

Artemisia Gentileschi: The Image of the Female Hero in Italian Baroque Art

By Mary D. Garrard

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Artemisia Gentileschi, widely regarded as the most important woman artist before the modern period, was a major Italian Baroque painter of the seventeenth century and the only female follower of Caravaggio. This first full-length study of her life and work shows that her powerfully original treatments of mythic-heroic female subjects depart radically from traditional interpretations of the same themes.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal
Garrard's in-depth study of Renaissance/Baroque painter Gentileschi is both timely and necessary. First, Garrard examines the life and work of the painter: the training with her artist father, the debt to Michelangelo and Caravaggio, the biblical and classical themes prevalent among her contemporaries, stylistic concerns, and her popularity, much-publicized rape, and influence. Then, using this information as context, Garrard proceeds to interpret the pictorial and spiritual contents of Gentileschi's paintings, contending that, while no one gainsays Gentileschi's skill, her true genius lies in her ability to empower mythic-heroic female subjects with "female artistic intelligence." In her novel, based on Gentileschi's life, Banti attempts to understand her own world, that of World War II Italy, through an imaginative and spiritual friendship with the 17th-century painter. Weaving back and forth between past and present, between a violated Artemesia and a violated Italy, Banti re-creates characters and landscapes. Through mastery of style and material, she builds a portrayal of courage and sorrow and creates a protagonist who moves from shadow to light. In both works, the final illumination belongs to the reader.
- *Lucy Breslin, Portland, Me.*
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Review
"[This book] is doubly welcome, both for its hitherto underrehearsed subject--one of the most accomplished female practitioners in the history of art--and for the exceptionally keen and questing intelligence which the author brings to her task."**--John Gash,** ***Art in America***

"Garrard brings her subject vividly to life as few scholars of the period have done for other artists.... [Her] powerfully argued, intelligent appreciation of every facet of Gentileschi's difficult life and artistic contribution will bring the artist a large, new audience."**--Ann Sutherland Harris,** ***The Women's Review of Books***

"If you read only one art history book this year, it should be Mary D. Garrard's *Artemisia Gentileschi*."**--Raymond B. Waddington,** ***Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900***

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