In this bold book, Jonas Grethlein proposes a new dialogue between the fields of Classics and Aesthetics. Ancient material, he argues, has the capacity to challenge and re-orientate current debates. Comparisons with modern art and literature help to balance the historicism of classical scholarship with transcultural theoretical critique. Grethlein discusses ancient narratives and pictures in order to explore the nature of aesthetic experience. While our responses to both narratives and pictures are vicarious, the ‘as-if’ on which they are premised is specifically shaped by the form of the representation. Form emerges as a key to how narratives and pictures constitute an important means of engaging with experience. Combining theoretical reflections with close readings, this book will appeal to Art Historians as well as to textual scholars.

Jonas Grethlein holds the Chair in Greek Literature in the Department of Classics at the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg. His authored publications include The Greeks and their Past: Poetry, Oratory and History in the Fifth-Century BCE (2010) and Experience and Teleology in Ancient Historiography: Futures Past from Herodotus to Augustine (2013), Die Odyssee. Homer und die Kunst des Erzählens (2017) and he is co-editor of Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography: The “Plupast” from Herodotus to Appian (2012).
Aesthetic Experiences and Classical Antiquity

The Significance of Form in Narratives and Pictures

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Acknowledgements

This book ventures across three sorts of academic boundaries: it discusses narratives and pictures, combines close readings with theoretical reflection and, while focusing on ancient material, simultaneously engages with modern art. Such roaming may easily estrange readers and implies the danger of inaccuracies. This risk is, I hope, made worthwhile by the new perspectives opening up for the trespasser. *Aesthetic Experiences and Classical Antiquity* will surely call into action the police patrolling disciplinary boundaries; at the same time, it relies on the intellectual curiosity of Classicists and students of Aesthetics. Just as contemporary debates in Aesthetics allow Classicists to see their territory in new light, I argue, so too ancient texts and pictures have the capacity to illuminate the field of Aesthetics – as indeed to re-orientate some of its discussions. In that sense, it is the ‘and’ of my title that provides the unlikely keyword: ultimately, I aim to foster a new dialogue between those interested in ‘aesthetic experiences’ on the one hand, and those concerned with ‘classical antiquity’ on the other.

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