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*Heather Birchall*

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**Heather Birchall : Pre-Raphaelites (Basic Art 2.0)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Pre-Raphaelites (Basic Art 2.0):

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Pre-Raphaelite Art 101By HexameronHeather Birchall is a refreshingly direct and yet scholarly writer, which makes this one of the best Taschen surveys. The 25-page introduction is consistently informative and relevant and avoids digressing into marginal topics. Birchall has a knack for writing coherently and without that pretentious verbiage and esoteric theory that plagues so much writing on art. Yet Birchall delves into her subject with scholarly expertise as well, citing secondary sources on every page.The introduction is a pleasure to read because it gets at the heart of the Pre-Raphaelites and their world. Birchall covers the formation and eventual decline of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB) without wading through too much social and political discussion. There are extensive sections on the PRB's two greatest figures, Rossetti and Burne-Jones, and much is said about their champion, John Ruskin. The remaining content of the book consists of 35 reproductions each accompanied by a single-page blurb about the featured artist and work. Unlike some other Taschen surveys, Birchall offers thoughtful interpretations and interesting historical nuggets, which makes these mini-essays worth reading.Like other schools, the Pre-Raphaelites were a relatively small group of artists. As such, several paintings by a single PRB figurehead are often spotlighted in this book. For example, of the 35 reproductions here, six are by Burne-Jones, five by Rossetti, five by Millais, four by Hunt, and three by Brown. Other works here stem from PRB disciples and second-tier imitators: Walter Deverell, John Inchbold, Frederick Sandys, Evelyn de Morgan, and Henry Wallis. What struck me as peculiar is the conspicuous absence of John William Waterhouse, who may not have been active during its halcyon days, but exemplifies the PRB as much as Burne-Jones. I cannot tell why Waterhouse was snubbed when a mediocre work by Simeon Solomon and a decidedly obscure painting by Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale were included.Bottom line: This is a superb introduction to the Pre-Raphaelites, written in an accessible manner without sacrificing substance. Birchall is perhaps the most satisfying writer who has yet contributed to the Taschen genre series. Devotees of Pre-Raphaelite art may not be as impressed, but the book is an excellent primer. For deeper exploration, consider these coffee table books: The Pre-Raphaelites and Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Art and Design.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Another wonderful book by TaschenBy H. Thomas BlancoAnother wonderful book by Taschen. I have always loved the pre-raphaelites and this particular book provides a great overview of movement with excellent reproductions.0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. recommend thisBy louise stanfielquite nice - well worth having

About the Author Heather Birchall organized a number of major exhibitions at the Victoria Albert Museum and Tate Britain in London before becoming Curator of Historic Fine Art at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. She was a member of the National Association of Design and Fine Art Societies (NADFAS) until 2014. Today she lives in San Francisco. A specialist in Victorian art, she has contributed to books and written articles about John Ruskin, the relationship between painting and photography, and British watercolors.

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