

The city might also well reconsider its position in relation to its repressive taxing of live cultural arts—especially live music, which has contributed so greatly to the city's reputation and economy. Live music clubs are required to pay a total of 13% in taxes (5% city amusement, 5% city sales, and 3% state sales). On the other hand, live boxing events pay only 1% city amusement tax, and movie theatres pay only 2%. . . . This does not make sense; boxing and electronic entertainment should not be favored over live cultural arts which provide much needed, steady jobs. In recent years many live music clubs have gone out of business, putting many musicians out of work, some only to reopen as disco establishments which pay no amusement tax. (p. 119)

Write to the mayor of New Orleans. Urge him to make cultural freedom a top priority. But first we should check our own local laws to see what obstacles stand in the way of street music, club music, dance, and fully protected parades. The struggle for human rites begins at home but is worldwide.

**Roy Strong.** *The English Renaissance Miniature.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1983. 208 pp., 247 ill. (8 color plates).

**Reviewed by Peter Burke**  
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This study opens with a fanfare of trumpets. The portrait miniature, Sir Roy Strong announces, was "England's greatest contribution to the art of painting during the Renaissance." On the heels of the important exhibition of these miniatures held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1983, he offers us a crisp chronological survey of the genre from 1520 to 1620, with special reference to five artists. The five are Lucas Hornebolte, a Netherlander who arrived in England in 1525; Hans Holbein, a German who learned the art of "limiting" (as painting miniatures was called) from Hornebolte and produced at least fourteen examples of the genre; Levina Teerlinc, a Netherlander who became a "gentlewoman" to Queen Elizabeth I; Nicholas Hilliard, the only Englishman in the group and the creator of some of the most memorable icons of the Virgin Queen; and Isaac Oliver, a Frenchman who is the real hero of the book for his introduction of Renaissance perspective and chiaroscuro (though Queen Elizabeth did not find him flattering enough and continued to prefer Hilliard).

Strong's study is important for two main reasons. In the first place, he has been in a good position to make use of the new technology developed in the laboratories of the Victoria and Albert and other museums, dating panel paintings with the help of tree-ring analysis and establishing attributions in the light of ultraviolet rays. These methods have helped in the reconstruction of the artistic personalities of Hornebolte and Teerlinc, the listing of Holbein's contributions, and the defining of the oeuvre of Hilliard and Oliver. Of course an element of intuition remains, so it is a pity that Sir Roy did not invite other specialist into the laboratory to view the miniatures with him. However, the new information is most welcome.

In the second place, the book is important for its bold attempt to liberate miniature painting from what the author picturesquely calls its "art-historical strait-jacket." Hilliard is traditionally considered a miniature painter and no more, although there is evidence to suggest that he illuminated manuscripts, painted pictures of normal size, designed medals and seals (and, in Strong's opinion, title pages), made jewels, and even colored funeral monuments. His miniatures need to be set in this context, and also in political



context. A former student of the late Frances Yates at the Warburg Institute, Strong follows her lead in relating art and politics, explaining Hilliard's insular and "reactionary" style by the fact that the wars of religion in France and the Netherlands made travel abroad difficult, while the threat of Spanish invasion heightened national consciousness. He adds some perceptive remarks on propaganda by the image. Like the *princeps* Augustus, Queen Elizabeth liked to be portrayed as eternally young, not necessarily from personal vanity alone but to keep the public from thinking about the problem of the succession.

It is a pity that Strong has dulled the force of his arguments by diluting them with a number of virtually gratuitous speculations. There are too many propositions of the "must have been" variety, let alone "there is nothing against the possibility that. . . ." In some cases what is no more than a hypothesis on its first appearance swiftly turns into a certainty and a foundation on which a second hypothetical structure is built, as in the matter of Hilliard's presumed responsibility for the illumination of the royal charter to Emmanuel College, Cambridge (an attribution that was not made under laboratory conditions). There is no discussion of alternative possibilities or of the charter as a genre.

There are other blemishes. This type of study, like the miniature itself, demands close attention to detail, but Strong's execution is sometimes careless. He mistakes a partisan for a "pike" (p. 105) and describes Beccafumi as one of the "latest" painters at a time when he had been in his grave for more than half a century. As for the critical vocabulary employed, the less said about it the better, though the point has to be made that Strong sees the miniatures in terms of photographic realism and appears unaware of the inconsistency between this view and the remarks thrown out from time to time about the conventions of visual communication. To discuss these conventions was not the author's aim and so it would be unfair to criticize him for saying so little about them, but it would be good to see a study of these miniatures, as of other English portraits, which concentrated on the expressions, postures, gestures, and accessories of the sitters as so many signs, so many strategies for the presentation of self—the visual equivalent of Stephen Greenblatt's brilliant book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare*.

**Chandra Mukerji.** From *Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983. 368 pp., ill. \$30.00 (cloth), \$12.00 (paper).

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A consistent theme in the critique of capitalism, especially since 1945, has been the attack on consumerism, an attack launched from both right and left at both the popular and the academic level. Consumerism from this perspective is seen as the characteristic central value system of late capitalism within which (1) the efficacy of societies is judged by their level of production of material goods and individual happiness and (2) status is defined in terms of the level of consumption of such goods. For the right this has led to the decay of traditional moral values and the decline of social deference. For the left it has increased human alienation and blinded the exploited classes to the inbuilt inequalities of the capitalist system. Consumption not religion becomes the opiate of the people.

More serious, among the younger radical American social historians (one thinks of the work of Elizabeth and Stuart Ewen) there is now work across a wide front searching for the roots of what can be seen as the characteristic social formation of contemporary capitalism, one in which there is a complex dialectic between, on the one hand, the social fragmentation caused by developments in the division of labor, transport, and communication systems and, on the other, the development of an international mass market for goods and services increasingly consumed on a privatized basis, each act of constantly repeated consumption carrying exchange relations into the very tiniest crevices of our personal lives. This search has focused upon a period of transition lasting in the U.S. from about 1880 to 1920, during which the institutions of mass retailing and advertising, mass communications, and mass politics, which characterize our era, were put into place and the values they incarnate were disputed.

*From Graven Images* engages with this important set of problems. But Mukerji is one of a group of historians who challenge the view implicit in much of the work in this area that consumerism is the product of a late stage in the development of industrial capitalism. Plumb and his colleagues at Cambridge University, whom Mukerji cites, push the origins of consumerism back to the eighteenth century. Mukerji herself finds its roots in the fifteenth or even fourteenth century,