

Paragone Past and Present

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Abstracts

Lynette M.F. Bosch, “*Terra Incognita*”: Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Life in the Painting of Arturo Rodríguez

“*Terra Incognita: Art, Literature, Philosophy, and Life in the Painting of Arturo Rodríguez*” focuses on a contemporary Cuban-American artist whose work engages with the concept of the paragone in his most recent series of paintings. Rodríguez’s *Terra Incognita* series draws the spectator into works that combine references to literature and to the history of art. Within this continuum, Rodríguez presents imagery drawn from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Hermann Melville’s *Moby Dick*, and Louis-Fernand Celine’s *Journey to the Edge of the Night*, juxtaposed with works as diverse as Gustave Courbet’s *La Rencontre* or *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet* (1854) and Japanese Noh masks. The goal of *Terra Incognita* is to engage the spectator in a journey of discovery and comparison that invites the viewer into a private landscape that juxtaposes art and literature and life as perceived when awake and life as experienced in dreams. Rodríguez does not resolve the implicit *paragone* he presents in his paintings. He only leads the spectator to the place where it is his audience that decides which is best.

Jennifer Bates Ehlert, “Virtue By Design: A Paragone on the Symbiosis of Virtue and Technology in the Art of Sarah Wyman Whitman”

Nineteenth-century American artist Sarah Wyman Whitman continues to gain importance as a designer for book covers and stained glass, and also for her affinity with the American Arts and Crafts movement. Whitman’s works straddle nineteenth-century mass production and nineteenth-century spiritual morality. Grappling with how to align these two seemingly opposing forces informs Whitman’s designs, writings, and artworks. Even though she worked in two industries greatly changed by mass production, stained-glass and book design, her art maintains an appeal to the individual. Her democratic ideals and noble messages imbue her art with a sense of handicraft and virtue. However, her skill in creating economical and innovative book covers and technically superior stained-glass windows demonstrates her understanding of technology. This article argues that Whitman, through a combination of faith and technical savvy, used her art to serve her optimal goal of filling the world with virtue.

Sara N. James, “Giovanni di Bonino’s Window of the Life of the Virgin Mary at Orvieto”

In 1325, the Opera del Duomo of Orvieto called Master Giovanni di Bonino da Assisi (d.1347) to fabricate stained-glass windows for their cathedral, the most significant of which would adorn the nearly square Cappella Maggiore, or east-end tribune. In 1334, when Giovanni signed and dated his masterpiece—one of the largest stained-glass windows in Italy—it would have been hailed as a marvel of technology and artistic expression. Although previous scholars have praised

Giovanni's fabrication and painting, they have overlooked the unusual choices of narrative scenes and the arrangement of the forty-four rectangular panes, which alternate both horizontally and vertically to form heretofore unnoticed dual typological relationships between the Marian narratives and the Old Testament prophets. The window not only emphasizes Mary, to whom the founding pope dedicated the cathedral, but also fits into a more comprehensive papal plan than ever before recognized and acknowledges earlier than previously realized devotion to Joseph; heretofore unobserved key episodes in the city's history, including heresy and a miracle; the probable involvement of theological advisors; and hitherto unseen site-specific dogmatic agendas related to the Feast of Corpus Christi, which was universally sanctioned in Orvieto.