In this book, Rachel Kousser draws on contemporary reception theory to present a new approach to Hellenistic and Roman ideal sculpture. She analyzes the Romans' preference for retrospective, classicizing statuary based on Greek models as opposed to the innovative creations prized by modern scholars. Using a case study of a particular sculptural type, a forceful yet erotic image of Venus, Kousser argues that the Romans self-consciously employed such sculptures to represent their ties to the past in a rapidly evolving world. Kousser presents Hellenistic and Roman ideal sculpture as an example of a highly effective artistic tradition that was, by modern standards, extraordinarily conservative. At the same time, the Romans' flexible and opportunistic use of past forms also had important implications for the future; it constituted the origins of classicism in Western art.

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Hellenistic and Roman Ideal Sculpture
The Allure of the Classical

Rachel Meredith Kousser
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