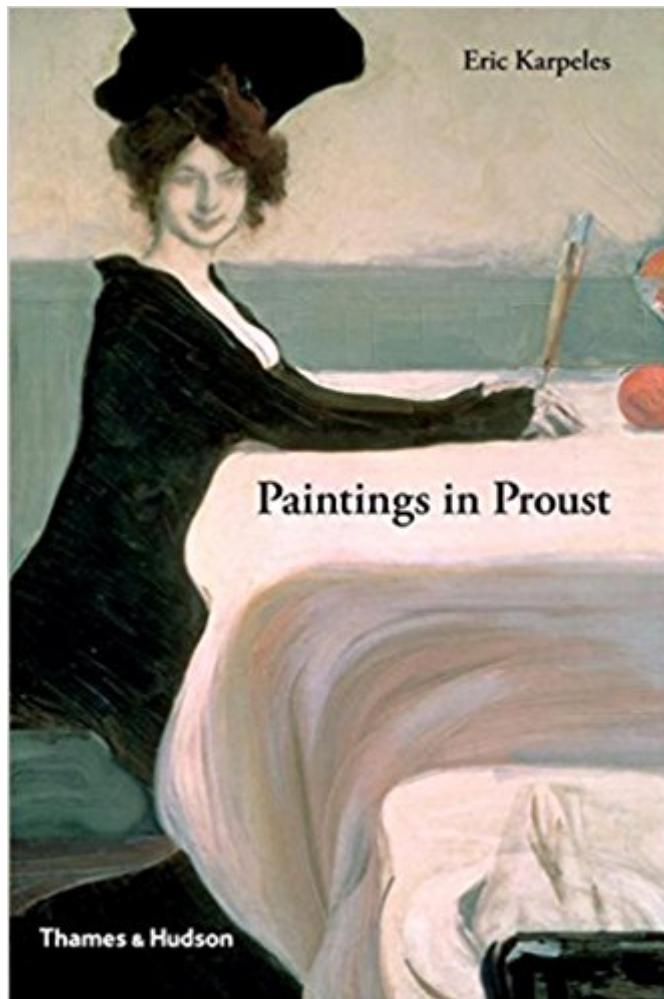


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Paintings In Proust: A Visual Companion To In Search Of Lost Time



Synopsis

A captivating, colorful examination of the ways in which Proust incorporated artists and the visual arts in his work. *A la recherche du temps perdu* by Marcel Proust is one of the most profoundly visual works in Western literature. Not only are there frequent references to specific works of art, notably during the narrator's visits to Venice and in his evaluations of the style of the imaginary painter Elstir, but certain characters are also evoked by comparison to particular paintings. Bloch's appearance as a boy is likened to the portrait of Mohammed II by Gentile Bellini; Odette de CrÃ©cy strikes Swann by her resemblance to a figure in a Botticelli fresco. Even the lesser figure of a certain Mme. Blattin becomes the subject of Proustian mischief by being described as "exactly the portrait of Savonarola by Fra Bartolomeo." Eric Karpeles has identified and located the many paintings to which Proust makes reference; in other cases, where only a painter's name is mentioned to indicate a certain style or appearance, Karpeles has chosen a representative work to illustrate the impression that Proust sought to evoke. With some 200 paintings beautifully reproduced in full color and texts drawn from the Moncrieff/Kilmartin/Enright translation, as well as concise commentaries on the novel's evolving story, this book is an essential addition to the libraries of Proustians everywhere. The book also includes an authoritative introduction examining the various ways in which Proust used paintings and the arts to extend his descriptive vocabulary, and a comprehensive index of artists and paintings mentioned in the novel. 200 full-color paintings

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an absolutely essential companion to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. The book reproduces

all the paintings and drawings that Proust makes clear reference to in his novel. It also contains works that he alludes to, but doesn't name or definitely describe, which Karpeles judges may have been the source of the inspiration. Some of these works are very difficult to track down; Karpeles does a truly wonderful service to all Proustians by gathering them together in one book. There are 206 illustrations, 196 in color. The quality of reproductions is excellent, although the details of some of the larger paintings suffer from reduced size. The book is arranged by the seven volumes of the novel. Each work of art is accompanied by a short introduction setting the context within the novel and the excerpt which references it. Karpeles also provides a helpful index which lists every reference in the novel to either the painters or paintings mentioned. The references include the page numbers from the French Tadie Pleiade Edition as well as the Moncrieff/Kilmartin and Moncrieff/Kilmartin/Enright translations (but not the latest Penguin translation). The footnotes at the end of the book are a gold mine of Proustian tidbits and should not be ignored. In addition to listing where the works are displayed and dimensions, Karpeles provides much interesting information and clarifies some textual issues. For example, in discussing the painter Mihaly Munkacsy, he explains that due to "Proust's often illegible scrawl ... Munkacsy's name was never used in the earliest editions of the novel The intense [editorial] scrutiny of Jean Yves Tadie restored Munkacsy to his rightful place ... and his correction resulted in the change also finally being made by ...

As a dedicated Proustian for twenty happy years, I have read his long novel several times but this new book by Eric Karpeles has taken my pleasure to a new level. Although I enjoy looking at paintings, I have a very limited knowledge of art history and, as a result many of Proust's allusions and even many descriptions were wasted on me. Vermeer's 'View of Delft' is such an important part of the novel that I made a point of finding a copy of the painting - but I lacked the knowledge to track-down all the other wonderful references that Proust uses. Who was the daughter of Botticelli's Zipporah that could so win Swann's heart - even though she was not his 'type'? Thanks to Karpeles, I now know what she looked like and have also become aware of all the other wonderful faces that Botticelli created. What were the paintings of Pieter de Hooche that inspired this exquisite description of Vinteuil's sonata? "He began, as always, with the sustained tremolos of the violin part which for several bars was heard alone, filling the whole foreground; until suddenly it seemed to draw aside, and - as in those interiors by Pieter de Hooch which are deepened by the narrow frame of a half opened door, in the far distance, of a different color, velvety with the radiance of some intervening light - the little phrase appeared, dancing, pastoral, interpolated, episodic, belonging to another world." I have savored that description for many years but, being unfamiliar with the painter

I could only go so far in my appreciation. Eric Karpeles has assembled every pictorial reference that Proust made in all seven volumes of the novel. He has tracked-down the reference - however obscure or arcane - and his publisher has reproduced each one, alongside the original quotation.

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