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Michael Cole and Mary Pardo, eds., Inventions of the Studio, Renaissance to Romanticism

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Artists have been defined by their inner nature and outward practice: genius and melancholic, scientist and poet, curator and entrepreneur. Inventions of the Studio, Renaissance to Romanticism shifts the parameters of this inquiry to site: the studio as a crucible for fashioning identity as well as objects. In a sense, the book might be considered part of domestic studies, for the studio represents a domestication of art. I mean this in the abstract as well as the literal sense. Artists’ studios were often attached to homes, and images of studios were filled with domestic clutter. More important, professional practice moved from the corporate workshop toward a personal identification with the work of art and the work of art with the personality of the artist, just as the home evolved into a site of individualized formation and display.

Inventions of the Studio consists of an introduction followed by four case studies, beginning with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the newly invented studio space began to be distinguished from the workshop, and ending in the nineteenth, when the studio became the locus of Romantic social alienation. In the first essay, the two editors of the volume, Michael Cole and Mary Pardo, map out the terrain, moving from a sphere of private, contemplative research to that of public, performative display, bringing together examples of artists’ studios from Cennino Cennini through Peter Paul Rubens. Christopher Wood then examines two new types of artistic study—life and landscape drawings. Walter Melion treats three sixteenth-century meditational treatises as “workshops” for “crafting” the soul, while H. Perry Chapman analyzes early modern self-portraits as statements about creativity and advertisements of artistic persona and production. The book concludes with Marc Gotlieb’s essay on the frustrated and alienated artist in nineteenth-century life and art. Thus, over the course of the book and the centuries, the actual and notional studio drastically alters from a site of restorative and creative solitude to one of self-destruction.

In “Origins of the Studio,” Cole and Pardo survey various functions of the studio, including study, reception, collection, and display. They begin by defining the term studio, which turns out to be rather elastic. Indeed, the authors admit to a certain anachronism in the title and theme of the book. As Wolfgang Liebenwein established in his 1977 monograph, Studiolo: Die Entstehung eines Raumtyps und seine Entwicklung bis um 1600, the study (rooms) was invented in the fourteenth century as a secular, domestic space for solitary reading, writing, and contemplation as well as storage of important papers and treasures. The term was not used for the artist’s workplace until the late seventeenth century in Italy and nineteenth century in England. Still, Cole and Pardo argue, the concept of an artist’s “locus of scholarly work” (p. 1) operated in earlier centuries. (An intriguing question, then, is how and when “studio” reverted in meaning from study to workshop/office, as in modern architectural practice.) This slippery terminology gives rise to some contradictory and even questionable—perhaps even, for example, to the representation on the Florentine Campanile of an architect seated at his desk with a compass (pp. 13–14, 23, fig. 1.5). At the time (1330s), the study/room was rarely documented in residential spaces, let alone workshops. It is true that studiolo was a term for desks and built-in cubicles later, toward the turn of the fifteenth century, but if furniture is the criterion, then the “invention of the studio” would extend back to antiquity. Conversely, names are not necessarily conclusive evidence of spatial function, particularly in an era when the single-purpose room was rather rare. Based on the sixteen shelves (mensole) of stucco models and two shelves (palchettes) of wax models recorded in Giambologna’s ground-floor studio in 1608, Cole and Pardo deduce that it was both a “workshop” and a “private room in which the artist made designs” (pp. 17–18). The adjacent scrivitoio (literally, “writing space”) also held little models on a small (display?) shelf (palchetino) that ran around the room as well as framed paintings.

Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s postmortem inventory of 1681 likewise lists a ground-
floor "studio where [Bernini] studied," and its contents—two rough-hewn marble statues of angels, a marble Saint Sebastian by an assistant, terracotta models, and various gesso heads and body parts—suggest that it was a workshop for carving.5

It is always tempting to search for "firsts," including early examples of artists' studies. It is not clear, however, that the literary references in Lorenzo Ghiberti's mid-fifteenth-century Commentarii means that he actually owned those manuscript sources, let alone had a separate room for them (p. 14). The authors are on firmer ground when they cite Cennini's Il libro d'arte, which recommends drawing sgrafito decoration on glass in a "stolettio where no one may inconvenience you in any way, possessing a single cloth-covered window, at which you will place your desk, like those used for writing" (p. 15).

