

The Sublime

“The range of recent artistic theory and practice that attempts to articulate such moments of mute encounter with all that exceeds our comprehension... takes hold of us when reason falters and certainties begin to crumble. Something rushes in and we are profoundly altered.

Awe and wonder can quickly blur into a darker aspect of the sublime experience with an evocation of spiritual immensity and a connection to traumatic events. Hegel saw the sublime as a fusion with the Absolute in which the beautiful is fulfilled, and declared that sublimity was the way that the divine manifested itself in the natural world.

Contemporary artists shy away from describing their work in such terms.”

Simon Morley
Introduction / The Contemporary Sublime
Documents in Contemporary Art - Sublime (2010)
Co-published by Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press