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**Art and History, 1969–2019** This article discusses a half-century of encounters between art historians and generalist historians, and their consequences for the study of art. On the history side, scholars such as Maurice Agulhon, Patrick Boucheron, Georges Duby (an amateur painter), Carlo Ginzburg (a painter in his youth), Serge Gruzinski, Simon Schama, Carl Schorske, and Jan de Vries might all be described as friendly “invaders” of art history, incorporating art into their vision of the past. Art historians who have in their turn invaded history, to everyone’s benefit, include Svetlana Alpers, Michael Baxandall, Hans Belting, Albert Boime, Horst Bredekamp, Michael Camille, Timothy Clark, Jaś Elsner, David Freedberg, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, Sergiusz Michalski, Martin Warnke, and Paul Zanker.

On occasion, individuals from the two disciplines have worked together, reducing the risks that are often involved in frontier crossings. For example, Brown, a historian of Spanish painting, and Elliott, a historian of early modern Spain, collaborated on a book about the seventeenth-century Spanish palace of the Buen Retiro, viewing it as a case study in “the complex relationship of art and politics” and aiming at a “total” history of both the construction and the “first occupation” of the palace in the 1630s. More often, essays by historians and art historians appear side by side in collective volumes such as the special issue of the *JIH* entitled “Art and History” (1986), published in book form two years later, or the special issue of the journal *Art History* (2018) devoted to “Art and Religious Reform.” The latter volume revealed, according to one of its editors, “how porous traditional disciplinary boundaries have become.” Conferences have encouraged the dialogue between

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the two disciplines. Scholars from other disciplines or outside the academic world altogether have sometimes joined in the conversation—for instance, Barrell (English literature), Montias (economics), Alsop (journalism), Kempers (sociology), Gell (anthropology), and Matless (geography).<sup>1</sup>

THE OLD REGIME The boundaries were not always porous; before the 1960s, the situation was vastly different. History and art history were usually studied and taught in different departments, and often in different buildings, at research universities from the mid-nineteenth century onward. In the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, courses in modern history were established in 1872 and 1873. Germany, the original home of the professional historian, had ninety tenured history professors (*Ordinarien*) in the year 1900. Chairs in art history, a particularly strong subject in the German-speaking world, were founded at the universities of Berlin (1844), Vienna (1852), Zurich (1856), Basel (1858), and Bonn (1860). In the United States, lectureships in art history were established at the universities of Michigan (1852) and Princeton (1859). Britain lagged behind—first at Edinburgh (1880) and later at Oxford (1955).<sup>2</sup>

1 Jonathan Brown and John H. Elliott, *A Palace for a King: The Buen Retiro and the Court of Philip IV* (New Haven, 1980). Another collaboration that same year was Loren Partridge and Randolph Starn, *A Renaissance Likeness: Art and Culture in Raphael's Julius II* (Berkeley, 1980). Theodore K. Rabb and Robert Rotberg (eds.), *Art and History: Images and Their Meaning* (New York, 1988), which was first a special issue, "The Evidence of Art: Images and Meaning in History," *JIH*, XXXVII (1986), 1–310; Bridget Heal and Joseph L. Koerner (eds.), the special issue, "Art and Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe," *Art History*, XL (2018), 240–455; Heal, "Art and Religious Reform in Early Modern Europe," in *idem* and Koerner (eds.), *Art and History*, 12. *JIH*'s special issue derived from a conference. So did Freedberg and de Vries (eds.), *Art in History: History in Art: Studies in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Culture* (Chicago, 1991), "dedicated to advancing the dialogue" between history and art history. John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840* (New York, 1980); Michael Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft: A Socio-Economic Study of the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton, 1982); Joseph Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting* (London, 1982); Bram Kempers (trans. Beverley Jackson), *Painting, Power and Patronage: The Rise of the Professional Artist in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1992; orig. pub. 1987); Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency* (New York, 1998); David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London, 2001).

2 Imline Veit-Brause, "The Disciplining of History," in Rolf Torstendahl and Veit-Brause (eds.), *History-Making: The Intellectual and Social Formation of a Discipline* (Stockholm, 1996), 7–30; Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte e. Disziplin* (Frankfurt, 1979); Wolfgang Beyrodt, "Kunstgeschichte als Universitätsfach," in Peter F. Ganz (ed.), *Kunst und Kunsttheorie: 1400–1900* (Wiesbaden, 1991), 313–333.

Separation was not complete. Jacob Burckhardt, who occupied chairs in both art history and history, published essays on Renaissance architecture and altarpieces as well as his famous fresco of Italian Renaissance culture. Aby Warburg, an independent scholar, did not need to worry about the frontiers between disciplines and what he called their “guards” when he wrote his famous essays about Florentine portraits, the last will and testament of a Florentine merchant, astrological themes in frescoes in Ferrara, and so on. Johan Huizinga was inspired to write *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London, 1924) by a visit to an exhibition of Flemish “primitives” in Bruges. Marxist historians of art such as Frederick Antal, Francis Klingender, and Meyer Shapiro all refused to exclude economic, social, and political history from their studies.<sup>3</sup>

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY MOMENT Notwithstanding those precedents, the 1960s and 1970s marked a turning point. The two disciplines began to converge in earnest at a time of increasing enthusiasm for academic interdisciplinarity, marked by the foundation of new institutions in a number of different countries, among them the universities of Sussex (1961), Bochum (1962), Konstanz (1966), La Trobe (1967), Bielefeld (1969), and Linköping (1970). The foundation of the *JIH* in 1969 formed part of that conjuncture.

