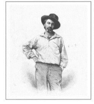

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William Pannapacker

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Taken as a whole, *A Companion to Walt Whitman* is both thorough and extensive. The essays speak to each other in a number of ways, and, in future editions, it would be nice if some method of cross-referencing were included for those who are new to Whitman scholarship. Those reading James Perrin Warren's piece on "Style," for example, will really miss out if they do not also peruse J. R. Le Master's work on "Oratory" or Kathy Rugoff's essay "Opera and Other Kinds of Music"; similarly, Folsom's piece on Whitman's visual culture provides an effective grounding for Jewell's and Price's essay on contemporary representations of the poet. Many anthologies do not provide this type of referencing, of course, but given the scope of this volume and the richly interwoven nature of the contributions, such signposts would be welcome for those who come to the text pursuing a particular subject. And come to it they will: this book undoubtedly will be referred to often by those who study Whitman, and it will surely become an essential part of any comprehensive collection. It is a significant achievement, constituting a companion not only to the poet, but to the entire field of Whitman studies as well.

Valparaiso University MARTIN T. BUINICKI

RUTH L. BOHAN. *Looking into Walt Whitman: American Art, 1850-1920*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006. xiv+261 pages.

Ruth Bohan's *Looking into Walt Whitman* is a deeply researched, well-written, and beautifully illustrated book, including more than 100 color and black-and-white images, some of which have never been published before. An Associate Professor of Art History at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Bohan has divided her study into two parts. The first, "Imaging Whitman: The Nineteenth Century," has five chapters and covers Whitman's interest in the visual arts and, in particular, his relationship with Thomas Eakins. The second part of the book, "Whitman and the Modernists: The Twentieth Century," has three chapters and examines Whitman's influence on several modernist artists, most notably Marsden Hartley, Robert Coady, and Joseph Stella. Earlier versions of some of these chapters have been published in books and journals, but *Looking into Walt Whitman* adds a lot of new material and weaves it all into a whole that is more than the sum of its parts.

There have been several book-length studies of Whitman and the visual arts going back at least as far as Henry S. Saunders' privately-published gathering of Whitman portraits in 1922. This subfield has grown since then, and it now includes *The Artistic Legacy of Walt Whitman*, edited by Edwin Haviland Miller (1970); *Walt Whitman and the Visual Arts* (1992), edited by Geoffrey M. Sill and Roberta K. Tarbell; and James Dougherty's *Walt Whitman and the Citizen's Eye* (1993), along with many essays in journals and books, including, most notably, the extensive and ongoing work of Ed Folsom. Nevertheless, most of the attention given to Whitman and the visual arts has focused on photography. This makes sense; Whitman was, after all, one of the most photographed of

nineteenth-century Americans, if not *the* most photographed. And Miles Orvell argues in *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture* (1989) that Whitman and painting don't seem to mix too well: painting—the realm of upper-class patrons—has an aristocratic aura while photography enables a more democratic portraiture. (Consider, for example, Michael L. Carlebach's collection of occupational tintypes, *Working Stiffs* [2002].) Bohan disagrees strongly with this interpretation of Whitman's artistic sensibilities, and she presents convincing evidence—much of it previously overlooked—to support her interpretation of Whitman as a lover of painting and sculpture, which, like many of his literary contemporaries, he regarded as kindred to poetry.

