

REVIEW

Reviews Spring 2021

Nele de Raedt, Frances Sands, Erin J. Campbell and Vanessa Vanden Berghe

De Raedt, N. A Review of Fabrizio Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020.

Sands, F. A Review of Matthew M. Reeve, *Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2020.

Campbell, E. A Review of Carla D'Arista, *The Pucci of Florence: Patronage and Politics in Renaissance Italy*. Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2020.

Vanden Berghe, V. A Review of Louise Campbell, *Studio Lives: Architect, Art and Artist in 20th-Century Britain*. London: Lund Humphries, 2019.

The Built and the Ephemeral: A New Approach to the Urban and Architectural History of the Italian Renaissance

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Fabrizio Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 320 pages, 2020, ISBN 9780300175431

In his recent book, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy* (Figure 1), Fabrizio Nevola takes the reader on a fascinating journey through the early modern Italian city, unveiling the street as a place of sociability and surveillance, a commercial thoroughfare, and a site of worship, drawing attention to how these varied activities helped to shape the street's physical form over time. Nevola examines the street as an 'ecosystem' of individuals, objects, and events. He discusses how both institutional decision-making and private interventions helped to shape what he calls 'the most complex artwork of the period' (8). In doing so, he not only gives prominence to the relationship between the ephemeral and the built, but also to how urban development is always a collective act, taking place through time. Although the study focuses on Renaissance Italy, its ambition goes beyond the reconstruction of street life in this specific time and place. It aims to reflect on the methods by which to examine the built environment of the city and to conjure up urban life of the past.

Street Life in Renaissance Italy employs an impressive corpus of primary-source material, including legal records, city statutes, paintings, diaries, novellas, prints, and architectural drawings. But its great merit lies in the careful

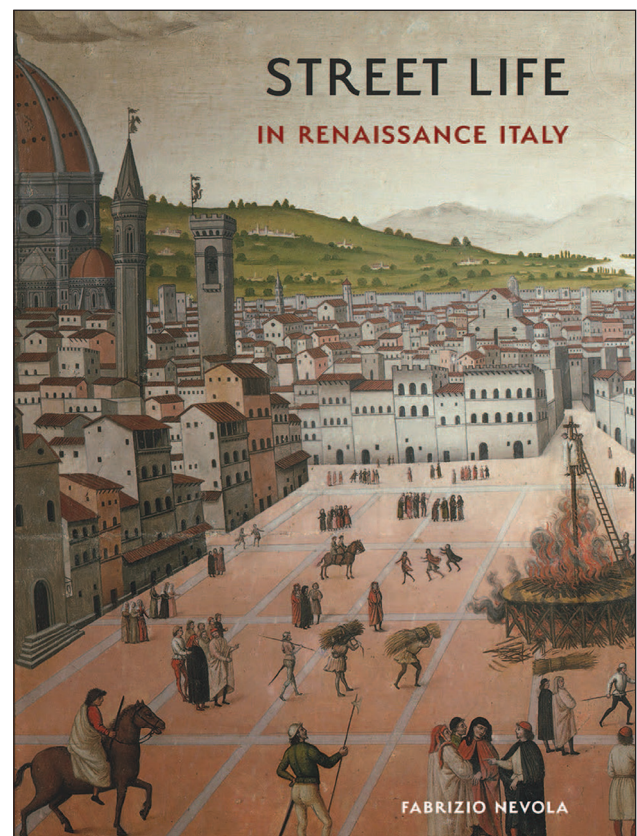


Figure 1: Cover of *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*. Photo credit: Yale University Press.

analysis of the physical fabric of the city itself. Nevola guides the reader on walks through the Renaissance city, highlighting the overall form of large urban ensembles, the architectural detailing of monumental buildings (such as the benches, chandeliers, and metal rings on urban

palaces), and the more modest structures integrated in walls, including devotional panels, landlord signs, and inscriptions. It is difficult to not be impressed by the continued presence of physical markers — and Nevola's seemingly comprehensive knowledge of them — that provide insight into Renaissance Italy's street life. These thorough and attentive observations are a testament to the author's careful analysis and reading of the built environment of historical cities. Integrated into a well-written and easy to read narrative, these observations bring the city 'to life' for the reader. For those working on the Italian peninsula, the book's inclusive geographical scope is a pleasure, comprising well-studied urban centers — Florence, Siena, Rome, Milan, Genova, Mantua, Naples, and Bologna — as well as smaller cities, such as Viterbo, Imola, Carpi, and even Ascoli Piceno.

