



# Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art

*Hans Belting*

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## **Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art** Hans Belting

Before the Renaissance and Reformation, holy images were treated not as "art" but as objects of veneration which possessed the tangible presence of the Holy. In this magisterial book, Hans Belting traces the long history of the sacral image and its changing role in European culture. *Likeness and Presence* looks at the beliefs, superstitions, hopes, and fears that come into play as people handle and respond to sacred images, and presents a compelling interpretation of the place of the image in Western history.

"A rarity within its genre—an art-historical analysis of iconography which is itself iconoclastic. . . . One of the most intellectually exciting and historically grounded interpretations of Christian iconography." —Graham Howes, *Times Literary Supplement*

"*Likeness and Presence* offers the best source to survey the facts of what European Christians put in their churches. . . . An impressively detailed contextual analysis of medieval objects." —Robin Cormack, *New York Times Book Review*

"I cannot begin to describe the richness or the imaginative grandeur of Hans Belting's book. . . . It is a work that anyone interested in art, or in the history of thought about art, should regard as urgent reading. It is a tremendous achievement."—Arthur C. Danto, *New Republic*

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