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Museums Of The Mind: Magritte`s Labyrinth And Other Essays In The Arts



Synopsis

This book eloquently demonstrates that just as our human relationships change and develop over time, so do our ties to cherished works of art. Such works, with their overlays of perception and projection, exert a lasting influence on the psyche. In the first half of the book, Ellen Handler Spitz guides us through a maze of surreal paintings by René Magritte, with psychoanalytic thought as her beacon. In the second half she leads us on a kaleidoscopic journey through other "museums of the mind," where interrelated works in drama, film, cartoon art, poetry, and opera are illuminated and rediscovered. She analyzes a performance of Chekhov's "The Bear," revisits the 1970s classic *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* from the perspective of the 1990s, reviews the film "Dead Poets Society," muses on the psychological themes in the comic strip *Calvin and Hobbes*, rereads a beloved sonnet by Gerard Manley Hopkins, and reconsiders "Antigone" to discover startling insights into the "twinship of good and evil." Her final chapter, "Music of Hope," looks directly at the power of art to shape the mind as well as to be shaped by it. Here Spitz reflects on the impact of the children's opera *Brundibár*, written by the Czech composer Hans Krása in 1938 and performed many times by inmates of the Terezín concentration camp.

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Customer Reviews

"Interdisciplinary consideration of art is nothing new, but rarely has it been accomplished with the stunning breadth of this volume. A psychoanalyst and an expert in aesthetics for children, [she] offers art appreciation, history, and criticism richly informed by psychoanalytic, philosophic, and

literary theory. . . . Spitz's writing and insights dazzle the imagination. If one learns to write in part by reading, this volume is a teacher to be treasured by all who value art and ideas." --from my review in the Journal of Aesthetic Education, Vol. 31 (spring 1997), pp. 117-120.

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