

Livia Stoenescu, ed., *The Interaction of Art and Relics in Late Medieval and Early Modern Art*, Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2020, 185 pp. 51 colour illus., € 100 (hardcover) ISBN 978250358398

Catherine Harding

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two sections shift the focus closer to Stettheimer's work, examining it on a stylistic and iconographic level. Section two, "The Temporalities of Art," draws parallels between Stettheimer's work and that of her contemporaries and stylistic predecessors, some of them obvious, like Duchamp, whose friendship is documented by her two portraits of him, and some more ambitious, like the parallels with Emily Dickinson and William Carlos Williams. Patricia Allmer's essay "Temporalities: Stettheimer's Baroque Modernism," which opens the second section and happens to be situated virtually at the middle-point of the book, captures the elusive essence of Stettheimer's canvases, once again cycling back to the notion of in-betweenness and memory. The authors gathered in part three, "Embodied and Performative Art Practices," analyse the multifaceted definition of presence and corporeality that Stettheimer constructs in her practice, with the collaborative opera *Four Saints in Three Acts* with Gertrude Stein and Virgil Thomson serving as a culmination. By reimagining what the body is physically capable of, how it carries itself through public space and how it chooses to present itself, particularly through clothing, the third section envisions Stettheimer as a kind of master planner, attuned to the sounds and affects of space and the body's ongoing need to negotiate its place on the grand stage that was early twentieth-century New York City.

In ending the book with a Coda on Stettheimer's portrait of Alfred Stieglitz and her resistance to being photographed, *New Directions in Multimodal Modernism* leaves the reader with the question of identity fresh in the mind. This time, however, it is Stettheimer's work and her network of personal and professional relationships that serve as the basis. The academic voice is muted, used as a frame to uphold rather than as a glue or a nail to definitively pinpoint

and lock-in, until the reader is left alone with Stettheimer no differently than they might be if they sat down in an empty gallery in front of one of her paintings. There is no conclusion; there is only Florine.

Notably, the book does not dwell much on Florine Stettheimer's privileged life in a social and economic sense, or on her politics. To some extent, and especially when it comes to race, this feels less like a deliberate omission, and more like an attempt to fuel the reader's curiosity and fascination with Stettheimer within her usual *milieu* of the salons. The discussion of Stettheimer's depiction of race in *Ashbury Park South* (1920), which Bloemink argues treats African Americans as individuals due to the range in skin tone "from light tan to the deepest brown" (29) and Cintia Cristia broadly describes as a "case for the unravelling of racial borders in America" (196), focuses primarily on Stettheimer herself and ignores some of the broader socio-historical implications. The discussion of jazz as one of the new forms of modernity occurs with little discussion of the Harlem Renaissance and Stettheimer's potential engagement with the movement. Even Cristia's description of the problematic figure of Nijinsky in *Music* (ca. 1920) stops short of acknowledging Stettheimer's role in directly replicating Nijinsky in blackface. *New Directions in Multimodal Modernism* therefore reinforces Bloemink's argument in her 1995 biography that Stettheimer did not paint that which was not palatable to her personal sensibility and aesthetic, while also recalling Linda Nochlin's 1980 essay, "Florine Stettheimer: Rococo Subversive," that defines Stettheimer's support for "[B]lack causes" as being based on her friendships with those who were themselves strong supporters, like Carl Van Vechten.² Both the editors and the authors examine Stettheimer's practice using the standards and ideologies of her time, leaving the question of racial

(in)sensitivity and the separation between art and politics up to the reader's discretion.

Florine Stettheimer: New Directions in Multimodal Modernism captures all that makes Florine Stettheimer and her work, both written and visual, attractive. Although certain elements of her life, like the continued fascination surrounding her decision to never marry or the androgynous nature of the figures in many of her paintings, remain unexplored, thus leaving the door for queer multimodality wide open, the authors gathered in this volume nonetheless succeed in dismantling the long-standing myth that Florine's work is nothing more than surface-level pleasure, all while embracing the eccentric and bold personality of Florine Stettheimer and her familial, artistic, and social circle. ¶

Margaryta Golovchenko is a PhD student in art history at the University of Oregon.
—mgolovch@uoregon.edu

1. Henry McBride, *Florine Stettheimer* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1946), 9.

1. See Linda Nochlin, "Florine Stettheimer: Rococo Subversive," in *Florine Stettheimer: Manhattan Fantastica*, ed. Elizabeth Sussman and Barbara J. Bloemink (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995), 105.

Livia Stoenescu, ed.

