



Senses of Devotion: Interfaith Aesthetics in Buddhist and Muslim Communities (Art for Faith's Sake)

William A. Dyrness

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This ethnographic study focuses on the religious imagery and practices of a sample of Buddhist temples and Muslim mosques in the greater Los Angeles area. As a way of expanding interfaith dialogue, it is framed as a conversation between the largely Christian researchers and the seventy-five respondents, who were asked about the images, space, and practices of their religious experience. From the respondents in their various religious settings, it seeks to distill the specific religious imaginations and aesthetic profiles that might be said to characterize their experience--to discover what might be considered the living images of these faiths.

Set in the context of contemporary discussions of the nature of religion and visual culture, this richly textured study of visual and sensory practices in religion raises fundamental questions about the place of belief and ritual practice and the role these play in our increasingly pluralistic religious culture.

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