

Discover How Old Women Shaped Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior Visual Culture

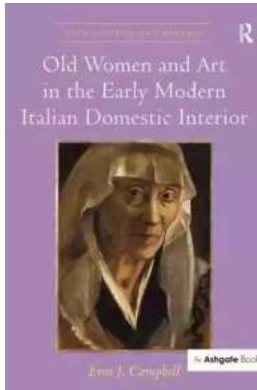
Throughout history, art has been influenced by a myriad of factors, from political and social events to the individuals who shape the world in which they live. One lesser-known but significant aspect of art history is the role of older women in the early modern Italian domestic interior visual culture. Often overlooked or disregarded, these women played a crucial role in shaping the artistic landscape of their time, leaving behind a lasting legacy that deserves recognition.

The Hidden Influencers

In the early modern period, women held a subordinate position in society, with limited opportunities for education or professional careers. However, in the privacy of their homes, these women found a space where they could exert their creativity and cultivate their own artistic tastes. Old women, in particular, played a pivotal role in creating a visual culture that transcended societal limitations, accumulating objects and curating their domestic interiors to reflect their personal style and refined taste.

The domestic spaces in which these women lived became veritable galleries of their own, displaying an array of artworks, decorative objects, and furniture that reflected their status, wealth, and interests. Their artistic choices were an expression of selfhood and agency, defying the constraints imposed by the patriarchal society of the time.

Old Women and Art in the Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior (Visual Culture in Early



Modernity) by Caryl Churchill(1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Print length : 215 pages



A Renaissance of Style

The early modern period in Italy was a time of great artistic innovation and cultural transformation, with the Renaissance at its helm. Old women embraced the ideals of this movement, redefining the interior decoration of their households by incorporating elements of the new artistic trends.

Their homes became a testament to the evolution of art, as they accumulated works by renowned painters, sculptors, and artisans. From portraits that captured their likeness and emphasized their status in society, to delicate tapestries and intricate ceramics, these women showcased their refined taste and appreciation for beauty.

Learning from the Masters

While many old women were patrons of well-known artists, they were not mere collectors. Rather, they actively engaged with the artistic community, fostering relationships with painters and sculptors, and even commissioning works that reflected their personal narratives. These collaborations allowed for a deeper understanding and connection with the art being produced, while also leaving a tangible mark on the cultural landscape.

One such example is the renowned Italian artist Artemisia Gentileschi, whose work was greatly influenced by her patrons and the interaction she had with the older women who supported her career. Gentileschi's powerful and emotive paintings often depicted women in positions of strength and agency, challenging societal norms and shedding light on the experiences and struggles of women in the early modern period.

The Legacy Lives On

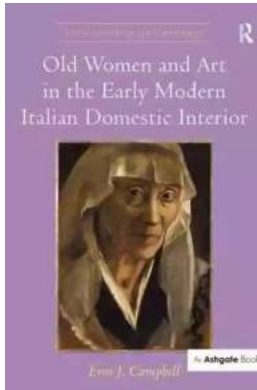
Despite their contributions, the role of old women in shaping the early modern Italian domestic interior visual culture has been largely overshadowed by the dominant narratives of the time. However, in recent years, art historians have begun to uncover and document the important legacy left behind by these influential women.

By examining the objects they collected, the relationships they formed, and the impact they had on artists and the artistic community, we gain a deeper appreciation for their role in shaping the artistic landscape of their time.

The extraordinary influence of old women in the early modern Italian domestic interior visual culture cannot be denied. Behind closed doors, these women curated stunning visual experiences that defied societal expectations and norms, leaving behind a legacy worthy of recognition.

By acknowledging their contributions, we not only gain a deeper understanding of the artistic landscape of the early modern period but also give these women the recognition they rightfully deserve.

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Though portraits of old women mediate cultural preoccupations just as effectively as those of younger women, the scant published research on images of older women belies their significance within early modern Italy. This study examines the remarkable flowering, largely overlooked in portraiture scholarship to date, of portraits of old women in Northern Italy and especially Bologna during the second half of the sixteenth century, when, as a result of religious reform, the lives of women and the family came under increasing scrutiny. *Old Women and Art in the Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior* draws on a wide range of primary visual sources, including portraits, religious images, architectural views, prints and drawings, as well as extant palazzi and case, furnishings, and domestic objects created by the leading artists in Bologna, including Lavinia Fontana, Bartolomeo Passerotti, Denys Calvaert, and the Carracci. The study also draws on an array of historical sources - including sixteenth-century theories of portraiture, prescriptive writings on women and the family, philosophical and practical treatises on the home economy, sumptuary legislation, books of secrets, prescriptive writings on old age, and household inventories - to provide new historical perspectives on the domestic life of the propertied classes in Bologna during the period. Author Erin Campbell contends that these images of unidentified women are not only crucial to our understanding of the cultural

operations of art within the early modern world, but also, by working from the margins to revise the center, provide an opportunity to present new conceptual frameworks and question our assumptions about old age, portraiture, and the domestic interior.



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