The Interaction of Art and Relics in Late Medieval and Early Modern Art
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Catherine Harding

How do artists and artisans manipulate materials to create a sense of the holy for the faithful? That question lies at the heart of this edited volume as its authors explore the interconnection between art and sacred relics during the late medieval and

early modern period in various Catholic contexts. Although focused on Christian art and materiality, many of the questions considered here are also being addressed in the rich literature on art and relics in a global context (Buddhism, Islam, and tribal Africa, to cite just a few areas of relevance).¹

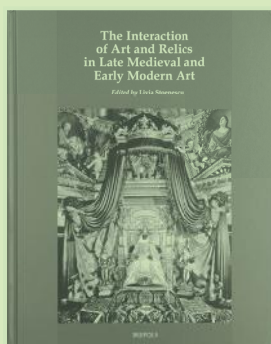
The book begins with an introductory essay that sets out the main parameters of this study, neatly framed within key paradigms of existing scholarship on Christian premodern visual culture. Stoenescu defines complex issues raised by the production by skilled artists and artisans of relics and reliquaries, shrines, or chapels, as well as the intriguing question of how the performative viewer experienced images believed to be *non manufactum* (i.e., not made by human hands)—or, on the other hand, those created by Domenico Ghirlandaio or Michelangelo, who were central to the growing cult of the artist in Renaissance Florence. The book's essays explore some of the key artistic strategies used in the fabrication, replication, and simulation of important sacred things, bodies, and religious spaces. A number of the essays

are disparate, but Stoenescu brings them together in associative harmony to advance the understanding of how art produces or enhances the sense of the sacred. The book is divided into three main sections. The first grouping of essays, "Relics in the Art, Decoration and Architectural Memory of Early Modern Chapels," concentrates firstly on the display of female saintly body relics in chapels in early modern Bologna and Florence; secondly, it examines the reframing of images and relics of the Virgin Mary within Toledo Cathedral as wondrous signs of Mary's descent to this location during her lifetime and, finally, a study of the shrine tomb of a prominent Jesuit, Saint Francis Xavier, at his burial site in Goa, India (between 1552 and the end of the seventeenth century). The second section, "Relics Integral to Sacred Spaces and Works of Art," looks closely at three case studies focused on artworks made for chapels within larger sacred spaces in Italy, Germany, and France. The last section of the book, "Artists Engaging with Relics," encompasses a case study focused on the notion of relics in relation to Michelangelo's reception by his fellow artists and patrons, and another on how talented glassmakers employed specific qualities of glass to inspire religious devotion.

To highlight key ideas in individual essays: Kristina Keogh's chapter on the cults of two important premodern holy women, Caterina de' Vigri (1413–63, Bologna) and Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (1566–1607, Florence), examines the intimate connection between intact female saintly bodies and the powerful devotional environments created for their remains. These gendered bodies were placed on display and accompanied by painted narratives of their life, making use of portrait conventions to communicate a clear sense of identity within these women's cults. The essay by Cloe Caverio de Carondelet discusses important relics of the Virgin

Mary, which were re-framed and newly presented in the cathedral of Toledo, Spain between 1584 and 1616. The re-use and re-housing of an earlier medieval image of Mary (dateable to early 1100s); a relic of the Virgin's footprint; and the creation of a magnificent early modern sculpted altarpiece set within the Chapel of the Virgin's Descent in the cathedral attest to the power of art and representation to convey deep theological truths to believers, combining visual narrative, symbolic messaging and a new sense of an authenticated past. Alison C. Fleming's essay looks at the many ways that the incorrupt body of Saint Francis Xavier inspired patrons to transform his casket by adding elements such as sculpted narratives of the saint's miracles, and a marble base for the tomb, which was created in *pietre dure* in Florence (1689–98) and shipped via Lisbon to Goa. The saint's tomb shrine was crafted in interplay with earlier 'artworks (portrait or narrative imagery) and sacred objects, such as the pillow upon which the saint's head had once rested. Fleming emphasizes how the tomb, the relics, and the saint's devotees engaged in a process of mutual inflection to strengthen devotion and generate an ongoing set of miracles—uniting believers across the interconnected devotional geographies of Europe and South Asia.

In Part Two, Sarah M. Cadagin analyzes a late fifteenth-century altarpiece made by the Florentine artist Domenico Ghirlandaio, reminding us that relics, images, altarpieces and especially miraculous images all contribute to the sense of the ineffable, again in a state of interplay, whether made in an artist's workshop or generated through more unpredictable miraculous means. Ghirlandaio was responding to the devotional and ritualistic practices associated with the ancient relic of the *Volto Santo* or Holy Face of Christ, a sculpture thought to have arrived miraculously in Lucca



(Keogh, Cavarero de Carondelet, Fleming, Simor, Stoenescu) demonstrate how devotional communities were strengthened each time architectural spaces were re-conceptualized.

