Edited by
James Romaine *and*
Linda Stratford

ReVisioning

Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art

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James Clarke & Co

and

The Lutterworth Press

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James Romaine
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Illustrations

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Figure 1. Masolino, *St. Peter Preaching*, 1420s, fresco, altar wall, left side, upper register, Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. Photo permission of Antonio Quattrone.

Expanding the Discourse on Christianity in the History of Art

JAMES ROMAINE

The substance, terms, and tone of the art historical discourse are established by the methodologies that scholars employ. These methods shape how and what art history is written and taught. This is true both broadly across the academic field as well as when specifically addressing the history of Christianity and the visual arts. *ReVisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art* explores some of the underlying methodological assumptions in the field of art history by examining the suitability and success, as well as the incompatibility and failure, of varying art historical methodologies when applied to works of art that distinctly manifest Christian narratives, themes, motifs, and symbols.

In developing this project, the co-editors looked to several precedents in which the field of art history has engaged in a critical self-examination. One model for this book is *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany*, edited by Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard.[1] In their introduction to that collection of essays, Broude and Garrard rightly argued that certain methodological assumptions of art history, intentionally and unintentionally, excluded women from the canon. In addressing this problem, Broude and Garrard began by noting, "The history of art, like other scholarly disciplines, has matured over the centuries by expanding its boundaries

1. See Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982). Also, Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism And Art History* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); and Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). The title of this introductory essay is an acknowledgment of this debt.

to include new ways of looking at its subject."[2] Following that model, this book and the Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art (ASCHA), the organization that initiated this project, are here contributing to further expanding the dialog and the maturation of the discipline of art history by calling to its attention certain methodological attitudes and assumptions that limit the scholarly study of the history of Christianity and the visual arts.

Broude and Garrard's introduction articulated a two-part objective, both of which are applicable to *ReVisioning*. They wrote,

> On the most basic and, to date, most visible level, [feminism] has prompted the rediscovery and reevaluation of the achievements of women artists, both past and present. Thanks to the efforts of a growing number of scholars who are devoting their research skills to this area, we know a great deal today about the work of women artists who were almost lost to us little more than a decade ago, as the result of their exclusion from the standard histories.[3]

ASCHA and this book aim to cultivate a community of scholars committed to the recovery of the richness and diversity of the history of Christianity and the visual arts that has been in danger of becoming neglected and invisible.

However, as Broude and Garrard observed, there was/is a larger goal to be accomplished. They wrote, "Feminism has raised other even more fundamental questions for art history as a humanistic discipline, questions that are now affecting its functioning at all levels and that may ultimately lead to its redefinition."[4] For Broude and Garrard, feminism was a reevaluation of the patriarchal "attitudes and assumptions" that defined both the concept of "art" and its history.[5] Broude and Garrard's self-consciousness of the theoretical basis of their own practice as well as their act of shining a light onto the methodological assumptions evident in the field at large were both a great contribution to art history and have served as a model for this book's attempt to question how art history has addressed, and failed to address, the history of Christianity and the visual arts.

The prevailing narrative of art history is one that charts a movement from the sacred to the secular, progressing out of past historical periods in which works of art were produced to reveal, embrace, and glorify the

2. Broude and Garrard, *Feminism and Art History*, 1.
3. Ibid., 1.
4. Ibid., 2.
5. Ibid., 2.

divine and toward a modern conception of art as materialist and a more recent emphasis on social context.[6] In fact, for many art historians this secularization of art is not only a narrative *within* the history of art; it has been the narrative *of* art history as an academic field.[7] Some interpretations of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art not only insist on equating modernism with secularism but also describe the erasure of all mention of spiritual presence from the scholarly discourse as a triumph for the field of art history.[8] The rise of the academic art historian in the nineteenth century and the development of critical methods of art history, such as connoisseurship, formalism, iconography, psychoanalysis, and semiotics, have been regarded, and even designed, as part of a movement away from matters of personal (and therefore presumed to be subjective) faith toward a critical and rational (and therefore presumed to be objective)

6. This is the narrative of the history of art as advanced in many of the most popular survey textbooks. See Marilyn Stokstad and Michael W. Cothren, *Art History*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2013); and Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner's Art Through the Ages*, 14th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013). In these textbooks, the religious content and contexts of art from historical periods before the nineteenth century are addressed; however, art with religious content and contexts in the nineteenth century or after are largely ignored. *Great Themes in Art*, 1st ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, 2001), a thematic survey textbook by John Walford, treats issues of spirituality roughly equally in all periods of art history.

