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_Mormon Arts_ Volume I. Lorin F. Wheelwright and Lael J. Woodbury, eds.

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(Reviewed by Dorothy J. Schimmelpfenning, a "Visiting Assistant Professor" in cultural foundations of education,
Graduate School of Education, University of Utah. Dr. Schimmelpfenning has B.A. and M.A. degrees in art, and a Ph.D. in cultural foundations.

For those who anticipate an historical treatment, or perhaps a compendium of pioneer folk craft, the book *Mormon Arts* offers a pleasant change from the stereotyped. The majority of works of art included in this first volume of a proposed series have been created by contemporary Mormon artists. However, under a doctrinal mandate to seek after “anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy,” the editors offer a potpourri of artistic expression, from Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, to semi-abstract paintings and avant-garde theatrical productions.

The editorial team of Lorin F. Wheelwright and Lael J. Woodbury readily acknowledges that there does not yet exist a style of art unique to Mormondom, but contends that the purpose of art transcends style in importance; the purpose in this instance being the expression of cultural values of an idealistic people dedicated to the service of God and His church.

For some, a preliminary examination of *Mormon Arts* may prove disconcerting. No attempt is made to organize the contents in chronological sequence, and the various artistic mediums appear loosely interspaced. However, the presentation of works of art within the book closely follows two editorial objectives: (1) to illustrate unifying principles of Mormon aesthetics, as proposed by Mr. Wheelwright, and (2) to categorize works of art according to the medium of expression, in the final sections of the volume.

The broad sampling of work created by Mormon artists, including sculpture, painting, poetry, dance, photography, and theater arts, offers something that should appeal to almost anyone’s personal preference. Quality color reproductions are generous in size and number, and encourage the casual browser to consider editorial comment more deeply.

A major bonus in the book is the series of twenty-two paintings, begun by C. C. A. Christensen in 1869. Reproduced in full color, with comprehensive explanations supporting each picture, these remarkable paintings provide a pictorial record of tragic events in the early history of the Mormon Church.

A strongly didactic publication, making frequent reference to unquoted L.D.S. scripture and doctrine, *Mormon Arts* may
not appeal to the general public. These very factors, however, plus the low purchase price of $13.95, should encourage members of the L.D.S. Church to add this introductory volume to their personal libraries.