



Painting Women: Cosmetics, Canvases, and Early Modern Culture

By Patricia Phillippy

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This original analysis of the representation and self-representation of women in literature and visual arts revolves around multiple early modern senses of "painting": the creation of visual art in the form of paint on canvas and the use of cosmetics to paint women's bodies. Situating her study in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy, France, and England, Patricia Phillippy brings together three distinct actors: women who paint themselves with cosmetics, women who paint on canvas, and women and men who paint women?either with pigment or with words.

Phillippy asserts that early modern attitudes toward painting, cosmetics, and poetry emerge from and respond to a common cultural history. Materially, she connects those who created images of women with pigment to those who applied cosmetics to their own bodies through similar mediums, tools, techniques, and exposure to toxic materials. Discursively, she illuminates historical and social issues such as gender and morality with the nexus of painting, painted women, and women painters.

Teasing out the intricate relationships between these activities as carried out by women and their visual and literary representation by women and by men, Phillippy aims to reveal the delineation and transgression of women's creative roles, both artistic and biological. In *Painting Women*, Phillippy provides a cross-disciplinary study of women as objects and agents of painting.

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Editorial Review

Review

Phillippy's focus on the semantic slippage of 'painting' as verb, adjective, and noun yields a brilliantly substantive way of thinking about the individual discourses of painting, cosmetics, and poetry as they arise from a common historical background. Thoughtful, polished, and, best of all, intellectually engaging.

(Marshall Grossman, University of Maryland)

A deeply illuminating work on aspects of material culture... which shaped following ages.

(Henry Berry *Midwest Book Review*)

Phillippy strikes a delicate interpretive balance between contemporary criticism and specific historical periods, cultures, and genres that will undoubtedly guide future research.

(*H-France*)

One will undoubtedly be enriched by many of the previously obscured glimpses that she has succeeded in unveiling.

(Yael Even *Renaissance Quarterly*)

Painting Women: Cosmetics, Canvases, and Early Modern Culture not only offers an enlightening argument, but also a productive direction and excellent model for feminist scholarship.

(Marguerite A. Tassi *Shakespeare Yearbook*)

This complicated subject leads to a study of early modern culture in England, France and Italy that is revealing.

(*Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*)

Painting Women makes a worthwhile contribution to the study of women and gender identity in early modern art and literature, and is likely to be of interest to scholars of early modern art, literature, and history.

(Danae T. Orlins *Sixteenth Century Journal*)

This ambitious project involves imaginative, if not acrobatic, yokings of the verbal and visual arts.

(Ann A. Huse *Clio*)

Painting Women makes an important contribution to the study of representation in early modern Europe.

(Kate van Orden *Journal of Women's History*)

About the Author

Patricia Phillippy is a professor of English at Texas A&M University.

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