Art historians who were looking outward at this time included the Australian Bernard Smith, author of *European Vision in the South Pacific: A Study in the History of Art and Ideas* (Oxford, 1960); the Englishman Francis Haskell, author of *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New York, 1964); and the Swede Allan Ellenius, whose *Karolinska Bildidéer* (Uppsala, 1966) was concerned with the relation between art and ideas. Both Smith and Ellenius had studied at the Warburg Institute, and Rubinstein, a historian who interpreted a number of fourteenth-century frescoes as evidence for political ideas, published his essay in the Institute’s journal in 1958.<sup>4</sup>

3 Huizinga (trans. Fritz Hopman), *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (London, 1924), orig. pub. in Dutch as *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam, 1919). The original title, *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, was used in the second (fuller) English version (trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch, Chicago, 1996).

4 Nicolai Rubinstein, “Political Ideas in Sieneese Art: The Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXI (1958), 179–207.

From the 1970s onward, this trickle became a flood. Among the most important early contributions from the side of the art historians were books by Baxandall (1972), Clark (1973), Bredekamp (1975), Warnke (1976), and Girouard (1978). Artistic genres such as the landscape and the portrait were placed, or more exactly replaced, in their social and political contexts. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraits were examined as expressions of individualism or, as Erving Goffman put it, “the presentation of self,” while nineteenth-century paintings of typical national landscapes (in Britain, Scandinavia, the United States, and elsewhere) were analyzed as expressions of national identity.<sup>5</sup>

Why did art historians make this turn toward generalist history at this time? The shift from an overwhelming concern with style to an interest in iconography, exemplified by the work of Erwin Panofsky and Jan Białostocki, encouraged the turn, although it does not fully explain it. Another part of the story is the discovery of “context.” Like their colleagues in departments of literature, art historians were becoming increasingly concerned with the milieu or situation from which the works that they studied emerged—from the micro-milieu of art patronage to the wider milieu of political events. Such concerns were no longer left to Marxists.

The generalist historians’ desire to include art in their studies was part of a wider movement for a “total history” best known in its French incarnation, the so-called “*Annales* School,” but visible in other countries as well. In an attempt to include every aspect of human life, this movement turned not only to texts for evidence

5 Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (New York, 1972); Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London, 1973); Bredekamp, *Kunst als Medium soziale Konflikte: Bilderkämpfe von d. Spätantike bis z. Hussitenrevolution* (Frankfurt am Main, 1975); Boehm, *Bildnis und Individuum* (Munich, 1985); Burke, “The Presentation of Self in the Renaissance Portrait,” in *Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (New York, 1987), 150–167; Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York, 1959); Ann J. Adams, *Public Faces, Private Identities: Portraiture and the Production of Identity in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Holland* (New York, 1998); Warnke, *Politische Landschaft: zur Kunstgeschichte der Natur* (Munich, 1992); Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National Identity in England and the United States* (New York, 1993); Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Rural Scenes and National Representation: Britain 1815–1850* (Princeton, 1997); Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*. At this time, social historians began to incorporate architecture into their studies. We omit this perspective from the discussion for lack of space, but pioneering works in this vein include Warnke, *Bau und Überbau: Soziologie der mittelalterlichen Architektur nach den Schriftquellen* (Frankfurt am Main, 1976); Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 1978).

but also to objects, such as images. Febvre, one of the founders of the group, who called himself a disciple of art historian Louis Courajod, gave lectures on the art of the French Renaissance; Braudel, the group's leader in its second generation, included artists in his study of Italians abroad.<sup>6</sup>

All the same, historians appeared to be—and perhaps remain—less bold, less likely to move into the territory of art than art historians are to move the other way. Significantly, in 1979, Agulhon, another member of the *Annales* group, still felt the need to defend his study of the history of Marianne as the female personification of France against the idea that it was trivial. Nonetheless, further studies by historians such as Elliott (1980), Starn (1980), Ginzburg (1981), and Scribner (1981) quickly followed, and not long thereafter, many more.<sup>7</sup>

The convergence of history and art history has resulted in a body of work too large to analyze in detail herein. The art of the Italian Renaissance in particular has attracted scholarly approaches from many angles—economic, social, political, and artistic—for a long time. Studies have often focused on the patronage system and the responses of artists to its constraints. Witness, for example, the work of Antal (1947) and, more recently, Kent and Simons (1987), Hollingsworth (1994), Dale Kent (2000), Jill Burke (2004), and O'Malley (2005). The surviving contracts clearly reveal that the balance of power was on the patrons' side and that artists who are now famous were treated in their day like ordinary artisans. One of the achievements of the generalist historians in this field has been to show how art patronage formed part of a much wider system of patron–client relations.<sup>8</sup>

6 Lucien Febvre (ed. and trans. Marian Rothstein), *Life in Renaissance France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977); Fernand Braudel (trans. Sian Reynolds), *Out of Italy 1450–1650* (Ann Arbor, 2008; orig. pub. 1991).

7 Agulhon, *Marianne au combat: l'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1789 à 1880* (Paris, 1979); Brown and Elliott, *Palace*; Partridge and Starn, *Renaissance Likeness*; Ginzburg, *Indagini su Piero: il Battesimo, il ciclo di Arezzo, la Flagellazione di Urbino* (Turin, 1981); Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (New York, 1981).

