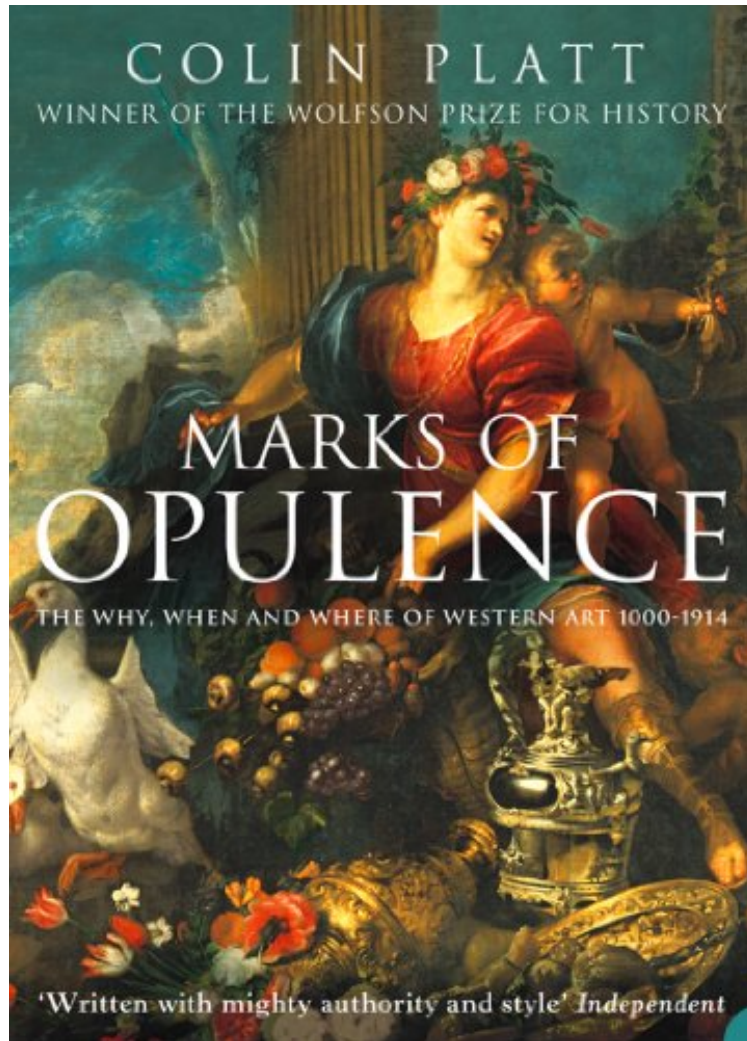


[FREE] Marks of Opulence: The Why, When and Where of Western Art 1000ndash;1914 (Text Only)

Marks of Opulence: The Why, When and Where of Western Art 1000ndash;1914 (Text Only)

Colin Platt

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Marks of Opulence: The Why, When and Where of Western Art 1000ndash;1914 (Text Only):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. DoubtsBy Philip LeetchThe writer clearly knows a lot [though I did notice slips] and can write engagingly, but I felt the book lacked a clear purpose and at times there were so many artists and works the writer felt were relevant and worth mentioning that a list-like effect was not avoided.

A sweeping, beautifully written history of artistic patronage from 1000 to the present day by a Wolfson Prize-winning

historian. 'Marks of Opulence' is a magisterial survey of European art and artistic patronage from 1000 until the birth of modernism. Tracing the history from the discovery of silver in the Harz mountains, through the catastrophic effects of plague in the 14th-century, to the studied magnificence of papal and royal courts in the 16th- and 17th-centuries, Platt shows how the great and the good have always used art to bolster political power. Arguing that the acquisitive instinct – felt by all of us in different ways – is central to the history of Western art, Platt traces how art began to move out of the palaces of the aristocracy into the homes of merchants, bankers and industrialists. From the mid 19th-century onwards, and in the pre-war Belle Époque in particular, it was the immensely wealthy 'robber barons' and their widows – in London and Paris, in Berlin and Vienna, in Moscow and Barcelona, in Philadelphia and New York – who collected the work of the most innovative artists and broke the hold of the Academies on Western art. Professor Platt's ambitious sweep through a thousand years of artistic endeavour in the West argues throughout that a superfluity of money is the chief driver of high achievement in the arts, and for the transforming power of great riches. Note that it has not been possible to include the same picture content that appeared in the original print version.

From Publishers Weekly A scholar who was awarded the Wolfson Prize for History for 1990's *The Architecture of Medieval Britain: A Social History*, Platt focuses on the economic, political, religious and cultural factors that enabled the creation of art, tending to gloss over the art itself. The book proves repeatedly that, in the words of Philip Hamerton, "the man who has money will rule the man who has art" and examines how the Black Death, the French Revolution and other historical turning points affected art production. Initially, churches' stained glass and altarpieces comprised the entirety of the art world. Eventually, churches were adorned with frescoes, paintings and statuary, and still later, art began to be commissioned for civic beautification and decoration, as a status symbol or a political tool, as an investment and for private enjoyment. Platt assumes the reader is conversant in art history and familiar with myriad politicians and religious figures, and his abrupt references give the book a choppy feel and tend to muddy lines of argument. Casual readers may have trouble with this sweeping history, but specialists and those with an art history background will find Platt's work illuminating and relentlessly informative. 32 pages of color reproductions. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. 'Exceptionally ambitious' Platt writes knowledgeably and interestingly. 'Sunday Telegraph' Lively and well informed. 'Daily Telegraph' Platt's pace never slackens and his range is impressive. Written with mighty authority and style. 'Independent' About the Author Colin Platt is Professor of Art History at Southampton University. He is the author of many books including *King Death: A History of the Plague*, *The Architecture of Medieval Britain*, which was awarded the Wolfson Prize for History, and the classic *The Medieval Town*. He lives in Hampshire.