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Aller au sommaire du numéro

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forty-eight hours, depending on the wind and weather.

Along with harbours and shipping there are constant references to fortifications of the past, as well as to modern defence systems constructed during the period of the Napoleonic wars. In *Dover from Shakespeare's Cliff* (ca. 1825), the town is seen from the Western Heights where there are underground fortifications begun in 1793 to resist a potential French invasion. The complex includes a number of deep dry moats, like the one shown in the watercolour, with approaches protected by gun emplacements. In the foreground of *Hythe, Kent* (Southern Coast series, ca. 1823), a cannon points downhill toward the Royal Military Canal, part of a fortification built during the Napoleonic wars as a segment of the defence system against possible French invasion.

It is obvious, therefore, that the very necessary mapping and identification procedures have been given due attention and Shanes' use of descriptive language is quite adequate for the task at hand. At times, however, the more obvious psycho-sexual symbols presented slight hazards. Some part of a landscape, such as a deep lush valley, firm rolling hills, or a domineering rock formation assumed suggestive shapes. Being a very prudent art historian, however, Shanes only occasionally gives these biological and sexual categories recognition, when, for example, an innocent topographical description becomes undeniable self-expression. Even the most modest attempt to explore material of this kind can meet resistance. Fortunately, most of Turner's erotic soliloquies 'beyond expression' are not explicit enough to offend the delicate sensibilities of someone still in search of the picturesque qualities that offered so much satisfaction to critics like John Ruskin.

Eric Shanes' book leaves little doubt that Turner was an important marine painter whose works contain a considerable amount of symbols, allegories and metaphors. Turner can no longer be considered an early impressionist or simply a painter of pleasant views that make few demands on the spectator. The author understands the need to go beyond the structures of a purely formalist approach to understand and appreciate these unique watercolours associated with the burgeoning industry of the engraver.

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ROBERT ROSENBLUM and H.W. JANSON *19th Century Art*. Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1984. 527 pp., 413 illus., 89 colour pl., $63.00 (cloth).

The publication *19th Century Art*, by Robert Rosenblum and H.W. Janson, is more timely than it first appears. Its topic may be from the past but it is not just dedicated to period specialists, for its approach is rooted in the critical controversies of the present. It is the first real summary of twenty years of revisionist art history and a clear reflection of the critical pluralism of today's artistic scene. Also, as a textbook, it will probably shape the views of the coming generation with as much force as the histories of Venturi, Canaday and Hamilton have the present one.

Today's artistic scene pits sect against sect, methodology against methodology, orthodox modernism against various post-modernisms. No group or approach clearly dominates the scene and there is no clear consensus over whether this pluralism is good or bad, whether it shows a greater historical objectivity or an abdication of critical judgement, a sign of new beginnings or an interregnum. Francis Haskell, for instance, wittily describes pluralism as having 'standards for all, malice towards none' (*The New York Times Book Review*, 22 April 1984, pp. 9-10), while Donald Kuspit comes to the more pessimistic conclusion that it 'is not so wholesome as it seems, but is rather the sign of an identity crisis in modern art, an inner uncertainty of direction inseparable from the rise of postmodernism ... it is not the sign of art's new presence, but of its loss of significant motivating force. It is the sign not of an emerging new order, but of the collapse of an old order, an old basis for the production of art' ('The Emptiness of Pluralism, The End of the New,' *Vanguard*, March 1984, p. 14).

Amid the resulting confusion, Rosenblum and Janson come down firmly on the side of pluralism. After their pioneering works on Neo-classicism, the northern Romantic tradition and nineteenth-century French sculpture, this is not surprising. The modernist history of nineteenth-century art, they see as narrow and 'evangelical,' caught up in a heroic myth of the avant-garde, 'a succession of supremely great artists whose genius separated them from their lesser contemporaries by an unbridgeable gulf ... [who] were concerned first and foremost with purely artistic problems which, if read in the proper way, could provide a kind of genealogical table for the more audacious developments of the early twentieth century.' They aim to 'give the 19th century back to itself, to read it more in its own terms,' to break down modernism's Franco-centric bias and internationalize its perspective. They aim to write a comprehensive history, like those by Richard Muther and Léonce Bénédite, from the turn of this century, before the modernist canon had hardened. In their approach they follow also the example of Fritz Novotny, whose history of the period published by Pelican in 1960 was considered so eccentric in its day. They declare their preference for practice over theory, their distaste for the tyranny of abstract systems yet they claim no transcendent objectivity. They describe their book as a 'work in progress,' which may someday be thought equally biased as the books it is now replacing.

In their concern to emphasize not 'purely artistic problems' but art's 'active involvement with historical events,' they structure their text around five events they see as defining the century: the American Revolution of 1776, the fall of Napoleon and congress of Vienna of 1815, the failed revolutions of 1848, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 and the Paris World's Fair of 1900. Between these dates they arrange their material not by rigid stylistic categories but by a loose amalgam of individual, national and thematic ones, such as 'Changes in History Painting,' 'Empirical Directions,' 'Poverty and Piety,' and 'Interiors: Domestic and Erotic.' Here they cipher on individual works and are especially good in pointing out the strange ambiguities created when outmoded artistic conventions were adapted to new situations. Another basic, and less successful, division is that between painting and sculpture. Due to the death of Janson before publication and the radical cutting of his massive manuscript, the two sections are not well harmonized and the sculpture section, within itself, is structured less imaginatively, along traditional stylistic and national lines. Whether the two sections could have been completely integrated or whether this would have caused serious organizational problems is far more debatable.

