



Jean Cocteau (Reaktion Books - Critical Lives)

James S. Williams

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Despite Jean Cocteau's renown as a leading figure in European cinema, his work and life have rarely been examined together. Evaluating Cocteau's career and his fascinating personal life on equal terms, James Williams offers here a groundbreaking analysis that sets them both within highly revealing historical and artistic contexts.

Williams's biographical investigation of this poet, dramatist, novelist, designer, and filmmaker centers around Cocteau's constant self-questioning and how it permeated his work. From Cocteau's work in fashion and photography to his formal experimentation to his extensive collaborations with male friends and lovers, the book charts the complex and unpredictable evolution of his work and aesthetic. Williams argues that Cocteau's body of work is best viewed as an ethical, erotic project of aesthetics that carries important ramifications for our contemporary understanding of being and subjectivity.

An engaging and wholly accessible account, *Jean Cocteau* is essential reading for all those fascinated by the man and his unforgettable films.

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