

Mary Bryan H. Curd. *Flemish and Dutch Artists in Early Modern England: Collaboration and Competition, 1460–1680*.

Visual Culture in Early Modernity. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010. xx + 236 pp. index. append. illus. tpls. map. bibl. \$99.95. ISBN: 978-0-7546-6712-4.

This study explores collaboration and competition as key themes in the history of artistic migration, in a study that comprises art, history, and economic history. In the early modern period many Netherlanders fled and went to London, pushed out by poor economic conditions as well as political and religious troubles at home. At the time, Dutch and Flemish artists were appreciated everywhere for their superior skills, and for the fashionable objects they crafted or created, available in different ranges, to everyone's liking and purse. Mary Curd's preface and introduction mention the contextualizing insights and theories of historians such as Peter Burke and socio-anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu. In chronological order, the author then proceeds to present five cases of Flemish and Dutch migrant artists, reviewing their history, endeavors and fortune in their new home town between 1480 and 1680. The case studies were selected for their differences in collaborative and competitive endeavors. The artists worked for different niches and were involved with patrons, middlemen, other artists or artisans, and a variety of people involved in the production process of early modern art and trade.

Chapter 1 studies an anonymous but presumably Flemish miniaturist working on a sumptuous and innovatively devised illuminated manuscript *The Pageants of Richard Beauchamp*, commissioned by Beauchamp's daughter Anne in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. A miniaturist was flexible, teamed up with whomever was working on the commission, needed little investment besides his materials. Chapter 2 takes us into the glazier's shop of Galyon Hone, who worked on various projects for King Henry VIII. Trained in Antwerp, Hone combined modern know-how and production practice with high quality designs. The glass trade involved collaborating with many specialized craftsmen. It speaks for Hone's cleverness and talent that he was able to build a successful career regardless of the difficulties thrown up by the local craftsmen, glaziers and their guild.

The late sixteenth-century tapestry business of Richard Hyckes is analysed in chapter 3. In order to produce this most luxurious art, considerable starting capital, large workshop premises, and a large number of artisans were needed. Hyckes's venture failed because of imprudent investments, old fashioned designs, and ultimately because he seemed out of touch with his customers. Peter Lely is the

protagonist of chapter 4. As a court painter he dominated English portraiture during the reign of King Charles II. His delicately crafted, subtle portraits appealed to an ever larger clientele, and the commissions poured in. By teaming up with his Dutch and native English colleagues, and more importantly by incorporating his potential rivals in his workshop, he grew into a powerful artist. The last chapter focuses on the well-connected Dutch engraver Abraham Blooteling, who at the end of the seventeenth century invented the mezzotint, successfully adapting to the demand for a more painterly style in engravings.

Migration, as a strategy for survival, was not always successful, as Hyckes's failed tapestry-venture shows. In fact, there is no recipe for success. During their career, the five artists adapted their strategies of competition and collaboration as opportunities presented themselves. The five cases are spread over more than two centuries, in the course of which London had grown into a megalopolis, and the economic, social, and religious landscape of England had profoundly changed, as had the status of the artist: these shifts merit more attention. The author also overstates the xenophobic attitude of the trade guilds: their pleas were always coated in corporate rhetoric and they were always complaining. With the high average mortality rate, the influx of strangers in early modern towns was a blessing rather than a curse. No urban trade would have existed without local, regional, and international migrants. The book is somewhat flawed due to the misspelling of Netherlandish words and names in the text and bibliography. The bibliography is extensive and up to date. One does wish however that some sources were explored at firsthand. In general, though, Curd offers a kaleidoscopic glimpse in the fascinating world of the Netherlandish migrant-artist. Her book shows that the history of English art of the early modern period cannot be written without looking at Netherlandish immigrants.

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Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and Military History, Brussels Vrije  
Universiteit, Brussels