

How can something finite mediate an infinite God? Weaving patristics, theology, art history, aesthetics, and religious practice with the hermeneutic phenomenology of Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jean-Luc Marion, Stephanie Rumpza proposes a new answer to this paradox by offering a fresh and original approach to the Byzantine icon. She demonstrates the power and relevance of the phenomenological method to integrate hermeneutic aesthetics and divine transcendence, illustrating how the material and visual dimensions of the icon are illuminated by traditional practices of prayer. Rumpza's study targets a problem that marks a major fault line in continental philosophy of religion – how to understand the integrity of finite beings in relation to a God that transcends them. For philosophers, her book demonstrates the relevance of a cherished religious practice of Eastern Christianity. For art historians, she proposes a novel philosophical paradigm for understanding the icon as it is approached in practice.

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