In its scope and method, *Street Life* makes a valuable contribution to the recent scholarship on the architectural and urban history of the early modern city. Nevola builds upon the fruitful tradition initiated by cultural anthropologists and historians, such as Edward Muir, Richard Trexler and Thomas and Elizabeth Cohen, whose scholarship has revealed multiple aspects of the ritual and social use of early modern cities. Yet this book is perhaps more aligned with the scholarship that emanated from Manfredo Tafuri, whose main focus is the built environment in which these activities took place. Inspired by the intellectual work of Henri Lefebvre and Michel De Certeau, Nevola considers the street to be a 'space', understood as a physical container, animated, shaped, transformed, and given meaning by the everyday life that it supports (Lefebvre 1991; De Certeau 1984). His interest therefore lies in how urban life shaped the street and how the street shaped urban life. As such, Nevola's study stands alongside those of Filippo de Vivo, David Rosenthal, and Luca Degl'Innocenti, among others, who have focused on the daily life of Renaissance cities. He diverges in his attempt to study this daily life in close interaction with the city's architectural and physical infrastructure.

The scope and methodology of *Street Life* is further distinguished by Nevola's engagement with more or less contemporary (architectural) theories. As mentioned before, the book is much indebted to Lefebvre's and De Certeau's work on the social production of space and the everyday. Yet its central inspirational voice is in fact that of the Danish architect Jan Gehl, who developed a design theory for urban environments centered upon the social life of the city (Gehl 1987). According to Gehl, whom Nevola quotes, urban design is about 'first life, then spaces, then buildings — the other way around never works' (8). Nevola's method, to study the street as an ecosystem, draws direct inspiration from Gehl's work.

Nevola also employs the work of authors such as Michel Foucault, Kevin Lynch, and Nicholas Mirzoeff (Foucault 1977; Lynch 1960; Mirzoeff 2015) as a means of introducing new questions, nuances, and complexities. Potential anachronisms and mistranslations of theoretical frameworks from one discipline into another render the deployment of such theories for the study of street life in the early modern period rather difficult and challenging. Yet Nevola handles these theories with the necessary caution,

and succeeds in using them to enrich the interpretation of historical material. For example, Nevola engages Foucault's *Surveillance et punir* in studying the mechanisms of control operating in the streets of Renaissance Italy (Foucault 1977). He warns, however, against indiscriminately applying this theory to a period in which concepts of surveillance did not yet have a theoretical formulation. He also brings necessary nuance to Foucault's rather polarized reconstruction of pre-modern and modern societies, which states — to put it rather simply — that pre-modern societies disciplined their subjects mainly through momentary, vertical measures of control (such as spectacles of punishments organized by public authorities), whereas modern societies utilize more ever-present, horizontal mechanisms, subjecting everyone to a condition of constant surveillance. Nevola argues that Foucault's concept of the modern 'disciplinary society' can be equally applied to the early modern period. He convincingly supports this argument by drawing attention to the multiple gazes (divine, social, juridical — centralized and dispersed) operating in Renaissance streets. Sacred images, painted on walls and portals, looked down upon people in the public realm. Neighbors, passers-by and hangers-on, sitting in windows or standing on benches, ensured social control. Coats of arms, displayed on numerous locations, made the presence of public and private authority visible throughout the city.

Although the engagement of these theories is in general very fruitful and enriching, their application, however, feels at times somewhat forced. This occurs, for example, when Nevola employs Lynch's classification of the 'imageability' of the city to explain the structure of the second part of the book. The first part, which comprises chapters one through three, takes a macro approach, focusing on the street within the city as a whole. The second part, chapters four through six, considers individual elements of the street (street, street corner, and palace). These three elements are based on Lynch's five categories that one uses to imagine the city: the path, the edge, the district, the node, and the landmark. Nevola conflates 'paths' and 'edges' with the 'street', and equates the 'node' and 'landmark' with the 'street corner' and 'palace' respectively. Without further explanation, he omits Lynch's 'district', leaving the reader to wonder what a discussion of the street within the neighborhood or parish might have added to the narrative. One could also question whether Nevola really needed Lynch's categories in structuring his book. If one were to forget Lynch's categories, would the square (which is now discussed in a short epilogue) have earned an independent chapter as well?

A few additional critical notes can be made concerning the book's structure and content. While the overall two-part structure — the street within the city and the street's individual elements — is clear, it creates repetition among individual chapters, and as a result, the author's main arguments are sometimes lost. This is especially the case in chapter four, which discusses the street as a distinct element. Here, Nevola argues that the mixed use of the street remained common well into the sixteenth century, despite the increasing stratification and specialization of its physical form and social use. However, repetition

of material previously presented obscures the argument. Furthermore, to bolster his argument, Nevola might have discussed here the activities of other professionals, such as notaries (Burroughs 2000), or the legal distinctions made between streets in city statutes, corresponding to different forms of social and physical appropriation (Friedman 1992). By including this material, Nevola would have been able to create more nuance and complexity in this chapter, a quality we do find in, for example, the chapters on the street corner and the palace.

