



The Controversy of Renaissance Art

By Alexander Nagel

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Many studies have shown that images—their presence in the daily lives of the faithful, the means used to control them, and their adaptation to secular uses—were at the heart of the Reformation crisis in northern Europe. But the question as it affects the art of Italy has been raised only in highly specialized studies.

In this book, Alexander Nagel provides the first truly synthetic study of the controversies over religious images that pervaded Italian life both before and parallel to the Reformation north of the Alps. Tracing the intertwined relationship of artistic innovation and archaism, as well as the new pressures placed on the artistic media in the midst of key developments in religious iconography, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* offers an important and original history of humanist thought and artistic experimentation from one of our most acclaimed historians of art.

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Review

“Nagel works here to recast people’s idea of the Renaissance. . . . This volume is elegantly and intelligently illustrated, with numerous figures in color. Meant to be provocative, it is admirable in its range and ambitions—a vade mecum for charting new approaches to Renaissance art. Highly recommended.”

(*Choice*)

“Nagel provides an insightful reading of Italian art produced between 1490 and 1540 during an era of religious controversy concurrent with the Reformation in northern Europe and preceding the Counter-Reformation in Italy.”

(*Art Libraries Society of North America*)

“One may not always agree with Nagel’s suggestions, but one cannot deny that his beautifully produced book is full of thought-provoking views that will stimulate its readers to rethink their ideas about Reformation questions in Italian Renaissance art.”

(*Renaissance Quarterly*)

“Beautifully produced and thought-provoking in its rewriting of early sixteenth-century Italian art history, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* is, like the art it discusses, productively iconoclastic, setting the stage for a revitalized discussion of one of art history’s most deeply studied periods.”

(*CAA reviews*)

About the Author

Alexander Nagel is professor of Renaissance art history at the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. He is the author of *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art* and coauthor, with Christopher Wood, of *Anachronic Renaissance*.

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