It is generally believed that this treatise was composed while the artist was in Padua in the 1390s, but in her book The Two Parallel Realities of Alberti and Cennini (2004), Latifah Troncelliti argues for a date decades later, based on the (only) manuscript's inscription stating that it was written or finished in the Florentine prison, Le Stinche, on July 31, 1437. Another early reference, not mentioned in Inventions of the Studio, is the 1455 inventory of the Paduan painter Francesco Squarcione. It lists two studies in his home: the large study held reliefs and drawings and the small one had reliefs "and all things related to the art of painting." These references highlight the early association of the study with the university (also called studium); Padua was a university town. More significantly, Cennini's treatise and Squarcione's inventory explicitly identify the artist's study with drawing. As early as 1431, Squarcione's contracts for taking on apprentices/students stipulated that their training included access to his collection of drawings.6

I bring up drawing because Cole and Pardo make the important point that, in the quattrocento and through the seventeenth century, the artist's "study" was associated with drafting and modeling rather than execution of the final work, which took place in the larger, more public workshop. In 1648, Carlo Ridolfi wrote of Jacopo Tintoretto:

when he was not painting, he would retire to his studio, located in the most remote part of the house. [There] he spent the hours destined for rest amid an infinity of reliefs, composing, through the working of models, the inventions he was to carry out in his works. Nor would he allow anyone in there, not even a friend, except on rare occasions. . . . (p. 15)

The 1686 postmortem inventory of the Roman sculptor Ercole Ferrata documents a "studio where one models" and a separate "studio where one works [studio dove si modella . . . studio dove si lavora]" (pp. 22-23). This differentiation of spaces is illustrated by Michelangelo's plan of about 1545 for his residence (fig. 1.7), with a "bottega" (workshop) at the front of the house and a much smaller "studio" toward the rear.

In various sections of their essay ("The Artist as Student" and "Manual Study and the Book"), Cole and Pardo rightly emphasize the ultimate origin of the artist's studio in the culture of the university. They connect theoretical and manual art treatises to scholarly "learnedness" and literary production. The cursus of training and organization in artists' academies, first founded in sixteenth-century Italy, also echoed traditional educational structures. The studio as a locus of study is also imprinted in a series of images beginning in sixteenth-century Italy and expanded on in the Lowlands. Cole and Pardo focus on the intersection of painters and scholars in Rubens's self-portrait with Justus Lipsius in Four Philosophers (ca. 1602, Galleria Palatina, Florence, fig. 1.1) and Gerrit Dou's Man Writing by an Easel (ca. 1630, Rijksmuseum, pl. 3), in which an old man seated in an artist's studio writes in a large tome. Dou also painted himself with books and other paraphernalia associated with learning (Artist in His Studio, ca. 1630-32, Colnaghi, London, and Self-Portrait, 1647, Staatkunstsammlungen Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, figs. 4.15, 4.16). By then, the artist's studio had become a distinct genre in seventeenth-century Holland, where, it has been proposed, these paintings functioned as advertisements in a competitive open market system. But, if so, then what was Dou (who commanded high prices by 1641) selling by representing himself as "pictor doctus" (Chapman, p. 133)?

This question can be answered, at least partly, by the notion of intellectual labor, a theme raised repeatedly, but not fully addressed, in the essays by Cole and Pardo (pp. 12-14, 25, 28), Wood (pp. 38, 49), and Melion (passim). The paintings of artists' studios by Dou, Rembrandt, and Johannes Vermeer, discussed by Chapman, illustrate mental as well as physical exertion and craft. Yet the authors do not explicitly articulate the multivalent significance of intellectual labor nor plumb its import for the (re)invention of the studio. The topic is also pertinent to Gotlieb's essay because it was their intellectual labor that made artists prone to melancholy. In his book on melancholy, Constantine the African, an eleventh-century Benedictine monk at Salerno and Montecassino, explained, "Thought is the exertion [labor] of the soul," and just as excessive exertion can cause disease in the body, "so can exertion of the soul cause it to succumb to melancholy." It is not surprising, therefore, that Albrecht Dürer gave away his engravings of Melancholia and Saint Jerome in His Study (1514) as a pair and that later scholars have continued to treat them as pendants (p. 28).

The studio/study was a visual refutation not only of a "well-furnished mind" (p. 27) but also of the process of mental labor. After all, another meaning of studium was zealous application and diligence (pp. 5-6). Under the rubric "On the life of the painter in his study," Leonardo wrote: "I will go my own way and withdraw apart, the better to think out the forms of natural objects." He advised artists to "remain solitary . . . particularly when intent on those speculations and reflections continually rising up before the eyes that give materials to be well stored in the memory. . . . And if you must have companionship, find it in your study. This may assist you to have the advantages that arise from various speculations." In this case, the physical space itself helps focus thought: "Small rooms or dwellings discipline the mind, large ones distract it." Similarly, treatises on art and virtue were effective as "alternate" or "portable studia" (Cole and Pardo, p. 4; Melion, p. 73), in part because the intrinsically small scale of books helped concentrate attention on text, image, and, ultimately, ideas.