7. In her essay "The 'Return' of Religion in the Scholarship of American Art," Sally M. Promey describes the "secularization theory of modernity" (*The Art Bulletin* 85:3 [2003] 581–603). She notes that, as the field of art history took form in the late-nineteenth century, it was founded on positivist theories of secularization. Promey writes, "Most succinctly, secularization theory contends that modernism necessarily leads to religion's decline, that the secular and the religious will not coexist in the modern world." She adds, "secularization theory became a powerful shaper of disciplines and intellectual inquiry" (ibid., 584). She also adds, later in the essay, "It is no accident that American art history has recovered the study of religion at just the time when the array of 'post-modernisms' calls into question aspects of the Enlightenment agenda, with its attendant secularization trajectories" (ibid., 593).

8. For example, Rosalind Krauss uses the art of Piet Mondrian to make a larger point ("Grids," *October* 9 [1979] 50–64). She writes, "Given the absolute rift that had opened between the sacred and the secular [in the nineteenth century], the modern artist was obviously faced with the necessity to choose between one mode of expression and the other. The curious testimony offered by the grid is that at this juncture he tried to decide for both. In the increasingly de-sacralized space of the nineteenth century, art had become the refuge for religious emotion; it became, as it has remained, a secular form of belief. Although this condition could be discussed openly in the late nineteenth century, it is something that is inadmissible in the twentieth, so that by now we find it indescribably embarrassing to mention *art* and *spirit* in the same sentence" (ibid., 54; emphasis original). For a de-sacralized treatment of twentieth-century art, see Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2004).

discipline. Some recent methods of art history have maintained what has been regarded as a necessary skepticism toward matters of religious faith, presuming that art history and religion, especially Christianity, do not belong together.

In *Art History after Modernism*, Hans Belting notes that modernism was not only an artistic practice; it was also a paradigm of art history.[9] As the dominance of that paradigm has waned, the discipline of art history has been freed to explore other directions and methods of scholarship. In *Has Modernism Failed* and *The Reenchantment of Art*, Suzi Gablik voiced a disenchantment with modernism, not only with its manifestation but also with its assumptions and mechanisms.[10] Gablik, in turn, urged a sacralization of art as antidote. Building on Gablik's proposition, James Elkins and David Morgan have suggested that "enchantment" as a human way of knowing, accounts for the large numbers of the public appreciation of art that involves spiritual meaning.[11]

In critiquing the secularist assumptions of those methods of art history persisting from the last century, it is advisable, however, not to go too far. In many cases, the development of these art historical methods has contributed positively to the establishment of professional practices. At the same time, these methods have created problems for the field of art history. The history of art, that is, the production of art by artists, has been, is, and is likely to continue to be, largely committed to the creative visualization of faith, spirituality, and religion. Over the last two centuries, artists, not only in Europe and the Americas but throughout the world, have continued to produce works of art with distinctly Christian subjects, forms, and purposes. At the same time, images and objects reflective of Christian content and contexts have too often been met by a field that lacks the methodological framework by which to meaningfully inform their engagement. In some cases, the very structures imposed by these methods' secularist assumptions minimize, misconstrue, or marginalize the work of

9. Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) vii.

10. See Suzi Gablik, *Has Modernism Failed* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1985); and Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1992). While there are many definitions of modernism, Gablik's description of it as a paradigm characterized by "mechanism, positivism, empiricism, rationalism, materialism, secularism, and scientism—the whole objectifying consciousness of the Enlightenment" will suffice here. Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 11. Our objective is not to discard these values and embrace their opposites but rather to open them to critique as assumptions for art historical methodologies.

11. See James Elkins and David Morgan, eds., *Re-Enchantment* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

art's Christian content. The effect is a contracting rather than expanding of the experience of looking at art. *ReVisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art* contends that scholars ignore the pervasive and influential presence of Christianity in the history of art at the risk of distorting that history. There is today an urgency to develop an open and rigorous discussion of methods by which scholars can constructively engage the history of Christianity and the visual arts, as a benefit not only to that history, but to the very integrity of the field of art history itself.

