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Whistler: A Life for Art's Sake

Daniel E. Sutherland



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The first biography in more than twenty years of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903) is also the first to make extensive use of the artist's private correspondence to tell the story of his life and work. This engaging personal history dispels the popular notion of Whistler as merely a combative, eccentric, and unrelenting publicity seeker, a man as renowned for his public feuds with Oscar Wilde and John Ruskin as for the iconic portrait of his mother. The Whistler revealed in these pages is an intense, introspective, and complex man, plagued by self-doubt and haunted by an endless pursuit of perfection in his painting and drawing.

In his beautifully illustrated and deeply human portrayal of the artist, Daniel E. Sutherland shows why Whistler was perhaps the most influential artist of his generation, and certainly a pivotal figure in the cultural history of the nineteenth century. Whistler comes alive through his own magnificent work and words, including the provocative manifestos that explained his bold artistic vision, sparked controversy in his own time, and resonate to this day.

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