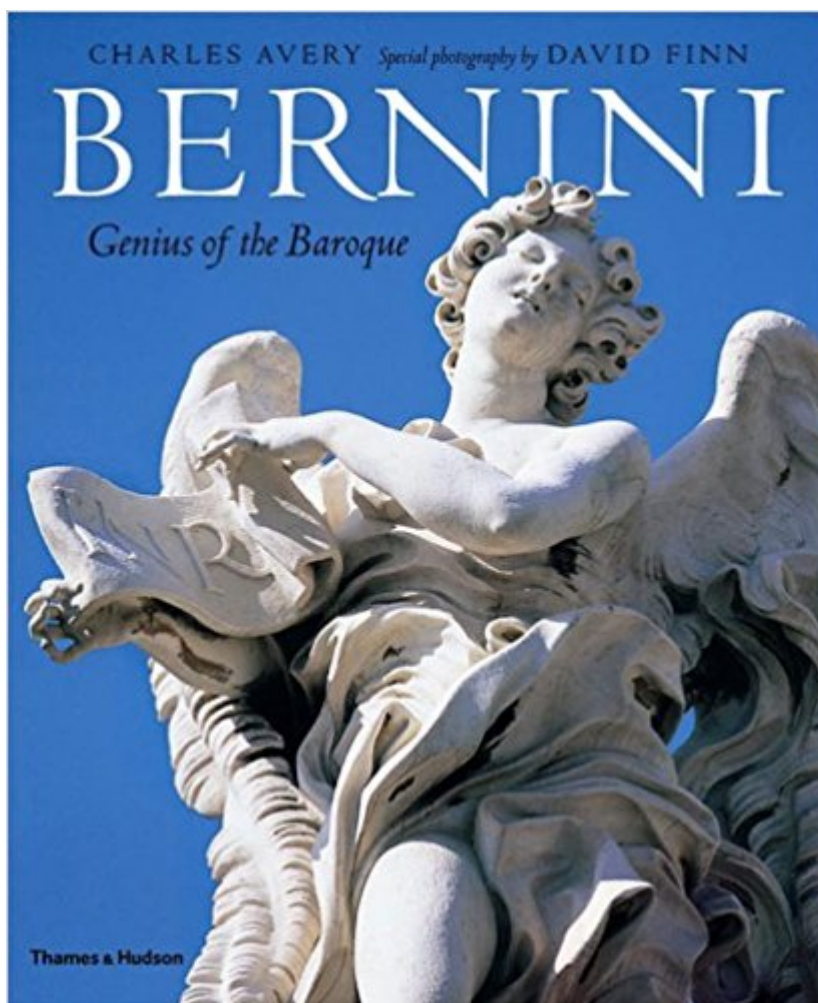


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Bernini: Genius Of The Baroque



Synopsis

A beautifully illustrated testament to this great Baroque sculptor Charles Avery. Gianlorenzo Bernini was one of the greatest artists of all time. World-famous for his uniquely powerful works of sculpture, he was also a virtuoso draftsman, a pioneering caricaturist, and a designer of gorgeous fountain displays. He even wrote plays. Bernini virtually created Baroque Rome. Without his contributions, we could not walk across the Ponte Sant'Angelo escorted by the angelic statuary that he designed for its balustrades. The Basilica of St. Peter would not have the sonorous crescendo of Bernini's bronze Baldacchino over St. Peter's tomb. We could not enjoy the huge splashing water display and vigorous drama of the figures on his Fountain of the Four Rivers in the Piazza Navona. Using much previously unpublished research, Charles Avery traces Bernini's career from his brilliant beginnings to his last mature works, including his architecture, and pays special attention to his techniques in drawing, modeling, and carving. 400 illustrations, 80 in color.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Wittkower's (1901-71) book, first published in 1955 and updated in 1966 and 1981, derives from an Italian edition of 1900. The text, which deals chiefly with the sculptures of this multifaceted Italian artist (1598-1680), is a classic. Though some of the entries have been updated and some new plates added, the main reason for this new edition seems to be its first issuance in paperback. This, and the fact that the color plates are less than stellar, mean that all but advanced art history collections can safely pass on this edition if they have earlier ones. Avery's book takes a broader look at Bernini, covering sculpture, drawings, models in terra cotta, urbanistic projects such as

fountains, and his work for St. Peter's and other Roman churches. The color photographs are better than those in the Phaidon book, where they are separate from the text; neither title offers uniformly better black-and-whites. Avery (sculpture, Victoria and Albert Museum) writes well, offers more context and comparative illustrations, and draws on material unavailable to Wittkower in shaping his text. Avery is the choice for all but the most scholarly of collections, which will want both titles. Jack Perry Brown, Art Inst. of Chicago Lib. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Charles Avery is a specialist in European sculpture. He was Deputy Keeper of Sculpture at the Victoria and Albert Museum and a Director of Christie's, London. David Finn, one of the foremost photographers of sculpture in the world, lives in New York.

This is a fine book about Bernini's sculpture. It has multiple photos of the important works. It groups sculptures into chapters by subject matter (busts, mystic religious, mythological, fountains, etc.) which makes sense. The text is interesting, and includes quotes from Bernini's contemporary Baldinucci and others. Avery places heavy emphasis on antecedents that may have influenced Bernini's designs. There is a fascinating chapter about Bernini's methods of sculpting. His fountains are described and illustrated in detail. His architecture is also covered. The book badly needs a biographical summary and chronology to assist the reader. Avery's chapter grouping by subject matter means that the sequence of events jump back and forth confusingly. Dates of composition are not always provided. Finn's photos are very good and taken from well-chosen angles. But some are not as sharp as one would like for such a work. Additionally, some sculpture photos have so little depth-of-field that key details are not even in focus--David's head, on page 67, for example. Nevertheless, I recommend this book highly. Avery is rather too coy and protective of his hero. There is the briefest and most obscure discussion of Bernini's failed campanile on Saint Peter's. It is simply dismissed, without details or illustrations, with "allegations of incompetence...ill-founded". There is a delicate discussion, in the final chapter, of the "truly regrettable episode" in which he attempted to murder his brother and dispatched his servant to slash-attack his mistress. Regrettable indeed. I highly recommend, in addition to this book, Simon Schama's outstanding DVD series "The Power of Art"-- his program on Bernini is magnificent.

Do wish this book showed more sculptures. I do love Bernini's work - particularly the angels on the bridge heading to the Vatican.

Book arrived in perfect condition. Big book with beautiful pictures.

Big pictures. Nice book. As described (was used). My girlfriend (an artist) loves it.

This is a beautiful book, however I did not scroll all the way down to see that it was printed in German. I have returned it for an English version.

Charles Avery does an excellent job summarizing Gian Lorenzo Bernini's life and works. This is probably the best introduction to Bernini available as a starting point -- there are many other books that give more exhaustive analysis, text, photographs and diagrams. As a starter, you will have chosen the best with this book. From June to December 1976 I was a student on the Florida State University study program "a Firenze", which totally changed my life and world view, causing me to return almost ten times since 1976. Bernini is my favorite Baroque sculptor.

This is a beautiful book. The works are shown from different angles, instead of just one frontal photo, so the reader gets the details of the work, with a good accompanying text. I accidentally discovered this sculptor, and find to my surprise that some of his work is more appealing than some of the more famous artists of this genre. There is a great deal of detail, in fact, a whole chapter devoted to his fountains, particularly, The Fountains of the 4 rivers. I wish I had this book before I went to Rome and saw it in person. Any lover of sculpture will not be disappointed with this purchase.

The hardcover edition is a gorgeous book!!

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