The first part of Bohan's book, "Imaging Whitman," begins with a chapter called "The 'Gathering of the Forces' in Brooklyn," which describes how Whitman "immersed himself in the cultural tide of mid-century New York" and details his efforts to "yoke both his person and his poetry to the expressive power of the visual" (14). Bohan demonstrates that, for *Leaves of Grass*, the visual arts were "a valuable ally and significant point of departure" (29). The artistic vitality of New York extended into Brooklyn, where Whitman supported the arts as part of his general enthusiasm for the flowering of American culture. It is surprising to recall that one-third of Whitman's journalistic writings before 1855 were about art. In these writings, Bohan observes, Whitman was "a leveler of artistic hierarchies and a staunch advocate of free public access to the arts" (18). Moreover, Whitman helped to found the Brooklyn Art Union; he even gave the keynote address at the Union's first prize ceremony, and he was nominated to serve as its president. And Bohan provides a narrative *catalogue raisonné* of Whitman's friends in the arts, giving particular attention to Gabriel Harrison, the "Poet Daguerrean," who made the lost daguerreotype that became the famous frontispiece of the 1855 *Leaves* (22); Charles Heyde, a landscape painter who became Whitman's brother-in-law; and the genre painter William Sydney Mount, who was active on Long Island. Also, Bohan shows how Whitman supported "the Horatian doctrine of *ut picture poesis*, which regards painting and poetry as homologous," as "sister arts" (22). William Cullen Bryant, it seems, was a model for the "visualist poet and artist-activist Whitman would become" (15). (This model is nicely illustrated by the famous relationship between William Cullen Bryant and the painter Thomas Cole, the subjects of Asher Durand's *Kindred Spirits* [1849].) Bohan makes a compelling case that Whitman was as involved with the arts as his fellow Young American Herman Melville.

The next chapter, "Masks, Identity, and Representation," considers Whitman's fascination with portraiture, particularly self-portraits, which "mediate the dynamic interface of the poet, his audience, and the poetic text" (31). Bohan begins with the familiar 1855 frontispiece, which constitutes an "imagetext, a composite or synthetic work that fuses image and text," a concept drawn from W. J. T. Mitchell, author of *Iconology* (1986) and *Picture Theory* (1982); Bohan argues that the "engraved status of the image, as much as the disposition of the figure represented, invokes the essential complementarity of text and image that Whitman sought" (33-34). She then discusses the bohemian context of Pfaff's, out of which came several caricatures of Whitman, and she gives sustained attention to the 1860 portrait of Whitman by Charles Hine, which

became the basis for the 1860-1861 frontispiece of *Leaves*. Bohan compares the frontispiece with the portrait, noting how the engraving stands between the portrait and the caricatures, signifying Whitman's desire for literary upward mobility while maintaining credibility among the bohemians. The duality of this much-maligned image suggests a "crisis of identity" reflecting the conflict between public and private selves expressed in the new "Calamus" poems (42). Bohan sees the contradictions of the Schoff engraving as "the first visual acknowledgement of the volume's competing poetic voices" (42).

Next, she describes Whitman's friendship with the Civil War illustrator Edwin Forbes. Whitman appears in his engraving, *Fall in for Soup!*, which, Bohan claims, "celebrates a new breed of common hero and constructs a dynamic alternative to the traditional single-family unit" (44). Here we get an account of Whitman's various artistic friendships through the 1870s: among them are John R. Johnston, a Camden and Philadelphia painter, whose portrait of Whitman is lost; and the British engraver William James Linton, who prepared an engraving for the Centennial edition of *Leaves*. Bohan compares the three visual images in this edition: Linton's 1873 wood engraving, the 1855 Hollyer engraving, and an 1871 photograph made in Brooklyn by G. Frank Pearsall. These three representations, she argues, "reinforce and expand Whitman's concern with the creative reciprocity of text and image," depicting the poet at various moments of time in different mediums (54).

Chapter three, "Visual Self-Fashioning and Artistic (Re)Assessment," shows Whitman's growing network of artistic friends and the ways in which they contributed to his poetic project. The chapter begins with Philadelphia's Centennial Exhibition, which Whitman visited at least twice. In this period, nationalistic artists such as Eugene Benson, George W. Waters, Percy Ives, and Sidney H. Morse began to visit Whitman in Camden. Morse, for example, made a bust of Whitman, which the poet didn't like and eventually destroyed, though Morse went on to make several more. (In the next chapter Bohan returns to Morse, who, it seems, had many things in common with Whitman.) She also gives notable attention to Anne Gilchrist and her son, the artist Herbert, who made numerous sketches of Whitman at Timber Creek in the late 1870s and a notable painting of him in 1887-1888. After providing an overview of Herbert's artistic career and showing how the Gilchrists were a bridge to the English art scene (most notably Ford Madox Brown and the Pre-Raphaelites), Bohan argues that the images from this period—Timber Creek and the staged butterfly photograph—reinforce "the triadic relationship between Whitman, his text, and the natural world" (64).

