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**A Rare Work of Art Theory and Critique  
From a Member of the William Morris Circle**

## **BEAUTY AND ART** by Aldam Heaton

*The book may be read to advantage by any one desirous of cultivating a refined taste in choosing beautiful things from the ordinary surrounding of his daily life. The volume will be welcome to every one who seeks trustworthy and intelligent guidance in the matters of taste*  
— The Scotsman

Art, as concept and field of endeavor, has always been with us. Yet, paradoxically, it has been extremely difficult to have artists agree on what the term “Art” actually means. **BEAUTY AND ART** (Valerius Press), Aldam Heaton’s rare and enlightening book offers one approach to settle the issue, in a concise and compelling format. Aesthetics and beauty are critically examined and elucidated, using a surprisingly wide range of specific examples, from interior design and architecture, to textiles and clothing. Heaton, a successful artist himself, gives us his entertaining and uncompromising views, challenging the myth that no one can clearly answer the question “What is Art?”.

**BEAUTY AND ART**, originally published in 1897, is a small masterpiece of art criticism. By highlighting the elements of decor found in the average person’s environment, Heaton hoped to inculcate in his readers an appreciation of aesthetics. Cultivation of refined taste in choosing beautiful things from ordinary surroundings is of primary importance to the civilised individual. Therefore, this work was intended to be a trustworthy guide for understanding the interrelationships of colour, form, shape, and texture. The works of Thomas Chippendale, Robert and James Adam, Matthias Darly, M.A. Pergolesi, Thomas Sheraton and others are carefully analyzed and evaluated.

As a man living at a time of fast-moving change, Heaton was concerned about the alacrity with which ugliness was accepted and classic greatness rejected. He believed social criticism should be invariably allied with art criticism. Thus, the aspiring connoisseur of artistic taste is informed as to who should be the heroes of the genre. But just as readily, Heaton provides his list of incompetents and bunglers. Further, he condemns the masses’ lack of knowledge of art, but he equally deplores the indolence of the aristocracy in promoting and subsidizing great art. Not surprisingly, he also decries popular taste and accepted norms.

Heaton concludes that from an aesthetic perspective modern design has failed. Yet, Heaton apparently was not a man who believed in the slow educational approach to refine the sensibilities of the populace. As a more immediate solution, he wanted to shock modern man out of his apathetic

acceptance of the vulgar, by throwing most popular pictures and ornamental objects into the “kitchen fire”! We can see something of his outspokenness in the following quote: “It may safely be affirmed that there is no subject closely affecting our daily lives and habits, about which we are all so ready to confess our ignorance as that form of Art which should be our guide in the choice of dress and furniture and ornaments of all kinds; and yet there is none where a general ignorance produces a failure so disastrous in its consequences.”

Aldam Heaton was an associate of the William Morris circle, and a friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Inspired by Neo-Classical style, he practiced interior design in London. Besides his work on the ill-fated cruise ship Titanic—he designed its State Rooms—he gained commissions for the interiors of notable houses and churches. He also collaborated with a number of prominent artists, including architect Richard Norman Shaw. He also was editor on the now highly prized compendium *Furniture and Decoration in England During the 18th Century*.

Paul Dennis Sporer (editor) is the author of *The Dimensions of Companionship; Liberating Love; The Concept of Family; and Equal but Different*. He has also served as editor on more than 30 culturally and historically significant books, including *Painting Explained*, by Thomas Gullick; *Is Secession Treason?*, by Albert Bledsoe; *The Heart of Aryavarta*, by Lawrence Dundas; *Beauty and Art*, by Aldam Heaton; *The French at Home*, by Albert Rhodes; *From Slave Cabin to Pulpit*, by Peter Randolph; *Newer Ideals of Peace*, by Jane Addams; *Views of Old Europe*, by Bayard Taylor; *Gentle Measures*, by Jacob Abbott; *Parental Influences*, William Bacon; *Finding a Way Out*, by Robert Moton; *The New Birth*, by Austin Phelps; *Tupelo*, by John Hill Aughey; *An Incident of Travel*, Arthur Jerome Eddy; *End of an Era*, by John Sergeant Wise; *The Missionary*, by Samuel Mazzuchelli; *Half a Century*, by Jane Swisshelm; *Born Three Times*, by Thomas L. Johnson; *Dark Hollow*, by Anna Katharine Green; and *1492: Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, by Mary Johnston.

For further information about **BEAUTY AND ART**, or to arrange an interview with the editor, Paul Dennis Sporer, please contact Cassandra Foxton, [inform\\_at\\_anzapublishing.com](mailto:inform_at_anzapublishing.com). The publisher’s website address is [AnzaPublishing.com](http://AnzaPublishing.com).

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**Revised and enhanced new edition, with new index and preface**

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