

the index of personal names, valuable even for the non-French-speaking reader. Ultimately, the contributions also lead us to reflect on the fact that European classicism was conceived from the start as a form of cultural, ideological, and social rebirth of an earlier tradition, which required understanding and attentive cultivation.

This book is an invitation to rediscover that spirit of intellectual effervescence and the uninterrupted fascination with the art of antiquity, a production that inspired European culture for many centuries.

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Murillo: Persuasion and Aura. Benito Navarrete Prieto.

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Do Murillo's paintings still have an aura today? Does the public perceive this aura? If so, is this because it is an inherent property of these masterpieces? Conversely, if it has been lost, what can art history do to recover it? These are some of the questions that come to my mind while reading Benito Navarrete's *Murillo: Persuasion and Aura*. Such questions may not necessarily coincide with those posed by the author, but, in my opinion, they shed light on the aims pursued in this book.

Professor Navarrete evidently considers Murillo's paintings to be intrinsically auratic. Furthermore, he proposes that this quality was noted over time by spectators such as Justino de Neve, one of Murillo's seventeenth-century Sevillian patrons, the impressionable nineteenth-century traveler Hans Christian Andersen, and the Marquis of Lozoya, a Franco-era art historian and cultural bureaucrat. However, little is said about whether this aura continues to be perceived today. In my view, as the cultural significance of the premodern artistic canon wanes, the aura of Murillo's paintings no longer remains intact. Furthermore, the auratic trace that persists predominantly pertains to these paintings' appeal in popular culture. This latter idea raises a series of questions about this book's explicit attempt to analyze Murillo in terms of Warburg and Didi-Huberman's concepts of the survival of images and the "aesthetic of the symptom": Murillo's paintings are survivals and symptoms of what? From when? And, above all, for whom?

Setting aside the idea of survival, a major strength of this book is precisely its inquiry into Murillo within the context of seventeenth-century Seville. Navarrete argues that the exploration of that milieu is a key issue when constructing a twenty-first-century understanding of Murillo. According to this argument, clichéd nineteenth- and twentieth-century views of Murillo can be overcome through a twofold analysis of what his original public would have expected, and the resources Murillo deployed to meet these expectations. It is regarding this that the author addresses the notion of

persuasion, and the book provides a study of a series of key examples. For example, Murillo's paintings of the Immaculate Conception and his street scenes are analyzed in terms of their potential for the viewer to interact with them.

Another insightful line of inquiry is the display of Murillo's paintings in his patrons' Sevillian houses, which offers a valuable insight into what it meant to possess a Murillo within the local networks of power; their display was also a form of acknowledgment of the painter's excellence and ingenuity. In these and other examples, notably the analysis of Murillo's visual language, this book proves itself to be well-documented and grounded in the author's detailed knowledge of the contemporary sources, as well as the debates on the attribution of Murillo's oeuvre. The book draws on Navarrete's earlier meticulous research on the painter, yet it combines this with a reflection on the current state of art history as a discipline. This latter concern is reflected in the book's structure: 1) Murillo and image; 2) the rhetoric of gesture, appropriation, and invention; 3) Murillo and his patrons; 4) Murillo and theatricality; and 5) how Murillo constructed his landscapes.

As a translation of *Murillo y las metáforas de la imagen* (2017) complemented by the addition of chapter 5, this book seeks to situate Murillo amid contemporary anglophone art-historical debates (although there are almost no references to race). Navarrete's endeavor to critically reframe Murillo's life and work amidst current historiographical concerns opens up a valuable space for discussion, and this book will undoubtedly become a valuable source of reference for future discussion of this painter. Nonetheless, I would say that on occasion Navarrete's concern to update the critical frame of reference is somewhat heavy-handed. While he claims to be writing against the grain of history, at times his discussion betrays an overdependence on Didi-Huberman and his rereading of Warburg and Benjamin. I must also add that doubts can be raised about certain nuances of the author's arguments.

One idea I find particularly labored is the suggestion that Murillo's reuse of pieces of American obsidian as a painting support might have been intended at that moment as an act of religious reparation, or, in Didi-Huberman's terms, an anachronism. Oliver Meslay has argued—in an article quoted by Navarrete—that the extant sources suggest that it is reading now these works in terms of Murillo's purported interest in the Christianization of American religious objects that renders them an anachronism. In my opinion, merely tracing the American origin of these obsidian pieces (with their yet unproven cult origin) does not suffice; instead, what is needed is to trace documentation of such items having been consciously Christianized in Spain. To date there does not seem to be any such evidence amongst the sources for Murillo, nor for the potential recipients of these works. On the other hand, I wholeheartedly agree with Navarrete's view that the success achieved by Murillo's complex works is explained by the painter's ability to maintain the spectator as the primary concern of his art.

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