One final quibble: it is surprising that more attention is not given to water supply in this book on street life. While waste management is briefly touched upon in a legal context, the supply of clean water for daily use is barely addressed. This is all the more curious as the topic complements a number of themes explored in the book, including the close interaction between courses of (underground) aqueducts or rivers and the direction and form of streets; public water sources as nodes of sociability; and the preferred location of urban palaces in close proximity to water courses. If the author had engaged with this topic, he would have added another dimension to an already richly layered narrative.

These few comments aside, the quality of the present work is indisputable. The book makes a valuable contribution to recent developments within the architectural and urban history of the Italian Renaissance, and to reflections upon the mechanisms that have shaped, and continue to shape, the cities we inhabit. With his ability as a storyteller, Nevola will surely engage a wide variety of readers in a fascinating discovery of street life in Renaissance Italy.

Walpole's Homoerotic Architecture

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Matthew M. Reeve, *Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 260 pages, 2020, ISBN 9780271085883

'I do believe most profoundly that Art cannot separate itself from the past but must build on it, engrafting the experience, modes and novelties of its own immediate time upon the great body of Art that has preceded it' (Walpole 1926: 82). These are the words of Hugh Seymour Walpole (1884–1941), a celebrated but largely forgotten English novelist and a relation of Horace Walpole (1717–1797), the 18th-century writer, antiquarian, and politician. Hugh Walpole was a homosexual man forced into secrecy by the legal standards of his time. He reminds us that art is tied to both history and contemporary life, coupled with the shifting standards that shape our experience of sexuality. His words seem apt in relation to Matthew Reeve's *Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole* (Figure 2), which gives a homoerotic reading of Horace Walpole's focus on the medieval past to inform his artistic patronage.

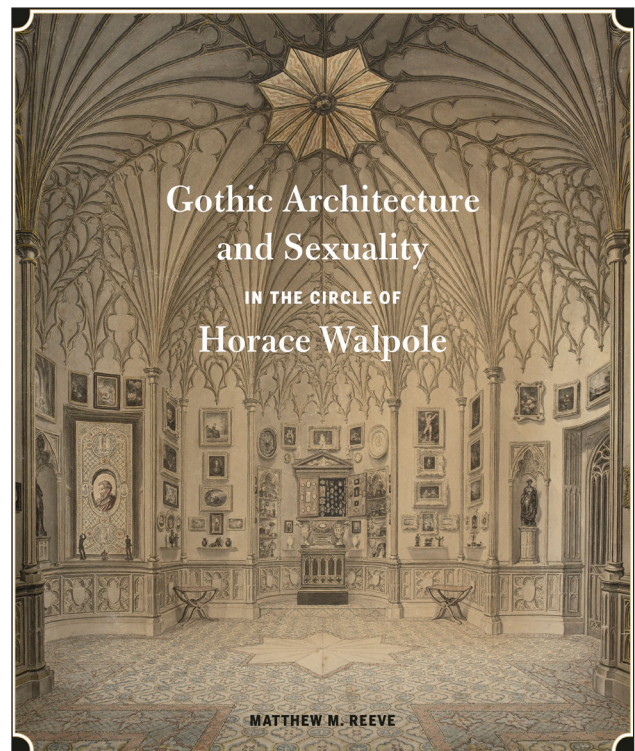


Figure 2: Cover of *Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole*. Photo credit: The Pennsylvania State University Press.

Reeve's book applies an impressive interdisciplinary approach, utilising scholarship on varied periods and artistic media, to explore the development of the Strawberry Hill Gothic style – principally in architecture but also in general material culture – within the context of Horace Walpole's homoerotic preferences. Strawberry Hill was Walpole's home, which he began to build in 1749: a neo-Gothic villa in Twickenham. It instigated the so-called Strawberry Hill Gothic, comprising proto-Gothic Revival inspired by medievalist antiquarianism. Reeve explains that this coincided with the emergence of male sexuality in the 18th century, defined by an awakening of male desire for other men. Reeve notes that attention has previously been paid to the sexualities of Walpole and his friends, the 'committee of taste', thanks to the sometimes overt and sometimes oblique messaging within their correspondence and Walpole's literature. Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) for example, safely places sexual alterity and ambiguity into an isolated and Catholic past, but Reeve argues that by translating the medieval Gothic into a burgeoning contemporary aesthetic at Strawberry Hill and elsewhere, Walpole and the 'committee of taste' developed a form of queer architecture.

