



## Derek Jarman (Critical Lives)

*Michael Charlesworth*

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Derek Jarman (1942–1994) is most often remembered as one of Europe's most innovative independent film-makers, whose films called into question and re-ordered the nature of film-making itself. But he was also a painter, writer and poet, gardener, set designer for other people's films, ballet, opera and theatre, and influential campaigner for gay rights and other causes. He was also the author of an extraordinary series of journals that offer invaluable insight not only into the nature of the society in which he lived but also into his own creative process. It is remarkable that his art was not confined to one or two of these activities but embraced all of them. This new biography of Jarman discusses the entire range of his works and provides a picture of the whole man, from childhood to his untimely death in 1994. For the first time it properly integrates his paintings and writings with his film, demonstrating the strong connections between his varied areas of artistic production. Author Michael Charlesworth employs and assesses film criticism, art history, garden and nature writing, critical analysis of poetry and the personal opinions of Jarman and his friends. He also shows how Jarman was an invaluable voice for a larger range of people: one who espoused love, friendship and art; one who fearlessly pushed forward intellectual virtues and the value of art in an often hostile and unappreciative political and social atmosphere. Fresh in its conclusions, engaging in style, Derek Jarman is accessible, thought-provoking, radical in its arguments and its tracing of the patterns of Jarman's phenomenal creativity. An invaluable complement to Jarman's works, this book will interest all Jarman fans as well as readers interested in the history of film, the arts and modern British history and culture.

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