

leads readers into another type of space, the dynamics of the Internet and its attendant publics. To my way of thinking, this kind of artistic practice can be exclusionary for those with limited accessibility to technology, thereby restricting democratic participation or 'serv[ing] to privilege certain publics over others.' So then, our discussion continues to evolve around monetary issues, definitions of what constitutes a public, and the desire on the part of artists and administrators to imagine how the role of public art can develop in this era of late capitalism.

Although I have focused here on a few select texts, this book is a critical sampler giving insight into the complex process of public art and its unstable relationship with location, identity, and context. The value of *Public Art in Canada: Critical Perspectives* rests in providing the history and processes of public praxis while allowing the reader to reflect on its possibilities for the future. (SUSAN SCHELLE)

Richard E. Spear and Philip Sohm. *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters*
Yale University Press. 400. \$85.00

The real lives of seventeenth-century Italian artists were, with few exceptions, nasty and brutish. As Raffaella Morselli, one of the authors in this collection, observes, 'Painters became and remained poor in a variety of ways.' The premise of this book is that we are not really seeing the art of this period until we come to grips with the tough economic realities that artists faced. Don't take the empty stretches of canvas in the later paintings of Guercino simply as expressions of a minimalist aesthetic. Fed up with patrons who did not pay the correct amount, he delivered paintings with fewer figures than they bargained for.

No one would deny that more information of this sort is helpful and necessary to know. It is equally true that we need lots of it for the information to rise above the level of the anecdotal. This book is presented as a survey of findings from various regions of Italy, with essays on Rome (Richard Spear), Naples (Christopher R. Marshall), Bologna (Raffaella Morselli), Florence (Elena Fumagalli), and Venice (Philip Sohm). Two efforts at a round-up by the economic historians Renata Ago and Richard A. Goldthwaite make it clear how difficult it is to see clear patterns in the data.

Painting had undeniably achieved a new cultural standing by 1600, and yet (possibly for that very reason) the protocols for monetizing that value were unclear. Some painters and buyers adhered to the old guidelines whereby size, materials, and the number of figures determined price; others embraced more modern, intangible criteria. With

few exceptions, such as the superstar Guido Reni, the lack of systematically applied criteria was to the disadvantage of the artists.

There are many tables in this book, and they are extremely useful, often enough because they make it clear just how hard it is to draw patterns from the data. Global conclusions are occasionally drawn out of them, for example that pricing in Venice was primarily by size of the picture rather than the number of figures, but such global conclusions are rare. And yet the accumulation of these numbers, disparate as they are, does induce a different view of things. One cannot come away from this book and still see swift and open brushwork, a defining feature of a good deal of painting after 1600, as a purely stylistic matter. There is no getting around the fact that it was a real solution to the pressures of time and money that most artists faced – a solution, of course, legitimized by a new aesthetic that allowed and cultivated the taste for it. To see the stylistic fact in the context of the hard economic reality is to view the paintings more subtly, not less.

Even as the insufficiency of the available data is lamented, the unchallenged premise throughout the book is that empirical information about pricing and earnings can tell us something fundamental about the kinds of paintings that were produced and the way they look. Well, *almost* unchallenged: Richard Goldthwaite is the only author in the collection to confront head-on the difficulty of drawing a useful link between economics and artworks. He points out, first off, that expenditures on paintings constitute an infinitesimal portion of the overall economy, and yet leaving that aside, taken on its own, this sector reveals a basic incoherence. 'The authors of this volume, whose charge was to say what they could about the subject, have produced arrays of prices that almost defy analysis.' In other words, there was a basically unsystematic relation between art and money, beyond our incidental difficulty in reconstructing the relationship on the available evidence. As Goldthwaite puts it, '[T]he cultural value of paintings was not expressed in the market.'

Such a contention, offered at the end of the book, opens a perspective onto a different line of inquiry. With no pricing system in place, immediate precedents and relevant comparisons counted for a great deal, suggesting an emergent, dynamic process. How does systematicity emerge from irregularity? Such questions, which go in the direction of advanced theoretical economics, are not raised in this book. Indeed, the book refrains from applying contemporary theory from any of the fields it touches. No reference is made, for example, to an abundant literature that has attempted to theorize the problem of the sociological function of the sphere of cultural production, not to mention recent efforts to come to grips with the irrationality of the art market and of markets in general. Basic notions such as Pierre Bourdieu's conception of "cultural

capital” are never invoked and tested, despite the fact that several times in this book one encounters the remark, uttered as early as 1583 and repeated thereafter in various forms, that ‘you pay for the artist’s fame.’ The literature cited here is of an empirical nature; it is context-specific.

And yet the data is irregular; if there is a pattern, it is, precisely, that decisions correlating art and money were consistently made on other than rational grounds, or that grounds considered rational in one place and time were not considered so elsewhere. That irrationalism and inconsistency in the pricing of art continues to this day. The relation between art and its price tag was often enough a symbolic one, which is to say that following the money still leads us straight down the rabbit hole of dynamic cultural processes – self-fashioning, adaptive rituals of distinction, social positioning, cultural capital, and the rest. Guercino may have replaced figures with empty space for hard economic reasons, and yet he lived in an art world where such emptiness had become an option, a viable pictorial choice, a choice his own recalcitrant works served only to legitimize further. After they got over their initial disappointment, the people who received these works probably found ways to appreciate their spare atmospheres and to put their appreciation into words. This book makes it clearer than ever that the atmosphere is where the action is. (ALEXANDER NAGEL)

Michel Sanouillet. *Dada in Paris. Revised and expanded by Anne Sanouillet. Translated by Sharmila Ganguly*
The MIT Press 2009. xii, 705. US\$39.95

Few texts have played as seminal a role in reconstructing the history of the avant-garde as Michel Sanouillet’s *Dada à Paris*, first published in 1965, revised and expanded by Anne Sanouillet in 1993 and 2005, and now finally translated into English. Writing at a time when Dada was seen as little more than a phase in the prehistory of surrealism, Sanouillet conducted extensive archival research and interviewed many of the protagonists of that brief but groundbreaking cultural moment to provide a detailed account of the complex network of relations that, over a period of less than four years, from 1920 to 1923, brought together many of the protagonists of the European and North American avant-garde in the Dada adventure. A concise but comprehensive introduction sketches the genesis of the movement in Zurich and its rapid dissemination throughout Europe and in New York. The book then shifts its focus to the French capital, where a group of young writers – the ‘three musketeers’ André Breton, Louis Aragon, and Philippe Soupault – formed in the poetic environment of Apollinaire’s ‘new spirit,’ found a new direction for their literary research in the works of Dada co-founder Tristan