

## *Guides to Research at Hirsch Library*

### **Master of the Straus Madonna. *Virgin and Child*. Florence, ca.1395-1400**

(or, “*Madonna & Child with Goldfinch*.”) Tempera & gold leaf on wood panel, 90 x 48 cm.

**44.565**

Welcome to the Hirsch Library. We trust that you have selected the object you wish to write about, and will spend a good deal of time looking at the object first-hand. The cultural backgrounds and descriptions in books and journals will be far more helpful if you absorb such material already having begun looking at the panel upstairs in the Beck Building.

Below are some suggestions for reading on the Early Renaissance, about the medium and technique of panel painting, and about the “subject” of the picture. By describing the subject matter of picture, and the technique the artist used, you should be able to come up with your assessment of the content—that is, the meaning, or the “soul” of the work. What follows below is hardly a comprehensive list—the literature on the Italian Renaissance is vast. We will welcome your own suggestions of titles to add to the library, and how to improve this list, so please let us know what you find most helpful!

“Reference” books you will find on the main floor; “Ready reference” behind the information desk. For items from the main stacks, please jot down the titles and call numbers, and the library staff will retrieve them for you. If you need help with terms & techniques, symbols, or abbreviations, please ask.

#### **Passages specifically on the Straus Madonna**

“Master of the Straus Madonna,” in *The Dictionary of Art*, v. 20, p. 771-772. N 31.D5 1996 Ref.

*A Permanent Legacy: 150 Works from the Collection of the MFAH*, p. 98-99. N 576 .H7 A85 2000 Ready Ref.

Carolyn Wilson. *Italian Paintings, XIV-XVI Centuries in the MFAH*, p. 104-13. ND 613 .M89 1996 Ready Ref.

#### **Surveys of the Italian Renaissance**

Frederick Hartt. *History of Italian Renaissance Art*. N 6915 .H37 2003

John Paoletti, *Art in Renaissance Italy*. N 6915 .P26 2002

*Dictionary of Art*. “Late Medieval Painting,” c.1100-c1400, vol. 16, p. 654-657. N 31. D5 1996 Ref.

Richard Freemantle. *Florentine Gothic Painters: Giotto to Masaccio*, p. 303-312. ND 621 .F7 F73 1975

Jill Dunkerton. *Giotto to Dürer: Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery*. ND 170 .N37 1991

David Bomford. *Art in the Making: Italian Painting before 1400*. ND 613 .N37 1990

Diana Norman. *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art Society and Religion, 1280-1400*. N 6913 .S53 1995

Robert Oetel. *Early Italian Painting to 1400*. ND 613 .O3213 1968

Alastair Smart. *The Dawn of Italian Painting, 1250-1400*. ND 613 .S6 1978

Timothy Verdon. *Christianity and the Renaissance*. N 7956 .A1 C47 1990

Black, et al. *Cultural Atlas of the Renaissance*. CB 361 .C85 1993 Ref.

## Technique, Iconography, Theory, Society, and the Function of Altarpieces, especially in Florence

- Cennino Cennini. *The Craftsman's Handbook*. ND 1130 .C3822
- Carmen C. Bambach. *Drawing & Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop*. N 6915 .B275 1999
- Bruce Cole. *The Renaissance Artist at Work*. N 6370 .C56 1983
- Oxford Companion to Christian Art and Architecture* (especially "Madonna Types") N 7830 .M87 1996 Ref.
- Gertrud Schiller. *Iconography of Christian Art*. (section on Mary typology) N 7830.S35132
- Hans Belting. *Likeness and Presence*. (challenging but impressive) N 7850 .B4513 1994
- David Freedberg. *The Power of Images*. (same) N 71 .F65 1989
- Michael Baxandall. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*. ND 615 .B2
- Anthony Blunt. *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600*. N 6915 .B55 1978
- F.W. Kent. *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy*. N 5273 .P38 1987
- Eve Borsook. *Italian Altarpieces, 1250-1550: Function and Design*. ND 1432 .I8 I82 1994
- J.R. Hale, ed. *The Thames & Hudson Encyclopedia of the Italian Renaissance*. DG 445 .T43 1992 Ref.
- Martin Wackernagel. *World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*. N 6921 .F7 W313
- Jaroslav Pelikan. *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture*. BT 610 .P45 1996
- Melissa Katz, ed. *Divine Mirrors: The Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts*. N 8070 .K3 2001
- Donna Ellington. *From Sacred Body to Angelic Soul: Understanding Mary . . .* N 8070 .E44 2001

**Web sites** are usually a misfortunate diversion in this area, but you might check [witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHmedieval.html#LateGothic](http://witcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHmedieval.html#LateGothic) (Recommended by The Fogg Art Museum on its own "Investigating the Renaissance" page)

The MFAH **Archives** holds the correspondence and documentation relating to the Straus family, their donations, and to the painting. For an appointment, call (713) 639-7733.

To track down articles in **journals**, use the Wilson Art Index, the Bibliography of the History of Art, and leads you gain from citations in your reading (for example, in Wilson 1996 or Paoletti 2002). You could browse **exhibition catalogs**, or books about the holdings of **other museums**: the entries written about similar objects could help you to look and think, and provide examples of how to write about art. To find books, use keywords in the **on-line catalog**. Once you zero-in on titles you like, pay attention to how those items are cataloged, and use their subject headings to find similar books. Use the **bibliographies** of books and articles you read to find leads to other sources.

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at **Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art***, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk.

At every stage of your work, please allow the **library staff** to help you. We can be reached at 713-639-7325.