



How Pictures Complete Us: The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Divine

Paul Crowther

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Despite the wonders of the digital world, people still go in record numbers to view drawings and paintings in galleries. Why? What is the magic that pictures work on us? This book provides a provocative explanation, arguing that some pictures have special kinds of beauty and sublimity that offer aesthetic transcendence. They take us imaginatively beyond our finite limits and even invoke a sense of the divine. Such aesthetic transcendence forges a relationship with the ultimate and completes us psychologically. Philosophers and theologians sometimes account for this as an effect of art, but *How Pictures Complete Us* distinguishes itself by revealing how this experience is embodied in pictorial structures and styles. Through detailed discussions of artworks from the Renaissance through postmodern times, Paul Crowther reappraises the entire scope of beauty and the sublime in the context of both representational and abstract art, offering unexpected insights into familiar phenomena such as Ideal beauty, pictorial perspective, and what pictures are in the first place.

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