After a brief consideration of Edward Carpenter, Bohan then shows how Whitman's relationship with John O'Brien Inman, who painted the portraits of Whitman's parents now in the Mickle Street house, "casts doubt on the claim that Whitman consistently preferred photography to more traditional visual media" (68). The chapter then turns to Whitman's attachment to Jean-Francois Millet, about whom Whitman once said, "'Millet is my painter: he belongs to me: I have written Walt Whitman all over him. How about that?'" (79). Bohan examines the thematic linkages between the artist and the poet: "Like Whitman's poems, Millet's paintings emphasize process over finished

product, the intuitive over the precisely rational" (80). She gives attention to Whitman's affection for the newly opened Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the home of notable Millet collector Quincy Adams Shaw, and then concludes with a consideration of Boston artist Truman Howe Bartlett, who made a cast of Whitman's hand in 1881. The bronze hand, according to Bohan, "evokes one of the hallmarks of the poetry itself—its emphasis on physicality, on the body's substantiality" (82).

In the next chapter, "Reception and Representation in the 1880s," Bohan gives a more extended look at Mickle Street, when Whitman's house became a place of artistic pilgrimage, even more than in the previous decade, and his literary reputation began to rise, as he was lionized by a new wave of New York literati. The only portrait of Whitman by a woman, Dora Wheeler, was painted in 1887, the day after Whitman's Madison Square Theater lecture on the "Death of Abraham Lincoln." The portrait depicts him, as Bohan puts it, as a "'majestic heathen god'" (89). (Also, around this time, Augustus Saint-Gaudens came close to making a sculpture of Whitman.) In her extended discussion of the painter John White Alexander, Bohan returns to the theme of Whitman's understanding of the relative merits of portraiture: "Where photographers frequently required a sitter to 'hold' a pose, sometimes for an extended period, and to sit under harsh lights, painters and sculptors were less demanding" (90). The "aura" of the subject, in other words, resided more in paint and sculpture than in reproducible photographs. "Alexander's portrait," Bohan observes, "represents an aestheticized Whitman, one whose studied elegance recalls the stylized self-consciousness associated with Oscar Wilde" (94).

The chapter then turns to Wilde's meeting with Whitman, and their emerging connections with sexual deviancy. Around this time, Whitman began wearing lace edging on his collar and cuffs, creating a visible tension between manliness and effeminacy in his appearance, which was complicated all the more by his claim of multiple paternity in a famous correspondence with John Addington Symonds. In relation to this tension, Bohan returns to Herbert Gilchrist, who painted a portrait of Whitman in 1887-1888 and a group portrait at the Gilchrist's house, *The Good Gray Poet's Gift* (1885-1886). By that time artists such as Gilchrist and Morse were having trouble finding standing room in Whitman's small parlor, as the artist and the sculptor worked simultaneously to immortalize the poet. Bohan details Whitman's exasperated reaction to Gilchrist's portrait with its "'Italian curls,'" which Whitman thought should be "sent to a barber" (104). Even though the Whitmanites did not like Gilchrist's work, Bohan offers a convincing defense of it: "the painting's broken brushwork and animating textural effects register as visual tropes both for the process of writing represented in the painting and for the process-oriented emphasis of Whitman's poetry" (105).