Walpole and his circle focused on a secularized and miniaturized version of ecclesiastical medieval Gothic architecture, such as Westminster Abbey, often with decorative motifs reproduced in wood or papier-mâché and painted to imitate stone. Furthermore, various members of Walpole's circle owned Gothic collections of artworks, which Reeve argues alluded to a thinly-veiled shared sexuality, a coded homoeroticism for the enjoyment of an in crowd. The objects regularly depicted effeminacy, hyperbolic masculinity, and hermaphroditism. Of course,

these collections were held privately, for the perusal of an invited coterie: the fellow so-called 'macaroni'. More public was the construction of Strawberry Hill Gothic-style architecture, which was usually domestic architecture, allowing for greater individuality than civic commissions. These villas are often considered to be queer architecture, albeit due to their connection with Walpole, his circle, and their collections, rather than any specific architectural feature. This is elaborated by Reeve through the case studies of selected Strawberry Hill Gothic villas, most notably Strawberry Hill itself, but also Old Windsor and Donnington Grove in Berkshire, The Vyne in Hampshire, and Lee Priory in Kent.

Over six chapters, Reeve considers this subject, describing the 18th-century community of genteel, 'homoerotically inclined' individuals as the 'third sex'. Walpole and his circle's affirmation of the Gothic connected Walpole's medievalist tendencies with his sexuality. As such, Reeve explains that the Strawberry Hill Gothic delivered a queer aesthetic in opposition to the prevailing neo-Palladian style. It is important to note that architecture in the Strawberry Hill Gothic style was understood in this light, and sometimes ridiculed as effete, by Georgian contemporaries.

Reeve opens the book with a historiographic review of Walpole's circle, in the context of a gendered Strawberry Hill Gothic, utilizing surviving letters and literature. The second chapter focuses on Strawberry Hill itself as 'a court of Gothic taste' that encapsulated the efforts of Walpole's circle. Reeve notes the irony of Walpole posing the Strawberry Hill Gothic as a style of homoerotic licentiousness, in contrast with its medieval ecclesiastical sources. Attention turns to Walpole's collection at Strawberry Hill in the third chapter. Reeve's chief interests here are the objects illustrating links between members of Walpole's circle, for example, portraits depicting the group being clustered into 'queer families' as opposed to biological ones.

The impact of the homoerotically charged Strawberry Hill Gothic is explored in the fourth and fifth chapters, where attention turns to some of the residences of Walpole's 'committee of taste'. Exemplary here are Old Windsor, Donnington Grove, The Vyne, and Lee Priory. At each house, improvements or renovations were undertaken in the Strawberry Hill Gothic. Of particular note is Reeve's in-depth analysis of the works at Old Windsor, undertaken by Richard (Dicky) Bateman. As Reeve explains, the connections between Strawberry Hill and Old Windsor are little known, as Walpole rarely mentioned the Gothic features present within the latter residence. However, Reeve notes that Walpole did signal the 'queerness' of the architecture. In a letter of June 13, 1781, to the Earl of Stafford, Walpole noted Bateman's use of chinoiserie at Old Windsor, being another 'alternative' style, and one which was considered effeminate by contemporary critics.

Reeve's study closes with an exploration of the demise of the Strawberry Hill Gothic at the turn of the 19th century, at the moment when the Gothic Revival emerged as an aesthetic of national identity rather than one of conspicuous otherness. The 19th century saw a reawakening of High Church beliefs, and an increasing admiration for

the history of Gothic architecture in Britain, as opposed to the Continental roots of classicism. Reeve notes that it was the early Gothic Revival critics who differentiated the Strawberry Hill Gothic as separate to their own tastes. Indeed, unlike its Strawberry Hill Gothic forebear, the Gothic Revival was typically used on ecclesiastical, civic, and educational buildings rather than domestic ones. In this context, at the end of his life, Walpole was aware that Strawberry Hill represented an outdated mode of Gothic architecture. In a letter of June 5, 1788, to Thomas Barrett, Walpole described Strawberry Hill as 'a sketch by beginners' in comparison with the Gothic Revival works then emerging.