As is often the case with volumes of collected essays, the contents

and now housed in proximity to the artist's altarpiece in the Cathedral of San Martino, Lucca. Relic and altarpiece worked in dynamic interplay for contemporary believers thanks to the creativity of the artist. Suzanna Simor examines the lively interconnections between saints' relics and visual expressions of the Apostles' Creed in the Catholic church. Two locations in particular, Bamberg Cathedral and Jean de Bourbon's "Creed" Chapel at Cluny, display doctrinal cycles that play directly with notions of relics, reliquaries and visualized statements of the Catholic faith. Indeed, as this volume suggests, such performative expressions of the theological truths and artistic expression lie at the very heart of early modern religiosity. Livia Stoenescu's own chapter considers how replicas of important miraculous images (such as the Veronica or True Face of Christ) and a collection of relics re-animated the sacred landscape at the Sacro Monte di Varallo, Italy, from the 1490s onwards. Art, architecture, and the sacred power of simulacra were fused in newly created installations designed to aid in the affective piety and mediative practices then being encouraged in Catholic worship. Such spaces, images, and locations became visual aids to help pilgrims imagine themselves in Jerusalem, walking in the footsteps of Christ. The replica of the Veronica image at Varallo is a kind of "contact relic" in its own right, transmitting the sacred during the meditations of the faithful, as part of the long-standing tradition of end-less creating, re-making and re-formulating sacred materiality. Citing Mircea Eliade, Stoenescu reminds us that for the faithful, spaces and images were continuously manifesting the sacred, whether as originals, duplicates, or substitutes.

In Part Three, Jérémie Koering tackles the sixteenth-century notion of procuring "relics" from distinguished artists such as Michelangelo, with admirers hoping to obtain even

the smallest fragment of a drawing from the artist's hand. The word *reliquiae* (remains) was used in relation to both the drawings and the artistic inventions of Michelangelo, helping us understand, as Alexander Nagel reminds us elsewhere, that notions of awe, wonder and the sense of artistic value were often tinged with ideas of the sacred.² In Koering's essay, the "relics" serving as inspiration to other artists and made by Michelangelo include his *Battle of Cascina*, the *Last Judgement* and the Sistine Chapel ceiling in the Vatican. The final essay by Sarah Dillon focuses on the materiality of different kinds of glass (i.e., transparent glass or rock crystal) in relation to fourteenth-century Italian relics and reliquaries, showing how artists and artisans were engaged in creating startling, evocative revelations of the holy.

The exciting question at the heart of this book is how "things" were being continually aestheticized in the premodern era in service to the sacred through a believer's sense of religious devotion. Each essay is precisely situated within its unique historical situation, and each explains the dominant aesthetic processes relied on by patrons, artists, and artisans. This book demonstrates ably that sacred things, whether labelled as art, relic, or reliquary, accumulated power and presence through human invention and desire in premodern Europe (and India). As we contemplate the future study of relics, reliquaries and aestheticization processes beyond the premodern and across different geospatial realities, this volume will hold its own within the fields of art history, visual studies, visual anthropology as well as religious studies. ¶

Catherine Harding is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History & Visual Studies at the University of Victoria.
—charding@uvic.ca

1. See for instance, the contributions in David Germano and Kevin Trainor, eds., *Embodying the Dharma: Buddhist Relic Veneration in Asia*

(SUNY Press, 2004); John S. Strong, *Relics of the Buddha* (Princeton University Press, 2004); see the multi-authored special issue "Relics and Remains," which places the topic in a global perspective encompassing diverse religious and political cultures, *Past & Present* 206, Supplemental issue 5, 2010.

2. Alexander Nagel, "The Afterlife of the Reliquary," in *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martina Bagnoli et al. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 211–221.

Lesley Johnstone and Monika Kin Gagnon

In Search of Expo 67

Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020

248 pp. 138 photos

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Didier Morelli

Fifty years after Expo 67, the echoes of the world's fair still resonate in the city of Montreal. A historical moment of emergent technologies, identities, and aesthetics, its material archive lives on in the sediments of Canada and Quebec's culture, media, architecture, and socio-political climate. Expo 67 was also an important display of interwoven local, provincial, national, as well as Indigenous narratives and storylines. These notions are taken up in the opening pages of *In Search of Expo 67*, where co-editors Monika Kin Gagnon and Lesley Johnstone write about critical approaches to the archive as a foundational principle of their joint curatorial endeavor. A compliment to their 2017 group exhibition of the same title at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC), *In Search of Expo 67* is a timely, compelling, and visually stimulating book that conveys the works of artists, scholars, and curators attending to the intricacies, tensions, and legacies of the iconic event.