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### Chen, Andrew H. Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260–1610: Ritual and Experience

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**Chen, Andrew H.**

***Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260–1610: Ritual and Experience.***

Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018. Pp. 234 + 13 plates, 66 b/w ill. ISBN 978-94-6298-478-4 (hardcover) €95.

Andrew Chen's *Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art, 1260–1610* examines the art and ritual of flagellant confraternities in Italy from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. Chen's is a rich, interdisciplinary study of the visual and material culture found in flagellant confraternities. Through detailed analyses of arts and rituals, he paints a clear picture of public flagellant processions and private devotions. The book includes a section on the transformation of the liturgical devotions of confraternities, especially after the Council of Trent. Chen aims to show what it meant to engage with artwork in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, especially among lay men and women who had not taken the vow but were members of confraternities where their devotions sometimes became part of public spectacle. Chen presents the flagellant confraternities in their historical, theatrical, devotional, and artistic forms. The book focuses on art patronage and ritual practices of flagellant confraternities in relation to how lay people contemplated God, the lives of saints, sin, and salvation. Chen argues that visual stimulation—such as paintings, sculptures, and manuscript illuminations—structured the ways flagellants envisioned historical and biblical events. He relies on Niklaus Largier's *In Praise of the Whip*, which is the leading study on flagellant confraternities, and argues that visual imagery, in its interactions with the nature and setting of confraternities, shaped individual experiences in a range of fascinating ways. He states that images meant different things to different people on various occasions and argues that confraternity members' performances before God, each other, and the spectators of public procession were shaped by the way they viewed artwork.

The book is divided into two main parts. The first, consisting of five chapters, focuses on art and ritual in relation to setting and daily activities. Chapter 1 introduces the different topologies of art that confraternities commissioned, such as altarpieces, fresco decorations, crucifixes, banners, painted necrologies, and illuminated books. This chapter also introduces newly discovered evidence that in a mixed confraternity in Verona, women participated in flagellation. The evidence suggests that the hooded design of the habit used

by confraternity members during processions enabled women to be part of a practice that was normally performed by men. Chapter 2 focuses on how wall paintings and other artworks were experienced by members as they entered and exited the premises. Chapters 3 and 4 concentrate on specific imagery in various confraternities, and offer analyses based on their locations and usage. Chapter 5 focuses on the use of banners in public flagellant processions. Chen shows that even in public, members were meant to use specific techniques of withdrawal and spiritual vision.

The second part of the book deals with the transformation and development of visual imagery and ritual practices through the centuries, especially after the Council of Trent, in various Italian cities. The book also includes an epilogue that gives an overview of how devotional ritual and Italian art were transferred via Spain to the New World.

*Flagellant Confraternities and Italian Art* is an illustrated volume with many colour and black-and-white plates. Chen offers a detailed and complex investigation of the visual culture of flagellant confraternities based on extensive archival research. Through detailed analyses of the artwork, he shows how early flagellations brought “mind, body and spirit close to the Christ they saw in their Passion images” (29). Chen’s analyses, along with the plates, make this volume a strong contribution to art and flagellation history, as well as to religious and confraternity studies.

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**Dekoninck, Ralph, and Aline Smeesters, eds.**

***Le Poète face au tableau. De la Renaissance au Baroque.***

Tours: Presses Universitaires François-Rabelais, 2018 / Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2018. Pp. 268, xvi + ill. ISBN PUFR 978-2-86906-671-7 / ISBN PUR 978-2-7535-7602-5 (hardcover) €35.

This impressive volume, which contains articles written in French and English, celebrates the intersection between poetry and painting in neo-Latin epigrams composed by poets from various countries—from Italy and France to Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands—during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.