



The Substance of Things Seen: Art, Faith, and the Christian Community

By ROBIN M. JENSEN

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company September 2004, 2004. Paper Back. Book Condition: New. The formative power of the beautiful is, first of all, an attraction. Trained as both artist and church historian, Robin Jensen astutely points out that attraction is the divine energy which enlivens beauty and serves as impetus for love's creative and transformative power. In her earlier book, *Understanding Early Christian Art*, Jensen concluded that "both verbal and visual eventually come down to the same thing and reinforce one another." Just as John Cassian describes the effect of chanting the Psalms day after day -- "He [the monk] will take into himself all the thoughts of the Psalms not as if they were the compositions of the Psalmist, but rather as if they were his own utterances and his very own prayer" -- so, too, visual art engages us as spectator and creator -- drawing us into beauty, and by virtue of this imaginative encounter, helping us take responsibility for the subsequent life of art in the world. Jensen's survey in *Substance of Things Seen* encompasses visual art and spiritual formation in Christian tradition, the visual exegesis of narrative art in early Christianity, the question of the icon as...



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