It is important to note that when the authors aim to read the nineteenth

century 'more in its own terms,' they use the comparative 'more.' They are not like Ranke in believing that the historian can show 'how it really was.' They can neither adopt the views of the nineteenth century nor avoid the influence of orthodox modernism. Despite the fears of Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner (*Romanticism and Realism: The Mythology of Nineteenth Century Art*, 1984, p. 216) that their sort of 'neo-conservative' revisionism will overturn the avant-garde pantheon, this does not happen. The authors reconfirm the stature of all its major figures, though often for different reasons. Artists like Turner, Courbet and Van Gogh merit whole sections of their own, yet they are treated neither as gods nor as pawns in some grand historicist system, valued only as 'prophets' for later movements. Many previously forgotten or now despised artists have a small but respected place in history. Despite much recent hoopla over the 'pompiers' and 'juste milieu' artists – Bouguereau and Bastien-Lepage, for instance – the authors see them as representative of the past. Whatever their fascination individually as men or the formal beauty or bizarre curiosity of their work, they are still not transformed into gods. The selection of Frederick Leighton's *Flaming June* to grace the book's dust-jacket makes this point very clear.

One of the great strengths of this book is the way it compares major and minor artists and shows how similar aims exist in works of widely varying quality. Some of the comparisons are unexpected, and all are well chosen to illuminate various points. The sublime historical landscapes of Turner are compared to those of Karl Briullov, John Martin, Francis Danby and Domingo Antonio de Sequeira, the urban scenes of Seurat to those of Gustave Doré, Gustave Caillebotte and Atkinson Grimshaw.

Rosenblum, especially, writes very well and manages the difficult task of being both urbane and enthusiastic. While Rosen and Zerner sneer at his appreciation of what they see as kitsch, even they exempt him from the 'sinister detachment' of most other revisionists. A final note is that the book is lavishly illustrated and has an extensive bibliography (9 pages of fine print). Though its price is high for a text-book, there is nothing on the market that can match it.

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MARTIN WACKERNAGEL *The World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist. Projects and Patrons, Workshop and Art Market*, trans. by Alison Luchs. Princeton (N.J.), Princeton University Press, 1981. xxx + 447 pp., $37.50 (cloth), $14.50 (paper).

BRUCE COLE *The Renaissance Artist at Work. From Pisano to Titian.* New York, Harper and Row, 1983. viii + 216 pp., 110 illus., $28.95 (cloth).

First published in 1938, Martin Wackernagel's *Der Lebensraum des Kunstlers in der florentinischen Renaissance* was a pioneering study of the relationship between Florentine art and the circumstances in which it was created. Wackernagel sought to present no less than 'the whole complex of economic-material, social and cultural circumstances and preconditions which in any way affected the existence and activity of the artist.' Highly regarded on its initial publication, it has remained a classic in the social history of Renaissance art, although difficult to access for students without a thorough knowledge of German. This excellent translation by Alison Luchs serves to make it available to a much wider audience.

Wackernagel's book is divided into three main sections, each of which presents extensive information on the art world of Florence between the years 1420 and 1530. The first section, on commissions, begins by tracing the evolution of the decoration of three major religious centres, the Cathedral of S. Maria del Fiore, the Baptistery of S. Giovanni and the Dominican church of S. Maria Novella, and one secular monument, the Palazzo Vecchio. Wackernagel reconstructs their decoration from documentary references in order to place 'each individual monument as far as possible back in its original context and functional setting,' and considers the symbolic significance of these sites.

Later chapters in the first section survey systematically types of sculptural and painted decoration for a wide variety of works and contexts, both religious and secular. In 'Sculpture for Church Buildings,' Wackernagel looks at bronze doors, statues and busts of saints, altarpieces, tomb sculpture, Madonna and Child tabernacles, *ex-voto* images, and a large number of ecclesiastical works by goldsmiths. 'Painting in Domestic Interiors' includes mural decoration and paintings on canvas and wood, classified by size, manner of display and function. The synoptic character of these chapters gives a very full account of the types and purposes of decoration in Renaissance Florence and is one of the most valuable aspects of this book. Wackernagel draws from extensive documentary sources and presents a full picture of the commissions given to artists and the original appearance of churches and domestic buildings in Florence. In addition, the author explores a number of themes, which recur throughout the book, including the development of the significant theme of the figure of David in Florentine art and the close interweaving of secular and religious values in many aspects of life.

Patronage also emerges in the first section as a vital interest of the author and becomes the focus of the second part of the book. Wackernagel is particularly concerned to stress the significance of the patron who commissioned the work of art, paid for it, and intended a particular use for it. He begins the second part with a survey of the categories of patrons from the 'great public-state bodies and the secular or spiritual corporations down to the petty bourgeois individual customers.' He traces significant evolutions in patterns of patronage, particularly the importance, early in the fifteenth century, of communal patrons, and the emergence of the individual patron in the later Quattrocento. The Medici and their circle, which included the most important families in Florence, are investigated in two chapters, and finally, the linked phenomena of the rising significance of the private patron and the growth in taste for luxurious items sumptuously executed are studied.

Section III focusses on the artist and his activities. The author comments first on the number of artists active in Florence during the Renaissance and their organization into guilds which closely regulated artistic activity. Workshop procedures are reviewed, including a brief survey of the major techniques of drawing and painting employed by artists. Business practices of artists – prices, forms of payment, contract stipulations – form yet another chapter, and finally, the artist's social status and growing self-consciousness as a creative individual are explored. Sub-themes of the third section are again the widespread demand for art in Renaissance Florence and the functional rôle of art.