formulas of great elegance, likely conceived from models in clay, and marked by a knowledge of the modern rules of architecture and of the principles of perspective in round sculpture. This book participates in the current reassessment of sixteenth-century French art, on which one might also consult the recent catalogue *Toulouse Renaissance*, edited by Axel Hémery and Pascal Julien.

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Rembrandt's Religious Prints: The Feddersen Collection at the Snite Museum of Art. Charles M. Rosenberg.
Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017. xvi + 476 pp. $70.

A number of significant publications dealing with Rembrandt's prints have appeared within the past decade, and Rosenberg's impressive volume takes its rightful place among them. His primary focus is the superb collection of seventy religious etchings acquired by Jack and Alfrieda Feddersen since 1966 and subsequently gifted to the Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame, in 1992. Insight on the collector may be gained in the first essay, by Rosenberg and Julia Quinn, which, following a brief history of print collections from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, situates the collecting activities of Jack Feddersen within this noble tradition. Through his prodigious efforts, Feddersen managed to secure excellent impressions of Rembrandt prints, during a period when high-quality etchings by the master were extremely scarce.

Rosenberg's study also goes well beyond the scope of the Rembrandt prints in the Feddersen collection, exploring many other religious works by Rembrandt and other artists. Many ideas surrounding Rembrandt's religious works are discussed in the general essay, the detailed catalogue entries, and the voluminous expository notes. Here and throughout the book, Rosenberg provides up-to-date coverage of sources on the artist's religious prints. He discusses a variety of material and often cites such earlier publications as Shelley Perlove's *Impressions of Faith: Rembrandt's Biblical Etchings* (1989), although he erroneously lists Robert Baldwin, who contributed an essay to the catalogue, as coeditor with Perlove. Perlove is the sole editor of the volume.

Rosenberg graciously acknowledges in the preface the primary usefulness of Shelley Perlove and Larry Silver's *Rembrandt's Faith*: *Church and Temple in the Dutch Golden Age* (2009); and indeed, a good number of his observations derive from this source (vii). To Rosenberg's credit, he expresses many of the ideas in his book clearly and astutely, and often engages in discourse with the material. He points out areas in need of further iconographical research, such as the two doves in Rembrandt's *Presentation in the Temple: Oblong Print*, of ca. 1639, as well as the net in Rembrandt's *Circumcision in the Stable*, of 1654 (170, 173n42). In some cases, however, he appears to challenge

the ideas of others without giving supportive evidence, as when he refers to the detailed backgrounds of some etchings as "generic" without explanation (43n143). In another case, he claims to be in disagreement with Perlove and Silver when he actually agrees with them that Rembrandt's detailed settings for the etched *Presentation in the Temple with the Angel: Small Plate*, of 1630, and the painted *Presentation*, of 1631, despite their details, were ultimately more fanciful than authentic (184n14; cf. Perlove and Silver [2009], 208). Rosenberg raises many points worthy of attention. In his discussion of Rembrandt's early *Circumcision*, of ca. 1626, he queries why the artist, as late as 1641, would reprint a "juvenile plate" (168). The author does not discuss the topic further, but it is worth mentioning here that the reprinting may suggest this youthful work was well received by the art market. Rosenberg also sets forth such original ideas as his suggestion that Rembrandt's etching *Virgin with the Instruments of the Passion*, of ca. 1642, may invoke the artist's grief over Saskia's death, in 1642 (26).

Rosenberg's essay at the front of the book, "Rembrandt's Religious Prints," serves as both an introduction and a conclusion to the volume. He discusses the artist's experimentation as a printmaker: his techniques and paper choices. The author also pursues such issues as the artist's use of costume, landscape, and architectural settings, as well as auxiliary figures, including animals. His excellent and amusing description of dogs in Rembrandt's art shows us that hard and fast generalizations cannot be applied to the master's work. But he does make a good observation that the canines nearly always turn away from the religious revelation before them.

Rosenberg's book is visually appealing, published in a wide format, with a host of high-quality images and details to relish. His close descriptions of Rembrandt's religious prints are a pleasure to read, and his book is very useful to scholars.

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Playful Letters: A Study in Early Modern Alphabetics. Erika Mary Boeckeler. Impressions: Studies in the Art, Culture, and Future of Books. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017. xiv + 286 pp. $75.

"I am the Alpha and Omega" (Rev. 22:13). Governed by the Christian religion, the Latin West was indoctrinated with the notion that the alphabet, divinity, and life itself corresponded. Boeckeler's *Playful Letters* delves into the multivalent uses of alphabetic letters and letterforms in print, paint, and performance in the early modern period. The argument turns on alphabetics as an interpretive model "to demonstrate . . . letterature's communicative function, affecting how readers read, writers wrote, printers printed, and image-makers made" (2–3). William Shakespeare, Albrecht Dürer, the Cyrillic alphabet, printed alphabets, and graphic design are all examined under Boeckeler's theoretical eye,