References to artists' ingenium in this period (or ingenium in late medieval France) are often cited as evidence of the profession's newly elevated status as a liberal rather than just a mechanical art. Along with the incorporation of scientific knowledge and rhetorical principles, the emphasis on ingenium and fantasia signaled art's intellectual enterprise. For example, Jacopo Bellini's signature/inscription of his 1484 Madonna and Child (Accademia di Brera, Milan) vaunted his "mental ingenua." But intellectual labor did more than increase professional or social standing; there may have been a commercial payoff as well. In his Vite of 1550 and 1568, Giorgio Vasari wrote that the poses of Antonio Pollaiuolo's Saint Sebastian altarpiece for the Pucci Chapel (now in the National Gallery, London) "quite clearly demonstrate the ingenio and consideration that he invested in this work: which fact was clearly understood by Antonio Pucci who gave him 300 scudi for it, affirming that he was hardly paying him for the colors." In 1592, the painter Lorenzo Lotto recorded in his account book that a portrait "with a beautiful invention" was considered worth over 30 scudi and "much more for the ingenua [ingenious] of invention." Could the images of artists hard at study—engaged in visual experiments in Dürer's Unterweisung der Messung (fig. 1.4) or bent over their tablets with "no one looking up from his drawing" (p. 68) in Enea Vico's Academy of Baccio Bandinelli (fig. 2.18)—be a way of promoting artists' intellectual labor as well as theory?

The commodification of intellectual labor was still a fairly recent and controversial concept in the early modern period. The
medieval debate over the right to charge for instruction or "sell" knowledge encompassed the question of whether knowledge was a product of labor or a gift from God. These concerns persisted in the Renaissance. In the mid-fifteenth century, Saint Antonino, archbishop of Florence, acknowledged that teachers, doctors, and lawyers could not sell "science," which is a spiritual thing, but he defended their fees as just compensation for labor. Interestingly, in this section on professions, the subsection on merchants and craftsmen ("De statu mercatorum et artificiorum") seems to make an exception for painters: "Painters seek, more or less reasonably, to be paid wages for their art not only according to the amount of [physical] labor involved, but rather according to their diligence and the greater expertise of their art."9 Still, breakdowns of costs in contracts for paintings typically specified the size of the painting and the number of its figures—that is, physical labor—as well as materials. In 1470, however, Francesco del Cossa argued that evaluations for the frescoes done in the Palazzo Schifanoia should be based not only on surface area (10 bolognini a foot) but also on materials, technique, and, above all, intellectual labor. He was not merely an apprentice or manual laborer, who "earns my living by means of my arms," he complained to Duke Borso d'Este; "having studied, and I still study continuously," he deserved higher pay than the other painters who "lack such study."9 His petition failed. Even in Italy, the translation of ingenuum, invention, and other types of intellectual labor into monetary reward was neither automatic nor consistent. In 1504 Pasquino Veneto won a competition for a painting for the entrance wall of the Scuola della Carità in Venice, but he died before he could execute the commission. When his brother asked to be compensated for the deceased artist’s design and labor, the confraternity’s governing board agreed only to pay for materials (canvas and wood)—and this "out of piety and charity."10

I would emphasize a couple of points about intellectual labor relevant to themes in Inventions of the Studio. First, the association of the studio/study with drawing and design is notable because these were forms of visual "thinking." The site of the brain identified with the reception and storage of sensory images was believed to be the same as or adjacent to the one for inventing new fantasia based on these images. So, too, was the studio a site for investigation and compilation, for processing images and converting them into original compositions. Ercole Ferrata’s modeling studio held copies after classical and modern sculptures. Bernini’s studio “where he studied” contained gesso casts of human parts—probably for anatomical study—as well as his own terracotta designs.

