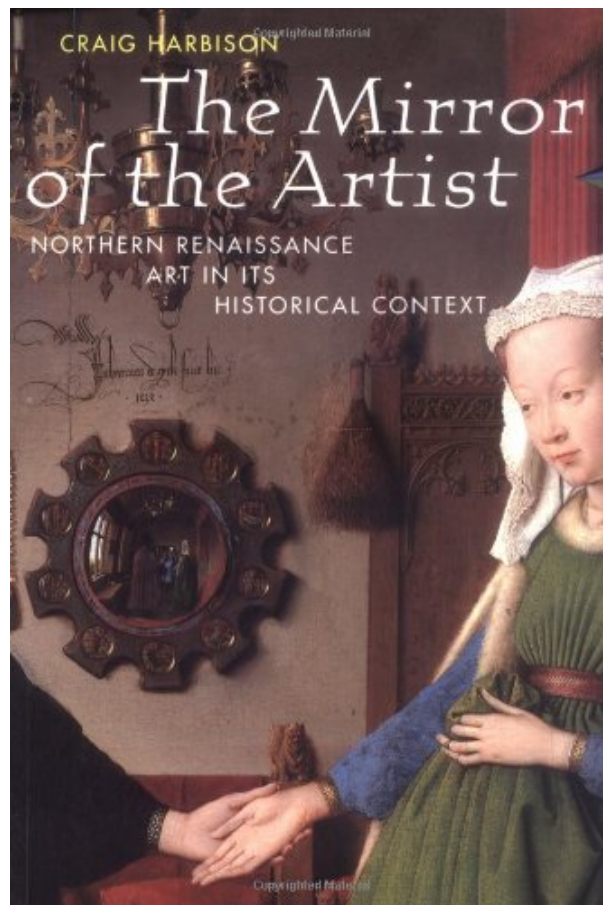
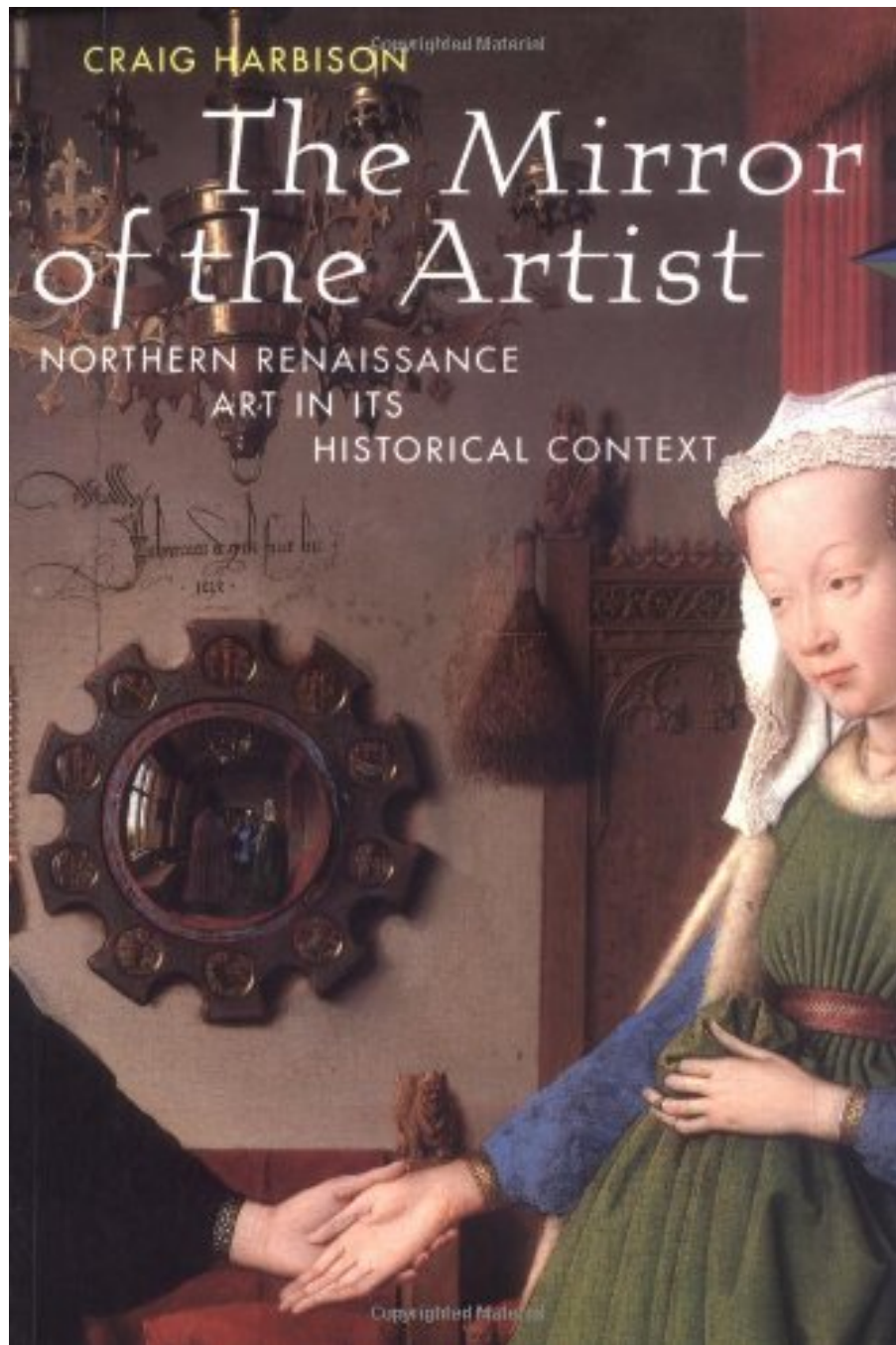


