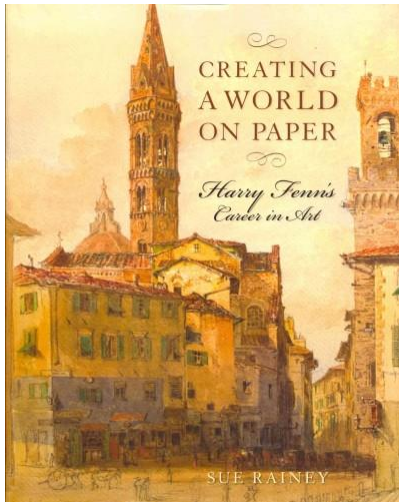


Creating a World on Paper: Harry Fenn's Career in Art, by Sue Rainey. University of Massachusetts Press, February 2013. 516 p. ill. ISBN 9781558499799 (cl.), \$49.95.



Sue Rainey's body of scholarship focusing on American graphic arts now includes this comprehensive study of Harry Fenn (1837-1911), a graphic artist, illustrator, and watercolor painter most often associated with popular illustrated periodicals, including *The Century Magazine* and *Harper's Weekly*, and books such as *Picturesque America*. Rainey recounts her decades-long engagement with Fenn's life and work in the preface. Her project aims to rescue Fenn from art historical obscurity and reinstate him as a central figure in American visual culture. Organized chronologically, the book follows the arc of Fenn's lengthy career, portraying him as a prolific and innovative artist who responded to shifts in technology as well as taste.

Born in England and active in America, Fenn was pivotal in elevating illustration in the eyes of American publishers and the image-consuming public. Nevertheless, later in life he bore witness to a decline in the status of the illustrator and an eventual decoupling of art from illustration, despite his continuing involvement in artists' organizations, exhibitions, and the art market. Reconstructing Fenn's legacy, Rainey situates her work among others' efforts to reconsider pictures published in nineteenth-century print media, which are often overlooked in a modernist art historical tradition. *Published in the Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book* series, this volume employs art historical methodology but also retains a biographically styled narrative. Alongside formal visual analysis, Rainey weaves Fenn's compelling personal story into the rich fabric of prevailing artistic movements, technological shifts, cultural tastes, social attitudes, and political developments of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The book is profusely illustrated with landscapes, cityscapes, genre scenes, and more—a testament to both the quantity and quality of Fenn's oeuvre. Rainey juxtaposes preparatory sketches with published illustrations and also compares same or similar subjects revisited and reinvented by Fenn for different commissions over time. The numerous printmaking techniques discussed reflect the technological development of the printed image during this time and, as Rainey argues, Fenn's own acumen and adaptability. This volume also includes thorough appendices of additional illustrations and exhibited works as well as an index and endnotes for each of the seven chapters.

With a seeming nod to some of Fenn's own sensibilities, Sally Nichols's elegant design includes typographic flourishes and occasional mirrored layouts integrating text and images across double-page spreads. The book is color offset printed on quality paper stock, and its structure is a sewn case binding with maroon cloth, gold foil stamp on the spine, and an accompanying dust jacket. Combining significant scholarship with high-quality reproductions and handsome design, this book would be a welcome addition to any library focusing on American art, visual culture studies, or the history of the book.

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