



Dutch Art and Urban Cultures, 1200–1700

By *Elisabeth de Bièvre*

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Traditionally Dutch art is seen and presented as a coherent phenomenon—the product of state formation in the late 16th century. Elisabeth de Bièvre challenges this view and its assumptions in a radical new account. Arguing that the Dutch Golden Age was far from unified, de Bièvre exposes how distinct geographical circumstances and histories shaped each urban development and, in turn, fundamentally informed the art and visual culture of individual cities.

In seven chapters, each devoted to a single city, the book follows the growth of Amsterdam, Delft, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Leiden, The Hague, and Utrecht over the course of five centuries. By embracing the full gamut of art and architecture and by drawing on the records of town histories and the writings of contemporary travelers, de Bièvre traces the process by which the visual culture of the Netherlands emerged to become the richest, most complex material expression in Europe, capturing the values of individuals, corporate entities, and whole cities.

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Review

“Sumptuously produced and illustrated to Yale University Press’s customary high standards, the books would be welcome simply as a splendid guide to Dutch urban histories, complete with maps, photographs and topographical views of the many surviving architectural sights and monuments. But de Bièvre’s purpose is more ambitious... by drawing out the character of each place she deepens our understanding and enriches our appreciation of the astonishing range of art it helped to create.”—Celina Fox, *Art Quarterly* (Celina Fox *Art Quarterly* 2015-12-01)

About the Author

Elisabeth de Bièvre is an independent scholar who has taught at the University of East Anglia Norwich, the University of California, Los Angeles, and University College London.

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