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Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c.1500ndash;c.1800

Nigel Llewellyn

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Nigel Llewellyn : Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c.1500ndash;c.1800 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c.1500ndash;c.1800:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Peek a booBy Tom DiazBought this for research for a stop action film I am making. For my purposes, it was quite good.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful and understandably creepy...By camaysarNigel Llewellyn, who is now Head of Research for all 4 branches of the Tate

Galleries in England, has done a fine job of describing the stages associated with the death experience and their representations in post-Reformation English art between the 16th and early 19th centuries. The book is associated with an exhibit shown at the Victoria and Albert museum in 1991. The 101 illustrations depict many levels of a mindset strange, poignant, and more than a bit unsettling, from memorial portraits, to memento mori rings (some incorporating beautifully-formed knots of hair from the deceased), statuary, funerary objects, "dances of death" prints, funeral biscuits and invitations, and much more. Llewellyn's writing is well-organized, lucid and thought-provoking. If the book whets your appetite for more, a good bibliography is appended. One only wishes that the format was a bit larger, so more of the often magnificent detail were clearer. The illustrations are mostly black-and-white, but a good number are in color. If you are looking for a massive change of pace in your reading, try this book!

How did our ancestors die? Whereas in our own day the subject of death is usually avoided, in pre-Industrial England the rituals and processes of death were present and immediate. People not only surrounded themselves with memento mori, they also sought to keep alive memories of those who had gone before. This continual confrontation with death was enhanced by a rich culture of visual artefacts. In *The Art of Death*, Nigel Llewellyn explores the meanings behind an astonishing range of these artefacts, and describes the attitudes and practices which lay behind their production and use. Illustrated and explained in this book are an array of little-known objects and images such as death's head spoons, jewels and swords, mourning-rings and fans, wax effigies, church monuments, Dance of Death prints, funeral invitations and ephemera, as well as works by well-known artists, including Holbein, Hogarth and Blake.

"A highly perceptive account of attitudes to death and its commemoration in post-Reformation England. Lucidly written." -- Financial Times
About the Author Nigel Llewellyn is Lecturer in the History of Art at the University of Sussex, and has curated an exhibition entitled 'The Art of Death', to be held at the Victoria and Albert Museum.