

Rire en images à la Renaissance. Francesca Alberti and Diane H. Bodart, eds. *The Body in Art*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018. 542 pp. €150.

The product of a 2012 conference in Paris co-sponsored by the Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art and the Centre d'histoire de l'art de la Renaissance, *Rire en images à la Renaissance* presents a welcome array of contributions that illuminate the sophistication and complexity of laughter and the comic in Renaissance art. Francesca Alberti and Diane Bodart successfully unify a diverse set of chapters, whose topics range from caricature to sacred laughter, primarily focusing on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Western Europe. As the authors note in their introduction, laughter in—and in response to—Renaissance art has rarely been recognized as a subject in its own right, relegated historically to the margins of literary studies or to broader chronological overviews. Their contribution is therefore a major one, illuminating the minute and varied processes at work behind the risible image.

The volume is structured in five major parts of approximately four chapters each. Part 1 addresses comic deformation and the links between the grotesque and the development of caricature as a genre, featuring Bodart's essay on the protohistory of political caricature in images of sovereigns. Bodart traces its roots, for example, in a portrait of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, produced at the court of Henry VIII, that renders his prognathism to a particular extreme; this potentially dangerous phenomenon of charged regal portraiture highlights the unsteady relations between power, satire, and derision. Part 2 explores the theme of ridiculous paintings, with essays on the operations of grotesques and the comic lexicon of images, detailing creative relations between word and image. Part 3 reconstitutes the Renaissance practice of humor in different social contexts, with an excellent case study by Patricia Simons on phallic double entendres and the many levels of wit, parody, and irony on a majolica dish used possibly at a carnivalesque dining club.

Part 4, on laughter and the sacred, reassesses the condemnation of laughter that is often considered typical to Christian thought, while addressing the complicated ambiguity of the early modern laugh and smile, each determined by particular historical and cultural contexts. Alberti's essay in this section examines several works that depict the laughing or smiling child Jesus, expressions linked to the joy and triumph of the kingdom of heaven and that enhance the images' theological efficacy. Citing Giorgio Vasari's passages on the subject, she rightly notes the capacity for such images to elicit laughter, joy, or marvel in the viewer, an aspect of the reception of religious images that merits study in its own right. Part 5 addresses humanist culture and the prized quality of artistic *ingegno*, the exercise of wit and invention, through the lens of visual pleasures, parodies, and play. Curiosity would be satisfied with more social context in places—for example, Albrecht Dürer's presumed refrainment from judgment with respect to social station in his depiction of a peasant woman with a toothy grin is interesting (when compared,

for example, with Theresa Flanigan, “Mona Lisa’s Smile: Interpreting Emotion in Renaissance Female Portraits,” *Studies in Iconography* [2019]: 183–230). Nevertheless, these chapters provide deep insight into the nature and practice of Renaissance humor.

Affects and emotions are increasingly central concerns of cultural studies, exemplified by Barbara Rosenwein’s work on anger (most recently, *Anger: The Conflicted History of an Emotion* [2020]). The study of the history of emotions and of emotion markers like tears benefits particularly from scholarship on laughter, which remains an underexplored domain within the field of art history—in comparison to tears and despair, for example, which have benefited from excellent scholarship in pre- and early modern studies (for example, Moshe Barasch’s foundational *Gestures of Despair in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art* [1976]). Alberti’s 2015 monograph, *La peinture facétieuse: Du rire sacré de Corrège aux fables burlesques de Tintoret*, is already a welcome addition to the field of Renaissance art history. As *Rire en images à la Renaissance* demonstrates, studying the history of laughter in the Renaissance illuminates diverse themes that resonate with the present: subversion, invention, pleasure, triumph, and relief. The volume therefore sheds opportune light on an underexplored aspect of the history of affective response.

Anne L. Williams, *University of Hong Kong*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.238

The Shadow Drawing: How Science Taught Leonardo How to Paint.

Francesca Fiorani.

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020. 374 pp. \$35.

Written with the pace of a novel-sounding narrative, this study masterfully navigates the vast ocean of Leonardo da Vinci’s bibliography in order to explore a crucial aspect of the artist’s career: the profound and mutually reinvigorating link between artistic investigations and scientific interests that has characterized Leonardo’s achievements as a painter as well as his goals as a scientist. With intelligence and on the basis of well-selected—and, in some cases, even new—evidence, the author reassesses the misleading separation that has been outlined in the past between the creative agenda pursued by Leonardo and his systematic, science-oriented inquiries, almost as though the guiding principles of the artist could be disjointed from the research intents of the scientist so that the latter appeared as a mere consequence of the former. Through a series of well-presented examples, this study argues that not only were those two fields of investigation deeply intertwined in the master’s career, but they also emerged simultaneously at the beginning of Leonardo’s activities in Florence.