



The V&A Book of Western Ornament

Michael Snodin

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Ornament surrounds us: on buildings, clothes and accessories, cars, and even computers. This easy-to-use reference, complete with rich illustrations, tells the story of European ornament from 1450 to the present; from the Renaissance to the consumer culture of today; from gargoyles to cell phones. Highly accessible, the book offers basic definitions and examples that contribute to a clearer understanding of this ever-popular subject.

Following a thematic approach, author Michael Snodin examines shapes, symbols, and patterns that derive from the natural world as well as key architectural styles. Also explored is ornament as it mirrors the preoccupations of each age: architectural in the Renaissance, exotic in the great age of discovery, and stylized in the Modern Age. As this book makes clear, behind the desire to decorate lies the need to give meaning to the things we make and live with: to make them distinctive and give them value.

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