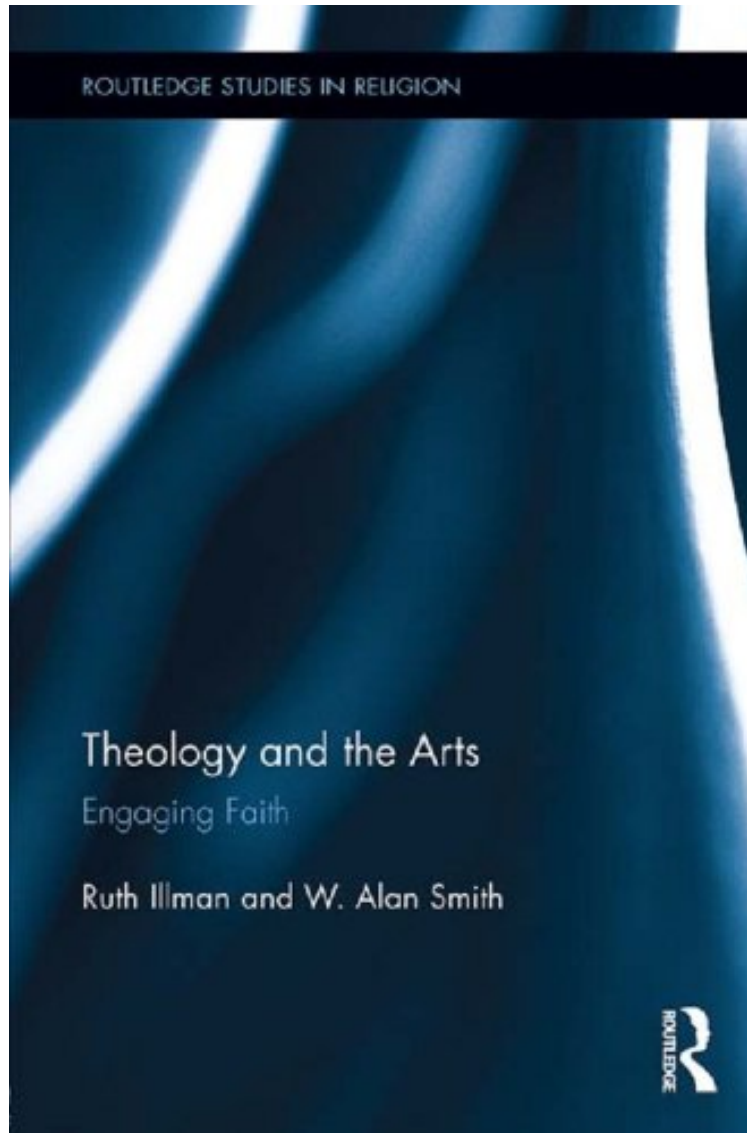


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Theology and the Arts: Engaging Faith (Routledge Studies in Religion)

Ruth Illman, W. Alan Smith
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Ruth Illman, W. Alan Smith : Theology and the Arts: Engaging Faith (Routledge Studies in Religion) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Theology and the Arts: Engaging Faith (Routledge Studies in Religion):

This book brings the emerging fields of practical theology and theology of the arts into a dialogue beyond the bias of

modern systematic and constructive theology. The authors draw upon postmodern, post-secular, feminist, liberation, and dialogical/dialectical philosophy and theology, and their critiques of the narrow modern emphases on reason and the scientific method, as the model for all knowledge. Such a practical theology of the arts focuses the work of theology on the actual practices that engage the arts in their various forms as the means of interpreting and understanding the nature of the communities and their members, as well as the mechanisms through which these communities engage in transformative work, to make persons and neighborhoods whole. This book presents its theological claims through the careful analysis of several stories of communities around the world that have engaged in transformational practices through a specific art form, investigating communities from Europe, the Middle East, South America, and the U.S. The case studies explored include Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Druze, indigenous, and sometimes agnostic subjects, involved in visual art, music, dance, theatre, documentary film, and literature. Theology and the Arts demonstrates that the challenges of a postmodern and post-secular context require a fundamental rethinking of theology that focuses on discrete practices of faithful communities, rather than one-dimensional theories about religion.

"The book's contributions to theology are many: it bridges the disciplinary study of practical theology and the arts, challenges and amends theology as it has been constructed, gives ample space to showing practical theology at work, and works across differences of international location and religious tradition." ndash; Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Vanderbilt University "W. Alan Smith and Ruth Illman have identified a movement within theology that bridges disciplines as diverse as art history, ethnography, and justice and peace studies. Their methodology making sense of this development is truly momentous." ndash; Kimberly Vrudney, University of St. Thomas, USA "This is also a text that could be engaging in the classroom, although clearly written as a scholarly study, not a textbook. The case studies, supported by the additional material on the [companion website], lend themselves to discussion in classes on religious and cultural pluralism, interreligious dialogue, theological aesthetics, ethics and social justice, embodiment and disabilities. Thus, Illman's and Smith's volume is, in itself, a very fine example of the practical theology of the arts that the authors develop in it." ndash; Stefanie Knauss, Journal of the American Academy of Religion "This book...provides a kaleidoscope through which the question of theology and the arts can be engaged from many horizons. What makes this book truly unique is the methodology that bridges disciplines as diverse as art history, ethnography, and justice and peace studies." ndash; Michael S. Driscoll, Theological Studies "The scholarship is rigorous, resulting in well-supported and well-developed arguments; its comprehensiveness makes it an excellent resource for urban ministry, worship, ministry, and religious education courses." ndash; Sergio Centeno, Religious Education "One of the things that makes the text lively is that though neither Illman nor Smith identify themselves disciplinarily as practical theologians, they nevertheless find the work of practical theology to be profoundly helpful to contemporary discussions of faith and religion...this text will be an undeniably useful resource for anyone working at the juncture of theological reflection, observation-based research, and the arts." ndash; L. Callid Keefe-Perry, Practical Matters Journal About the Author Ruth Illman is Director of the Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History, associated to Åbo Akademi University in Åbo, Finland. She is committed to research on interreligious dialogue and the role of the arts in this dialogue, cultural encounters and peace research. She is also the editor-in-chief of the international peer-reviewed journal *Temenos. Nordic Journal of Comparative Religion*. Illman has published widely in international journals such as the *International Journal of Public Theology*, the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, and *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*. Her book entitled *Art and Belief: Artists Engaged in Interreligious Dialogue* was published by Equinox Publications in 2012. You find her website at: <http://web.abo.fi/instut/di/english/ruth.html>. W. Alan Smith is Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Florida Southern College. An ordained minister, he has been active in regional and general levels of work in the denomination as well as in higher education. He was most recently the Executive Secretary of the Religious Education Association. He is the author of numerous articles in journals including *Religious Education*, *Teaching Theology and Religion*, and the *Forum on Public Policy*.