

Caravaggio



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The dramatic realism of Caravaggio's art has fascinated viewers since the seventeenth century. Yet no prior monograph presents the thorough investigation of Caravaggio's "realism" ventured in John Varriano's remarkable book. Forgoing the "life and works" format of most earlier monographs, Varriano concentrates on uncovering the principles and practices--"the intellect and the imagination--"that guided Caravaggio's eye and brush as he made some of the most controversial paintings in the history of art. Caravaggio's irascible personality, libertine sexual preferences, and lawless, even murderous, behavior have attracted as much heated commentary as his realism. Varriano sheds important new light on these disputes by tracing the autobiographical threads in Caravaggio's paintings and framing these within the context of contemporary Italian culture. Ultimately, Varriano links Caravaggio's aggressive persona and innovative methods to changes taking place throughout seventeenth-century Europe.

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