

All in all, a monument of scholarship, and a valuable scholarly tool that will probably not be written again. These are the books that remain on our shelves half a century after publication—and longer.

Martha Hollander. *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2002. xvi + 263 pp. + 89 illus. \$55.00. Review by MELINDA K. VANDER PLOEG FALLON, GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY.

Hollander considers the play between main and subsidiary scenes within a shared pictorial space. She privileges composition, in this case the construction of space, and explores its social and psychological functions. Despite consciously downplaying narrative and allegory, she permits symbolism to add meaning to paintings. A statement of this methodology and some historiography constitute the book's brief introduction. Each of the subsequent four chapters starts with analyses of select paintings from the oeuvre of a prominent artist and then expands to treat similar works by various other Dutch painters. A first chapter ranging from history painting to landscapes establishes that medieval and renaissance traditions produced an emblematic approach for understanding images containing divided spaces. Hollander implicitly argues that this approach lingered and affected the seventeenth-century conception of genre paintings. In the following three chapters Hollander employs the emblematic approach and, by doing so, offers an innovative response to the question of meaning in Dutch art.

In the first chapter Hollander fleshes out the introduction. She first acquaints the reader with *doorsiens*, "look throughs" or openings into another space that allow the addition of subsidiary scenes to the main scene by examining paintings and texts by Karel van Mander and then jumps back in time to establish the roots for the emblematic reading of images containing multiple scenes. The subsequent discussion establishes that Dutch artists continued to

use *doorsiens* and that the device found strong support in seventeenth-century Dutch art theory. Appearing in the chapter are various early visual precedents for incorporating multiple scenes into one image for the sake of commentary such as marginalia on manuscript pages or devotional images where a narrative cycle appears within individual frames around a main image. Hollander's consideration of tripartite theater sets as another visual medium that facilitated the simultaneous presentation of several scenes complementing or commenting on a central scene testifies to the range of her sources. Particularly important for understanding Hollander's later analysis of individual works is the section where she likens the composition and reading of scenes containing *doorsiens* to that of emblems. Both incorporate diverse elements rendered at different scales into one image to provide visual commentary reinforcing or expanding the implications of one subject. Through the comparison of *doorsiens* and emblems, she presents a mode of interpretation that departs from narrative readings of Dutch genre paintings and the decoding associated with Edy de Jongh's studies of emblems and Dutch genre painting. Hollander then explores the functions of *doorsiens* within domestic scenes in the remaining three chapters.

The chapter on Dou begins by comparing his backgrounds to *doorsiens* and then likens his paintings to emblems. Hollander then extends the discussion to backrooms and paintings within paintings as a means used by other artists to provide similar visual commentary on a primary scene. Whereas the focus on the emblem-like structure of the images is thought provoking, the interpretation of several images could have been enriched by additional consideration of the precedents mentioned in chapter one. For example, the multiple openings in the theatrical arches she referenced (pp. 31-35 and figs. 13 and 14) were surrounded by reliefs or sculpture that commented on the art of drama just as the arched openings framing Dou's figures are often adorned by reliefs dealing with the art of painting.

The remaining two chapters reveal a strong interest in gender issues by focusing on the ways Maes and de Hooch located their

subjects within socially meaningful architectural boundaries, that is, whether the artist situated a woman within family or servant quarters. The chapter on Maes introduces his paintings of eavesdroppers from the 1650s. Hollander brings together information about the compartmentalization of activities within seventeenth-century Dutch homes and relations between mistresses and maids to posit that the artist's explorations of transitional spaces in these images underscored the mutability of feminine identities. She stresses an emblematic reading of the paintings that asks whether the main figure will behave like a mistress or a negligent servant. In so doing, Hollander downplays too strongly the narrative tension created in each image by the central and pivotal eavesdropper whose gaze and finger to the lips pulls the viewer into amiable collusion. Plays like those Hollander mined to present options for the interaction between mistresses and maids sometimes feature eavesdroppers whose activities generate similar tensions and amusement for the audience. The comic suspense generated by Maes's scenes was surely familiar to his contemporaries and crucial in their responses to these images.

In the chapter on de Hooch, Hollander examines his device of showing open doors in interiors or alleyways in courtyards to emphasize the contiguity of domestic space and activities with public spaces and life. In Hollander's reading, the intersections between such spaces in the images parallel the porous nature of both gender divisions and private/public life in the seventeenth century. The interpretation works well for images of interiors or courtyards opening to community spaces but the attempt toward the end of the chapter to assert that Dutch artists incorporated domestic life into public scenes by showing figures such as mothers nursing seems out of place because it departs from the book's overarching theme of spatial junctures. At the end of the chapter, a two-page section serving as the book's conclusion appears. It shifts from de Hooch to several paragraphs lauding the ambiguity of many seventeenth-century Dutch paintings.

Hollander's new approach to interpretation is laudable, but the book's wandering structure sometimes distracts the reader. The

absence of a distinct conclusion clarifying the main points and reinforcing their links to the book's themes is lamentable. Grasping the main points currently requires a kind of active engagement with the material that readers may lack time or training to perform. A full conclusion could make the book's many original and intriguing observations more approachable.

Finally, the frequency of various small inexactitudes should put the reader slightly on guard. Several can be caught by simply comparing the text with the illustrations. Such is the case with the statement about a plan for a house and courtyard by Daniël van Breen (fig. 67) that, "next to the privy another flight of stairs leads to the basement." According to the key on the plan itself, that "privy" is merely a cistern for rainwater. Other inaccuracies strike only an informed reader, such as the statement that Petronella de la Court's dollhouse was, "an exact replica of her actual house" (125) when a comparison of the dollhouse with de la Court's estate inventory reveals that the dollhouse contained far fewer rooms than did her house and that many paintings in the dollhouse correspond neither in subject nor artist to those known to have adorned the walls of her home. While bothersome, such errors only question individual points.