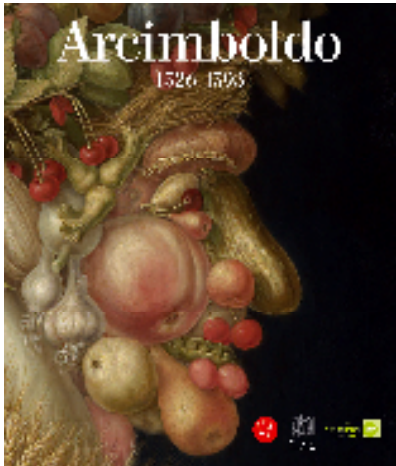


Arcimboldo 1527-1593 / Edited by Sylvia Ferino-Pagden.—Milan, Italy: Skira, dist. by Rizzoli International Publications, February, 2008.—304 p: ill.—ISBN-13: 978-88-6130-379-9: \$65.00.



This exhibition catalog examines the works of the visionary Italian Renaissance artist (and later celebrated Surrealist forebear), Giuseppe Arcimboldo, court painter to two Hapsburg emperors. He is particularly known today for his paintings of 'composite heads,' portraits "composed out of disparate but related elements ...which are conjoined to make up a head and the upper part of a torso" (p. 97), such as the individual types of fruit and vegetables which create the form in one of the artist's numerous versions of Summer. The essays and images included here attempt to create a truly monographic understanding of Arcimboldo and his life and career, which began and ended in Milan. He spent the intervening years in the Viennese and Prague courts of Maximilian II and Rudolf II, respectively, where his astounding portraits captured the interest of courts across Europe. His early years were marked by a personal and professional relationship with Bernardo Luini, a follower of Leonardo da Vinci. Some of Leonardo's drawings, many examples of which are included in the catalog, may be seen as a source of inspiration for Arcimboldo's later

fantastical works. During his time at the court in Prague he also devoted a great deal of energy to elaborately-staged festivals and pageants. His sketchbook of costumes designed for the wedding of Maximilian's son in 1571 has survived, giving us a greater sense of his larger oeuvre. Examples of his costumes for court festivities are also well represented in the catalog. After returning to Italy at the end of his life, Arcimboldo continued to paint as well as to collect works of art and objets d'art for Rudolf II.

The volume includes fourteen essays by leading scholars and experts on Arcimboldo, including editor Sylvia Ferino-Pagden, curator of Italian Painting at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. The authors have here contributed to the scholarship through an exploration of a wide variety of themes relating to the artistic milieu within which Arcimboldo worked. These critical essays are devoted to such topics as the artist's development, possible influences and sources, the impact of nature on his works, art at the court of the Hapsburgs, and Maximilian II as a patron of the arts. There are abundant color illustrations throughout and catalog entries follow one or more groups of essays, depending on the topic. In addition to an extensive bibliography, the appendix includes detailed technical analyses with abundant visual references and a summary of surviving archival documents tracing Arcimboldo's movements in Milan and at the Hapsburg courts.

The book is recommended for museum libraries which support Italian Renaissance and Mannerist collections and for academic libraries serving advanced undergraduate and graduate art and art history students.

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