



Jane Austen and the Arts: Elegance, Propriety, and Harmony

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The essays collected in *Jane Austen and the Arts: Elegance, Propriety, and Harmony* examine Austen's understanding of the arts, her aesthetic philosophy, and her role as artist. Together, they explore Austen's connections with Edmund Burke, Adam Smith, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Madame de Staël, Joanna Baillie, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Mary Anne Schimmelpenninck, and other writers engaged in debates on the sensuous experience and the intellectual judgment of art. Our contributors look at Austen's engagement with diverse art forms, painting, ballet, drama, poetry, and music, investigating our topic within historically grounded and theoretically nuanced essays. They represent Austen as a writer-thinker reflecting on the nature and practice of artistic creation and considering the social, moral, psychological, and theological functions of art in her fiction. We suggest that Austen knew, modified, and transformed the dominant aesthetic discourses of her era, at times ironically, to her own artistic ends. As a result, a new, and compelling image of Austen emerges, a "portrait of a lady artist" confidently promoting her own distinctly post-enlightenment aesthetic system.

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