The book valiantly dispels the caustic conception of the Strawberry Hill Gothic as a subverted mode of architecture, or the less offensive but still inaccurate ideas of non-permanent theatricality and *mise en scène*. However, the book does not explore the sway of contemporary developments in style. The Strawberry Hill Gothic did not spring from medieval architecture unaided by any intervening evolution in design. Reeve couches Walpole's work in terms of a 'camp' revolution, specifically rebelling against the established neo-Palladian norms. As early as the introduction, Reeve dismisses any preoccupation with stylistic development, so typical among scholars of 18th- and 19th-century architecture, as 'a causal explanation' for the emergence of the Strawberry Hill Gothic. As a result, what Reeve ignores is the growing influence of neo-classicism from the mid-18th century onward – surely the principal reactionary response to neo-Palladianism – and the well-documented impact of neo-classicism over other 'alternative' styles such as chinoiserie and the earliest iterations of the Gothic Revival such as the castle style. Robert Adam's Circular Drawing Room at Strawberry Hill, for example, is obviously the work of a noted neo-classicist, despite its 'Gothic' elements: the ceiling is informed by the rose window at the east end of St Paul's Cathedral, and the chimneypiece is inspired by the Cosmati work on the 1269 shrine of Edward the Confessor at Westminster Abbey. In short, Adam's design provides evidence for the intertwined development of Strawberry Hill Gothic-style interior design with 18th-century neo-classicism. This omission by Reeve is frustrating, although it is not urgently germane to his analysis of Walpole's circle as the 'third sex', and their exploration of gendered design at Strawberry Hill and elsewhere.

Gothic Architecture and Sexuality in the Circle of Horace Walpole has been beautifully produced by The Pennsylvania State University Press, with generous formatting, and it is richly illustrated with 140 high-quality images, although a good number of these are given in black and white. The cloth-covered hard-back edition is substantial, but without the impractical backbreaking mass of some monographs. The lavish publication is reflected in the high standard of Reeve's research. His prose is Daedalian in its eloquence but firmly maintains the threads of coherence sometimes abandoned by scholarly theorists, resulting in a work which is accessible and pleasing for all. The range of subject matter will interest an array of audiences, including medievalists; early modernists; historians of art, architecture, and literature; anthropologists; and queer theorists.

From observation of Reeve's past publications, it is no surprise that here he successfully contextualizes the sophisticated manipulation of a wider medievalism within the homoerotic aesthetic of Horace Walpole's realm. Like Walpole and many of his Georgian contemporaries, Reeve impresses upon us the unbreakable sibling bonds between architecture, art, and the literary arts in understanding the social and cultural context of the 18th century. Reeve's scholarship in this book offers a new dimension to the study of the Strawberry Hill Gothic and to the homoerotic nature of Walpolean design and collecting more generally. It masterfully highlights the unblinkered benefits and meticulous scrutiny afforded by an informed interdisciplinary approach.

All in the Family: Architectural Patronage and the Pucci of Renaissance Florence

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Carla D'Arista, *The Pucci of Florence: Patronage and Politics in Renaissance Italy*. Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 359 pages, 2020, ISBN 9781912554256

Carla D'Arista's beautifully produced book on the Pucci family offers a gripping tale of architecture, art, and furnishings in the context of the political life of an elite Renaissance Florentine family (**Figure 3**). D'Arista bases her study on extensive archival research, which forms part of the distinguished Medici Archive Project. Focusing on

a family of Medici loyalists whose fortunes mirrored at times the fortunes of that more famous first family of Florence, the text provides lessons on the intertwining of materiality and politics. Alongside commissions for chapels, palaces, villas, and altarpieces, the narrative singles out family members caught up in the political struggles of the time, including their involvement with popes, emperors, and prominent humanists. We are drawn into a world of financial maneuvering, political scheming, and spectacular material splendor.

In his foundational study, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History* (1980), Richard Goldthwaite shows how the tremendous wealth circulating in Renaissance Florence gave rise to unprecedented luxury consumption among its elite citizens. D'Arista's book provides a compelling case study of that consumption. Originally descended from minor Florentine guildsmen, the Pucci demonstrate how a family could foster a dynastic identity by cultivating alliances with important power brokers, the Medici above all. Modeling their patronage on the values of the Medici, who embraced the Aristotelian concept of magnificence, the Pucci practised architectural patronage as a means to advance their political objectives, assert their social ambitions, and elevate their social status. Describing the family's land holdings, D'Arista shows how their properties between Florence and Siena were a 'virtual network of estates' (17) that exerted both physical and symbolic control over the territory. She documents numerous prestigious building projects, including palaces, villas, and private chapels, allowing us to follow the family's architectural self-fashioning across generations, such as the family patronage of Santissima Annunziata, the preeminent pilgrimage church of Florence, which was close to the homes of Puccio Pucci (1389–1449) and three of his brothers on Via dei Servi. The family's association with the church is documented from the 14th century, when rights were obtained from the Servites for a chapel. When construction on the church was underway in the 15th century, Antonio Pucci (1419–1484), passing over the claim to a chapel, commissioned instead a separate annex on the eastern side of the church, which became the Oratory of Saint Sebastian. The oratory was so large it competed with the Medici Sacristy in San Lorenzo. D'Arista suggests that Antonio's decision to build the oratory may in fact be the result of emulating the Medici practice of 'asserting architectural presence in important urban spaces' (31).

