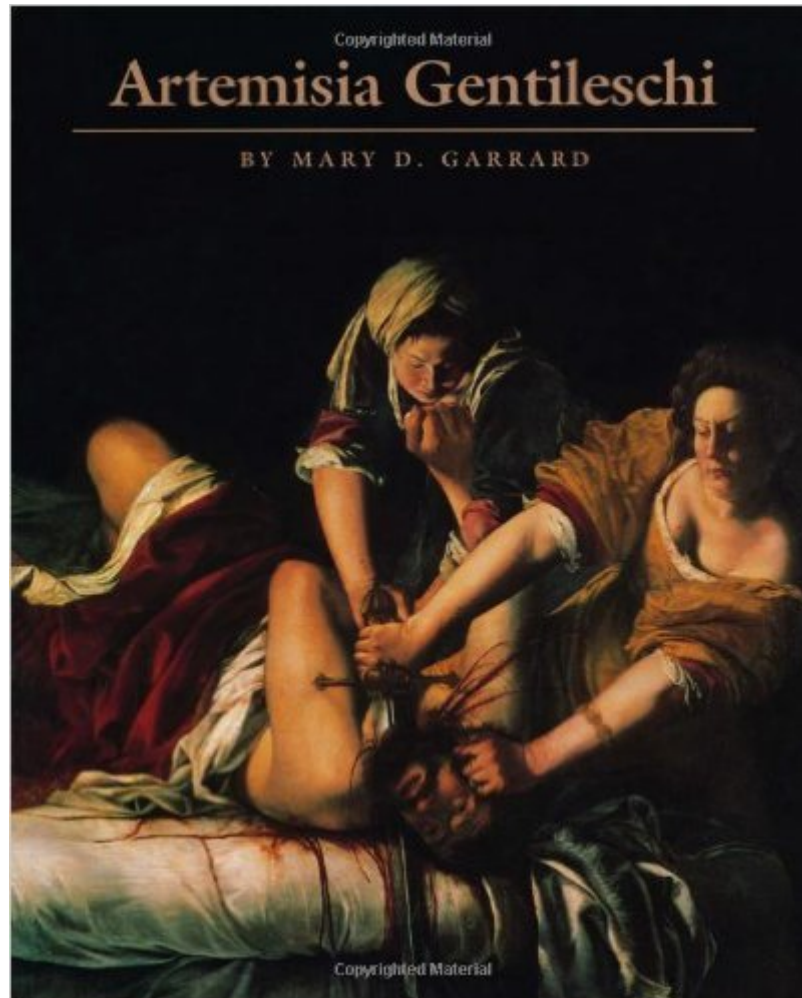


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Artemisia Gentileschi



Synopsis

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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Customer Reviews

If you want to travel into the mind of Artemisia Gentileschi, as Garrard obviously did, this book is an incredible asset to your journey. She takes you through Artemisia's life (Rome, Florence, Naples etc.) from the very first information to her death. Garrard has her ideas, but they are hardly overtly feminist or out of context. The intelligent reader goes beyond the author anyhow and reads the paintings. This book has copies of every known letter to have been written or received by Artemisia and most of her artwork, her complete rape trial, along with comparisons to her father's work and other artists that she had contact with. It is extremely fascinating and a more complete analysis of an artist's life that I have yet seen. ...and about Susanna- don't tell me for a minute that the woman who painted that strength of repulsion wasn't being threatened (not necessarily by Tassi but likely Cosimo or even Francesco- think about it) have you ever seen a Susanna that genuinely appalled? Most renditions of the tale feature fear, surprise, or complete oblivion (allure even). Her Susanna is truly defensive and angry; horrified and disgusted.

I think that this work delves significantly into the time that Gentileschi lived, bringing as many details as possible about her that are available to us. It is exceptionally well-researched and thought out. If you truly want to know anything about this artist, I feel it probably is in here somewhere. But, with that said, it is a very heavy book. Perhaps Garrard may be forgiven for forgetting to explain things that may be evident to her, but I found myself having to go on the internet to look up what she was talking about a lot of the time. I do not specialize in Italian art history, but I have a pretty good foundation in art history. I found her use of phrases in foreign languages without an English translation tiresome, and I didn't like having to flip back forth through the book so often to get the meaning of a thought. If you have to sit by a computer because you know you're going to need it every couple of pages, there is a problem. My other comment is that, while I respect Garrard's right to an educated opinion, it is just that. For instance, we don't know why Gentileschi painted several Judiths. It was a very popular subject then, and while her court experience and rape might well have led her to want to paint it, we simply do not know. Garrard repeats this and several other opinions ad nauseum, making an already ponderous tome even longer. I find Gentileschi's life and work fascinating, but I gave this book only three stars because, sadly, I am unlikely to have the desire/time to finish it. I am used to reading reference work, used to plodding through academic language, love comparisons with other artists of their time, and I'm willing to go the extra mile to understand an artist's work. But, after awhile I began to feel that Garrard cared more about publishing a brilliant work. Sadly, I think that Artemisia got a little lost in this.

An excellent examination of this remarkable painter's life and works. The discussion about Artemisia's contribution as a woman in art (including her role in shaping feminism) is interesting. The interpretations given of some of the paintings provide a fascinating look into her works. Highly recommended!!!

Mary Garrard pays scholarly tribute to Artemisia Gentileschi in this fine compilation. Anyone interested in Italian Baroque art, especially the Caravaggio followers, will find this book a great resource. Many color plates (most of the artist's most important works) and black and white images support the text.

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