



James Ensor: The Temptation of Saint Anthony (Art Institute of Chicago)

Susan M. Canning, Patrick Florizöone, Nancy Ireson, Kimberly Nichols

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This engaging volume describes the creation and restoration of the extraordinary large-scale drawing *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*—a work by late 19th-century Belgian artist James Ensor (1860–1949)—on the occasion of its first public showing in more than 60 years. The piece is composed of 51 separate sheets of paper collaged into a hallucinatory social critique and artist’s manifesto. Each sheet of the nearly six-foot-high work is reproduced at actual size, revealing Ensor’s remarkable technique and fertile imagination. Here, Saint Anthony is surrounded not with nature, as customary, but with the moral decay of society. Replete with tiny scenes depicting both sexual temptation and spiritual piety, Ensor splices potent imagery from travelogues, popular science, and technology magazines into a Symbolist masterpiece. Susan M. Canning, Patrick Florizööne, and Nancy Ireson analyze the drawing’s meaning; Herwig Todts details its origins and early history; and Kimberly J. Nichols recounts the work’s restoration.

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