The book is organized chronologically, starting with Puccio Pucci and the building of Uliveto, a fortified estate on the road to Siena between Montespertoli and Castelfiorentino, which was constructed on farmland purchased in 1424, and ending with the dispersal of the family's art collection in the early 20th century. As the narrative unfolds, we witness the power of architecture, art, and the decorative arts to forge, consolidate, and maintain political relationships. D'Arista highlights the family's patronage of many of the same architects and artists employed by the Medici. A prime example of this practice is their employment of Giuliano da' Sangallo (1443–1516), the favorite architect of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492) and the designer of a number of important

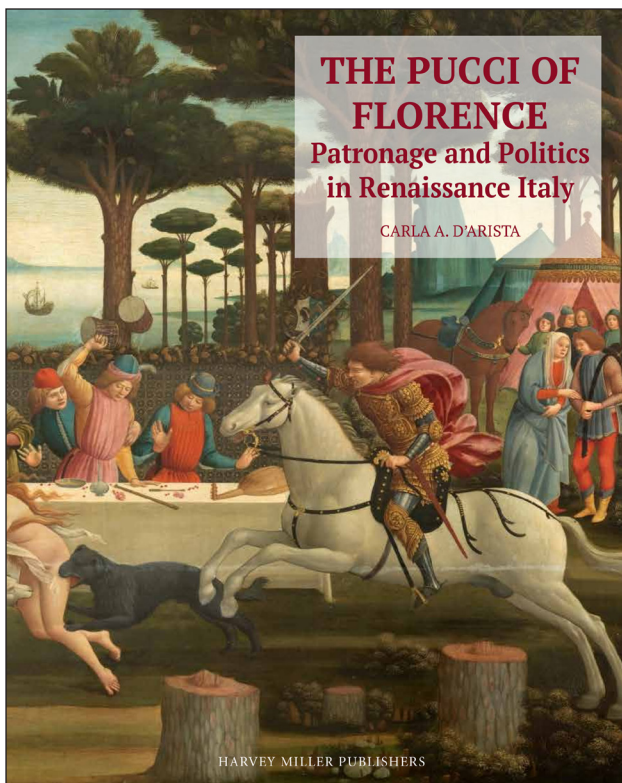


Figure 3: Cover of Carla D'Arista, *The Pucci of Florence: Patronage and Politics in Renaissance Italy*. Photo credit: Harvey Miller Publishers.

Florentine palaces, including those for Filippo Strozzi the Elder and Bartolomeo Gondi. The Pucci family's patronage of Giuliano, and notably, his work on the oldest part of their villa at Casignano, about five miles southwest of Florence, is discussed in the context of the architect's work for the Medici, such as the Villa of Poggio a Caiano and the church of Santa Maria delle Carceri in Prato. Both the residence at Casignano and the Medici Villa of Poggio a Caiano, with their emphasis on classical forms, were inspired by the antique villas referred to by Pliny the Younger in his letters. D'Arista shows how the humanist promotion of classical culture translated into material form in architectural projects, and 'transformed humanism into political propaganda' (36). In this way, classicism became a platform not only for the glorification of the family, but also a social strategy to consolidate and maintain political connections advantageous to the lineage. In teasing out the social register of architecture in her discussion of the Roman architectural patronage of Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci (1458–1531), she uses the wonderful metaphor of 'architectural ekphrasis' (162) to characterize his building program as a medium of praise. Buildings such as the Palazzo Pucci, constructed in close proximity to the site of the new St. Peter's, and the planned but never built Vitruvian palace in Orvieto, exploited all the advantages of site, scale, design, and ornamentation to draw attention to the cardinal's wealth, influence, taste, and learning.

D'Arista's book also documents the fragility, vulnerability, and precariousness of magnificence. As an example, during the Siege of Florence (October 1529–August 1530), the Pucci house on Via de' Pucci was confiscated along with the houses of other Medici supporters, its contents sold at auction. The book juxtaposes the fierce politics of the day with descriptions of important commissions, intertwining art with politics. We learn of hangings and beheadings alongside the commission of artworks, such as Sandro Botticelli's four *spalliere* based on the eighth story of the fifth day of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which relates the brutal tale of Nastagio degli Onesti. The painted panels were commissioned for the wedding of Giannozzo (1460–1497), son of Antonio Pucci, to Lucrezia Bini in 1484. Giannozzo was subsequently executed on August 12, 1497, for his role in a conspiracy to reinstate Piero De' Medici (1472–1501), who had been exiled from Florence in 1494.

