



Hieronymus Bosch

Larry Silver

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- A stunningly illustrated, ground-breaking exploration of the work of the Low Countries' great visionary painter

“Larry Silver, a professor of art history at the University of Pennsylvania, elucidates “The Garden of Earthly Delights” and the nightmarish circus it presents, as well as a host of Bosch’s other magnificent works. He draws upon new research into his subject’s cultural milieu, belief system and artistic intentions. His explications of the paintings and their influence on other artists, most notably Pieter Bruegel the Elder, contain many fresh insights. . . . Bosch has 310 illustrations, most in full and high quality color, a vast bibliography and index. It’s a big book and will well reward the many hours needed to digest it.” — Bloomsbury Review

The phantasmagoric imagery of Hieronymus Bosch (d. 1516) has been the source of widespread interest ever since the painter’s lifetime, and is still so enigmatic that scholars have theorised that it contains hidden astrological, alchemical, or even heretical meanings. Yet none of these theories has ever seemed to provide an adequate understanding of Bosch’s work. Moreover, the considerable professional success that the artist enjoyed in his native Hertogenbosch, not to mention his membership in a traditional religious organisation, suggests that he pursued not a sinister secret agenda but simply his personal artistic vision.

This intriguing new monograph by noted art historian Larry Silver interprets that artistic vision with admirable lucidity: it explains how Bosch’s understanding of human sin, morality, and punishment, which was conceived in an era of powerful apocalyptic expectation, shaped his dramatic visualisations of hell and of the temptations of even the most steadfast saints. Silver’s account of Bosch’s artistic development is one of the first to benefit from recent technical investigations of the paintings, as well as from the reexamination of the artist’s drawings in relation to his paintings.

Hieronymus Bosch is also unique in how securely it places its subject’s work in the broader history of painting in the Low Countries: Silver identifies sources of Bosch’s iconography in a wide range of 15th-century panel paintings, manuscript illuminations, and prints, and describes how, despite their own religiousness, Bosch’s pictures helped inspire the secular landscape and genre scenes of later Netherlandish painters. Augmented by 310 illustrations, most in colour, including many dramatic close-ups of Bosch’s intricately imagined nightmare scenes, this is the definitive book on a perennially fascinating artist.

Larry Silver, a historian of Northern Renaissance art, received his Ph.D. from Harvard University and is currently Farquhar Professor of Art History at the University of Pennsylvania. His books include *Peasant Scenes and Landscapes*, *Hieronymus Bosch*, *Graven Images*, *Art in History*, and *The Paintings of Quinten Massys*.
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