

The Darker Side of Light



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For many today, the art of the late nineteenth century is dominated by Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. However, this is only the better-known part of the story, a story retold within the pages of this captivating book with its finely executed works of art and the insightful essays that accompany them. For collectors the experience of prints, drawings, and small sculptures was often a private affair, like taking a book down from the shelf for quiet enjoyment. Prints and drawings were kept aside, compiled in albums and portfolios, while medals and bronzes were often placed in the seclusion of the library. In short, such works of art were not typically a part of one's day-to-day environment in the manner of a framed object hung on a wall. Rather, they were subject to purposeful study on chosen occasions. From the beginning this element of discreteness allowed for degrees of experiment leading artists to sometimes recherche, sometimes enigmatic, and often melancholy subjects that indulged the solitary circumstances of their reception. By explicating a range of highly engaging, often mysterious and beautiful objects, "The Darker Side of Light" evokes the shadowed interiors and private introspections that compose a far less familiar history of late nineteenth-century art.

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