

peculiarity here is that so many monarchs were either children or infants when they acceded to the throne.

Regarding arches raised for Louis XIV's entry into Paris in 1660, Elaine Tierney extracts from surviving contracts details about worksite organization and timing, materials, degrees of oversight exercised by corporate patrons, freedom accorded to artists to use their expertise and judgment, and viewing platforms (*échaufauds*) erected on the initiative of private individuals and groups. However, a problem arises when she writes that "[Jean] Marot depicted [a] triumphal arch in glorious isolation, looking more like a permanent stone edifice than a temporary construction crafted out of canvas, plaster and wood" (144). Of course, once pictorial and other decoration was affixed, the supporting wooden armature was invisible to all, so it makes no sense to evince failure or deliberate omission on the printmaker's part. Recall, too, what Marot actually did: while seated in a properly equipped studio, he used drawings to create prints. Most likely made by others, such drawings preceded the construction and ornamentation of ephemera and thus have no relationship to them. Instead, they embody idealized views, and the reproductive printmaker followed suit.

Monochrome prints obviously cannot capture the colors that animated painted canvases or plaster statuary, but that does not mean that black-and-white imagery is irremediably deceptive or illegible. To effectively exploit the abundant surviving imagery associated with festivals, we should focus on how and what they communicate, not on what they demonstrably or allegedly lack.

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*Art of the Northern Renaissance: Courts, Commerce and Devotion.*

Stephanie Porras.

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A survey of an art historical period written for an undergraduate audience might seem like no place for iconoclasm. Newly issued textbooks can soften the boundaries of the canon without destroying it. The first decade of the twenty-first century saw the publication of three notable options for English-language surveys of the "Northern Renaissance," an art historical period whose name has always required defense, qualification, or the tossing up of hands in the absence of a more favorable alternative. In 2005, Larry Silver and Henry Luttikhuisen published a second edition of James Snyder's original 1968 text, preserving its geographic and chronological arrangement of sculpture, painting, and prints. Two more concise contributions did away with chapters arranged by historical sequence and region by favoring a thematic approach. Susie Nash's 2008 book, with its emphasis on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, is notable for two distinctive chapters, one on the

technical analysis of paintings and one on workshop practices. Jeffrey Chipps Smith's 2004 text delivers, in place of the iconographical emphasis of Snyder (who was a student of Panofsky), a more contextualizing approach.

In a similar spirit to Smith, Stephanie Porras has written a book that covers a wide range of art in different media. Her *Art of the Northern Renaissance*, with its lively writing and captivating details, introduces students to the visual and material cultures of France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, England, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Central Europe with precise descriptions of techniques, explanations of period terms, references to inventories and other forms of primary-source evidence, and tidbits about failed commissions, uncompleted projects, and destroyed monuments. The book is divided into eight chapters, each covering a twenty- to thirty-year range, thus allowing the discrete units to focus on different approaches to the historical study of art (devotion, civic performance, individual authorship, exchange, etc.), while also grounding a narrative about the secularization of art and its development in response to capitalism and urbanization, in a sense of chronological progression.

Porras's thematic approach is successful because she argues for the interrelatedness of arts of different media and opens up the scope of the objects' histories. With her discussion of the *Goldene Rössl*, a New Year's gift given in 1405 by Queen Isabeau of Bavaria to her husband, Charles VI, we learn not only about goldsmiths' techniques and enamel work, the rendering of visionary experience into tactile form, and the politics of gift giving but also about how this soon-to-be-pawned-off object functioned as convertible currency. While the book includes indispensable descriptions of Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition*, Grünewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*, and Holbein's *Ambassadors*, it also makes careful reminders that painting in the early modern period did not yet enjoy the privileged status it would later gain. At the death of Henry VIII, in 1547, the royal collection owned 2,770 tapestries and merely 300 paintings, Porras records.

There is another set of questions worth adding to the now-politicized ones of which works of art are illustrated and how chapters are titled and organized: in what voice, and by what authorities, may any introductory historical survey be written? By beginning her book with the 1902 Bruges exhibition *Les Primitifs flamands*, the author nods to the notion that art history's critical tradition has influenced what we consider valuable for attention and that the intervening centuries have sometimes skewed the balance away from the objects most prized by the cultures that produced them. We now have a more nuanced and varied contribution to the English-language pedagogical approach, which had never felt comfortable with the territorial organization of Wolfgang Braunfels's *Die Kunst im Heiligen Römischen Reich Deutscher Nation*, but which had also long contorted itself in an attempt to combine Panofsky's great interests: the successive developments of the early Netherlandish painters, the innovations of Albrecht Dürer that shattered artistic conventions, and the question of whether the term *Renaissance* has everything to do with Quattrocento Italian interests in classicism or whether it might be liberated from such an association to mean something else. With

great delicacy and elegance of language and of logic, Porras has put forth a book that may be the best effort in a survey format to both honor and correct that tradition.

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*Dialogue on the Errors and Abuses of Painters.* Giovanni Andrea Gilio.

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Gilio's *Dialogo*, first published in 1564, is not only the earliest treatise on art published in the post-Tridentine period; it is also, as Michelangelo scholars know well, the most sustained critique of the painter's *Last Judgment* fresco in the Sistine Chapel. Penned by a cleric from Fabiano and dedicated to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, it addresses the practices of contemporary painting in the form of a fictional dialogue among six interlocutors—an ecclesiastic, three lawyers, a medical doctor, and a *letterato*—who lament the fact that most modern painters are ignorant and thus fail to understand the subjects they need to treat or—no less dangerous—are primarily interested in showing off their intellect (*ingegno*) and imaginative ideas (*capricci*). Appearing within months following the conclusion of the Council of Trent, the *Dialogo* is a text that speaks directly to what was at stake for painters at the time, especially regarding sacred subjects, which demanded both decorum and truth to scripture so as to fulfill the mission of religious art (primarily to teach and to arouse devotion) and to avoid, at all cost, derision. Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* becomes the focus of the interlocutors' discussion of "errors and abuses," criticized for its lack of fidelity to scripture, "capricious" representation of individual figures (a beardless Christ, a fearful Virgin Mary, and angels without wings who look like "jesters and acrobats"), mixing of pictorial modes (historical and poetic), contorted (*sforzate*) figures, and, perhaps worst of all, pervasive nudity; these last two attributes, in addition to being indecorous, were seen as mere demonstrations of Michelangelo's knowledge of anatomy and "mirabile ingegno."

Notwithstanding Julius von Schlosser's dismissal of the treatise as "revealing a meager and limited intellect" and being of interest "only as a mirror of its time" (*La letteratura artistica* [1964], 426), the *Dialogo* is widely recognized as one of the most important primary sources on the reform of art in the second half of the sixteenth century, influencing virtually all of the major art treatises of the period, notably those by Raffaele Borghini, Gian Paolo Lomazzo, Giovanni Battista Armenini, Gregorio Comanini, and Federico Borromeo. While scholars of Michelangelo and, more generally, of post-Tridentine art and other related fields who possess sufficient knowledge of early modern Italian have long read and mined Gilio's treatise, especially in the excellent