8 Frederick Antal, *Florentine Painting and Its Social Background* (London, 1947); F. William Kent and Patricia Simons (eds.), *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1987); Mary Hollingsworth, *Patronage in Renaissance Italy* (London, 1994); Dale Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven, 2000); Jill Burke, *Changing Patrons: Social Identity and the Visual Arts in Renaissance Florence* (University Park, 2004); Michelle O'Malley, *The Business of Art: Contracts and the Commissioning Process in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, 2005); Guy F. Lytle and Stephen Orgel (eds.), *Patronage in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1981).

Because the Renaissance is often in the limelight, it is more illuminating to examine other movements, periods, and topics. This article therefore proceeds with an analysis of three case studies—art and the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the rise of the art market in the eighteenth century, and the proliferation of political monuments in the nineteenth century—before discussing two general problems, that of agency and that of deciding what counts as “art.”

THE REFORMATION The explosion, from the 1980s onward, of studies about the importance of art (or, more generally, of images) in both the Catholic and Protestant reformations offers an example of both the convergence and the continuing difference between the interests of art historians and those of plain historians. These studies tend to center on two main themes, one negative and the other positive. The negative theme is iconoclasm, the destruction of images; its complementary opposite is propaganda, the making of images in order to persuade. Notwithstanding the investigation of both themes in various regions and throughout various periods, from early medieval Byzantium to the twentieth century, the scholarly concentration of studies on the sixteenth century remains remarkable.<sup>9</sup>

Odd as it may seem that one of the richest examples of collaboration between generalist historians and art historians should be the destruction rather than the creation of art, it makes perfect sense given the problems that iconoclasm poses. For generalist historians, iconoclasm is primarily a historical phenomenon in need of explanation. Is it an example of “mindless” violence, or did it have a purpose? For a subset of this group, ecclesiastical historians, what matters is to reconstruct the arguments for and against the legitimacy of religious images. For art historians, however, iconoclasm, which was “written out” of art history until the 1970s, is

9 The scholarly concentration of studies on the sixteenth century include, besides the studies cited in the following paragraph, Hans-Dietrich Altendorf (ed.), *Bilderstreit* (Zurich, 1984); Carlos Eire, *War against the Idols* (New York, 1986); Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts* (New York, 1988); Michalski, *The Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (New York, 1993; orig. pub. 1989); Scribner (ed.), *Bilder und Bildersturm* (Wiesbaden, 1990); Gruzinski, *La guerre des images* (Paris, 1990); Olivier Christin, *Une révolution symbolique: L'iconoclasm Huguenot et la reconstruction catholique* (Paris, 1991); Lee P. Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands: Iconoclasm in Reformation Zürich, Strasbourg and Basel* (New York, 1995).

both a disaster, depriving the world of magnificent works of art, and precious evidence of the public response to images.<sup>10</sup>

Two books published in the 1980s typify the contrast. The first, written by two French historians, explicates the wave of iconoclasm in Flanders and northern France in the summer of 1566 in myriad ways—by mapping its distribution, reconstructing its chronology, identifying its participants, determining whether it was spontaneous or premeditated, assessing the relevance of the poor harvest of that year, and, finally, interpreting the destruction as a ritual of purification by zealous Protestants who associated images with idolatry. In similar fashion, Heimpel, a German medieval historian, who tried to identify the iconoclasts, summarized his conclusions in the epigram, *Die Bilderstürmer waren die Bilderstifter* (often translated, “the image breakers were the image makers,” meaning not the artists but the people who had paid for images and became angry when Martin Luther and other preachers told them that they had spent their money in vain).<sup>11</sup>

The second book, written by Freedberg (whose dissertation at Oxford in 1972 treated iconoclasm and painting in the Netherlands), bears the subtitle *Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. In his chapter devoted to iconoclasm, Freedberg shows himself to be well aware of the historical context studied by Deyon and Lottin in *Les casseurs de l'été 1566*, but he is more interested in what he accuses the “purely empirical historians” of neglecting, “the deeper psychological issues”—the emotions triggered by images and the power and the paradoxes of iconoclasm in all periods. “We love art and hate it; we cherish it and are afraid; we know of its powers.” Hence, the book’s title, *The Power of Images*. More recently, Joseph Koerner noted Luther’s claim that iconoclasts felt the need to break images precisely because they took their power seriously.<sup>12</sup>

Koerner also studied the devotional art of the Lutherans, who were less iconophobic than the Zwinglians and the Calvinists but preferred their paintings to adopt a more modest style, as visitors to churches in Saxony or Denmark can still observe today. In any

10 Koerner, “Afterword,” in Heal and *idem* (eds.), *Art and Religious Reform*, 216.

11 Solange Deyon and Alain Lottin, *Les casseurs de l'été 1566: l'iconoclasme dans le Nord de la France* (Paris, 1981); Christin, *Une révolution symbolique*, also stresses purification. Hermann Heimpel, *Der Mensch in seiner Gegenwart* (Göttingen, 1954), 134.

