

Heiko Damm, Michael Thimann, and Claus Zittel, eds. *The Artist as Reader: On Education and Non-Education of Early Modern Artists*.

Intersections: Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture 27. Leiden: Brill, 2013. xxiii + 522 pp. + 16 color pls. \$189. ISBN: 978-90-04-24223-4.

The editors' introduction establishes the central questions of this substantial collection of essays: how did artists gain knowledge from books and other sources, and how did they conform, or not, to the ideal *pictor doctus*? The fifteen essays present a range of responses, from individual artists, audiences, and theorists.

Cécile Beuzelin proposes that Jacopo Pontormo (1494–1557) was well read in natural philosophy, anatomy, and poetry, as evidenced by his correspondence and diary. Eva Struhel reconstructs the reading practices of the Florentine poet and painter Lorenzo Lippi (1606–65): not only did Lippi write a burlesque to parody Tasso, Ariosto, and Marino, but he also painted subjects from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* that sensitively adhere to its details. According to Martin Papenbrock, not only do the landscapes by Gilles Coninxloo (1544–1606) reflect Calvinist theology, but his portrait also presents him as a theologian with his finger in a book. Tico Seifert analyzes how Pieter Lastman (1583–1633) was prompted to paint his

ancient history and poetical subjects by imprints of his textual sources in Dutch publications. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–92) portrayed himself as “erudite collector and courtier,” in the robes of doctor of civil law and with the bust of Michelangelo in the background, according to Iris Wenderholm.

In Venice, artists gained knowledge through oral communication and visual tradition, as Elsje van Kessel examines in one essay. Titian invited learned men to his dinner parties, where conversations were held in front of his paintings. Lex Hermans concludes that the ideal painter was a transposition of Cato’s ideal orator, according to Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1538–92). Annette de Vries demonstrates how Karel van Mander’s *Het Schilder-boeck* (1604, republished 1618) and Hendrick Hondius’s series of sixty-eight portraits of artists (1610, republished 1618) were read, as some copies of the 1618 edition of Van Mander were bound with Hondius’s portraits. Charles Le Brun (1619–90) opted to follow Seneca rather than Plutarch in his *Death of Cato*, according to Eckhard Leuschner, for a Stoic interpretation. Huub van der Linden explains how the Lombard painter Stefano Maria Legnani (1661–1713) turned to his own books for visual models and textual sources; in one project, an adviser, Ercole Agostino Berò, promoted other motifs for the decoration of the Palazzo Carignano, Turin, to glorify the patron.

Angela Dressen examines how the library of the Badia Fiesolana played a crucial role in Florentine intellectual society. Maria Berbera discusses two manuscript books by Francisco de Holanda (1517–84): an album of drawings of major monuments studied by De Holanda in Italy, and a chronicle of the world in images. This second book shows De Holanda’s erudition, and how he fused Venus with Death in a macabre *vanitas* image. The French architect-engineer Jacques Gentillâtre (1578–1623) compiled various sources into his commonplace book, which Alexander Marr analyzes for its utility. The readings of two composers, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) and Johann Mattheson (1681–1764), enriched their music, as Rainer Bayreuther elucidates. The final essay, by Kelly Donahue-Wallace, concerns Jerónimo Antonio Gil (1731–98), who was the principal engraver of the Royal Mint in Mexico City, and who founded the Academy of San Carlos in order to train artists and to improve artistic taste in the colony.

From the Renaissance on, art writers recommended essential practical manuals, historical-poetical books, and illustrated compendiums. However, more interesting to investigate is not what artists may have owned or had access to, but how they used knowledge gained from written texts and verbal discourses in the creative process. Their reading process and its resultant imagery can only become apparent from comparison of the received narrative and the visual result. Artists with extensive libraries are not necessarily using their books to further their imagination, and artists with small libraries may very well have read far beyond what their bookshelf indicated. The editors have provided an extensive bibliography and an extremely useful framework for future research. This volume helps fill a gap long recognized as worthy of further study.

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