

Male Trouble: A Crisis in Representation

Abigail Solomon-Godeau



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In this pioneering book (which includes illustrations of works rarely, if ever, reproduced), Abigail Solomon-Godeau shows that the masculine ideal, whether in the guise of martial, virile heroes or languishing, disempowered youths, raises important questions about the fashioning of masculinity itself - questions relevant not only to the elite culture of the past but also to the mass culture of the late twentieth century. Examining the different forms of ideal manhood in relation to the cataclysms of the French Revolution and to international Neoclassicism, she explores how and why the beautiful male body dominated the visual culture of the time and appealed so powerfully to male spectators. Drawing on feminist, psychoanalytical and critical theory, as well as art and cultural history, Solomon-Godeau proposes a radical revision of Neoclassical visual culture as it relates to the emerging bourgeois order, demonstrating how both reflect the status of women. With scholarship and wit, she challenges preconceptions as well as offering new insights to the specialist.

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