12 Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989), 390, 388; Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (London, 2004), 153–168.

case, Huldrych Zwingli objected only to images in churches. Both he and Jean Calvin allowed images to be displayed in houses as moral examples. The unintended consequences of the Reformation may also have been important. It was suggested long ago that the ban on religious images in churches (or “temples,” as Calvinists often preferred to call them) led to a rise of secular paintings in the Dutch Republic and elsewhere, the response of artists to a fall in the demand for Madonnas and saints.<sup>13</sup>

The study of sixteenth-century art as a means of religious persuasion or propaganda also came to prominence during the 1980s. For example, the historian Scribner turned to the study of images as a means to discover popular attitudes regarding the Lutheran Reformation, which occurred at a time when most Germans—the “simple folk,” as Luther called them—could not read. Scribner studied cheap prints that vividly contrasted the poverty and humility of Christ with the greed and arrogance of the pope, and (ironically enough) presented Luther as a saint with a halo at a time when Luther and other Protestant leaders were trying to do away with the cult of saints. A few years later, the art historian Keith Moxey produced a complementary study also focused on cheap German woodcuts of the early sixteenth century. Despite the reference to “popular imagery” in his title, Moxey was hostile to descriptions of these woodcuts as “folk art” or as a “mass medium.” Like Scribner, he viewed these images as part of a campaign by elites to persuade ordinary people to support what we call the Reformation.<sup>14</sup>

On the Catholic side, Emile Mâle’s *L’art religieux après le Concile de Trente* (Paris, 1932) had already identified changes in religious iconography and placed them in the context of the Counter-Reformation. Later scholars took up the mantle of Mâle’s pioneering work. De Maio, for instance, produced two case studies of Counter-Reformation art, one on Michelangelo and the other on Naples. Gruzinski, a historian of Latin America,

13 Andrew Morrall, “The Family at Table: Protestant Identity, Self-Representation and the Limits of the Visual in Seventeenth-Century Zurich,” in Heal and Koerner (eds.), *Art and Religious Reform*, 336–357. For this argument about the ban, which goes back at least as far as the nineteenth-century Dutch minister (and Prime Minister) Abraham Kuyper, see Seymour Slive, “Notes on the Relationship of Protestantism to Seventeenth-Century Dutch Painting,” *Art Quarterly*, XIX (1956), 2–15.

14 Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*; Keith Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors and Wives: Popular Imagery in the Reformation* (Chicago, 1989), 8–9.



wrote several books about the history of images, primarily in colonial Mexico, and what he calls the “image war” waged by Catholic missionaries, who destroyed what they called the “idols” of indigenous gods (iconoclasm was not confined to Protestants) and replaced them with images of Catholic saints. Particular attention has been paid to the role of Jesuits both as patrons and occasionally as artists. Some studies tackle the controversial question of the distinctiveness of their contribution to the art of the Counter-Reformation. Others employ modern theories of propaganda to analyze the function of the images produced by or for the Jesuit order.<sup>15</sup>

THE RISE OF THE ART MARKET A different opportunity for collaboration, this time between economic historians and art historians, derives from the growing interest in the early history of the art market. It is surely no coincidence that this interest has developed at a time when today’s art market makes so many headlines, thanks to the higher and higher prices paid for selected works of art, both old and new.

In Renaissance Italy, most paintings were produced for individual patrons, “made on a bespoke basis,” as Baxandall once put it. In Italy, the sale of works of art to individuals who had not commissioned them goes back at least to the fourteenth century. The art market probably thrived more than surviving documents reveal; unlike commissioned works, cheap works that were sold informally (in markets and fairs or directly from the workshop) would presumably not have required contracts or elaborate records of any kind. Some religious paintings of popular subjects, such as Annunciations or Nativities, might be left unfinished to accommodate the requirements of particular customers, thus occupying a space between the market and patronage systems.<sup>16</sup>

The evidence for the purchase of paintings “off the peg” is greater in the southern Netherlands, the Dutch Republic, and, as the market system expanded in the eighteenth century, elsewhere. In the case of late fifteenth-century Bruges, Martens noted

15 Romeo De Maio, *Michelangelo e la Controriforma* (Rome, 1978); *idem*, *Pittura e Controriforma a Napoli* (Rome, 1983); Gruzinski, *La guerre des images*; Rudolf Wittkower and Irma B. Jaffé (eds.), *Baroque Art: The Jesuit Contribution* (New York, 1972); Evonne Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley, 2004).

16 Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 1.

“the increase of on spec production of cheaper works.” A similar increase took place in sixteenth-century Antwerp and in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, followed in the eighteenth century by the rise of an art market in Rome, Paris, and London, as well as in other cities. This trend did not develop in isolation but formed part of what is often described as the commercialization of Western European society.<sup>17</sup>

A major contribution to this growing field of study came from Montias, a Yale economist previously known for his studies of central planning in Poland and economic development in Communist Romania. Montias moved to art history in mid-career, producing a series of books about Dutch art in the seventeenth century from an economic perspective. In a case study of the city of Delft, based mainly on the evidence of inventories, Montias estimated that the city had “forty to fifty thousand paintings” c. 1650, their owners amounting to “perhaps two-thirds of the population.” Most of the paintings were bought cheaply, for “two gulden or less.” In similar fashion, van der Woude, a Dutch economic historian, estimated that 25 million paintings were produced in the Dutch Republic between 1580 and 1800.<sup>18</sup>

Alongside new works, a market in second-hand pictures or “old masters” was becoming important by the seventeenth century, as collecting works of art became more and more fashionable among princes, such as Philip IV and Charles I, as well as among aristocrats. The investigation of the history of collections and collectors has been growing ever since the launch of the *Journal for the History of Collections* in 1989. In this interdisciplinary enterprise, museum curators and art historians have joined forces with

17 Maximilian P. J. Martens, “Some Aspects of the Origins of the Art Market in Fifteenth-Century Bruges,” in Michael North and David Ormrod (eds.), *Art Markets in Europe, 1400–1800* (Aldershot, 1998), 26. See also Lorne Campbell, “The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century,” *Burlington Magazine*, 118 (1976), 188–198. Elizabeth A. Honig, *Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp* (New Haven, 1998), 13–18; Paolo Coen, *Il mercato dei quadri a Roma nel diciottesimo secolo* (Florence, 2010); David Ormrod, “The Origins of the London Art Market,” in Michael North and *idem* (eds.), *Art Markets in Europe, 1400–1800* (New York, 1998), 167–186; Antoine Schnapper, “Probate Inventories, Public Sales and the Parisian Art Market,” *ibid.*, 131–142.