Second, design and drawing were the manifestations of artistic intellectual labor. In art theory, design was a mental concept or image and its translation into physical form; the intellectualization of the profession, therefore, became bound up in a definition of disegno. Cole and Pardo note that studio came to mean “drawing” in the seventeenth century. I would add that a new type of drawing, the sketch—which comes into its own in the Renaissance—specifically makes visible the intellectual labor of design. One might even discern a conscious display of intellectual labor in Leonardo’s graphic musings, his multiple variations of a composition on a single page or his web of pentimenti dissolving the form of a figure—all in dramatic departure from the careful and tidy outlines of earlier drawings. Scholars have noted the marked change in drawing style from medieval closed, linear contours that maximized “readability” (within a workshop, for example) to the rapid strokes, broken outlines, and fragmentary studies that characterize sketches, making them less useful as a means of communication but more identifiable with an individual hand. In 1537 Pietro Aretino used the artist’s sketch as an exemplum for the greater value of the less finished work because it retained a fresher imprint of the author’s mind. Moreover, he explicitly identified design with intellectual labor: “And because the good painters greatly value a beautiful group of figures sketched, I let be printed my things done in such a way, nor do I care at all to miniature-paint words, because the labor is in the design.”11 Drawing is the topic of the book’s opening case study, Christopher Wood’s “Indoor-Outdoor: The Studio around 1500.” The author discusses two innovative subjects in the Renaissance, the human nude and landscape. Dürer’s earliest life—that is, unidealized—study of a nude woman (1493, Museo Bonnat, Bayonne, fig. 2.16) coincides in date with his first landscape watercolors. Landscape and life drawings were emblematic of a shift in the definition and process of art because of the "radical novelty of the idea that art might be grounded in ordinary sensory experience" (p. 44), a shift that was contemporary with the increasing prominence of sensory proof in other disciplines, such as anatomy.

Wood, however, immediately problematizes the process and nature of life drawing, which “most decisively distinguished the modern artist’s studio from the pre-modern workshop.” In the "experiment," he argues, was doomed to be shorten and futile, running afoul of workshop traditions of copying. When codified and institutionalized in the academy, life drawing retained this self-referential aspect. Books as well as fragments of sculpture and human anatomy are strewn about in Vico’s engraving of Baccio Bandinelli’s Academy (p. 68, fig. 2.18).

Thus, life drawing is seen as “a misunderstanding imbedded cameo-fashion inside the history of art” (p. 69) and even a fraud.

Wood asserts that life drawing could not be practiced as much as it was preached because of the difficulty in finding a suitably private yet well-light location to draw nude (or near nude) models. The workshop, opening onto the street, was too public; the study or scrittoio was too small (pp. 46–48). Wood cites an eighteenth-century ground plan with a “workshop” (bottega) whose only light was a doorway onto the street; yet this plan, as noted by Anabel Thomas (cited by Wood), also has a second “working area” behind, lit by its own window, as well as a scrittoio in the rear. Additionally, workshops often adjoined private dwelling spaces; according to the 1427 Florentine catasto (tax records), about a quarter of the city’s inhabitants lived over botteghe.12 Benvenuto Cellini’s vivid description of drawing from a nude model for his relief of the Nymph of Fontainebleau and then having sex with her also indicates the availability of private spaces for life drawing.

Such purported practical obstacles merely form a preamble to Wood’s thesis that life drawings misrepresented themselves as transcripts of actual encounters with nature. Wolf Huber’s Nude Man in Landscape of about 1505 (Hamburger, Kunsthalle, fig. 2.1), a finished drawing in ink with white heightening, is offered as a case in point. It embodies both trajectories of the new indoor-outdoor encounter with reality. And therein lies the paradox, for this figure, whose pose and breechcloth are typical of studio life models, “has no business outdoors,” seeming to have “forgotten to put on his clothes. He has stumbled out of a private space and is not prepared to occupy a social identity” (p. 40). The figure’s resemblance to a drawing by Filippino Lippi suggests that it may be a workshop copy, which, Wood argues, further undercuts the premise of life studies: a specific transcription of an individual “subjective” encounter between artist and model. The copying and recycling of landscape studies, as in Dürer’s Saint Jerome of about 1496 (based on his drawing of a quarry), is likewise seen as a negation of the avowed intention of outdoor research. Indeed, Wood interprets the phrase naer het leven (from life) as the flip side of uyt den ghesti (from the mind/spirit) because both accentuate the paramount role of the individual artist and imply, he argues, a particular moment of invention or transcription (p. 39).