The dichotomy between the history of art and the methods of art history had earlier aroused Elkins's curiosity as demonstrated in *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, where he noted, "It is impossible to talk sensibly about religion and at the same time address art in an informed and intelligent manner; but it is also irresponsible not to keep trying."[12] Elkins, together with Morgan, gives his own try in *Re-Enchantment*, which addresses the most "challenging subjects" in current writing on topics which "bear articulation yet are not sufficiently addressed," including the flourishing of religion in art.[13]

In his introduction to *Re-Enchantmen*t Morgan cites this trend, finding it noteworthy, the number of art critics, art school professors, and art historians who in the face of artwork evoking religious experience express "contempt for art that intends to do so and viewers that welcome it."[14] Morgan proposes:

> When art takes on spiritual meanings, it requires of the professional interpreter an expertise that far exceeds the narrower and more defensible boundaries of formalist criticism, art-world journalism, knowledge of artists and their works, and skill at making art and cultivating one's career at it.[15]

Morgan's observation suggests that despite the breadth of art historical methodologies in use today, the field continues to struggle to find the interdisciplinary tools by which to practice a more robust analysis of the ways in which religious faith has informed works of art. While the discrediting of antireligious rationalism appears to have spurred renewed

12. See James Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (New York: Routledge, 2004). At the same time, Elkins claims, "art that sets out to convey spiritual values goes against the grain of the history of modernism," explaining that most religious art today makes itself out to be too sentimental and thus becomes simply "bad" art by failing to exercise boundaries between art and religion (ibid., 20).

13. Elkins and Morgan, *Re-Enchantment*.

14. Ibid., 17.

15. Ibid.

interest within the academy in things spiritual, if not religious, interpretive strategies have not yet been consciously and critically developed.

The questions remain, has the discipline of art history developed sufficient methodologies by which to critically see the history of Christianity in the visual arts? Do art historians possess the methodological tools to recognize and discuss the meaningful interface with works of art bearing Christian content or reference? How will art historians responsibly write about works of art with Christian content? The field of art history stands in need of its own methodological reflection. Some, perhaps including Elkins, hold that the professional standards and methods of art history are necessarily at odds with religion. Others, the editors of this book included, wish to make the case that the field of art history, in fact, must find professional standards and methods by which to addresses the history of Christianity and the visual arts.

Thankfully, this project has already been underway, with increasing momentum, for many decades. The scholarly literature addressing the history of Christianity and the visual arts has developed to such an extent that it can no longer be justly overlooked. While this literature, reflecting the complexity and diversity of its subject is far too rich and manifold to be surveyed in any single essay, it is possible to note some of its characteristics.[16] One of the most interesting phenomena of the evolution of this literature is how it has developed along two distinct tracks: visual theology and religious culture.

Developing out of a recognition of the strengths and limitations of formalist and iconographic methods of art history, but, at the same time, wanting to keep the work of art, as a content-permeated image or object, at the center of the scholarly focus, a content-oriented method of art history began to emerge.[17] While this method was not exclusively concerned

16. Any list of this literature will be far from a complete accounting of the depth, diversity, and richness of the scholarly discourse concerning the history of Christianity and the visual arts. This essay is principally concerned with scholarship that fits within a category of art history. Therefore, scholarship that is mainly theological—see Jeremy S. Begbie, *Voicing Creation's Praise: Toward a Theology of the Arts* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2000); or Gesa Elsbeth Thiessen, ed., *Theological Aesthetics: A Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004)—as well as books aimed at the encouragement of contemporary artists of faith—see James Romaine, ed., *Objects of Grace: Conversations on Creativity and Faith* (Baltimore: Square Halo, 2002); or Ned Bustard, ed., *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God* (Baltimore: Square Halo, 2007)—are not a part of this discussion. This essay only cites books and catalogs, in English, that are largely concerned with the history of Christianity and art. To avoid redundancy, books cited in footnotes to the text of this essay are not repeated in lists of literature.

17. Erwin Panofsky and Sir Ernst Gombrich are scholars who established some of this foundation.

with spiritual or Christian content, many scholars, such as Doug Adams,[18] Diane Apostolos-Cappadona,[19] John Dillenberger,[20] Jane Dillenberger,[21] William Dyrness,[22] and Hans Rookmaaker,[23] have evidenced in their work a distinct concern for the sacred.

