



Picasso: Style and Meaning

Elizabeth Cowling

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Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) is notorious for various forms of excess - excess in his love life, an excessive output, an excessively inconsistent style. In this groundbreaking book Elizabeth Cowling draws on her exceptional knowledge as an authority on Picasso to argue that he came to equate stylistic consistency with sterility. Abandoning the traditional use of subject matter to achieve variety and meaning, Picasso gradually reduced his to a handful of standardized motifs and used a vast array of different styles as the principal means of communicating ideas and feelings. In short, style is meaning in Picasso's art; his notoriously mercurial nature found expression in stylistic variety and experimentation. With rare intelligence and clarity, the author has woven biography and analysis into a compelling narrative. The 600 illustrations include all of Picasso's major works up to the beginning of World War II, and these are juxtaposed with their sources - Old Masters, contemporary artists, found objects and Picasso's own drawings and sketches - to make a visually telling counterpoint to the arguments of the text. Scholars familiar with Picasso's work will find Cowling's fresh insights a revelation and readers new to Picasso will come away with a profound understanding of both Picasso and his art.

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