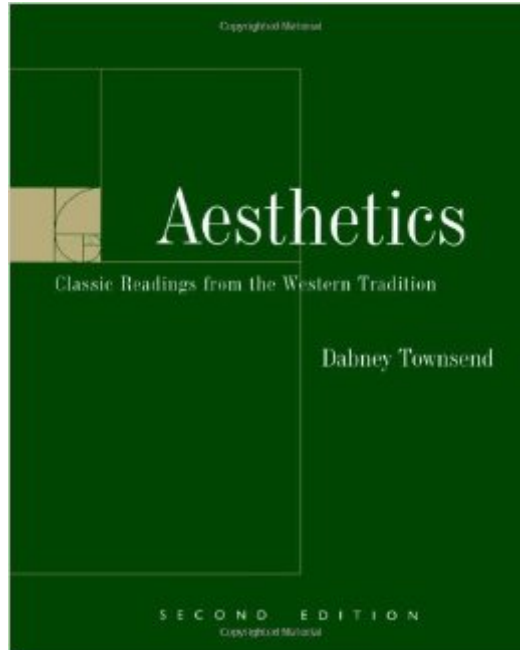


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Aesthetics: Classic Readings From The Western Tradition



Synopsis

This anthology is a collection of basic readings for beginning students, chosen to illustrate the major movements in the history, development and nature of aesthetics. Selections of major importance are drawn from the period of the Greeks to the mid-twentieth century. Every section introduction includes an historical overview of each period, biographical information, and a brief analysis of key concepts. The editor designed this anthology to be of sufficient length for use as the sole text in a one quarter course, yet brief enough to invite the use of additional materials in longer courses.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Aesthetics: Classic Readings from the Western Tradition" edited by Dabney Townsend, is an aesthetics anthology I recently read in hopes of finding a better text for the philosophy of art course I regularly teach. It's one of the better anthologies available, but in my opinion it's not the best of them (that honor I'd probably reserve for either Stephen David Ross' "Art and Its Significance" or Hofstadter's old standby "Philosophies of Art and Beauty," both of which are half the price of this very expensive book--or for Hazard Adams' "Critical Theory Since Plato," if you can afford a \$135 book). Townsend's text includes primary texts--that is, selections from texts authored by recognized authorities in the field--as well as short introductions to figures and periods. "Aesthetics: Classic Readings" strikes a pretty good balance between depth and breadth. It includes selections from 20 writers old and new, ranging from Plato and Aristotle to Bell and Danto (the first edition included only 15, as it lacked the post WWI selections which have significantly improved the second edition). Some writers featured here (like Bonaventure, Dante, Ruskin and Weitz) are not regularly included

in anthologies of this type, so their presence is refreshing. And the selection offers a sound representation of figures from different historical periods and different philosophical perspectives. But the selections are relatively superficial in content, as there are only a few complete essays in the mix (most are abbreviated excerpts), and only a scratch on the surface of truly important writers like Plato and Kant. And one wonders why someone like Morris Weitz is included if that choice eliminates a much more influential figure, like Nelson Goodman for instance.

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