18 Michael Montias, *Artists and Artisans*, 220, 327; Ad van der Woude, “The Volume and Value of Paintings in Holland at the Time of the Dutch Republic,” in Freedberg and de Vries (eds.), *Art in History*, 285–372.

historians of consumption, sociologists, and even psychologists, some of whom treat collecting as pathological.<sup>19</sup>

At the more expensive end of the scale, the art market took the form of what Alsop called “a cultural-behavioral system”—a network of institutions and social roles that included, and still includes, art auctions, exhibitions, dealers, forgers, connoisseurs (in other words, well-informed collectors, whether concerned with rarity or with skill), critics (publishing reviews of exhibitions, as Denis Diderot did in his *Salons*), and art historians (often called upon to authenticate the attribution of unsigned works to famous artists).<sup>20</sup>

Competition is an essential element in the market system. In the Dutch Republic of the seventeenth century, for instance, many artists responded to it by what economists call “product differentiation.” Different artists specialized in different subject matter—landscapes, portraits, still lifes, and various “genre” paintings. As the division of labor increased, these genres came to be subdivided. Seascapes and townscapes appeared alongside landscapes. Some painters of still lifes specialized in flowers and others in “Vanitas” paintings in which objects such as hourglasses, clocks, and newspapers showing their date of publication all emphasized the brevity of human life. Genre painters produced tavern scenes, market scenes, and kitchens. Others concentrated on church interiors or on skating scenes. Needless to say, attempts to examine art as an economic enterprise have proved controversial. A well-known sensitive case involved art historian Alpers’ study of Rembrandt’s workshop, which received a favorable review in the *Journal of Economic History* but a denunciation as reductionist from some of her colleagues in art history.<sup>21</sup>

On the consumer’s side, one response to the market system was investment in art, whether in the narrow sense of buying works to sell for profit or in the wider sense of buying them for

19 Classic studies in this field include Krzysztof Pomian (trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Portier), *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice 1500–1800* (Oxford, 1990; orig. pub. 1987); Jaś Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.), *The Cultures of Collecting* (London, 1994); Brown, *Kings and Connoisseurs: Collecting Art in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Europe* (New Haven, 1995). For the pathology, see Werner Muensterberger, *Collecting, an Unruly Passion: Psychological Perspectives* (Princeton, 1994).

20 Montias, *Artists and Artisans*, 183–219; Alsop, *Rare Art Traditions*; Thomas Crowe, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, 1985).

21 Alpers, *Rembrandt’s Enterprise: The Studio and the Market* (Chicago, 1995).

what Bourdieu called “symbolic capital,” an important means of social mobility. Studies of this phenomenon by economic and social historians may not be common, but they are not lacking either. Other scholars have investigated the relationship between increasing wealth and the growing demand for art in the Dutch Republic or between “the sudden explosive rise of Dutch economic power [and] the similarly surprising and rapid flowering of Dutch cultural life” in the seventeenth century, including painting.<sup>22</sup>

THE POLITICS OF MONUMENTS The interaction between art and politics has aroused even more interest than that between art and economics. Three generalist historians—Rubinstein, Skinner, and Boucheron—have written about the frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the town hall (Palazzo Pubblico) of Siena, viewing them as contributions to political theory. In our age of advertising, it is no surprise to discover a large and ever-expanding literature on the “fabrication,” “marketing,” or “selling” of public images of rulers, from the Roman emperor Augustus to Benito Mussolini, via the emperor Maximilian, the Tudors, and King Louis XIV. Other historians prefer to employ the concept of propaganda, which is technically an anachronism if employed before the age of the French Revolution but a useful anachronism all the same.<sup>23</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, statues of rulers were sometimes erected on public squares. They included monuments to Grand Duke Cosimo de’ Medici on Piazza della Signoria in Florence; Louis XIV on Place des Victoires in Paris; and Peter the Great on Senate Square in St. Petersburg, the “bronze horseman”

22 Annalisa Guarducci (ed.), *Investimenti e civiltà urbana, secoli xiii–xviii* (Florence, 1989); Richard Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300–1600* (Baltimore, 1993); de Vries, “Art History” in Freedberg and *idem* (eds.), *Art in History*, 255.

