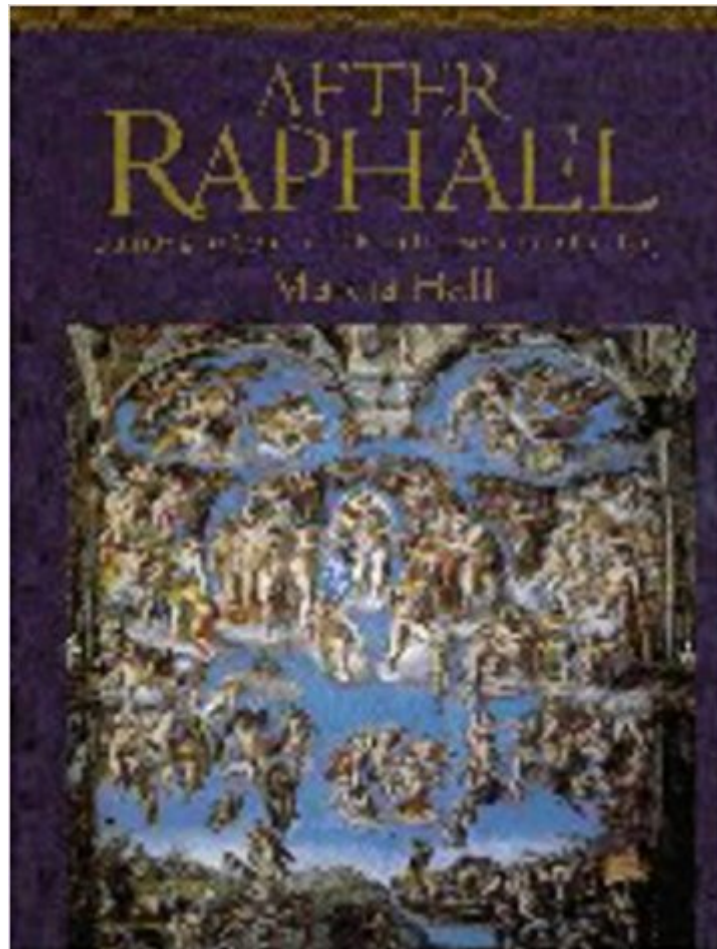




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After Raphael: Painting In Central Italy In The Sixteenth Century



Synopsis

After Raphael is the first overview of sixteenth-century Italian painting to be published in over thirty years. Reevaluating the paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Bronzino and their followers in the light of recent research, Marcia Hall offers a new interpretation for the stylistic shifts that occurred after 1520. By taking into account the social, cultural, political, theological, and patronage issues that affected taste and stylistic developments, she demonstrates how the revival of interest in antique Roman sculpture relief affected Mannerist painters. She also examines the repercussions of the Reformation, which changed forever the Church's view of the function of images.

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"Lucid and engagingly written, thoroughly annotated and indexed, this book might serve as an excellent survey of the art of the century..." Choice "[Hall] has taken a difficult and much written about topic and dealt with it in a manner that is beyond mere praise--it is a groundbreaking work, one that should not be overlooked by anyone interested in sixteenth-century Italy. Surely it will prove to be an invaluable resource for years to come." Katherine A. McIver, Sixteenth Century Journal "It is a work in which there is much to praise. Much of it is eloquently written....she provides pages of perfectly clear and engaging narrative..." The Catholic Historical Review "Hall reaches outside the boundaries, drawing attention to equally compelling but relatively little known works by the acknowledged masters....[Hall's] work is worthy of superceding the surveys constructed by her predecessors." Renaissance Quarterly

After Raphael is the first overview of sixteenth-century Italian painting to be published in over 30 years. Reevaluating the paintings of Raphael, Michelangelo, Pontormo, Bronzino and their followers in the light of recent research, Marcia Hall offers a new interpretation for the stylistic shifts that occurred after 1520. By taking into account the social, cultural, political, theological, and patronage issues that affected taste and stylistic developments, she demonstrates how the revival of interest in antique Roman sculpture relief affected Mannerist painters. She also examines the repercussions of the Reformation, which changed forever the Church's view of the function of images.

AFTER RAPHAEL, anyone trying to sort out what happened in art before, during and following his short life and successful career have had to look at the works that he designed and the many paintings that his workshop carried out and finished the way that he wanted them done: as my sculptress mother used to say, and my artist sister still says, the questions that were asked before him were there, along with his answers, in all his works; also, the questions that artists raised and answered after he was long gone were there too, along with his answers. His death in 1520, or that of Pope Leo X's a year later, ended the High Renaissance Classic style of centralized compositions putting the focus and the most important action in the same place, as in Leonardo da Vinci's "Battle of Anghiari" for the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence, and unreal poses with lots of ornamentation, as in what Michelangelo did for the Sistine Chapel. What with influence and money falling into hands outside the Roman Catholic Church, the popes needed to draw on something that would pull Italy together and keep fighting weight as art definers and supporters against middle-class citizens, known as burghers, and wealthy families, such as the Medici. Pope Julius II had pulled out a common history under the Roman Empire: a classical art style based on ancient Roman relief sculpture became popular what with admiration for the "Apollo Belvedere" and the recently uncovered "Laocoon" marble statue, until then known from the praise passed down through history by the writings of Pliny the Elder; beautiful examples were Pinturicchio's pioneer trying the domus aurea style in Nero's palace colors, gilding and stuccoes out on the Bufalini Chapel at Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Raphael's painting of the Stanza della Segnatura private library, and leading ancient history painter Ripanda's stone-like monochrome relieflike paintings. Particularly the engravers had taken up a related relieflike style beautifully expressed in Polidoro da Caravaggio's now lost facade decorations all'antica, Michelangelo's "Battle of Cascina," and Raphael's "Battle of the Milvian Bridge" design. The Mannerist style knew almost no limits in ornamenting paintings filled with figures and tried to ape antique sculpture, as in Cardinal Ricci's chapel, where Francesco Salviati painted David as independent, merciful and unpretentious in the midst of all sorts of illusions, what

with parts of the frescoes looking like they were really jutting out from the walls as part of the architecture, and of all sorts of ornamentation, such as framed paintings, garlands, scrolls, and vases; and as in the Altoviti family chapel altarpiece by Giorgio Vasari, who held true to style by having the flat light strike the foremost parts of the figures. Not surprisingly a Counter-Mannerist style showed up among younger artists influenced by Michelangelo's frescoes for the Pauline Chapel and his later Pietas, but without the painter-sculptor's view of clumsily and gracelessly sinful people in need of redemption and with the noble, sincerely devout figurings from Sebastiano del Piombo. What with Protestant criticism of image-making as breaking God's Commandments, a Counter-Reformation style slowed the pace of ornamentation in painting, and the Council of Trent came up with standards for sacred art, acceptable to the Roman Catholic Church, coming out against what was relieflike and unreal, and competitive with the Reformation. Mature Late Mannerists pulling out the stops on ornamentation included second rank artist Jacopino, with his Oratory of San Giovanni decollato trailblazing the first use of relieflike style in sacred art, and Taddeo Zuccaro. So author Marcia Hall has come up with a beautifully illustrated, carefully written and clearly organized book: I am unaware of books that add to her thorough work; her magnificent book leaves readers with a very personal reaction, in that we can choose whichever artist or style that we want to look into individually and separately, because she has left us better informed on them all

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