

ROBERT J. WILLIAMS

Professor  
Dept. of the History of Art & Architecture  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

robertw@arthistory.ucsb.edu

EDUCATION:

Princeton University, Dept. of Art & Archaeology; Ph.D.,  
1988. Dissertation advisor: Prof. John Shearman;  
dissertation title: "Vincenzo Borghini and Vasari's Lives"

University of Pennsylvania, Dept. of the History of Art;  
M.A., 1979. Thesis advisor: Prof. Leo Steinberg; thesis  
title: "Francesco Bocchi and the Theoretical Bases of Art  
Criticism in the Late-Mannerist Period"

Georg-August Universität, Göttingen, 1977-8

University of Pennsylvania, B.A., magna cum laude, with  
Distinction in the History of Art, 1976

BOOKS:

Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From  
Techne to Metatechne (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Art Theory: An Historical Introduction (Blackwell, 2004)

Francesco Bocchi: The Beauties of the City of Florence  
(translated, with an introduction and commentary, in  
collaboration with Thomas Frangenberg; Harvey Miller,  
2006)

The Beholder: The Experience of Art in Early Modern Europe  
(co-edited with Thomas Frangenberg; Ashgate, 2006)

ARTICLES (selected):

"Notes by Vincenzo Borghini on Works of Art in San Gimignano  
and Volterra: a Source for Vasari's Lives," Burlington  
Magazine, vol. 127, 1985, pp. 19-25

"A Treatise by Francesco Bocchi in Praise of Andrea del  
Sarto," Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes,

vol. 52, 1989, pp. 111-39

"Boccaccio's Altarpiece," Studi sul Boccaccio, vol. 19, 1991, pp. 229-40

"The Facade of the Palazzo dei Visacci," I Tatti Studies, vol. 5, 1993, pp. 209-244

"The Vocation of the Artist According to Giovanni Battista Armenini," Art History, vol. 18, 1995, pp. 518-36

"The Sala Grande in the Palazzo Vecchio and the Precedence Controversy between Florence and Ferrara," Vasari's Florence: Art, Culture and Politics at the Medici Court, P. Jaks, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1997)

"Giorgio Vasari," Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, M. Kelly, ed. (Oxford University Press, 1998) vol. 4, pp. 431-5

"The International Style, 1527-1600," The Oxford Illustrated History of Western Art, M. Kemp, ed. (Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 180-7

"The Spiritual Exercises of Leonardo da Vinci," The Blackwell Companion to Art Theory, P. Smith & C. Wilde, eds. (Blackwell, 2002) pp. 75-87

"Italian Renaissance Art and the Systematicity of Representation", Rinascimento, vol. 43, 2004, pp. 309-31

"Bronzino's Gaze," The Beholder (Frangenberg & Williams, eds.; see above, pp. 87-101)

"Always Like Himself: Character and Genius in Bernini's Biographies," Bernini's Biographies, M. del Beke, et al., eds. (Penn State University Press, 2006, pp. 181-99)

"Leonardo's Modernity: Subjectivity as Symptom," The Life and the Work, C. Salas, ed., (Getty Research Institute, forthcoming)

"Leonardo and the Florentine Academy," in Leonardo's Trattato della Pittura (C. Farago, ed., Ashgate, forthcoming)

"A Newer Protagoras" (with Christopher Wood; Art Bulletin, 88, 2006, 567-82)

"James Elkins, 1955- , " Contemporary Art Theory: Key Thinkers (D. Costello & J. Vickery, eds.; Berg, 2007, pp. 64-6)

"The Artist as Worker in Sixteenth-Century Italy", Drawings by Federico Zuccaro (J. Brooks, ed., J.P. Getty Museum, forthcoming)

REVIEWS (selected):

Review of Thomas Frangenberg, Der Betrachter: Studien zur florentinischen Kunstliteratur des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts, Renaissance Studies, vol. 11, 1997, pp. 24-8

"Vasari Revisited," review of Patricia Rubin, Giorgio Vasari: Art and History, Oxford Art Journal, vol. 20, 1997, no. 2, pp. 84-6

Review of Ingrid Rowland, The Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in Sixteenth-Century Rome (caa reviews: [www.caareviews.org](http://www.caareviews.org))

"Suppressing History," review of Michael Ann Holly, Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image, Oxford Art Journal, vol. 22, 1999, pp. 205-9

Review of Patricia Emison, Low and High Style in Italian Renaissance Art, Art Bulletin, vol. 82, 2000, pp. 356-7

"Sticky Goo", review of James Elkins, Our Beautiful, Dry, and Distant Texts, Pictures and the Words that Fail Them, Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?, Oxford Art Journal, vol. 25, 2002, pp. 97-102

Review of Hans Belting, The Invisible Masterpiece, Art Bulletin, vol. 85, 2003, pp. 393-5

IN PROGRESS (selected):

Raphael's Modernity: Italian Renaissance Art and the Systematicity of Representation. A study of Raphael's achievement, concentrating on three aspects emphasized by his contemporaries and immediate followers but not given sufficient attention by modern scholars: 1) the principle of synthetic imitation -- the combination into one's own style of the outstanding features of other styles -- and its importance for all subsequent notions of artistic identity; 2) the principle of decorum, which stands for the deeper systematicity of representation and thus for the claim of art to be a philosophical and critical practice; and 3) the distinctive collaborative method developed in the artist's workshop, which is both a response to new economic pressures and an attempt to advance a new idea about the rational nature of creative activity.

Renaissance Theory (with James Elkins). An anthology of essays, together with the transcript of a conversation held at University College, Cork, in April, 2006, and responses solicited from more than twenty scholars, devoted to the current state of research in the field of Renaissance art history (under contract with Routledge).

Modern Art Theory: A Critical Overview. An introduction to modern art theory, similar in format to Art Theory: An Historical Introduction, listed above (under contract with Blackwell)

Nature and Negation in Italian Renaissance Art. A study high Renaissance and early mannerist drawings -- especially the drawings of Baccio Bandinelli, who, though largely forgotten today, was regarded by many of his contemporaries as the greatest draughtsman of his time (!) -- which addresses issues of technique, style, and expression, but directs the consideration of them to the overarching issue of disegno as a kind of performance and thus of art as a kind of work, a productive process parallel to, yet distinct from, nature, and which models our relation to nature in a distinctively complex, modern way.

Remembering Art History. A critical history of art history, more or less evenly divided between developments up until the 1960's and '70's, and those that come after, the so-called "new" art history.