



Gustave Moreau: History Painting, Spirituality, and Symbolism

Peter Cooke

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The acclaimed French painter Gustave Moreau (1826–1898) strove to renew history painting by creating epic art in a nonacademic manner. In this thought-provoking book, Peter Cooke explains how Moreau essentially created pictorial Symbolism through his novel approach to the genre of history painting. In the process, the author closely examines the artist through some of his major paintings, his ideology and aesthetic, and, for the first time, in relation to other artists of his time and of the previous generations. The narrative follows Moreau's career from his Neoclassical and academic training through his conversion to Romanticism, his studies in Italy, his experiences as an exhibitor at the Paris Salon, and his subsequent years as a professor at the École des Beaux-Arts and as the founder of his own museum. By drawing on unpublished manuscripts from the Musée Gustave Moreau in Paris, Cooke presents fresh insights into how Moreau's art reflects his spiritualist ideology, as well as his controversial effect on the art world of his time.

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