



The Cabinet of Eros: Renaissance Mythological Painting and the Studiolo of Isabella d'Este

By Stephen Campbell



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The Renaissance *studiolo* was a space devoted in theory to private reading and contemplation, but at the Italian courts of the fifteenth century, it had become a space of luxury, as much devoted to displaying the taste and culture of its occupant as to studious withdrawal. The most famous *studiolo* of all was that of Isabella d'Este, marchioness of Mantua (1474–1539). A chief component of its decoration was a series of seven paintings by some of the most noteworthy artists of the time, including Andrea Mantegna, Pietro Perugino, Lorenzo Costa, and Correggio.

These paintings encapsulated the principles of an emerging Renaissance artistic genre—the mythological image. Using these paintings as an exemplary case, and drawing on other important examples made by Giorgione in Venice and by Titian and Michelangelo for the Duke of Ferrara, Stephen Campbell explores the function of the mythological image within a Renaissance culture of readers and collectors.



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Review

"Stephen J. Campbell's ambitious and commendable new book, *The Cabinet of Eros*, largely redeems both paintings and patron, through a mixture of broad contextualization—both physical and cultural—and close reading. . . . Unlike many previous commentators, Campbell takes Isabella's intellectual ambitions seriously."—Andrea Bolland, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*
(Andrea Bolland *The Sixteenth Century Journal*)

About the Author

Stephen J. Campbell is professor of history of art at Johns Hopkins University and author of *Cosmè Tura of Ferrara: Style, Politics and the Renaissance City, 1450-1495*, published by Yale University Press. **Clifford Malcolm Brown**, now retired, was professor of history of art at Carleton University, Ottawa.

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