In chapter five, "Thomas Eakins and the 'Solitary Singer,'" the last chapter in part one, Bohan examines how, more than any other artist, "Eakins engaged Whitman's presence within the terms of the poet's own radicalism" (111). Covering some familiar ground—the Eakins-Whitman relationship has been addressed in many books and essays—Bohan effectively lists the parallels that brought them together: both were invested in the "direct observation of nature,"

a commitment to representing "everyday life" (112). They also shared an adversarial relation to the genteel standards of the time. *The Gross Clinic* (1875), for example, was not regarded as art at the Centennial Exposition. Eakins was fired by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1886 for exposing a male model before female students (and, possibly, for homosexuality). *Leaves* had been banned in Boston in 1882. Both had somewhat malleable notions of male gender identity. Following these introductory matters, Bohan makes a fascinating connection between Eakins' well-known 1888 portrait of Whitman and the poet's Dutch ancestor, "Old Salt Kossabone," as an element of his idealized self-presentation. Her analysis of Eakins' portrait of Whitman is the most in-depth and layered reading that I have encountered. Bohan argues that Eakins is blurring the line between genre painting and formal portraiture by depicting Whitman in the act of speaking: "Eakins' portrait," Bohan writes, "celebrates that autochthonous song in a daring deviation from established portrait conventions" (120). The chapter also notes Whitman's presence as a spectator in Eakins' painting, *Between Rounds* (1899), that was as new to me as Bohan's identification of Whitman in Forbes' *Fall in for Soup!* Bohan's Whitman is the Zelig of nineteenth-century American art.

In a compelling conclusion to the first part of her book, Bohan returns to the theme of the genre-blurring of Eakin's portrait of Whitman and compares it, in particular, to his painting *The Concert Singer* (1890-92). Whitman was an opera fan, of course, but the subject of the painting had other connections to him detailed by Bohan. Through the voice of Weda Cook, its ostensible subject, *The Concert Singer* "mediates the personal and psychological space between Whitman and the many disappointments incurred by the lackluster response of his readers" (130). In the process of analyzing the painting, Bohan demonstrates that Cook deserves more notice as one of the few female members of the Camden *ménage*, and Eakin's *Concert Singer* now seems to be a major image in the visual canon of Whitman studies.

In the second part of *Looking into Walt Whitman*, titled "Whitman and the Modernists," Bohan shifts her focus from Whitman himself to a trio of visual artists who created the Whitman they needed for their time. She explains how Whitman's poetry—its "protean nature," its "powerful themes of self-discovery"—enabled the early modernists to construct a "usable past" that liberated them from "social, cultural, and artistic norms" of the Victorian era (8). The first chapter of the second part, "Marsden Hartley's Masculine Landscapes," examines the painter's "sexual, spiritual, and musical engagements with Whitman's poetry as filtered through his associations with Traubel and an aging group of Whitman loyalists" (9). By the time Hartley arrives on the scene, the Whitmanites were reinventing the poet as someone with "impressive modernist credentials and the spiritual standing of a demigod" (145). Hartley drew on the growing tradition of homoerotic readings of Whitman stretching back to at least the 1870s and English readers like Carpenter and Symonds. Befriended by Traubel and William Sloane Kennedy, Hartley painted *Walt Whitman's House*, a representation of both 328 Mickle and 431 Stevens Street, and Bohan provides a perceptive analysis of the layered connections to Whitman in this work and others such as Hartley's *Songs of Winter* (1908): "Like the symbolic merger of

hands in Eakins' *The Concert Singer*, in Hartley's activated brushwork Hartley and Whitman seem physically reconstituted, their bodies and minds merged in a resounding act of physical and spiritual union" (159). Ultimately, Bohan argues, Whitman—partly mediated by his supporters— not only liberated Hartley from the portrait tradition, he liberated him from the strictures of bourgeois heterosexuality (164).

