



Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence

Professor Svetlana Alpers, Professor Michael Baxandall

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Tiepolo and the Pictorial Intelligence Professor Svetlana Alpers, Professor Michael Baxandall Tiepolo is an example of the specifically pictorial intelligence. This book is both a study of his art and an argument for fuller recognition of the peculiarities of the painters' representational medium. Svetlana Alpers and Michael Baxandall locate distinctive modes of Tiepolo's representation of the world and human action; follow his process of invention from first pen drawings through small oil-sketches to great frescoes; and analyze his best and biggest painting, the "Four Continents", in the Stairway Hall of the Prince-Bishop's Residence at Wurzburg, which is illustrated with photographs specially taken for the book. The topics taken up include: painting's resistance to enacted narrative drama, its engagement with indeterminacies and repetitions, the senses in which painters may "perform" both past art and themselves, the constructive roles of gestural drawing, the exploitation of shifts of scale between design and finished work, the dialogue between the changing natural site lighting and in-picture lighting, contributions made by the beholder's own mobility, the expressive scope of tensions between two and three dimensions, the deep rationale of rococo formal structure, and the sources of the moral force of pictures that lack an explicit moral. The book - both art criticism and a practical polemic - ends with an annotated gazetteer for travellers, listing those Tiepolo paintings that can still be seen in the places and conditions for which he painted them.



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