Wood returns to landscape, the subject of his book on Albrecht Altdorfer, but here cast in a different light. Refuge in the studio is like a wilderness retreat: both are sites of hermetic contemplation linked by a “cultivation of perplexity” in a search for “enlightenment” (p. 62). In “The Bewildered Artist,” Wood interprets the "meaningless
foreground” and “pile of debris” in Dürer’s Quärry (Kunsthalle, Bremen) and Watermill with Draftsmen (Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz) respectively sought “moment of private confusion” in a “lawless encounter” with the “dynamic chaos” and “arbitrariness of nature” (pp. 62, 64, figs. 2.13, 2.15). Similarly, with life drawing, he infers the artist’s “loss in confidence” in methods of transcribing reality, faced with a “confusing array of possible referents” (p. 36). Psychologically charged readings run the danger of imposing later sensibilities and notions of subjectivity on Renaissance art and culture. The author perceives a “mutual interference between the two systems, referential and experiential,” that is, a “clash” between the earlier workshop traditions of copying pattern book motifs and the new direct encounter with nature (p. 54). Even poised figures according to stock formulas or predetermined compositions is suspect. But would these common, contemporaneous, and sometimes conjoined practices have provoked a sense of contradiction? Cornini recommended drawing rocks and then transcribing them in larger scale as mountains in paintings. Was there a Renaissance “existential” conundrum with transposing figural and landscape studies into composite compositions? If life and landscape studies reflect the new authority of nature, then (re)quotation did not necessarily diminish its value and weight, but could rather enhance it—in accordance with the traditional mode of using authoritative sources. A basic problem with Wood’s provocative contention that early modern life or nature studies were intended/perceived to be an “effort to reduce the origin of art to a single point in time-space” (p. 55) is his lack of substantiation for these claims. He states that “the Renaissance was hardly capable of articulating these theses. . . . The idea of the artist’s experience as the matrix of art was not clearly articulated in art-theoretical texts, or any texts” (pp. 38–39). In fact, encounters at a particular place and moment were frequently asserted in a variety of contexts, even implying close proximity to sights and sounds when this could not have been the case. The importance of the specific eyewitness as proof of reliability and authenticity in early modern judicial courts, diplomatic correspondences, travelogues, and ethnographic reportage has been recently discussed in Barbara Shapiro’s A Culture of Fact: England, 1590–1720 (2006). In festival and entry accounts, these claims were explicitly signaled through phrases such as “Récit véritable . . .” “Warhaftige und historische Beschreibung . . .” “Diario esatto e veridico . . .” “Scribo ut factum descriptum est” (p. 36). In art, comparable claims were affirmed by “naer het leven” or “contrafactum.” As noted by Claudia Swan (cited by Wood) and Peter Parshall in his article on the “imago contrafacta” (cited by Swan), these telltale markers and, occasionally, a precise date and place were applied to portraits, landscapes, and records of natural spectrums in order to reach for their accuracy and/or authenticity. The phrase “fuit hic” (“was here”) accompanying Jan van Eyck’s signature is the reason that scholars identify, in the mirror below, the blurry image of a figure standing in the doorway as a self-portrait. Reflections of artists in their studios include Clara Peeters’s self-portrait on the surface of a goblet in her Still Life of 1612 (Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe). Unfortunately, Wood does not provide evidence that the purpose of the life drawings featured in his essay, or generally in the Renaissance, was to record a particular artist’s presence at a specific place and/or time.

Walter Melion’s essay, “Benedictus Arias Montanus and the Virtual Studio as a Meditative Place,” examines three publications of the 1570s by the theologian Montanus with engravings by Philip Galle. Melion treats these treatises as, notional, “portable study,” because they guide the reader through “theoretical places of memory and invention” so that offered a site of scholarly retreat whether the reader-viewer could retire in search of religious renewal” (p. 75). In David, hoe est virtus exercitatisseae probatum Deo spectaculum (David, or the Spectacle of Well-Exercised Virtue Pleasing to God, 1575), for example, the martial hero evolves into a contemplative ruler. Nevertheless, very few of the settings or activities of transformation can be specifically identified with the studio. The Divinum nuptiarium con venta et acta (Compact and Celebration of the Divine Nuptials, 1573–74) is set in the bedchamber, where the Bride (sponsa) or soul prepares to be joined to Christ and contemplates virtue in a mirror. The study as locale is most explicit in Humanae salutis monumenta (Monuments of Human Salvation, 1571). Even here, the connection to the overall theme of the artist’s studio is rather tenuous. Still, the processes of instruction and transformation of virtus embodied in these treatises have implications for virtue as well as virtuosity in the arts. In the Monuments, subtle differences in the descriptions and images of the four Evangelists’ studies (pp. 90–98) alert us to nuances of the studium as a site. The text contrasts Matthew’s former profession as tax collector with his new spiritual vocation; as “avancis is transmuted into the desire for souls,” so, too, Melion notes, the illustration of the “miracle counting room alters into that of a scholar’s study” (p. 94). According to the publisher Plantin, Saint John’s Gospel is the result of divine inspiration rather than innate ability or acquired learning, and for Melion the woodcut of Saint John’s study “figures his absorption in divine things” (p. 97). More specifically, one might observe that the room of this most visionary of the Evangelists has the least clutter and that only sky, no earthly landscape, is visible through its window. Indeed, the only well-defined city or landscape in this series of studies is that of Saint Mark, whose “expansive ministry” to the Nile and Macedonia is noted in the text.

