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Jacobi, Lauren, and Daniel M. Zolli, eds.
Contamination and Purity in Early Modern Art and Architecture.
Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021. Pp. 368 + 22 b/w, 86 col. ill. ISBN 978-94-6298-869-9 (hardcover) €129.

This volume had its genesis in a 2016 conference on the topic of "Purity and Contamination in Renaissance Art." The idea derives from anthropologist Mary Douglas's influential 1966 book, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge). As Lauren Jacobi and Daniel Zolli state in their wide-ranging introduction, between 1400 and 1750, "questions surrounding what was pure and impure—distinctions between the clean and the unclean, sameness and difference, self and other, organization and its absence—were of paramount concern" (17). During these centuries, trade and exploration led to the mass movement of objects and peoples, resulting in efforts by European Christians to contain, expel, or convert others. The editors are correct to point out that while the role of contamination and purification in debates about sin and righteousness, ethnicity and gender has been widely studied since 1966, these categories have been less prevalent in studies of how Europeans approached art and the built environment. The book provides a series of compelling approaches to contamination and purity/purification in early modern material culture, through essays that act as case studies of attitudes toward these two categories, exploring materials used by artists and the reception of their materials and practices.

Several essays deal with complications posed by the binary character of the two categories as related to the built environment. Lisa Pon shows that despite Venetian efforts to isolate certain communities—Jews in the Ghetto, plague-stricken people in the *lazzaretti* (plague hospitals)—the Venetians also recognized that these boundaries were of necessity permeable. Carolyn Dean and Dana Liebsohn assess the reclamation of ritual spaces in the southwestern United States in the seventeenth century. When Spanish friars attempted to reconsecrate land sacred to the Indigenous Pueblo people at Awatovi, the people revolted, appropriating Catholic buildings and sacred objects, their non-binary view of the world allowing them to understand them as doubly sanctified. Lauren Jacobi examines the (ultimately unsuccessful) attempt by Pope Sixtus V to reclaim the Italian Pontine marshes, viewed as physically and

spiritually dangerous and corrupted spaces, and connects that effort with the later Fascist campaign to drain the marshes and return corrupted urban Italians to a purer, rural life.

Three essays deal with sculptural materials and works. Catherine Mangone examines the reception by collectors and patrons of Michelangelo's unfinished works in marble. Being unfinished, the works were in a sense impure, but they were also thought to reveal the master's hand and *disegno* (idea/design) at work. Owners of these sculptures often placed them in locations such as grottoes, where they became aligned both with the generative qualities of nature and the ways in which nature can cause ruin over time. Grace Harpster considers the ways in which the darkened surface, said to be accumulated candle soot, of the Black Madonna at Loreto problematized Counter-Reformation dictates that sacred objects should be kept clean. Soot was impure but the result of extreme devotion; however, if the wooden statue's surface colour was not due to soot, concerns about non-white racial contamination arose. Allison Stielau discusses the emergency coinage minted from melted-down liturgical objects to pay the ransom for Pope Clement VII after the 1527 Sack of Rome. The state of flux of molten metal can be an invitation to corruption of purity through adding base metals, and the minting of these coins was not subject to the normal supervision of the official mint, so that their actual gold and silver content is uncertain. Still, the coins' continued connection to the original sacred objects "calls into question the process by which smelting and refining 'purifies' metal […]. Instead, the metal was understood to maintain a connection to those symbolically resonant previous forms" (160).

Another three essays consider what may loosely be called pigmented works. Christopher J. Nygren traces the evolution of stone supports for paintings in Rome during the sixteenth century, where the polychromate nature of the stone—as in semi-precious lapis lazuli—became part of conveying an ineffable or otherworldly quality to the scene depicted. By contrast, in baroque Florence, artists turned to *pietra d'Arno*, a sedimentary stone, searching the petrified layers of sludge for inspiration for their painted compositions, which tended to be "more terrestrial and more mundane" (143). Sylvia Houghteling discusses a series of tapestries commissioned by Charles V to celebrate his 1535 victory over Ottoman forces in Tunis. The tapestries have been considered to reflect Charles's vision of his empire and his defense of Christendom. Houghteling argues that the material used in the tapestries, and their centres of

production—silver from the New World, dyed silk made by forcibly-converted Muslims in Granada—create a potential for perceived contamination between the tapestries' materials and iconography. Through a consideration of the works of Bruegel the Elder and his followers, Amy Knight Powell argues that, before the Scientific Revolution, the Renaissance was beginning to understand matter, being composed of atoms, as incomplete and impure, always disintegrating. She posits that Bruegel's drawings, with their use of dots, stipples, and circles, reveal how he allied himself with atomistic philosophy and potentially with atheism.

The final essay, by Caroline A. Jones and Joseph Leo Koerner, overlays temporal periods and geography, moving between Albrecht Altdorfer's etchings of the destruction of the Regensberg synagogue and the city's promotion of the cult of the Virgin Immaculate, and Francis Picabia's Dadaist lithograph of an ink stain that seems to besmirch the Virgin's immaculacy. The essay moves on to consider the ways in which art history and its institutions play on the social reversibility of purity and defilement: for example, in the Nazis' rejection of abstraction—for them, associated with the Jews—and their celebration of Gothic style as inherently pure and Germanic. By contrast, the Gothic was anathema to Clement Greenberg, who in the United States promoted once again the purity of abstraction.

Overall, the book is an important contribution in bringing anthropological approaches into our understanding of works of art and architecture.

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Kleinbub, Christian K.
Michelangelo's Inner Anatomies.
University Park: Penn State University Press, 2020. Pp. 260 + 40 col., 77 b/w ill. ISBN 9780271083780 (hardcover) US$99.95.

Michelangelo's Inner Anatomies is an art history monograph that re-evaluates a selection of Michelangelo's drawings, frescos, sculptures, and architectural drawings, alongside paintings executed according to the artist's designs by