

the practice of textual and physical “recycling” (38). As a model of “the dirty work of transformation” (43), composting becomes for Dolan a way to rethink cultural and agricultural production. Consuming food, in her analysis, draws out uncomfortable connections between eating, local environments, the darker side of Mother Earth, and early modern stories of child cannibalism in and beyond Shakespeare. Surprising insights about English wine, the double-faced nature of hedges and hedgerows, and Jamestown as agricultural frontier also populate this lively study.

As ecocriticism matures and expands in early modern studies, it will be especially valuable to rely upon a book that gracefully spans both sides of the historicism-presentism debate, that reads early modern agricultural manuals and twenty-first-century organic winemakers’ brochures as clearly as Shakespeare’s plays, and that demonstrates by example how to bring early modern texts into contemporary debates.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.27

Green Worlds in Early Modern Italy: Art and the Verdant Earth.

Karen Hope Goodchild, April Oettinger, and Leopoldine Prosperetti, eds.
Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700 11. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019. 286 pp. €109.

With a few exceptions, art history has been slow to discover the green turn that has long occupied other disciplines, such as the ecocriticism of literary studies or the topics of environmental history. The theme of verdancy appears in art historical analyses, but primarily in the service of interpreting pastoral iconography or so-called pure landscape. *Green Worlds in Early Modern Italy* aims to refocus our view on the predominance of poetic viridescence in art. This book is not about villas, garden design, botanical illustration, or landscape history, though these invariably factor into each chapter. Instead, *Green Worlds* considers verdancy as an expressive, symbolic, spiritual, and creative leitmotif that informs and enlivens visual culture, revealing how deeply an ideology of green pervaded the early modern period.

Essays by ten scholars are divided into three thematic sections that present a compelling and cogent argument, succinctly outlined in the book’s introduction. The first, “Devotional Viridescence,” centers on the function of green as spiritual and mental respite and rejuvenation. Rebekah Compton, April Oettinger, and Paul Holberton investigate the *honesta voluptas* (honest pleasure) of enjoying nature as both sensual delight and as a meditation on the sacred through experiments with green pigments, the anthropomorphic depiction of trees, and a study of Erasmus’s colloquy, *Convivium religiosum*. Part 2, “Green Building,” examines visual and verbal descriptions of illusionistic green spaces and verdurous ornament. Jill Pederson and Natsumi

Nonaka explore the literary and theoretical contexts of Leonardo da Vinci's *Sala delle Asse* and Flemish painter Lodewijk Toeput's depictions of gardens, while Karen Goodchild analyzes Giorgio Vasari's use of the word *verzure* (verdure) to describe real and fictive vegetal structures and the artistic skill they required. Titian takes precedence in part 3, "Sylvan Exchange." Leopoldine Prosperetti and Sabine Peinelt-Schmidt consider his depictions of wooded landscapes and their influences on later generations of artists who absorbed, transmitted, and transmuted his style. Patrizia Tosini and Susan Russell look at Northern European and Northern Italian painters whose time in Rome transformed their work, and their impact on emerging subgenres of landscape painting. In the afterword, Paul Barolsky offers a rumination on the interpretation of art and the relationship between nature, poetry, and painting. Revisiting works by Giorgione and Titian, he argues that our interpretation of paintings requires iterative, close contemplation, for only by the careful beholding of sensuous details in verdant paintings can we fully experience their meaning.

Though the book covers numerous topics spanning three centuries, recurring themes serve as a connecting thread throughout. One is the essential idea of God's Book of Nature, a medieval and early modern theological concept that explained God's creation as a second holy scripture revealing his divine providence. Classical pastoral and bucolic poetry, as well as the Renaissance literature it inspired, were also vital aspects of the appreciation of nature's beauty and bounty. A number of essays underscore the fundamental importance of Jacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia* in forging a new green direction in Renaissance literary and visual arts. Another theme is the new approaches to landscape painting forged through the exchange between Northern European and Northern Italian artists in Rome. Finally, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, and other Venetian painters feature throughout the book for the lyrical, stirring, and spiritualized natural imagery they produced, as well as for their profound influence on later generations.

Some significant aspects of viridescent culture are absent here, and studies elucidating the spatial and sensory experiences of green (i.e., gardens, architecture, and sculpture) would have been welcomed. While more limited geographically and chronologically, Jodi Cranston's *Green Worlds of Renaissance Venice* [2019] is an example of a study that addresses such issues. The achievement of this collection far outweighs these gaps, however, and leaves fertile ground for future study. Students and scholars of art and history will find that this exploration of verdancy and eco-poetics within visual culture offers a fresh perspective on the art of the past, as well as on our present concerns about the global climate crisis. By viewing art through a green lens, we better understand the early modern fascination with green, as well as the relationships humans conceived of and negotiated between themselves and the natural environment.

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doi:10.1017/rqx.2022.28