While speculating that Montanus may have been an amateur draftsman, Melion confesses to using the term studio in the (later) sense of artisanal workshop (pp. 73, 197 n. 1) rather than as a site of design (as outlined in Cole and Pardo’s introduction). In fact, the crafts were identified with virtue, and some, such as metalwork, were specifically associated with alchemical and spiritual transformation. The process of crafting the soul is most vividly embodied in Galle’s dedication of the David to Philip II:

Having taken root in my soul, Montanus’ oft heard opinion pleased me so much. . . . For I, by reason of my impoverished mind and manner, have adorned this place of sacred feeling with certain curtains/hangings [veluti aulairi] which, though contrived by me of poor, rough, and inconsequential stuff, could be made splendidly according to the faculty and genius of each man from wool or silk, silver or gold, interwoven with gems, and further could be greatly increased and amplified by art and elegance. (p. 77)

While the soul is envisioned here as an aulic space (not a studiolo, as suggested by Melion) ornamented with splendid hangings, the analogy might also be extended to the domestic setting, where textile making was long and often identified with virtue (albeit mostly female), from Penelope in antiquity to the “virtuous” women targeted by sixteenth-century pattern books and depicted in seventeenth-century Dutch emblems and paintings. The David “wrought” by Galle would serve as a pattern to be crafted more splendidly by others, particularly Philip, who might then serve as a model for his subjects. The hoped-for patronage of the king would also “perfect [Galle] as a great artistifier,” who would, in turn, “prepare and undertake greater and more ornate works of art” (p. 78).

Architecture figures prominently in the three publications, probably because its planning and measurement displayed prudence, foresight, and discernment. In David, King David’s “shaping” of his son and heir, Solomon, is compared to the construction of the temple. In the background of the engraving “David Accepts the People’s Offerings for the Temple,” a mason chisels a block of stone under the supervision of an architect or overseer in an otherwise empty landscape. In the following scene of David on his deathbed counseling his son, the background opens to a fully constructed cityscape (pp. 87–90, figs. 3.15, 3.16). In the

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scene entitled "Double Measure of Human Fortune [Humanae sortis mensura genuina]" in Hu-
manae salutis monumenta, Solomon sits on a
throne, but he leans over to write or draw at a
table, carpentry tools and instruments of
measurement scattered around him (pp.
91–92, fig. 3.18). In other words, this alic-
us space, with dais and baldachin, has been
converted into a workshop/officina (in the
Ciceronian sense) on behalf of his subjects
and mankind. The text refers to its articula-
tion of human principles and dispensation of
laws—the "constant officium of great princes
[Perpetuum magni est principis officium]."

By the time these treaties were pub-
lished, the reification of "statecraft" was
fig-
ured in actual workshops established by rul-
ers in or near their palaces. Some also
owned elegant and ornate sets of tools,
practiced alchemy and crafts, and were
credited with technological innovations. In
1576, the Venetian ambassador described
Francesco I de’ Medici in his laboratory/
studio, giving orders to his clerks about legal
matters and doling out clemency while giving
instruction to artisans and performing his own
experiments.14 About this time, the grand
duke was also depicted as a goldsmith and
an alchemist in paintings for his studio.

Perry Chapman’s essay, "The Imagined
Studios of Rembrandt and Vermeer," re-
turns us squarely to the artist at work. The
author’s thesis is that, in the north, paint-
ings of the artist’s studio rather than theo-
retical texts (more prevalent in Italy) glor-
fied the nature and ritualization of the
profession. As stated earlier, it has been
proposed that seventeenth-century Dutch
paintings of studios promoted their artists’
craft. Adriaen Brouwer hung a ‘‘schilder ka-
er’’ (painter’s studio) in the front hall
(voornuis) of his house in Amsterdam. Ver-
meer’s Art of Painting was inventoried after
his death in his schilderkrager; perhaps he
kept it for display to clients (pp. 127, 136).
In Holland’s rather crowded and competi-
tive art market, such ‘‘advertisements’’ were
more effective when they demonstrated the
artist’s particular specialty or trademark
style and staging. Chapman compares Jan
Miense Molenaer’s Art in His Studio (1631,
Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Ber-
lin) to his comic, gay companies and Adria-
en van Ostade’s etching of a ‘‘dilapidated’’
studio (ca. 1669) to his pesant scenes (pp.
128–29, figs. 4.13, 4.14). In a sense this goes
back to Jacob Burckhardt’s heralding of Re-
naissance individualism and the rise of the
artist, but now discussions of artists’ signa-
tures and biographies, notions of genius
and invention are recalibrated with a new
attention to the marketplace. It would be
interesting to know if biography/personality
and art became intertwined during artists’
lifetimes as it sometimes did afterward (Jan
Steen’s reputation as a drunkard) and if so,
how this, too, might have been part of mar-
ket ing the artist.