The book is most compelling in chapters three and four, which relay the history of the Pucci as astute marriage brokers, forging dynastic alliances for a host of children. In these chapters we read in detail of the range and quality of the family's household goods and the social and political meaning of their possessions. D'Arista brings household inventories to life by providing illustrations of extant objects as well as photographs of comparable objects for those now long lost. In her discussion of the 1484 inventory of Antonio Pucci's Florentine residence, an eighteen-room home with two kitchens, she includes beautiful descriptions of textiles stored in the *cassoni* in Antonio's chamber or recorded in family documents, including red damask, brocade, cloth embroidered with gold, patterned silks, and imported rugs. In her evocation of Antonio Pucci's wardrobe, which consisted largely of black

garments, she emphasizes how costume was a means to construct his public persona and convey the moral virtues of justice and probity. Chapter four details the domestic luxury goods recorded in family account books, such as the collections of glass, silver, and tin ware that were displayed on buffets and credenzas. Deploying artworks that represent contemporary-like interiors as evidence for the Pucci interiors, such as Domenico Ghirlandaio's *The Birth of the Virgin* (1485–1490) in the Tornabuoni chapel, with the caveat that such interiors are fictional, D'Arista allows us to visualize their splendor. The author's thoughtful integration of architecture, woodwork, furnishings, bedding, metalware, textiles, jewelry, and devotional images, supported by extensive color illustrations throughout the text, is one of the book's major contributions.

This ambitious, beautifully written and illustrated book is built on an impressive array of carefully interpreted archival sources. The chronological sweep is breathtaking. While Florence has been called a 'laboratory for patronage studies' over the last century, research has remained primarily focused on the Medici (Burke 2004: 16). Indeed, far less has been written about patronage across generations of other families in Florence. In the recent book on Tornabuoni-family patronage, Maria DePrano calls for 'additional in-depth studies of more families', noting that there is much to be learned from the patronage of other leading families (2018: 3). It would have been useful for D'Arista to provide in the book's introduction a historiographical framework on the state of early modern patronage studies and an assessment as to how her work contributes to the study of architectural patronage as a mode of accruing social and political power. *The Pucci of Florence* substantiates Jill Burke's thesis that 'the appearance of buildings and their ornamentation' was crucial to the exercise of power during this period (10). Remarkably, however, D'Arista cites neither Burke nor DePrano in her bibliography. Nevertheless, D'Arista's superb book makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the Pucci patronage of Florentine architecture and art, and demonstrates the determining role of visual and material culture in the advancement of the early modern family.

Evaluating the Artist's Studio: A Relationship between Architect, Artist, and the Illustrated Press

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Louise Campbell, *Studio Lives: Architect, Art and Artist in 20th-Century Britain*. London: Lund Humphries, 288 pages, 2019, ISBN 9781848223134

Working from home became commonplace during the COVID-19 pandemic and significantly changed what had been the standard work-office culture. For many, offices were transferred to kitchen tables, bedrooms, and makeshift living-room computer stations. However, such remote, computer-based work is only one type of a wide range of home-based work. Indeed artists, such as those discussed in Louise Campbell's *Studio Lives: Architect, Art*

and Artist in 20th-Century Britain (Figure 4), represent a group of professionals who have a long tradition of shaping their work-home environments. Architectural history is littered with great examples of one-off studio homes for artists; one famous example is the house and studio for Amedée Ozenfant, built by Le Corbusier (1924). Although such designs are very familiar to us, research rarely moves beyond architectural analysis, allowing 'little space for discussing life inside the studio, and the work which emerged from it' (8). In *Studio Lives*, Campbell seeks to address this gap, exploring how artists – working together with architects – designed and fashioned their workplace and accommodation in the period between 1892 and 1938.

Campbell is principally concerned with examining the relationship between 'architect, art and artist' and, as the subtitle of her book reveals, the creation of various studio types. Building on the work of Alice T. Friedman (2006), Campbell shows how the relationship between architect and artist in the early 20th century was one of equals in the design of the latter's home and work environment. The relationship was based on persuasion and negotiation and was firmly connected with the wider socio-cultural and economical context of the time.

The book's first section, 'Legacies', highlights the changing attitude towards the functions of the late-Victorian studio-house through an analysis of Limnerslease, the Arts and Crafts studio-house of the artists G. F. Watts and Mary Watts. Together with the architect Ernest George, the couple set about creating a vast estate where art could not

only be made but also displayed through the inclusion of a large gallery. Limnerslease shows how artists, such as the Wattses, were interested in how their work was seen by both a public audience and potential clients. The Wattses' studio-house became a hive of activity that the owners tightly controlled so as to increase sales and manage reputations. However, such a closely managed environment was nothing new; the model was already well known to the Wattses, who organized 'Show Sunday', a day in April when a public audience was allowed into their studio to view the works that would be displayed at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Nevertheless, as Campbell importantly points out, the turn of the 20th century brought a notable change with the widespread use of photography. Artists could employ photography, as well as their newfound celebrity status in the illustrated press, to exercise even greater control over the way their environment was perceived by the public. Campbell rightly highlights the importance of how journals like *The Studio* framed the artist's studio. A description of studios in design terms rather than as 'a frame for viewing the inhabitant' helped to demystify the design profession, which, in turn, put the architect forward as 'an inspired ally in the process of design rather than an autocratic expert dictating his own terms' (32).

