

Art and its Observers

SERIES IN ART

About the author

Professor at the University of New Hampshire, **Patricia Emison** is the author, most recently, of 'Moving Pictures and Renaissance Art History' (Amsterdam University Press, 2021), as well as 'The Italian Renaissance and Cultural Memory' (Cambridge University Press, 2012), 'The Shaping of Art History: Meditations on a Discipline' (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), and 'Creating the "Divine" Artist from Dante to Michelangelo' (Brill, 2004). She has also written articles, catalogue entries, and chapters on topics ranging from Renaissance prints to aura in the digital age. She has long taught both an interdisciplinary humanities survey and an art history survey, as well as a course on writings about the history of art, all to undergraduates, and this book is based on that experience.

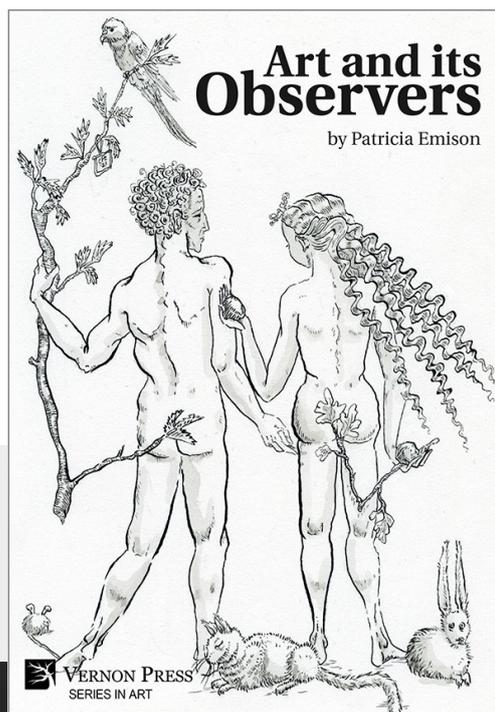
"Patricia Emison's breadth of artistic knowledge is quite remarkable, yet she remains able to focus on the finest of details, always ensuring her readers remain engaged by writing in her typical dynamic style. Most noteworthy for me in this publication is the closing chapter, which is worthy of an extended study in its own right. Emison's deep understanding of what has come before places her in the ideal position to explore the contemporary, and she does so directly and without hesitation, turning topics on their heads, stripping back an artist's practice to the very core, and thus offering the audience – and indeed artist – unique insight."

David Cass

Artist and author of 'Perimetri Perduti' (2016), 'Pelàda' (2017), 'Rising Horizon', (2019), 'As Coastline is to Ocean' (2019)

Summary

What ties western art together? This extended essay attempts to distill some of the basic ideas with which artists and observers of their art have grappled, ideas worthy of ongoing consideration and debate. The fostering of visual creativity as it has morphed from ancient Greece to the present day, the political and economic forces underpinning the commissioning and displacement of art, and the ways in which contemporary art relates to past periods of art history (and in particular, the Renaissance), are among the topics broached. Architecture, drawings, prints, films, painting, sculpture, and decorative arts from Europe and the US are considered and examined, often including nonstandard examples, occasionally including ones from the immediate surroundings of the author (who is based in New England). Although this book is primarily geared to those who would like a brief introduction to some basic aspects of a visual tradition spanning thousands of years, students of aesthetics might also discover useful benchmarks in this concise overview. The author places the emphasis on how art has been used and loved (or sometimes despised or ignored) more than on which works should be most famous.



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