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Discussion of major political entities; Burgundian court, Holy Roman Empire, French and English monarchies, German cities and duchies; their relative power and prestige over time, their particularly make-up and artistic concern; the importance of ephemeral art in aristocratic circles. Also includes discussion of social and economic developments over two centuries; the position of the Catholic church and general characteristics and evaluation of intellectual life in 15th and 16th centuries. ÿ

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By bill-g

Informative, smart and well-written, Craig Harbison's "The Mirror of the Artist" provides an excellent, brief introduction to the sensibility, historical context, and practice of art in the North. From the attitude toward realism, to patronage among the growing class of government bureaucrats, to the market for art or the influence of the Reformation, the book offers an enhanced understanding of artistic interest and social situations in which the paintings were made -- without ever forgetting their aesthetic dimension. The best tribute I can offer is that I immediately went back to Amazon to order Harbison's "Jan Van Eyck: The Play of Realism", a \$35 large format paperback. Minor quibble: Although well-illustrated for a paperback this size, with the book just about 6.25" x 9.5", more details should have been illustrated when details were discussed in larger works. (I'm still looking for the barely visible figure of the devil above the cow in the "Portinari

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An exciting survey

By James D. Ahrens

I've loved the art of this period for years, but had little academic grounding in it. This book lets me return to old favorites with new eyes.

This, in common with other volumes in the "Perspectives" series, offers high quality (though small) reproductions of important works, up-to-date analysis and discussion of the art and the contexts in which it was created. Harbison's tone is informative, if occasionally a little too sententious. But it's a very small price to pay, given the overall excellence of his work in this volume. It's obvious that Harbison loves this period, and he transmits his excitement for these works to the reader in concise language that is accessible to a lay audience.

Of particular interest is the discussion of how the Northern Renaissance related to and differed from what was going on in Italy at the time. The only major weakness: not enough of a focus on Durer. But it's hard to get sufficient focus on any artist in a book this condensed.

An excellent book for those familiar with the period, or those wanting to get acquainted with a school of art often unjustly overshadowed by its southern contemporary.

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