This method of art as visual theology recognizes the work of art as a personal medium, for the artist or the viewer, of a vertically-oriented imagination. Specifically applied to the history of Christianity and the visual arts, this method regards both Christianity as well as the visual arts as establishing a vertical relationship between God and humanity. This method tends to regard the work of art as biblical exegesis. This impact is not just that the work of art, or artist, is regarded as an interpreter of the Bible but that the scholar is an interpreter of the work's meaning as it is read from the work's iconographic and formal construction.

In the more recent literature, there has developed a rich diversity of methodological directions,[24] addressing works for the Early Christian

18. See Doug Adams, *Transcendence With the Human Body in Art: George Segal, Stephen De Staebler, Jasper Johns, and Christo* (New York: Crossroad, 1991). Doug Adams and Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, eds., *Art As Religious Studies* (New York: Crossroad, 1987).

19. See Diane Apostolos-Cappadona, ed., *Art, Creativity and the Sacred* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); and *The Spirit and the Vision: The Influence of Christian Romanticism on the Development of 19th-Century American Art* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995).

20. See John Dillenberger, *The Visual Arts and Christianity in America* (New York: Crossroad, 1989); and *Images and Relics: Theological Perceptions and Visual Images in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

21. See Jane Dillenberger, *Style and Content in Christian Art* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1965); *Secular Art with Sacred Themes* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1969); *Image and Spirit in Sacred and Secular Art* (New York: Crossroad, 1990); and *The Religious Art of Andy Warhol* (New York: Continuum, 1998).

22. See William Dyrness, *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Ada, MI: Baker Academic, 2001); *Reformed Theology and Visual Culture: The Protestant Imagination from Calvin to Edwards* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and *Senses of the Soul: Art and the Visual in Christian Worship* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2008).

23. See H. R. Rookmaaker, *Modern Art and The Death of Culture* (New York: Crossway, 1994); and Marleen Hengelaar-Rookmaaker, ed., *The Complete Works of Hans R Rookmaaker* (Carlisle: Piquant, 2002).

24. For texts that survey histories of Christianity and the visual arts, see Michelle P. Brown, ed., *The Lion Companion to Christian Art* (Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008); John Drury, *Painting the Word: Christian Pictures and their Meanings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999); Neil MacGregor with Erika Langmuir, *Seeing Salvation: Images of Christ in Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Rowena Loverance, *Christian Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Martin O'Kane, *Imaging the Bible: An Introduction to Biblical Art* (London: SPCK, 2008); and *Painting the Text* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007); and Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Illustrated Jesus Through*

and Byzantine,[25] Medieval,[26] Renaissance and Reformation,[27] Baroque and

the Centuries (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

25. See Andreas Andreopoulos, *Metamorphosis: The Transfiguration in Byzantine Theology And Iconography* (Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005); Clemena Antonova, *Space, Time, and Presence in the Icon: Seeing the World With the Eyes of God* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010); Charles Barber, *Figure and Likeness: On the Limits of Representation in Byzantine Iconoclasm* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); John Beckwith, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1970); Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jepphcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Robin Cormack, *Icons* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Paul Corby Finney, *The Invisible God: The Earliest Christians on Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Pavel Florensky, *Beyond Vision: Essays on the Perception of Art*, ed. Nicoletta Misler, trans. Wendy Salmond (London: Reaktion, 2002); Michael Gough, *The Origins of Christian Art* (New York: Praeger, 1973); André Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of Its Origins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); Robin Margaret Jensen, *Understanding Early Christian Art* (New York: Routledge, 2000); and *Face to Face: Portraits of the Divine in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004); Anastasia Lazaridou, ed., *Transition to Christianity: Art of Late Antiquity, 3rd–7th Century AD* (New York: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, 2012); Robert S. Nelson, *Hagia Sophia, 1850–1950: Holy Wisdom, Modern Monument* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); and ed., *Holy Image, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2007); Jeffrey Spier, ed., *Picturing the Bible: The Earliest Christian Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Imago Dei: The Byzantine Apologia for Icons* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

26. See Martina Bagnoli, ed., *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics, and Devotion in Medieval Europe* (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum, 2010); Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levant* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Anne-Marie Bouché, *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Herbert L. Kessler, *Spiritual Seeing: Picturing God's Invisibility in Medieval Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Aden Kumler, *Translating Truth: Ambitious Images and Religious Knowledge in Late Medieval France and England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300–1500* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Amy Knight Powell, *Depositions: Scenes from the Late Medieval Church and the Modern Museum* (Brooklyn: Zone, 2012); Sixten Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative: The Rise of the Dramatic Close up in Fifteenth Century Devotional Painting* (Doornaspijk, NL: Davaco, 1984); and Richard Viladesau, *The Beauty of the Cross: The Passion of Christ in Theology and the Arts—From the Catacombs to the Eve of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

