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978-0-521-18433-5 - Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne

Robert Williams

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A critical study of the literature on the visual arts produced during the period generally known as the Late Renaissance, *Art, Theory, and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy* presents a bold reinterpretation of Renaissance art as a whole. Whereas traditional accounts have emphasized the specific concern with the visible, the centrality of naturalism, and the assimilation of contemporary scientific interests, Robert Williams argues that art comes to be redefined as an all-comprehending form of knowledge, a mode of knowing distinguished by its ability to superintend other modes and thus, ideally, to subordinate all. Using the writings of artist-theorists such as Vasari, Lomazzo, and Zuccaro, and of literary men such as Aretino, Tasso, and Bocchi, Williams is also able to show that this redefinition, radical and untenable as it may seem, actually documents a real historical event, an increase in the scope and coercive power of representation that accompanies – and in essential respects defines – the emergence of early modern culture.

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Robert Williams

University of California,

Santa Barbara



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521184335

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First published 1997

First paperback edition 2010

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Williams, Robert, 1955–

Art, theory, and culture in sixteenth-century Italy : from techne to metatechne / Robert Williams.

p. cm.

Includes index.

ISBN 0-521-49599-7 (hardback)

1. Art, Italian. 2. Art, High Renaissance – Italy. 3. Art, Late Renaissance – Italy. 4. Art and society – Italy – History – 16th century. I. Title

N6915.W525 1997

709'.45'09031 – dc21

96-46389

CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-49599-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-18433-5 Paperback

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To Carole

דרכיה דרכי-נעם וכל־
נתיבותיה שלום

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Acknowledgments

Financial support for an early version of the research project that resulted in this book was received in the form of a Dame Frances Yates Fellowship from the Warburg Institute of the University of London in 1986. Research was completed – almost – and writing begun during a year as National Endowment for the Humanities Postdoctoral Fellow in the History of Art at the American Academy in Rome (1990–91), during which time I received generous additional support from the College of Letters and Science, Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, Academic Senate, and Office of Research of the University of California, Santa Barbara. Further assistance was received in 1992 from the University of California in the form of a Regents' Humanities Faculty Fellowship. To all of these agencies I am extremely grateful.

The various research facilities, especially libraries, that extended their courtesies to me are too numerous to name, but I feel called upon to single out a few that I ransacked with particular ruthlessness: the British Library, the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. The Prefect of the last-named, Monsignor Leonard Boyle, did me an extraordinary favor. In California, I made myself a nuisance at the Getty Research Institute, and especially at the libraries of the University at Santa Barbara: the kind and efficient people in the Inter-Library Loan office probably began to suspect that I thought of them all as my personal research assistants.

The many people who, over the course of years, have contributed in various ways to my thoughts on the subject matter of this book are also

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

too numerous to name: the list would have to begin with an extraordinary grade-school teacher, Claude Falcone, who first made me realize what a serious thing art is. Perhaps I can be forgiven if I acknowledge here only those colleagues who read and commented on the draft. Of them I owe most to Martin Kemp; I am also grateful to David Cast, Clark Hulse, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Robert Montgomery, and Alessandro Nova. Parts were read, and astute suggestions made, by Thomas Frangenberg, Anthony Grafton and John Shearman, as well as by several of my colleagues at Santa Barbara: Ann Bermingham, Ulrich Keller, E. Bruce Robertson, and Abigail Solomon-Godeau.

My wife, Carole Paul, had to put up with more than even my usual degree of self-involvement; apart from the qualities alluded to in the dedication, I am deeply grateful for her patience and forbearance. To her, and to my daughter Julia – who hasn't yet known me when I wasn't fussing over what she recently characterized as this “dreary stuff” – I look forward to presenting a different aspect.