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Review

'Fra Angelico's work - unlike most old master art - was much admired by the post-war American master of spiritual abstraction Mark Rothko. Looking at the plates in this thorough and scholarly new study, with their combination of radiant-colour and pared-down simplicity, you can see why.' Sunday Telegraph '[a] very well-written book ... [Ahl] nimbly summarises the history of Florence in the opening years of the fifteenth century as a context for Fra Angelico's career, and the historiographic legacy of the artist, primarily in literature, from the fifteenth though the nineteenth centuries. These overviews condense the welter of miscellaneous information other writers have brought to bear on these topics and translate with finely balanced judgment into 'user-friendly' form for the modern general-interest reader. The other great strength of this monograph is Ahl's care in elaborating the devotional content and significance of each painting by Fra Angelico that she discusses. ... The excurses offered here are models of concision, neither too detailed nor patronisingly summary.' Burlington Magazine 'a well-informed and scholarly text ... a good read ... strong on the cultural, religious and historical context of Angelico's life and work ... a good overall survey' The Art Book 'a new monograph of extraordinary breadth, careful scholarship and unparalleled beauty. ... Ahl's goal is to achieve a better understanding of the friar-artist by placing him in the context of those who influenced him, his contemporaries, and his deep Dominican spirituality. ... Unlike many previous scholars, [...] Ahl recognizes the obvious: this painter was a devout man of the church. ... [Ahl] engag[es] the reader with her clear, flowing prose. ... This superb monograph is the definitive study to date on Fra Angelico. ... In the exquisite photographic reproductions, colors appear rich, gold glistens, and delicate textures in gilded backgrounds are discernible. ... Bound in sumptuous lavender silk, the book is accessible to the interested reader, valuable to the scholar, and a must for any library.' Mary Baldwin College [Staunton, VA], Sixteenth Century Journal, 2010

About the Author

Diane Cole Ahl is the Arthur J '55 and Barbara S. Rothkopf Professor of Art History at Lafayette College, Pennsylvania. She holds a PhD from the University of Virginia and BA from Sarah Lawrence College, New York, and has received many grants and awards for teaching and scholarship. She is the author of Benozzo Gozzoli and editor of The Cambridge Companion to Masaccio.

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