In the next chapter, "Robert Coady and *The Soil*," Bohan examines how "Coady celebrates Whitman's championship of vernacular and popular traditions" in his Whitman-inspired magazine *The Soil* (1916-1917). *The Soil* only lasted for five issues—not uncommon for little magazines—but Bohan makes good use of its short run by showing how there were competing versions of Whitman afoot in the years just before 1919, the centenary of his birth: "Where Hartley celebrated Whitman in the cosmos, Coady located him in the common language of the streets, in vaudeville, in the functionalist beauty of the machine, and in the fast-paced narratives of the dime novel" (168). Coady's Whitman, with his "populist sensibilities, expansionist rhetoric, and flagrant hucksterism" stood in contrast to "the mystical-spiritual foundations" cultivated by Alfred Stieglitz and his admirers (168). In 1916 Coady would argue that photographs of locomotives were art, anticipating Charles Sheeler, and he promoted "a celebratory vision of the twentieth-century city as a vast, democratic marketplace, a crucible of modernity awaiting the transformative hand of the artist," a modernist vision of the carnivalesque with Whitman as progenitor (173). In this context, Bohan also shows how Coady's Whitmanesque vision paralleled a new freedom of bodily expression for women as seen in Isadora Duncan, who regarded Whitman as "one of her three dance masters," and the noted swimmer and actress Annette Kellerman (174). Once again, in this chapter, Bohan presents the complexity of the relationships between people who were collectively constructing a Whitman who offered both radical innovation and rootedness in an American tradition. Modernists like Thomas Mufson, for example, were inspired by "Whitman's courageous and unprecedented embrace of the breadth and diversity of American cultural experience, especially those elements at the margins of elite culture" (166). Bohan also discusses Whitman's reception by George Santayana, the publishers and booksellers Charles and Albert Boni, and the larger art scene in Greenwich Village, where bohemians continued to meet in the vicinity of Pfaff's. The chapter includes a narrative of Traubel's activities after Whitman's death: his work with Mitchell Kennerley as the new publisher of *Leaves*, his leadership of the Walt Whitman Fellowship International, and his ongoing publication of *The Conservator* (1890-1918).

The final chapter, "Joseph Stella's *Brooklyn Bridge*," details the Italian-American artist's role in the "transatlantic construction of a modernist Whitman" (193). Completing the dialectical portrait of Whitman's reception, Bohan describes how "Whitman mediated for Stella the seemingly unresolvable distance between Coady's urban populism and Hartley's mystical and spiritual dialogue with the natural world" (190). Bohan shows how Stella was linked to an international movement in the first decade of the twentieth century that the French called "le whitmanisme," which included Marcel Duchamp and Whitman biographer and translator Léon Bazalgette. Their Whitman was a modern-

ist—and sometimes a futurist—whom they associated with the skyscrapers of New York, the city's internationalism, and the aesthetic of the Armory Show. Futurism was linked strongly to modernism for the Italian Stella, and Bohan locates echoes of Whitman's influence in Stella's *Battle of Lights* (1913-1914): "In this exuberant tribute to the spatial and temporal disjunctures of the modern urban environment, Stella first brokered a fusion of the developing Futurist and Whitmanic impulses in his art" (196). The connection between Whitman and this species of modernism in general—and Futurism in particular—was also sustained by Basil De Selincourt's *Walt Whitman: A Critical Study* (1914), and the notion became common in the United States, especially in New York, where many of the European refugee artists from World War I settled. For example, in 1917, the Society of Independent Artists called on "the spirit of Walt Whitman" to guide them (197). And Stella himself became obsessed with the Brooklyn Bridge. Bohan eloquently narrates Stella's passionate embrace of a Whitmanian sensibility that he associated with New York, identifying how "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" is represented in Stella's paintings of Brooklyn Bridge: "Whitman and Stella project a dynamic space-time continuum that allies present, past, and future in a throbbing and kaleidoscopic intensity" (203). Bohan's analysis of Whitman and Stella is a comparative *tour de force* that is, at times, so apt and enthralling as to eclipse the art and poetry it describes with its own perceptive dexterity, encompassing both the literary and the visual arts.