27. See Paolo Berdini, *The Religious Art of Jacopo Bassano: Painting as Visual Exegesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Carl C. Christensen, *Art and the Reformation in Germany* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979); John W. Dixon Jr., *Art and the Theological Imagination* (New York: Seabury, 1978); and *The Christ of Michelangelo* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1994); and *Images of Truth: Religion and the Art of Seeing* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1996); Creighton E. Gilbert, *How Fra Angelico and Signorelli Saw the End of the World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003); Sara Nair James, *Signorelli and Fra Angelico at Orvieto: Liturgy, Poetry and a Vision of the*

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Rococo,[28] nineteenth-century,[29] twentieth-century,[30] and contemporary[31]

28. See Xavier Bray et al., *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600–1700* (London: National Gallery London, 2009); James Clifton, *The Body of Christ: In the Art of Europe and New Spain 1150-1800* (New York: Prestel, 1997); Lloyd DeWitt, *Rembrandt and the Face of Jesus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); Adelheid M. Gealt and George Knox, *Domenico Tiepolo: A New Testament* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Ronda Kasl, ed., *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); John Rupert Martin and Gail Feigenbaum, *Van Dyck as Religious Artist* (Princeton: Art Museum, Princeton University, 1979); Mia M. Mochizuki, *The Netherlandish Image after Iconoclasm, 1566–1672: Material Religion in the Dutch Golden Age* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008); Shelley Perlove and Larry Silver, *Rembrandt's Faith: Church and Temple in the Dutch Golden Age* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); Alain Saint Saëns, *Art and Faith in Tridentine Spain (1545–1690)* (New York: Lang, 1995); E. John Walford, *Jacob van Ruisdael and the Perception of Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); and Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., ed., *Rembrandt's Late Religious Portraits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

29. See Ronald Bernier, *Monument, Moment, and Memory: Monet's Cathedral in Fin De Siecle France* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007); Marcus C. Bruce, *Henry Ossawa Tanner: A Spiritual Biography* (New York: Crossroad 8th Avenue, 2002); Michael Paul Driskel, *Representing Belief: Religion, Art, and Society in Nineteenth-Century France* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); Kathleen Powers Erickson, *At Eternity's Gate: The Spiritual Vision of Vincent van Gogh* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Michaela Giebelhausen, *Painting the Bible: Representation And Belief in Mid-Victorian Britain* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Cordula Grewe, *Painting the Sacred in the Age of Romanticism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (London: Reaktion, 2009); Anna O. Marley, ed., *Henry Ossawa Tanner: Modern Spirit* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Joyce Carol Polistena, *The Religious Paintings of Eugène Delacroix, (1798–1863): The Initiator of the Style of Modern Religious Art* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 2008); Robert Rosenblum, *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Debora Silverman, *Van Gogh and Gauguin: The Search for Sacred Art* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000); and Timothy Wilcox, *Constable and Salisbury: The Soul of Landscape* (London: Scala, 2011).

30. See M. A. Couturier, *Henri Matisse: The Vence Chapel: The Archive of a Creation* (New York: Skira, 1999); Horton Davies and Hugh Davies, *Sacred Art In A Secular Century* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1978); William Dyrness, *Rouault: A Vision of Suffering and Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971); Jefferson J. A. Gatrall and Douglas Greenfield, eds., *Alter Icons: The Russian Icon and Modernity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011); John Golding, *Paths to the Absolute* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Richard Lipsey, *An Art of Our Own: The Spiritual in Twentieth Century Art* (Boston: Shambhala, 1988); Sheldon Nodelman, *The Rothko Chapel Paintings: Origins, Structure, Meaning* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997); Marie-Therese Pulvenis de Seligny, *Matisse: The Chapel at Vence* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2013); Andrew Spira, *The Avant- Garde Icon* (London: Humphries, 2008); and Maurice Tuchman, ed., *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890–1985* (New York: Abbeville, 1986).