Chapman’s brief overview of fifteenth-
and sixteenth-century artists’ self-portraits
begins with Rogier van der Weyden’s Saint
Luke and ends with Cornelis Cort’s engraving
of Jan van der Straet’s Academy. In fact, the
setting of Rogier’s Saint Luke (Museum of
Fine Arts, Boston, fig. 4.2) can hardly be
called a studio, since it clearly depicts a
throne room (identified with heavenly
Jerusalem). Nor is it "one of the earliest
representations of the artist at work" (p.
111); there are a number of prior examples
in sculpture and painting, especially manu-
script illumination. Yet it may be an early
and rare representation of the saint drawing
the Virgin. Saint Luke does not look at his
model, implying that he is inspired by a di-
vine vision, as in earlier images of the saint.
On the other hand, it may be an overstretch
to say that this is an image of inspired cre-
ativity in the classical/Renaissance sense,
explicitly embodied in the baccic figure of
Furia urging on the saint/artist in Maerten
evans Heemskerck’s Saint Luke in the Frans
Halsmuseum, Haarlem, dated 1539 (before
his trip to Italy). By contrast, Heemskerck’s
later, more academic and Italianate Saint
Luke (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, fig.
4.3) is filled with props that signal the intel-
llectual labor of art: classical sculptures in
the background and books with contemporary
anatomy illustrations in the foreground.

Chapman’s examination of "pictorial the-
ory" culminates in Rembrandt’s Artist in His
Studio (ca. 1629, Museum of Fine Arts, Bos-
ton, fig. 4.1) and Vermeer’s Art of Painting
(ca. 1666, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vi-
en, pl. 5), with particular attention to the
relations between artist, easel, and viewer.
Rembrandt’s painting is a brash statement
by a young artist who had just taken on his
first pupil (Dou) but was already building a
reputation, attaining the notice of Constan-
tijn Huygens, secretary to the stadholder.
A diminutive figure in the background, his
face mostly obscured by shadow, the painter
nevertheless retains the role of protagonist
by means of his costume and silhouette
against the wall as well as the distinctive
rauw (rough) brushwork of the painting it-
self. Rembrandt dramatized intellectual cre-
ativity by the painter’s inaction and distance
from the easel, whose brilliantly lit front is
turned away from the viewer, concealing
whatever image might be on that surface.
For Chapman, this contrasts paradoxically
with the seemingly genre-like quality of the
scene. "[With] such naer het leven (from life)
rendering, the artist’s choice to conceal a
 crucial aspect of his picture becomes all
the more striking. The thing so pointedly not
represented proclaims that the artist paints
wyt den gheest (from the imagination),
that painting is as much inventing as it is imitat-
ing the visible world" (p. 109). But how
does this representation of intellectual cre-
ation fit with Rembrandt’s rauw manner,
which, ironically, draws attention to the art-
ist’s manual touch? Or are both expressions
of the inimitable nature of his art—created
wyt zijn zelven? The same questions could be
asked of Rembrandt’s late self-portrait
(1660s, Kenwood House, London, fig. 4.11).
As the X-rays reveal, originally the artist’s
brush was raised; in the later version, his
hand is lowered as if to stress the intellec-
tual rather than the manual labor (p. 126).

Vermeer’s painting is also highly individu-
alistic, but here the artist is turned away
from the viewer. Chapman associates this
deliberate anonymity with the suppression
of the personal “touch” of the artist’s hand
that was so conspicuous in Rembrandt’s
work. In Vermeer’s painting of the artist
painting History (Clio), the hyperrealism and
smooth (net), self-effacing brushwork
hark back to the heroic age of Netherland-
ish painting—that of van Eyck—as does the
artist’s anachronistic dress with slashed
black velvet. Yet it is unlikely that, as pro-
posed, the chandelier is a specific allusion
to van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait (p. 144); this
painting had left the Low Countries by 1556
with the Mary of Hungary and was inventoried
after her death in Spain. It was seen in Ma-
drid in 1599 and remained there at least
until 1794.15

In the book’s last essay, "Creation and
Death in the Romantic Studio," Marc Got-
lieb explores the artist’s studio as a site of
isolation and desolation, of actual as well as
fictional suicides. Art and life were inextric-
ably intertwined. Léopold Robert killed
himself with the razor with which, according
to an eyewitness, he had scraped down his
painting in a “rage of destruction” (p. 153).
Through such contemporary accounts, even
withdrawal from society and private mo-
ments of solitary death were reenacted as
“public performances of the artist’s interior-
ity” (p. 150).