Overall, *Looking into Walt Whitman* is an exemplary demonstration of the potentialities of interdisciplinary research. The book is notable for the serious attention it gives to sometimes derided figures such as the Gilchrists (following the pioneering work of Marion Walker Alcaro) and Whitman's disciples, particularly Horace Traubel, whose pro-Whitman writings in *The Conservator* have just been edited by Gary Schmidgall (*Conserving Walt Whitman's Fame* [2006]). Bohan's book also significantly reshapes our understanding of Whitman's reception among the early modernists who were translating *Leaves* into new mediums. There are, of course, some trade-offs in any project that attempts to do so much, particularly the effort to cover Whitman's relationship with art *and* his reception among the early modernists: either topic could have been the basis for a substantial book. Sometimes the chapters seem episodic, moving quickly from one figure or theme to another. There is, after all, so much to cover. In particular, Bohan's catalogues of human relationships—their personal intersections, their third-party friendships, their unpublished opinions, the affinities in their major works—make scholarly prose seem like an inadequate medium without the accompaniment of diagrams of the sort that teachers have long used to explain the novels of William Faulkner. (As Bohan added branch after branch in the complex genealogy of Whitman's admirers in France, I began to envision a Website called "The Walt Whitman Network," utilizing something like the software designed for reconstructing family trees.) Bohan's best analysis, in my opinion, occurs when making connections between poetry and visual images, showing how they respond to each other; indeed, Bohan's work calls our attention to the way disciplinary divisions have shaped our interpretations of Whitman and American literary and artistic culture as a whole. No one who has read Bohan's book will ever look at Eakins' portrait of Whitman, or his *Concert*

Singer, or Stella's *Brooklyn Bridge,* in the same way, or think of Whitman as a poet who embraced photography at the expense of painting.

Hope College WILLIAM PANNAPACKER

DAVID HAVEN BLAKE. *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006. xviii+251pp.

The famous opening lines of Walt Whitman's 1855 *Leaves of Grass*—"I celebrate myself, and what I shall assume you shall assume"—tell us something about celebrity in the United States, past and present, but what precisely they tell us is obscured by the fact that celebrity as we know it now did not yet exist when Whitman wrote them. Most of the elements that constitute our present-day culture of celebrity—a sensational press, a discourse of democratic individualism, a society of urban crowds, a popular entertainment industry, an expanding capitalist economy—were swirling in loose emergent formation in antebellum New York when Walt Whitman imagined a self capacious and generous enough to absorb a nation. Of course, this self was only imagined, and during his lifetime Whitman never became celebrated in the manner or to the extent he represented throughout the early editions of *Leaves*. Rather, and despite all his Barnumesque attempts at self promotion, his career followed the conventional literary arc from early neglect to late respect to posthumous fame. By the time Whitman died in 1892, a nationally integrated and technologically mediated culture industry was in place, and by the early twentieth century this industry would organize a full-blown system of celebrity, into which his image would be successfully absorbed in myriad ways, some quite close to his early visions, and some he surely could never have imagined. Thus the challenge of any study of Whitman and celebrity is to negotiate the frequently disjunctive and contradictory relations between his utopian imaginings and their real historical, and rapidly changing, contexts.

David Haven Blake's *Walt Whitman and the Culture of American Celebrity*, for the most part, effectively meets this challenge. Blake prefaces his study with an extensive discussion of the well-known 1877 photograph of Whitman gazing at a butterfly perched on his finger, which was revealed to be a hoax in 1936 when the butterfly was discovered to be cardboard. Blake sees this photograph "as a testament to Whitman's remarkable merger of poetry and publicity" (3), and it is this merger, clearly central to Whitman's revolutionary aesthetic though rarely appreciated in its scholarly analysis, that forms the fascinating focus of this highly original study. Blake's book is organized thematically, with an opening introductory chapter on "celebrity" followed by chapters on "personality," "publicity," "intimacy," and "campaigns." Blake both invites us to and discourages us from seeing a historical progression in these chapters, and it is indeed in its simultaneous desire for and resistance to chronological intelligibility that this otherwise quite brilliant book founders.

Blake is well aware of the methodological risks involved in his project. For