23 Quentin Skinner, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, LXXII (1987), 1–58 (a reply to Rubinstein’s “Political Ideas in Siennese Art”); Boucheron (trans. Andrew Brown), *The Power of Images* (New York, 2018; orig. pub. 2013). For an intervention by an art historian, see Enrico Castelnuovo, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti: Il buon governo* (Milan, 1995). Dino Biondi, *La fabbrica del duce* (Florence, 1967); Zanker (trans. Alan Shapiro), *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, 1990; orig. pub. 1987); Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, 1992); Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian: The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton, 2008); Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven, 2009); Henk van Veen, “Art and Propaganda in Late Renaissance and Baroque Florence,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XLVII (1984), 106–118; Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque*.

described in a poem by Alexander Pushkin. The nineteenth century, however, was the great age of “statuomania,” to borrow Agulhon’s term. Noting that the rise of statues followed the revolutions of 1789, 1830, and 1870, Agulhon suggested that the preponderance of figures who were neither saints nor kings should be interpreted as an expression of secular, liberal values. Since his work in the 1970s, studies of this phenomenon have multiplied, encouraged by the boom in historical studies of nationalism and memory.<sup>24</sup>

As in the case of religious art, attention has been paid to both the destruction of secular images and their fabrication. This interest was doubtless encouraged by the wave of political iconoclasm that followed the demise of Communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, sweeping away statues of Joseph Stalin, Vladimir Lenin, and Felix Dzerzhinsky (head of the Soviet secret police). McBride, an Irish historian (who was surely thinking of Admiral Horatio Nelson’s Pillar in Dublin, blown up by the Irish Republican Army in 1966), described this form of destruction as “a tradition of explosive de-commemoration.” It co-exists alongside a non-violent tradition of removal and re-erection of monuments, usually in some form of open-air museum or statue park. Statues of Queen Victoria are still standing in Delhi, for instance, as are statues of Stalin in Budapest. Less dramatic, this practice also deserves study as an aspect of the links between political and cultural history.<sup>25</sup>

Two major themes dominated the study of public monuments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first theme is a political one, nationalism. In Latin American cities, bronze horsemen are highly visible, usually in the form of national liberators like José San Martín and Manuel Belgrano in Buenos Aires; San Martín and Bernardo O’Higgins in Santiago; José Gervasio Artigas in Montevideo; and Simon Bolívar in Caracas, Bogotá, Lima, and Medellín. In many Italian cities, statues of Giuseppe Garibaldi (nearly 400 of them), or, less frequently (and standing rather than riding), of Camillo Benso, count of Cavour, have a

24 Agulhon, “La ‘statuomanie’ et l’histoire,” *Ethnologie française*, VIII (1978), 145–172; Boime, *Hollow Icons: the Politics of Sculpture in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century France* (Kent, Ohio, 1987); Lars Berggren and Lennart Sjöstedt, *L’ombra dei grandi: monumenti e politica monumentale a Roma, 1870–1895* (Rome, 1996); Michalski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage, 1870–1997* (London, 1998).

25 Dario Gamboni, *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (London, 1996); Ian McBride, “Memory and National Identity in Modern Ireland,” in *idem* (ed.), *History and Memory in Modern Ireland* (New York, 2001), 2n.

similar prominence on public squares, many of them erected soon after the unification of Italy in 1871. Statues of Dante, which are homages to the nation as much as to poetry, are also ubiquitous. In what was newly united Germany, Otto von Bismarck and Johann Wolfgang Goethe took the places of Cavour and Dante. The United States, too, has what Boime, an art historian, calls its “national icons,” from the Statue of Liberty to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Many statues of Confederate generals such as Robert E. Lee and Thomas Jonathan (better known as “Stonewall”) Jackson in the South, monuments to a failed attempt at independence, are now waiting their turn for de-commemoration.<sup>26</sup>

The second theme in recent studies of public monuments is a social one, patronage, whether public or private. As Savage remarked, “Public monuments do not arise as if by natural law to celebrate the deserving: they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent to their erection.” The attempt to discover what kind of people these were has inspired much recent research. Boime made the point that given the cost of production, sculptors, much more than painters, needed support from the state, and that the French government used sculpture “to project a particular image.” So did municipalities. After 1871, the city council of Paris was responsible for some significant commissions, notably the monument to the Republic (1883) on Place de la République and the Triumph of the Republic (1899) on Place de la Nation. Statues of heroes of the Revolution, such as Jean-Paul Marat and Georges Danton, reinforced the message, and statues of Étienne Dolet and Diderot paid respect to individuals regarded as the Revolution’s precursors.<sup>27</sup>

France was not alone in this political use of sculpture. In Britain, James Wolfe’s monument in the Abbey, in which Prime Minister William Pitt (the Elder) took a close interest, was “the first memorial built as state propaganda.” Nelson’s Column in Trafalgar Square, erected through a public subscription organized by a committee mainly composed of members of both Houses of Parliament, straddles the frontier between public and private

26 Albert Boime, *The Unveiling of the National Icons* (New York, 1998); Hans A. Pohlsander, *National Monuments and Nationalism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Germany* (New York, 2008).

27 Kirk Savage, “The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument,” in John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, 1994), 135; Boime, *Hollow Icons*, 4; Michalski, *Public Monuments*, 13–55.

initiative. In Italy, tourists who pass the statue of Giordano Bruno on Campo de' Fiori in Rome are usually unaware that it was the brainchild of Prime Minister Francesco Crispi, who had it built to honor a leading heretic and thus strike a blow against the Church.<sup>28</sup>

Other monuments were the result of subscriptions from individuals outside the public sphere. In fact, the original idea of a monument to Bruno came from the University of Rome and had the endorsement of the Freemasons before Crispi intervened. The subscription campaign for a statue of Voltaire in Paris, which began in 1867, was led by Léonor-Joseph Havin, a republican anticlerical politician and journalist. A stroll through central London will quickly produce examples of other group initiatives, with the evidence coming from inscriptions on the pedestals. In Waterloo Place, for instance, a plaque describes the statue of Field Marshal John Fox Burgoyne as having been “erected by his brother officers of the Royal Engineers.” The statue of the explorer Robert Scott, better known as “Scott of the Antarctic,” was “erected by officers of the fleet” and that of John Lawrence, Viceroy of India, “by his fellow subjects, British and Indian” (it would be interesting to know which Indians gave their rupees to this cause).<sup>29</sup>

