



Venus at Her Mirror: Velazquez and the Art of Nude Painting (Art & Design)

Andreas Prater

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The 17th century saw a tremendous thematic and technical development in the realm of painting as artists experimented with realism and anatomical exactitude, and gave free expression to themes of sensuality. This is especially apparent in Velazquez' "Venus at Her Mirror", also known as "The Rokeby Venus". In this text Andreas Prater uses the much-studied and imitated painting to trace Venus's depiction in art through the centuries. Prater begins by offering a detailed examination of Velazquez' masterpiece. He delves into its numerous levels of meaning as well as its impact on the nude paintings of its day. He also looks at the painting's history, including its attempted destruction by a suffragette in 1919. Velazquez' self-admiring Venus is compared to her depictions in other well-known works by admiring artists, including da Vinci, Giorgione, and Titian, as well as in works by later artists such as Manet and Cabanel, and into the modern world of advertising. These comparisons provoke intriguing perspectives on the evolution of eroticism, feminism, and Christianity in art, and offer an understanding of the influence that one artist and one work can have on generations that follow.

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