



Bosch and Bruegel: From Enemy Painting to Everyday Life (The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts)

Joseph Leo Koerner

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In this visually stunning and much anticipated book, acclaimed art historian Joseph Koerner casts the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Bruegel in a completely new light, revealing how the painting of everyday life was born from what seems its polar opposite: the depiction of an enemy hell-bent on destroying us.

Supreme virtuoso of the bizarre, diabolic, and outlandish, Bosch embodies the phantasmagorical force of painting, while Bruegel, through his true-to-life landscapes and frank depictions of peasants, is the artistic avatar of the familiar and ordinary. But despite their differences, the works of these two artists are closely intertwined. Bruegel began his career imitating Bosch's fantasies, and it was Bosch who launched almost the whole repertoire of later genre painting. But Bosch depicts everyday life in order to reveal it as an alluring trap set by a metaphysical enemy at war with God, whereas Bruegel shows this enemy to be nothing but a humanly fabricated mask. Attending closely to the visual cunning of these two towering masters, Koerner uncovers art history's unexplored underside: the image itself as an enemy.

An absorbing study of the dark paradoxes of human creativity, *Bosch and Bruegel* is also a timely account of how hatred can be converted into tolerance through the agency of art. It takes readers through all the major paintings, drawings, and prints of these two unforgettable artists--including Bosch's notoriously elusive *Garden of Earthly Delights*, which forms the core of this historical tour de force. Elegantly written and abundantly illustrated, the book is based on Koerner's A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, a series given annually at the National Gallery of Art, Washington.

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