



Degas and the Little Dancer

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Degas's sculpture of the Little Dancer Aged Fourteen is one of the most celebrated images of our age. Although it caused immediate controversy when first exhibited in 1881, it is now recognized as the sculptural masterpiece of Impressionism. After the artist's death, the Original wax was reproduced in at least thirty plaster and bronze casts that are now scattered throughout the world and inspire delight among museum-goers and continuing debate among art historians.

This beautiful book is the first full-length study of the subject and offers entirely new perspectives on a work that is widely regarded as a key precursor of twentieth-century sculpture. In three chapters, Richard Kendall analyzes the origins of this distinctive figure in Degas's ballet imagery; explores the condition of French sculpture in the 1870s and the significance of Degas's choice of materials, procedures, and exhibition strategy; and describes the critical responses to the first public display of the statuette, particularly those comparing it with dolls and the art of ancient Egypt. Douglas W. Druick then explores the fascinating association between the sculpture and views of criminality current in the artist's day, and for the first time in the history of the work, Arthur Beale examines the technical character of its variant forms using laboratory analysis and X-ray photography. The book presents sixty-five color plates of major works by Degas that encompass the genesis and legacy of the Little Dancer, as well as a wealth of comparative plates and preparatory drawings, some never before published.

The book is the catalogue for an exhibition that will open at the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, in February 1998 and then travel to the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass., and the Baltimore Museum of Art.

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