THE PROBLEM OF AGENCY If art expresses attitudes to political events, historians need to discover whose attitudes they are. More generally, the half-century from 1969 to 2019 has seen a major shift in the social history of art, away from viewing images as an expression or even a “reflection” of society (as Marxists like Arnold Hauser used to say) and toward viewing them as powerful in their own right. The titles of many important studies symbolize this shift in orientation.<sup>30</sup>

The concern with power is linked to an emphasis on action. Boime discussed both the inauguration and destruction of monuments as patently political acts. Bredekamp recently produced an essay about the theory of the pictorial act. The interest in action is

28 Holger Hoock, *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War and the Arts in the British World, 1750–1850* (London, 2010), 44; Lars Berggren, *Giordano Bruno på Campo dei Fiori; Ett monument projekt i Rom, 1876–1889* (Lund, 1991).

29 Jean-Marie Goulemot and Eric Walter, “Les centenaires de Voltaire et de Rousseau,” in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Lieux de Mémoire* (Paris, 1984), I, 381–420.

30 Zanker, *Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*; Freedberg, *Power of Images*; Boucheron, *Power of Images* (translating the French subtitle, “essai sur la force politique des images”).

visible in other disciplines, too. Skinner's notion of the "speech act" was borrowed from philosophy and linguistics to intellectual history. In the study of literature, the "literary act" has become a center of interest. In anthropology, Gell's *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford, 1998) has become a classic. Rejecting alternative approaches to the anthropology of art, Gell attributed agency to inanimate objects. His book is concerned with abstract patterns as well as with human or animal figures and with the modern world as well as with the traditional societies traditionally studied by anthropologists.<sup>31</sup>

WHAT IS ART? The masks and totem poles with which anthropologists have often been concerned are certainly objects, but are they "art"? The question prompts a much more general one: What is art? Warburg, a pioneer of *Kulturwissenschaft* ("Cultural Studies," but in a wider sense than the term is currently employed in the Anglophone world) liked to describe himself not as a historian of art but as a "historian of images" (*Bildhistoriker*). Belting, an art historian—the author of a book on "the anthropology of the image," another entitled *The End of Art History?* and a third on *The History of the Image Before the Age of Art*—argued that the concept of art did not emerge in Europe until the Renaissance and that it lost its usefulness in the early twentieth century, with the rise of abstract art.<sup>32</sup>

Studies of objects in different places raise problems similar to the ones that Belting identifies in different periods. This point is vividly illustrated by the turn to global histories of art, increasingly common in our age of globalization. Take the case of Honour and Fleming's *World History of Art*, currently in its seventh edition. My review in 1982 had nothing but praise for its discussion of particular objects from different parts of the world but objected to its attempt to squeeze them all into the culture-bound category of *art*. I still believe it wiser to restrict the term to such places as ancient Greece and Rome, the post-medieval West, and the other cultures (notably, China and Japan) that Alsop used for comparing

31 Boime, *Hollow Icons*, 13; Bredekamp, *Theorie des Bildakts* (Frankfurt, 2010); Quentin Skinner, "Conventions and the Understanding of Speech Acts," *Philosophical Quarterly*, XX (1970), 118–138.

32 Hans Belting (trans. Thomas Dunlap), *An Anthropology of Images: Picture, Medium, Body* (Princeton, 2011, orig. pub. 2002); *idem* (trans. Christopher S. Wood), *The End of the History of Art?* (Chicago, 1987; orig. pub. 1985); *idem* (trans. Edmund Jephcott), *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago, 1997; orig. pub. 1990).



and contrasting in *Rare Art Traditions* (which appeared, coincidentally, in the same year as Honour and Fleming's book).<sup>33</sup>

The growing interest in objects, from ex votos to advertisements, that used to be excluded from the traditional Western canon of "art" has led to the coining of the term *visual culture* and the rise of visual-culture studies in the universities, in conjunction with, but also in competition with, traditional departments of art history. Generalist historians have their place in visual-culture studies, alongside students of fashion, the media, and popular culture, but their interaction with these groups is a different story from the one told in this article.

CONSENSUS VERSUS CONFLICT The interest in objects that art historians—or, should we say, "former art historians"—excluded from the canon has encouraged a certain convergence with plain historians in the last half-century. So has the practice of viewing objects, whether "art" or not, as cultural or ideological constructs or representations. Notwithstanding the lecture entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Social History of Art" that Allan Langdale delivered at the Getty Institute in 1996, the social history of art appears to be alive and well, and its practitioners continue to innovate.<sup>34</sup>

Compared with the days of Antal and Hauser, the menu of questions asked by social historians of art has become much longer and more various. For example, the central question to which Honig responded in her book on Antwerp concerned "conjunctions between economic thought and pictorial thought." O'Malley, provoked or inspired by Goldthwaite's argument that the demand for art in Italy was on the rise in the fifteenth century, studied the way in which artists responded to this pressure. Turning from economics to politics, a number of studies have examined the use of royal portraits as gifts between princes or as symbols of loyalty on the walls of courtiers and commoners.<sup>35</sup>

33 Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *A World History of Art* (London, 1982); Burke, "A World History of What?" *Art History*, VI (1983), 214–217; Alsop, *Rare Art Traditions*. For art in East Asia, see Craig Clunas, *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences* (Princeton 2017); Timon Screech, *Obtaining Images: Art, Production and Display in Edo Japan* (Honolulu, 2012).

