

THE ART BULLETIN



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Articles

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In May 1496 five local artists opened a shared workshop in Perugia, creating a painters' cooperative, known as the Società del 1496. An analysis of the formation and operation of their enterprise, their active civic roles, individual and collaborative works and their costs, as well as their interrelations with the more famous painters active in the city—Perugino, Pintoricchio, and Raphael—provides a more complete picture of the society's integral position in Renaissance Perugia. What emerges is a greater understanding of how communal artistic production was designed to meet the increasing demand for art in central Italy around 1500.

Pietro Tacca's *Quattro Mori* and the Conditions of Slavery in Early Seicento Tuscany

MARK ROSEN 34

Sculptural images of bound captives at the foot of a triumphant victor date back to antiquity, yet the portraitlike depictions of slaves in Pietro Tacca's *Quattro Mori* in Livorno (1621–26) were unique in transcending their iconographic roots to address contemporary social conditions in Tuscany's most important port. The development of the slave trade in Livorno and the contemporary construction of the Italian coast's most important *bagno* (slave prison) form the backdrop for Tacca's sympathetic and idiosyncratic treatment of these four Muslim captives.

Joshua Reynolds's "Nice Chymistry": Action and Accident in the 1770s

MATTHEW C. HUNTER 58

The first president of Britain's Royal Academy of Arts, Joshua Reynolds was described by contemporaries as a dangerously misguided chemist. Using a secretive laboratory of fugitive materials, he crafted visually striking images that came together quickly and stopped audiences dead in their tracks. But, just as rapidly, those paintings began to deteriorate as objects—flaking, discoloring, visibly altering in time. When framed around the "nice chymistry" he prescribed for aspiring artists in his famous *Discourses*, Reynolds's risky pictorial enterprise can be situated within a broader problematic of making and thinking with temporally evolving chemical images in the later eighteenth century.

The Visual Culture of Fashion and the Classical Ideal in Post-Revolutionary France

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In her little-known painting *A Study of a Woman after Nature* (1802), Marie-Denise Villers exploited a conjuncture between masculine-inflected ideals of Neoclassical art and feminine-inflected ideas of fashionability in the post-Revolutionary period in France by making a feature of female dress while emulating the standards of history painting. The artist's confident synthesis of idioms is examined in the context of Albertine Clément-Hémery's memoir of a women's art studio. Walter Benjamin's notion of *gestus* is enlisted as a means of understanding how the quite different image cultures invoked in this work communicated social ideas.

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