



Claartje Rasterhoff, *Painting and Publishing as Creative Industries: The Fabric of Creativity in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1800* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017, 344 pp. ISBN, 9789089647023).

In *Painting and Publishing as Creative Industries: The Fabric of Creativity in the Dutch Republic, 1580-1800*, Claartje Rasterhoff takes the Dutch Golden Age discourse beyond an exploration of the art and book markets, and extends the existing range of novel approaches to this period. She reminds us that the Golden Age in painting and publishing lasted only a few decades during the seventeenth century, and therefore places this period within the entire life cycle of each industry. She goes further, challenging approaches to artworks and books as simple commodities, and proves that exogenous shocks and endogenous preconditions cannot fully explain production growth and qualitative innovations in these industries, nor can they account for the shape and duration of their rise and fall. Rasterhoff draws on paintings and publishing as creative goods following the work of economist Richard Caves on creative industries, and assesses how their features impacted each industry's organization from the vantage point of business theorist Michael Porter's 'Diamond' model for competitiveness. In so doing, she infuses her analysis with the uncertainties and complexities inherent to cultural production, and how these interacted with the demand and industry input conditions, the context of rules and incentives, and the related and supporting industries. The result is a spatial clustering and organisation framework which demonstrates that the special features associated with creative goods are fundamental to their systems of production, consumption and distribution. Furthermore, with data now available thanks to recent initiatives in the digital humanities, Rasterhoff introduces concrete indicators to quantitatively assess each industry's organisation. This novel approach will undoubtedly inspire similar studies on other cultural industries and timeframes.

The book is organized in two parts, Publishing and Painting, each with chapters which systematically assess the emergence, growth, and maturity and decline phases. In the emergence phase (1580-1610), publishing and painting experienced the same exogenous factors (the Dutch revolt and immigration from the Southern Netherlands) and endogenous preconditions (high literacy rates, population growth, increasing commercialisation, and rising purchasing power). By catering to the preferences of an expanded local consumer base, both industries developed into highly diversified markets in their growth and innovation phase (1610-1650). While these facts and the nature of the innovations have received much scholarly attention, Rasterhoff

demonstrates the need to factor in these developments the particular ways in which each industry organised itself and its output. This also helps explain how each responded when overproduction in the face of a saturated local demand initiated the decline phase (1650-1800).

Rasterhoff traces the developments in publishing and painting between 1580 and 1800 by integrating the wealth of existing research on this period. Guarded against historical determinism and armed with novel analytical tools, she persistently asks: given certain conditions at each point in the industry life cycle, were the subsequent developments inevitable, or can we identify forces that altered the course of events? To gauge scholarly debates and circulating narratives, she collected and analysed data on publishing and painters from several online resources, complemented by prosopography and archival sources. The *Short Title Catalogue Netherlands* database and *Thesaurus 1473-1800* publication provided data on titles (to approximate production) and number of publishers, across towns and genres. These figures illustrate how printers reacted against a stagnating market around 1620 by opening new market segments, e.g. in the form of cheaper, smaller and more portable books (67). This revitalised the industries clustered around book production, and reinforced the spatial pattern of specialisation between cities. Rasterhoff carefully constructs an array of more complex industry indicators to evaluate competitiveness: entry, exit and disturbance rates; output and size per publisher; and market concentration indices. Decreasing market concentration ratios during the seventeenth century explain how, in a highly competitive environment, Amsterdam did not constitute a monopoly, though it eventually became a centre for booksellers embedded in the city's commercial and financial infrastructure. From around 1660, publishers approached internationalisation as a strategy to counteract domestic sluggishness, but after 1730 they became domestic-focused and risk-averse as they relied on existing content, and shifted the emphasis from production to distribution.

Lists of seventeenth-century painters with their biographical information from the ECARTICO database complemented with estimates for the eighteenth century from RKDartists & make possible the most comprehensive quantitative analysis of the industry to date. Because these data cannot gauge production levels directly, measuring competitiveness in painting required different indicators than for publishing: number of active painters per period; distribution of painters per birth place and main work location; and age cohorts active per period. To assess quality and innovation within the identified trends and uncover the nuances, Rasterhoff turned to historiometry, which measures painters' reputation based on different art historical reference works. A drawback of this method is that quality assessments depend on when they are made, and historical interpretation changes what is perceived of quality. Therefore, the sample of lexicons such as Karel van Mander's *Schilder-boeck* of 1604 included to weigh in contemporary

reputation helps counteract art historical bias. To illustrate, the distribution of prominent painters per period and their location movements during the growth phase indicate that painting was a polycentric activity. Furthermore, the increased activity and specialisation of artists who during the 1630s and 1640s refined the innovations of the 1610s and 1620s and introduced further variations emerges as a distinguishing feature of the observed expansion in the market for paintings (209). The underlying mobility of artists and artworks, mediated by master-apprentice relationships and facilitated by low barriers of entry, created 'inter-local pipelines' for knowledge transfers that impacted artistic performance (225-230). Recast under this framework as 'spinoffs', John Michael Montias' process and product innovations fit within the multifaceted concept of 'local buzz' or transfers of knowledge and skill over time, which future researchers will find fruitful to engage.

As the decline in painting set soon after 1660, new rounds of differentiation strategies were no match for the earlier innovations. More successful strategies focused on marketing and distribution (e.g. auctions and catalogues), and on guarding quality and expertise (e.g. guild regulations, artists' societies and academies). Given this shifting importance of distribution over production as an identifiable trait of mature markets in both industries, it is worth contrasting to other industries and geographical areas, such as the Southern Netherlands, where an international outlook and distribution infrastructure also characterised the growth phase.

This is a remarkable work of integration and synthesis of scholarship that advances a fresh understanding and illustrates novel analytical tools at work in an area of study exceptionally rich. Buttressed by the many case studies singled out by historians, and quantitatively assessed with industry data that are now becoming increasingly available for researchers of these and other industries and timeframes, Rasterhoff puts forward a framework and methods to explain how a cultural competitive edge emerges, grows and eventually dies out. This framework presents art and cultural historians with the challenge to henceforth deal with the special features of creative goods and the resulting spatial and industry dynamics because they cannot be assessed as isolated effects. This publication also makes the case for integrating into the history of cultural achievements those less acknowledged features and lesser-known actors, and demonstrates that data-driven methodologies have the ability to place them in context, and even necessitate in order to assess fruitfully issues of long term relevance.

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