



On Beauty: A History of a Western Idea

By U. Eco

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Beauty is neither a history of art, nor a history of aesthetics but Umberto Eco draws on the histories of both these disciplines to define the ideas of beauty that have informed sensibilities from the classical world to modern times. In terms of form and style, Beauty has been conceived for a vast and diversified readership: taking in painting, sculpture, architecture, film, photography, the decorative arts, novels and poems, it offers a rich and intelligent panorama of this huge subject. It traces the philosophy of aesthetics through history and examines some of the many treatises that have sought to define it. Beauty is Umberto Eco at his most captivating and eclectic: we read not only of Botticelli and Michelangelo but of how the fashion of the 1960s owes much to ancient Egyptian dress, and how ancient Roman and eighteenth-century hairstyles have much in common. It makes the familiar new, and sheds a brilliant new light on the unfamiliar. Illustrated in full colour throughout and produced to the highest standards, Beauty is an indispensable book.

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