34 Moxey, *Peasants, Warriors and Wives*, 6–7.

35 Honig, *Painting and the Market*, ix; O'Malley, *Painting under Pressure: Fame, Reputation and Demand in Renaissance Florence* (New Haven, 2013). For the use of royal portraits, see Rouven Pons, *Die Kunst der Loyalität: Ludwig VIII von Hessen-Darmstadt (1691–1768) und der Wiener Kaiserhof* (Marburg, 2009).

Nonetheless, despite many examples of dialogue and collaboration between generalist historians and art historians in the half-century under discussion, a simple image of consensus would be misleading. Open conflicts have been rare (among the exceptions to the norm was the dispute at Harvard University in the 1980s between Clark, a proponent of the social and political history of art, and Freedberg, a traditional, “pure” art historian who specialized on Italian Renaissance painting). More common have been what were described in 1986 as “the difficulties of drawing art and history together.” A review by Davis, an art historian, criticized DUBY’s trilogy on art and society in the Middle Ages for “serious omissions and solecisms” in the course of his effort to “synchronize changes in art with changes in society.” Other art historians are, or at least used to be, ill at ease with quantitative methods. When, at a conference held in 1987, van der Woude offered his calculations of the total number and value of Dutch paintings during the Republic, some art historians thought that this project was nothing but “hocus pocus.” No wonder that one of the editors of the conference proceedings described the two disciplines as “driving in opposite directions down a common street.”<sup>36</sup>

Scholars in the two disciplines still work with “distinct sets of priorities.” Art historians study objects primarily for their own sake, whereas generalist historians view them as sources. Using works of art, or images in general, as a form of evidence about the past like official documents and other texts has gradually become part of what might be called “normal history,” especially since the 1980s. A collective example of the importance of this “visual turn” on the part of generalist historians is the series, “Picturing History,” founded by Michael Leaman of Reaktion Books in 1997, which presents itself as “a new kind of historical writing in which images form an integral part.” It has now reached twenty-seven

36 Rabb and Brown, “The Evidence of Art,” in Rabb and Rotberg, *Art and History*, 1–6; Michael T. Davis, review of Georges DUBY (trans. Eleanor Levieux and Barbara Thompson), *The Age of the Cathedrals: Art and Society, 980–1420*, *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XLI (1982), 156–158; van der Woude, “Volume and Value.” For the hostile reaction, see Marten Jan Bok, “Pricing the Unpriced,” in North and Ormrod (eds.), *Markets for Art*, 103. When I was at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton in 1967, however, the distinguished art historian Millard Meiss supported my attempt to measure the rise of secular paintings in Renaissance Italy via a list of the dated paintings surviving from that period. De Vries, “Introduction,” in Freedberg and *idem* (eds.), *Art in History*, 5.

volumes, ranging from “The Feminine Ideal” to “Picturing Tropical Nature” or “The Devil.” The authors draw from the evidence of images to discuss problems of cultural, social, political, or economic history, paying particular attention to long-lasting stereotypes of foreigners, women, witches, Jews, and Catholics.<sup>37</sup>

Yet, some art historians exhibit various degrees of discomfort with the idea of treating art as evidence, as if to do so (bracketing the question of the quality of a particular item) is to desecrate it. A sophisticated expression of this reaction comes from Baxandall’s *Painting and Experience: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (New York, 1972), itself a landmark in the process of convergence discussed in this article. Training his sights on Marxist historians such as Hauser, whose *Social History of Art* (New York, 1951) presented art as a reflection of social trends, and Antal, who associated particular styles of art with social classes, Baxandall decried “the philistine level of the illustrated social history” on the lookout for illustrations of “a Renaissance merchant riding to market” and so on, as well as “facile equations between ‘burgess’ or ‘aristocratic’ milieux on the one side and ‘realist’ or ‘idealizing’ styles on the other.” His point is well taken, even if some works of art were originally intended as illustrations, including what the Spaniards call *costumbrista* paintings, presenting the manners and customs of particular cultures.<sup>38</sup>

Nearly a half-century later, neither generalist nor art historians have taken the promising approach that Baxandall advocated and exemplified in 1972 as far as it might reach. Baxandall’s approach is exemplified in his treatment of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German limewood sculpture, including the practices of calligraphy as well as Mastersong (evincing a “period ear” in parallel to a “period eye”). Again, Alpers placed seventeenth-century Dutch art in a context of a “visual culture” that included the practice of map-making, bringing painting and cartography together under the rubric “the art of describing.”

The idea of a visual habitus, influenced by the experiences and practices with which both artists and their public are best acquainted, should not be confined to early modern Europe

37 Rabb and Brown, “Evidence of Art.”

38 Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 152.

(although, given the gradual fragmentation of culture since the fifteenth century, it may be advisable to think of period eye in the plural). Today, we might do well to approach early twentieth-century art in this way. Cubism and Futurism, for example, could be linked to the practice of photography, to the cinema, and to the recurrent experience of rapid motion by train or plane, successive views coming from a variety of different angles, including from above. Despite the increasing number of publications that link art and history, the opportunities for interdisciplinary work in this field are far from exhausted.