31. See Ronald Bernier, ed., *Beyond Belief: Theoaesthetics or Just Old-Time Religion?*

periods as well as non-Western cultures.[32]

A context-oriented method of art as religious culture has developed out of methods that placed issues of class, gender, race, and/or sexual orientation as formative to the work of art's interpretation. Keeping issues of theory and history at the center of the scholarly focus, scholars have adaptively applied these strategies to develop methods of art as religious culture that address the power and presence of the visual in religious culture and practice.[33] This method acknowledges the work of

(Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2010); Richard Francis, *Negotiating Rapture: The Power of Art to Transform Lives* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996); and Eleanor Heartney, *Postmodern Heretics: Catholic Imagination in Contemporary Art* (New York: Midmarch Arts, 2004).

32. See Sandra Bowden et al., *Beauty Given by Grace: The Biblical Prints of Sadao Watanabe* (Baltimore: Square Halo, 2012); Nicholas James Bridger, *Africanizing Christian Art: Kevin Carroll and Yoruba Christian Art in Nigeria* (Tenafly, NJ: Society of African Missions, 2012); Carol Damian, *The Virgin of the Andes: Art and Ritual in Colonial Cuzco* (Miami Beach: Grassfield, 1995); William Dyrness, *Christian Art in Asia* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979); Deborah E. Horowitz, ed., *Ethiopian Art: The Walters Art Museum* (Surrey, UK: Third Millennium, 2006); C. Griffith Mann, *Art of Ethiopia* (London: Holberton, 2006); Ilona Katzew, *Contested Visions in the Spanish Colonial World* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2011); Suzanne L. Stratton-Pruitt, ed., *The Virgin, Saints and Angels: South American Paintings 1600–1825 from the Thoma Collection* (Geneva: Skira, 2006); and Elizabeth Netto Calil Zarur and Charles Muir Lovell, eds., *Art and Faith in Mexico: The Nineteenth-Century Retablo Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001).

33. Inevitably, this methodological direction depends on scholars in fields of religion, history, sociology, and others. As Nigel Aston notes in his *Art and Religion in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (London: Reaktion, 2009), the field of art history has often lagged behind some of these fields in recognizing the significance of religion, and Christianity, in private and public life. The area in which the study of religious culture has especially flourished is American art. See David Bjelajac, *Millennial Desire and the Apocalyptic Vision of Washington Allston* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 1988) and *Washington Allston, Secret Societies, and the Alchemy of Anglo-American Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth-Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); David Morgan, *Icons of American Protestantism: The Art of Warner Sallman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); *Visual Piety: A History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); and *The Embodied Eye: Religious Visual Culture and the Social Life of Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); David Morgan and Sally M. Promey, *The Visual Culture of American Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); James Elkins and David Morgan, eds., *Re-Enchantment* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Sally M. Promey, *Spiritual Spectacles: Vision and Image in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Shakerism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), and *Painting Religion in Public: John Singer Sargent's*

art as operating in a public sphere of life along a horizontally-oriented axis and developing a greater consciousness of both social/personal difference and connectedness. Scholars following this methodological direction are also concerned with the question of "meaning." However, in this case, the meaning of the work of art is not read from the object itself but rather constructed from its social and cultural function.

The discipline of *art history* itself benefits from a balance of *art-* and *history*-oriented methods. The scholarly study of the history of Christianity and the visual arts benefits from the further development of both art-as-visual-theology and art-as-religious-culture methods. While individual scholars may be inclined in one direction or the other, it is unusual for a scholar of Christianity and the visual arts to pursue their work exclusively along either the vertical or horizontal axis. The field of scholarship needs to pursue both visual theology and religious culture.[34]

As the field of scholarly study of Christianity and the visual arts has grown, it has become necessary for scholars to initiate forums not only to further promote this direction of scholarship but to do so in an intentionally self-critical manner. In May 2010 a gathering of scholars convened in Paris, France for a symposium entitled "History, Continuity, and Rupture: A Symposium on Christianity and Art."[35] At this symposium, participants came to the consensus that the field of art history lacked scholarly forums in which issues of the history of Christianity in the visual arts could be openly, charitably, and critically addressed. This symposium became the inaugural event of the Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art.

ASCHA is dedicated to the facilitation and promotion of scholarship that examines the complex and contradictory history of Christianity and the visual arts, as it is diversely manifested in all historical periods

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Triumph of Religion at the Boston Public Library (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); David Morgan and Sally M. Promey, *The Visual Culture of American Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Kristin Schwain, *Signs of Grace: Religion and American Art in the Gilded Age* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); and Gene Edward Veith, *Painters of Faith* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2001).

