

an island unto himself. He enriches the vocabulary, expands pre-Galilean knowledge, and links the past to what is new in modern science. Those who study Leonardo's anatomicals will find in Piro's *Glossario* a requisite research partner.

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The Making of the Artist in Late Timurid Painting. Lamia Balafrej.

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Imagine a book that centers on the work of the Florentine painter Raphael, but which makes no mention of the artist's name in its title or table of contents. Lamia Balafrej's illuminating and tightly written *The Making of the Artist in Late Timurid Painting* does something similar, though the artist in question is Kamal al-Din Bihzad (d. 1535/36), a Persian manuscript painter who enjoyed legendary status during his own lifetime and long after. Balafrej's book first refers to the artist on page 2, and introduces him within the context of the Cairo *Bustan*, a famous manuscript of Sa'di's *Bustan* (The orchard) that was completed around 1488 at the Timurid court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara in Herat, present-day Afghanistan, and bears paintings, as Balafrej puts it, "in the name of Bihzad."

Balafrej's oblique orientation to the figure of Bihzad is, of course, strategic. For, while the book describes itself as a "close, microhistorical analysis of the Cairo *Bustan*," its purview isn't so much the historical individual associated with the manuscript's illustrations, but rather the idea and function of artistic authorship that emerged in Herat during the second half of the fifteenth century (2). The book's core argument is that late Timurid manuscript painting was a vehicle for self-reflection, self-representation, and "an agent of empowerment," a departure from the standard remit of courtly manuscript paintings, which, Balafrej contends, had been limited to the illustration of text and the glorification of royal patrons (2). Importantly, the author locates this paradigm-shifting phenomenon within the "symbolic potential of color, line, and composition," rather than in iconic depiction or the indexical trace (2). For Balafrej, it was skill, manual labor, and craftsmanship—the "making," in short—that lay at the heart of the late Timurid painter's project to embed himself in the illustrated manuscript.

The book's organization, accordingly, leads the reader through the various acts of artistic making in the Cairo *Bustan* that produce and foreground the painter's presence. Chapter 1 takes up the manuscript's pictorial preface, which Balafrej argues employed such tactics as extratextual visual abundance and intricacy of design to shift focus from the figure of the emperor—the usual focus of frontispiece

compositions—to the medium of painting itself. Chapter 2 turns to the numerous extratextual epigraphs that appear throughout the Cairo *Bustan*'s paintings. These marks, Balafrej claims, inscribed Bihzad into his own paintings, and thereby functioned as a metacommentary on the main text, the authority of the painter, and creation. They simultaneously modeled modes of looking and responding for the participants of the royal gatherings where manuscripts like the Cairo *Bustan* were collectively used. Chapter 3 explores how the visual abundance, intricacy, and miniaturization evident in the Cairo *Bustan*'s illustrations “[pointed] away from the painting’s content toward the process of creation” (110). Drawing upon literary theory, Balafrej proposes that the *Bustan*'s paintings represent a “potential world” (141), meaning that they refer not to phenomenal realities, but to “the matrix from which reality was produced and can be produced” (142). As a result, the artist’s imagination was tied explicitly to divine creation. Chapter 4 concentrates on the contoured line, which formed the basis of the practice and assessment of late Timurid painting. Here the author cautions against interpreting painting through a strictly semantic framework, contending that the sensuous, expressive qualities of painting’s contours point instead to the painter and his role as the maker of hermeneutically boundless images. Chapter 5 considers how “signatures define artistic authority as manual and intellectual authorship” (195). Balafrej insightfully observes that Bihzad’s signatures in the Cairo *Bustan* “idealize the notion of authorship” by eschewing particularity (203). The artist’s self-promotion is thus a paradox: announcing himself through the addition of his signature, Bihzad simultaneously erases his own presence by rendering his scribal self in transcendent terms. The epilogue closes the book by tracing the impact of the Cairo *Bustan* in Iran and beyond.

This absorbing book promises to enliven debates in art history and other disciplines. Its greatest strength lies in its identification of painterly skill, labor, and inscription as arenas for the articulation and performance of an empowered, if also paradoxical, creative self. Another important contribution is its close, meticulous reading of image, text, and form in illustrated manuscripts, which the author often combines with analysis of poetry, metalwork, and architectural epigraphy. One not insignificant quibble is that Balafrej often characterizes earlier manuscripts and other media as “foreshadowing” the Cairo *Bustan* (see, e.g., 49, 90, 101, 118), and thus introduces a determinism that she in other places seems to reject. If Bihzad’s work in the Cairo *Bustan* represents the crystallization of a longer “turn toward pictorial self-reflection,” one then wants to know how and why this consequential shift occurred when and where it did (3). While the book’s introduction offers a few suggestions, this line of questioning is otherwise little explored. Future studies will have to take up this thread; fortunately for those scholars, they’ll have Balafrej’s book upon which to build.

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