How such tightly controlled artist-studios came into being is the focus of the book's following three sections. From Section II onward, the reader is guided chronologically through specific case studies of the studios created for, and by, sixteen artists who were able to build or remodel their studio homes. Campbell frames her analysis in terms of 'the studio as home', 'after the Victorians', and 'building for art', so as to provide the reader with an understanding of the lived experience of those artists who commissioned new work-home environments, either through inheritance or through the sale of their work.

Through the analysis of the studio-houses of Henry Payne, Roger Fry, and Augustus John, Section II, 'The Studio as Home', offers insight into how family homes were rethought under the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement, 'demonstrating in different ways the significance of place, architecture and family for artists in the years before the First World War' (44). To keep the home contained from the outside world, William Morris advocated an enclosed garden space. Nevertheless, the pull from the outside world, the city more specifically, remained strong. For many artists, it was important to have a foothold in cities such as Birmingham or London so as to fashion an identity to which clients and the commercial art market could relate positively. Such a tension led to experiments, such as the studio-house that Rob van t'Hoff designed for Augustus John in Chelsea, London. At 28 Mallord Street, Van t'Hoff showed his interest in William R. Lethaby's ideas on architectural proportion and geometry, published in 1911, which, according to Campbell, resulted in a studio-house that was 'formal and tightly composed'. The strict geometry of the building's facades also resembled the geometric experiments of the Dutch avant-garde, making 28 Mallord Street 'almost a parody of the self-consciously historicist mode of its neighbours' (74).



Figure 4: Cover of *Studio Lives: Architect, Art and Artist in 20th-Century Britain*. Photo credit: Lund Humphries.

In the book's final third and fourth sections, Campbell turns her attention to the post WWI decades, where the role of the press became increasingly important, not only in how artists fashioned their identity but also in how the studio was presented as a place for display. The discussion here opens up issues around queer aesthetics and its impact on the design of the studio and on the work of the artists on display, exemplified through the studios of individuals like Gluck, Eileen Agar, and Ben and Winifred Nicholson. The final part of the book is perhaps the strongest, especially in the analysis of Brackenfell, the studio house purpose-built for the artist and textile manufacturer Alastair Morton, which was designed by the husband-and-wife architects Leslie Martin and Sadie Speight. In dialogue with the building's plans, Campbell allows the reader to better understand how the spaces would have been used and experienced. Indeed, although Campbell does not explicitly refer to the concept of atmosphere, it is implied throughout the chapters, especially in relation to the use of light. The most striking example of this is William Orpen's studio, which was referred to in *Country Life* as 'having light as an operating theatre' (131). Campbell further points towards the importance of light in relation to the studio's *mise en scène* and materiality. Descriptions of Mary Watts's decorative approach at Limnerslease and Speight's treatment of interior surfaces at Brackenfell offer insights into the creation of interior atmospheres and how this evolved, from the late 19th to the early 20th century. Although Campbell sought to move away from an architectural analysis of the artist's studio, the inclusion of more plans would have been welcome, as these would have enabled a closer inspection of the studio's atmospheres. The inclusion of more plans would also have opened up a discussion around how the profession of artist affected the design of the artist's studio, especially in connection to contemporary ideas about artistic practice.

Despite the lack of plans, *Studio Lives* is a lavishly illustrated book, which makes for a nice change from monographs on architecture and design that appear with a minimum of grayscale images. The inclusion of 41 colour plates illuminates the featured artists' incredible artistic output. The selected case studies, which also form the chapters of the book's four sections, introduce the reader to the studios of well-known artists such as Augustus John, Winifred and Ben Nicholson, as well as lesser-known artists such as Dora Gordine and Alastair Morton. Each section has its own introduction, in which the individual case studies are placed within the broader context of the time. The breadth of case studies should be of interest to academic and non-academic audiences alike.

Throughout *Studio Lives* Campbell invites a closer reading of British studios and studio-dwellings in the first half of the 20th century. Focusing on the relationship between architect and client, Campbell gets closer to the specific character of the studio, to the ideas of studio at the time, and to its lived experience. Her focus on the studio's

creation, execution, and presentation gives greater agency to the studio's inhabitants and offers a valuable reference point for further research into the closely-knit relationship between architect, art, and artist in early 20th-century Britain.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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