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Caravaggio: Complete Works



Synopsis

A revolution in painting: The mysterious genius who transformed European art – Caravaggio, or more accurately Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610), was always a name to be reckoned with. Notorious bad boy of Italian painting, the artist was at once celebrated and controversial: Violent in temper, precise in technique, a creative master, and a man on the run. This work offers a comprehensive reassessment of Caravaggio's entire oeuvre with a catalogue raisonné of his works. Each painting is reproduced in large format, with recent, high production photography allowing for dramatic close-ups with Caravaggio's ingenious details of looks and gestures. Five introductory chapters analyze Caravaggio's artistic career from his early struggle to make a living, through his first public commissions in Rome, and his growing celebrity status. They look at his increasing daring with lighting and with a boundary-breaking realism which allowed even biblical events to unfold with an unprecedented immediacy before the viewer. An accompanying artist chronology follows Caravaggio's equally tumultuous personal life. This is the definitive work about Caravaggio for generations to come, to be delved into and put on display, with its slipcase neatly converting into a book stand.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I just returned from a 2 1/2 week trip to Italy during which time I visited Uffizi, Borghese, San Luigi dei Francesi, Santa Maria del Popolo, Pitti Palace, Pinoteca Capitolina, and the Scuderie dei Quirinale CARAVAGGIO exhibition. So I have personally viewed nearly half of Caravaggio's authenticated works within the past month. And, to confirm the writings of some of the other reviewers, many of the reproduction plates in this book are inaccurately dark. I was disappointed

with the cave-like lighting provided at the Quirinale show, but even those tiny halogen bulbs illuminated more of the subtleties of M. Merisi's work than do the reproductions in this book, which was proudly announced as being full of new - and supposedly properly exposed - photographs. One great mystery lies in the fact that where there are multiple representations of the same work, the brightness levels vary - sometimes greatly - from one photo to the next. In nearly all cases the detail plates (which are full-bleed) are brighter and more accurate than the full-size shots. The smaller photos displaying the Cantarelli Chapel at San Luigi more faithfully reproduce the colors of the St. Matthew trilogy than do the dedicated full-page plates. I have little technical knowledge of the printing process, but it seems to me that those who do this for a living (especially at this book's price-point!) would know how to calibrate their devices, publishing software and inks to produce a finished product of consistent tone and luminance. A couple of other quibbles: 1.

The subtitle is actually *The Complete Works* rather than *...Paintings*. Page count is 306, not 480. In black boards with gold lettering, and a beautiful jacket of the head of Judith exemplifying the stunning dimensions of the masterpieces and details within. The book opens with six spreads picturing six head details. The book is printed and sewed (in Italy) with state of the art tolerances and lies flat, but occasionally of course threads or a razor thin line is visible in the center of a spread spanned by an art piece. CONTENTS I Lombard beginnings 1571-1592 page 20 II The path to artistic autonomy 1592-1599 page 28 III The large religious works in Rome 1599-1606 page 94 IV The late oeuvre in Southern Italy: Naples-Malta-Sicily 1606-1610 page 184 Epilogue, reflections and refractions page 238 Catalogue of Paintings page 242 Bibliography page 300 Index page 304 Acknowledgements, Credits, Imprint page 306 All page stock is substantial, semiglossy up through page 242 for utterly convincing color of full and detail reproductions, entailing bleeds or white framing; from page 243 onward, uncoated paper that is a pleasure to the touch and takes the ink very well to reproduce all the pictures again in smaller size, say 3 by 5 inches, for reference as you read the detailed descriptions. The Catalogue first presents Paintings 1-67, in chronological order, and comprising, in the opinion of the author, indubitably autograph works (as well as copies of them).

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