Although Gottlieb describes a particular
cultural moment in the nineteenth century,
its world of frustration and melancholy were
sown in the Renaissance, when artists’
strange behavior, withdrawal, and even sui-
cide were blamed, in part, on the same Sat-
urnine nature that endowed them with cre-
ative inspiration and innovative power.
Even Raphael himself, celebrated as a grace-
ful lover by Vasari and Jean-Auguste-Domi-
ique Ingres (fig. 1.16), was identified with
one of the most powerful images of moody
artistic isolation, the engraved Portrait of Ra-
phael attributed to his collaborator, Marcan-
tonio Raimondi (Bartsch XIV.369.469). The
notion that “every artist paints himself,” or
that the character of the artist—whether
devout like Fra Angelico or violent like Cel-
dlini—was reflected in his work, also has a
long and fairly continuous tradition from
the Renaissance to the present day. Thus, it
is not surprising that more than a few Ro-
mantic images of suffering artists in pain
and print (such as Alexandre-Gabriel De-
camps, The Suicide of 1836) featured early
modern subjects. Gotlieb highlights Jean Gigoux’s *Death of Andrea del Sarto* (1854), Adolphe Moulleron after Robert Flery’s *Celestina in His Studio* (1841), and Eugène Delacroix’s *Michelangelo in His Studio* (1849; on the book’s cover). What distinguishes the Romantic period and Gotlieb’s study from earlier ones is the close identification of a particular setting with this isolation and frustration: the artist’s studio or garret, usually poor and squalid.

The Romantic’s lonely despair was exacerbated by an acute awareness of public neglect and disdain. This, too, has its seeds in the Renaissance, when artists were targets of a vocal, hypercritical public and reportedly overcame obstacles to pursue their vocation (think of Bernard Palissy’s years of impoverished research and burning his furniture to fire his kiln). Artists themselves engaged in internecine wars of words and daggers, fueled, it was said, by the destructive side of competition—envy. Much of this was well known in the nineteenth century, not only through artists’ biographies, beginning with Vasari’s, and the latter-day publication of artists’ letters (for example, Giovanni Bottrari, *Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, scultura, ed architettura*, 1822–25; Giovanni [Johann] Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d’artisti dei secoli XIV, XV, XVI, 1839–40*) but also by the publication, translation, and celebration of Cennini’s *Autobiography*, which fostered Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s and others’ heroization of the artist as personality. While these episodes of struggle, suffering, and humiliation, made more “present” by the artists’ own voices, may have seemed akin to those of the Romantics, the primary stage for their enactment had shifted from the Renaissance arenas of street, court, and palace to the private domestic realm of the artist himself.

All in all, this book offers five distinctive investigations of actual and notional studios. Michael Cole and Mary Pardo’s essay is an excellent introduction to a variety of issues surrounding artistic production and identity. The subsequent studies address particular aspects of the theme in different periods and from different ideological/methodological viewpoints. In this sense, the book is truly greater than the sum of its parts and would be an illuminating text for students—not only for different concepts of what the artist is and does but also for different ways that contemporary scholars practice their own craft of art history.

**Notes**


7. Lorenzo Lotto, “Il Libro di spese diverse” con aggiunta di lettere e d’altri documenti, ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venice: Istituto per la Collaborazione Culturale, 1960), vol. 4, April 10, 1552: “con una bella inventione . . . et a judicio de molti valere ultra scuti trenta et molto più per la ingeniosa impresa de inventione.”


**KEITH HOLZ**

*Modern German Art for Thirties Paris, Prague, and London: Resistance and Acquiescence in a Democratic Public Sphere*


With this book Keith Holz proposes to offer “one model to conceive of the history of modern German art differently.” He takes as his topic the activist communities formed by “degenerate” leftist and liberal German artists who fled Adolf Hitler’s Germany and sought refuge in the democratic capitals of Prague, Paris, or London. It is not his purpose to relate yet another “history of artist,” fashioning biographical narratives “rendered all the more compelling by the displacements and hardships brought on by cataclysmic historical circumstances.” Many such individual histories have been written, devoted to major figures of the Weimar art world—and of modernism—such as Max Beckmann and Paul Klee. By contrast, Holz focuses on “the discursive and institutional settings in which artists worked and lived” (p. 283) in those three cities. The result is indeed a different model—one might call it a political history of art—that privileges collective political action over individual aesthetic achievement, explicitly political subject matter over “autonomious” art.

It is therefore hardly surprising that most of the principal figures in Holz’s account are artists largely forgotten today—the Prague art academy professor and painter Willi Nowak, for example, or, in Paris, the émigré graphic artist Max Linenger and the exiles Eugen Spiro and Heinrich Lohmar. They and others equally or even more obscure played an instrumental role in the