

Sabine Frommel and Flaminia Bardati, eds. *La réception de modèles cinquecenteschi dans la théorie et les arts français du XVII^e siècle*.

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Seventeenth-century French art often measured its achievement against the stellar Italian artists from the previous century: as Roland Fréart de Chambray and others have shown, Nicolas Poussin was considered the equal of Raphael, while Michelangelo's style was defined as vulgar and hardly appropriate for the maturing French classicism. This collection of essays examines in depth the role of models in

artistic exchanges between sixteenth-century Italy and seventeenth-century France, a well-established yet inexhaustibly fertile nexus in early modern art history. The originality of this volume is defined by the focus on the critical reception of the Italian Cinquecento models in seventeenth-century France ranging from painting, sculpture, and architecture to artistic theory. This emphasis provides a considerable framework for the seventeen Italian and French scholars who contributed to the volume to highlight various aspects of the transmission of artistic forms and concepts from one culture to another, such as selection, appropriation, translation, cross-fertilization, and emulation.

The introduction to the volume by Sabine Frommel and Flaminia Bardati calls attention to the historical modalities underpinning the transfer of the Italian models into the new French context. Essays on Roland Fréart de Chambray and Paul de Chantelou by Bruno Toscano, Daniela des Pesco, and Michael Hochman interrogate French art theory's critical exploration of the Renaissance models along with its search for the autonomous relation to antiquity essential for the French version of classicism. The examination of Réne Ouvrard's *Architecture harmonique* (1679) by Vasco Zara points to the Cinquecento tradition of comparing musical harmonies to architectural proportions, while introducing a lesser-known source to the field of classical theory.

Poussin's commanding position in the cultural relay between Rome and Paris (as the latter city aspired to become the new capital of the arts in Europe) receives illuminating accounts in the essays by Olivier Bonfait on the debates around the pictorial precedents for the royal tapestries and by Sylvia Ginzburg on Poussin's first series of the *Sacraments* expressing the artist's geometrical conception of space. Gianlorenzo Bernini's no-less-vital position in the mediation of artistic forms between Rome and Paris is brought to light in Sabine Frommel's stimulating interpretation of different versions of the Cinquecento heritage emerging in the projects of Italian architects submitted for the expansion of the Louvre, a crucial juncture in the definition of classicism in France. Christophe L. Frommel shows how Pietro da Cortona's and Carlo Rainaldi's designs, along with the earlier project by the French architect Antoine Léonor Houdin, incorporated sixteenth-century architectural ideas with seventeenth-century exigencies and significantly informed Bernini's final projects, executed during his visit to Paris in 1665.

The essays on the resonance of Italian models in the formation of French classical architectural theory by Claude Mignot, Alexandre Gady, and Aurélien Daurius, and on the creative adaptation of Italian building typology and morphology of forms by Federico Bellini and Laurent Lecomte, constitute a significant part of the volume. Architectural objects, as Sara Galetti argues for the Palais du Luxembourg, designed for Marie de' Medici in the likeness of the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, can serve as models of the emerging bilingual visual identity corresponding to the cultural contingencies of their commissioners.

Although the essays gathered in the volume examine specific encounters between Italian artistic forms and types and their interpretation in France, their arguments broach new ways of understanding the function of models in the studies

of cultural transfers. The etymology of the word *model*, along with *module*, descends from Latin *modulus*, a “small measure” (see Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood, *Anachronic Renaissance* [2010], 51), and points to the catalytic process occurring in the process of absorption of certain prototypes. This collection, exemplary in defining the loci of the intersection between the two consecutive cultural formations, demonstrates how the “small measure” of reference can be turned into a critical force in the self-definition of French art and architecture of the *grand siècle*. This collection is a rigorously researched and thematically enriching addition to the field of cultural exchanges between France and Italy, outlined most recently in *L'idéal classique. Les échanges artistiques entre Rome et Paris au temps de Bellori (1640–1700)* (2002) and *Actes du colloque d'histoire de l'art “Rome-Paris, 1640. Transferts culturels et renaissance d'un centre artistique”* (2010).

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