



Annunciation (New Testament series)

Editors of Phaidon Press

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'In the sixth month the Angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings favoured one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus."' The drama, the symbolism, the poignant simplicity of the imagined scene evoked by these words, have proved irresistible to artists over the centuries. Presented here, in a chronological sequence, are over 100 of the finest representations of this encounter. All depicting the same subject, yet all wonderfully and subtly different, these images are an inexhaustible source of pleasure and inspiration, taking the viewer on a journey of meditation through the ages. The design of the book is simple and the theme is unchanging, but the outcome is rich and endlessly varied. While the message is Christian, the human drama of the Annunciation has a universal appeal: the artists, attempting to express an awe-inspiring mystery, have at the same time invested the scene with the deepest humanity. The images in this book are simultaneously expressions of religious devotion, depictions of human drama and emotion, and great works of art.

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