



## James Ensor

*By Anna Swinbourne, Susan Canning, Michel Draguet, Robert Hoozee, Laurence Madeline, Jane Panetta, Herwig Todts*

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**James Ensor** By Anna Swinbourne, Susan Canning, Michel Draguet, Robert Hoozee, Laurence Madeline, Jane Panetta, Herwig Todts

James Ensor's painting of 1887, "The Temptation of St. Anthony," now in The Museum of Modern Art's collection, established the artist as one of the boldest painters of all his contemporaries. Ensor (1860-1949) was a major figure in the Belgian avant-garde of the late nineteenth century and an important precursor to the development of Expressionism in the early twentieth, yet his work is underappreciated in the United States, and far too little seen. This striking volume, published on the occasion of Ensor's major 2009 exhibition in New York, gives the artist the attention he so greatly deserves. It presents approximately 90 works, organized thematically, examining Ensor's Modernity, his innovative and allegorical approach to light, his prominent use of satire, his deep interest in carnival and performance and, finally, his own self-fashioning and use of masking, travesty and role-playing. Works in the full range of his media--painting, printing and drawing--are presented in an overlapping network of themes and images to produce a complete picture of this daring body of art. The most comprehensive volume on the artist available in English, this remarkable, scholarly volume reveals Ensor as a socially engaged and self-critical artist involved with the issues of his times and contemporary debates on the very nature of Modernism.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

The MoMA survey... is an artist's-artist show. It will appeal to anyone trying to negotiate an insider-outsider perch, anyone obsessed by violence and light, anyone who knows that loony is relative. --Holland Cotter, The New York Times, June 26, 2009

### **Review**

Ensor is the figure no conscientious chronicler of the birth pangs of modernism can afford to overlook.

### **Review**

The James Ensor retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art will affect many viewers like the detonation of a bomb whose fuse has been fizzing inconspicuously for a century. It concerns a titanic exception to standard accounts of Western art since the late nineteenth century.

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