34. In the interest of self-disclosure, it should be noted that the co-editors of this book favor differing methodological orientations. Romaine favors an emphasis on the content of the art object. Stratford favors an emphasis on theory and historical context. While every essay in this book addresses some part of the work of art's content and context, readers can judge for themselves where each contributor's essay fits along the vertical and horizontal axis.

35. This symposium was sponsored in part by Asbury University and its Lilly *Transformations* Project.

and world cultures. Second, at the conclusion of the Paris symposium, it was proposed that selected papers be gathered and published in order to continue the dialog. In February 2011, ASCHA held a symposium in New York at the Museum of Biblical Art. In 2012, ASCHA held symposia in Los Angeles at the Cathedral of Angels and in Philadelphia at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Selected papers from ASCHA's Paris, New York, and Philadelphia symposia are here joined by essays specifically written for this book.

ReVisioning: Critical Methods of Seeing Christianity in the History of Art, as well as the mission of the Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art, aims to develop and apply methods of art history that are academically rigorous as well as responsive to the art's Christian content. What is intended is an expanded discourse on works of art that employ religious, specifically Christian, themes, iconography, subjects, and forms through the development of a diversity of methodologies that are fitting to and effective in critiquing and interpreting this art.

Emerging out of the mission and activities of the Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art, *ReVisioning* offers essays that examine specific works of art from the history of Christianity and the visual arts. *ReVisioning* opens with two introductory essays by the book's co-editors that establish a theoretical foundation and historical context for the issues of methodology that the remaining essays address more specifically.

The development of art historical methods addressing the history of Christianity and the visual arts is best examined with reference to specific works of art from particular historical contexts. The fifteen historical essays that form this book's main corpus have been chosen, organized, and edited to provide a chronological overview of selective examples from the history of Christianity and the visual arts with the aim of identifying specific works of art that offered interesting methodological problems. In each essay, the author has introduced a topic, reviewed the relevant critical literature, suggested methodological issues manifested by this literature's engagement of the topic, and offered a new potential reading. These historical essays have been divided into three groups, corresponding to major periods of the history of Christianity and the visual arts: Early Christian to Medieval; Renaissance and Baroque; and nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

In *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*, Hans Belting notes that prior to the Renaissance, visual imagery in the service of the Christian faith, collective liturgy, and private devotion

was not regarded as "art." Since many methods of art history have been conceived to address European (i.e., Renaissance) conceptions of "art," images, objects, and architectural achievements from before the Renaissance, as well as those from non-European cultures, pose particular scholarly challenges. Of concern is the fact that works of art may fail to maintain their original character as sites of religious revelation and devotion, or may fail to retain an echo of that mode of being, if sufficient methodological sensitivity is not present. *ReVisioning* addresses these issues with five essays that apply a range of methodologies, including iconographic, theological, contextual, semiotic, and historicizing methods, to a diversity of religious visual imagery.

As Christianity began to develop a particular visual language, artists borrowed forms, themes, motifs, and symbols from both Judaism and the Classical pre-Christian world around them. This process of visual evolution and transformation has led to issues of iconographic controversy in which the interpretation of figures and symbols depends on context and repetition. In "Iconographic Structure: Recognizing the Resurrected Jesus on the Vatican Jonah Sarcophagus," Linda Møskeland Fuchs critically investigates the issues latent in the iconographic identification and interpretation of a central group of figures in one of the most celebrated Christian sarcophagi of the third century. Fuchs combines a careful reading of the figures' poses and arrangement in the context of the overall composition of the sarcophagus design, comparable examples from other early Christian funerary art, biblical text, and contemporary theological writings to construct a compelling proposition that the Vatican Jonah sarcophagus features what may be the earliest known depiction of the resurrected Jesus. Her essay demonstrates how scholarship in the history of Christianity and the visual arts should begin with a study of the art objects themselves and attempt to situate those works within their artistic, cultural, and theological contexts.

In the history of Christianity and the visual arts, works have been, and continue to be, at once visual and religious experiences. In fact, the capacity of works of art to be both aesthetic and theological objects is one of the principal reasons that these works of art persist in their effect on the viewer. "Icon as Theology: The Byzantine *Virgin of Predestination*," by Matthew Milliner, employs one of the most celebrated works of Byzantine art in the United States, the so-called Princeton Madonna, as a case study in how a visual image performs theologically. After briefly surveying a history of methodological issues evident in Byzantine studies, his essay