

*Materialized Identities in Early Modern Culture, 1450–1750: Objects, Affects, Effects.* Susanna Burghartz, Lucas Burkart, Christine Göttler, and Ulinka Rublack, eds.

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At first glance, a reader might be forgiven for wondering what glass, feathers, gold paint, and veils have in common to render them illuminating for a cohesive study of material identity in early modern culture. Is this an aesthetically pleasing snapshot, a princely collector's cabinet? *Materialized Identities in Early Modern Culture*, with swirling fabrics, evocative colors, and things that shine, spans, in its editors' words, "the whole spectrum of animal, vegetable, as well as mineral matter" (44–45). What emerges, however, is a unified volume crafted with the artful dexterity and practical skill it affords to the artisans of the "things" it examines (28). Each chapter—written by historians and art historians in the culmination of a research collaboration ongoing over four years—brings to the fore these four materials' effects on early modern identities through their fluid appearances, properties, and processes of making. The volume embraces and extends recent trends in material culture to rigorously examine the structure and affectivity of material itself, drawing on the history of the senses and emotion to consider how the materiality of objects (such as paint's ingredients and smell, or the translucency of sheer fabric) were integral to their reception as tools of identity.

In each of the volume's four parts, two studies address a single material. Part 1, "Glass," begins in Renaissance Venice. Dealing with glass's "transparent and lustrous" nature, its affordability and richly diverse, often luxury forms—from glass beads to glass dildos—Lucas Burkart performs a wide sweep of the production and consumption of glass in the early modern city (74). Rachele Scuro's examination of the closely guarded monopoly of glassmaking families turns to how the process of making impacted identity and to the involvement of the glassmaker's hands in his craft as potential impediment to higher status. Stefan Hanß and Ulinka Rublack's chapters on feathers in part 2 are similarly complementary, tracing the "global material trajectories" of feathers (174), and their diverse sensual and even healthful effects on bodies and minds. Hanß's investigation of coloring and sewing feathers that became "headwear, collars, shoulder and elbow adornments, necklaces, panaches, fans, and shin guards" (140) gives way to Rublack's reading of feathers as objects displaying political ambitions in the public festivities of the Württemberg court. Also highlighting appearances, Christine Göttler leads into part 2, "Gold Paint," with an investigation of Netherlandish oil painting and its "power . . . to imitate" gold through the use of vermilion, pointing to the affective power of paint's "golden glow" (233, 263).

Michèle Seehafer's discussion of shell gold (distinct from gold leaf) focuses both on the virtuosity of its use in art and observations derived from reconstructing historical recipes. In part 4, Katherine Bond and Susanna Burghartz draw attention to veils

that concealed and revealed, accentuated, and burdened female bodies. Bond extends veils beyond “semiotic codes for social types” printed in costume books to “objects of beauty, fashionability, virtue, and vehicles of creativity” with “crackling energy,” fabrics of differing drapes and thickness that had physical and emotional effects on the body (327, 348). Susanna Burghartz focuses on sumptuary policies in Basel and Zurich and pushback that similarly indicated veils’ “affective, physical affects on their wearers,” and through reconstruction draws attention to “the play of opacity and transparency” as part of performing female self (404, 406).

Just as glass is molded and shatters, feathers and veils flutter, and gold enlivens a painting, so these chapters are fluid and interactive; not only through a shared methodology of affectivity, but in their sustained effort to tactilely engage with historical materials or to replicate creation processes. The chapters’ material-based approach performs the refreshing function of surveying identity through a wide social lens, while their focus on sensation highlights the dynamism of both material and identity. The disparity of glass, feathers, gold paint, and gold underlines the potential to extend this affective approach to various objects in Europe and beyond, making the book of use to a wide intersection of material and cultural historians. *Materialized Identities* may shimmer under the light, yet it delivers a solid framework, highlights the benefits of interdisciplinary collaborations, and will vitalize future scholarship through the valuable insights its approach to material history offers.

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*Rubens e la cultura italiana, 1600–1608*. Raffaella Morselli and Cecilia Paolini, eds. I libri di Viella Arte. Rome: Viella, 2020. 338 pp. €38.

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A Flemish painter born in Siegen, Peter Paul Rubens spent his formative years on the Italian peninsula (1600–08) in the employ of Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, before returning to Antwerp and setting up shop. The edited volume *Rubens e la cultura italiana* asks anew Michael Jaffé’s question, “How much did this Flemish painter absorb of Italy, and how did Italy respond to him?” (*Rubens and Italy* [1977], 7). Editor Raffaella Morselli argues that Rubens left Italy with not just a pictorial repertoire but also a *modus operandi*, indeed the very sense of himself as a *pictor doctus* (13, 16–17). Essays by established and emerging scholars cover Rubens’s engagement with Italian culture, broadly defined, as well as his status in the local art market. The authors present documentary research, points for revision, and some theoretically ambitious arguments. Together with Morselli’s *Tra Fiandre e Italia* (2019) from the same publisher, the present volume is an important reference point for students of Rubens’s Italian sojourn.