
*Corbino from Rubens to Ringling* is a classic biography of an essentially forgotten artist. Well-known and well-recognized in his day, Jon Corbino’s paintings made the covers of the most important and respected art magazines including *Magazine of Art*, *ARTnews*, *American Artist*, and *Art Digest*. Janis and Richard Londraville present a heavily researched and thoroughly documented biography that incorporates suspense and intrigue into their enjoyable and clear writing style. Corbino’s volatile and unpredictable personality takes center stage with emphasis on his alcoholism, depression, and anger. Corbino is a multi-dimensional figure with multiple roles: teacher, artist, husband, ex-husband, son, father, and friend. The authors also do a fine job of interpreting the artworks.

The book is divided into five parts. As with most biographies it follows a chronological formula from birth to death examining Corbino’s personal and professional lives and the tensions between the two. His struggles for success, rise in popularity and recognition, and lack of satisfaction with his stature in the art world are emphasized. The threat of abstraction is a constant for this figurative artist who was philosophically opposed to non-figuration. His tenuous relationships both personal and professional are closely examined including his three marriages, relations with his five children, and relations with dealers and friends. The authors highlight seminal moments for Corbino including natural disasters and professional rejections from shows and fellowships. He continued the balancing act of father and painter until he was diagnosed with cancer and died at fifty-nine before any of the aforementioned issues seem to be worked out.

The publication contains black and white reproductions of paintings and family photographs. There are sixteen color plates which are uneven in quality, but mostly adequate. However at least one is off in color and at least two are blurry.

*Corbino from Rubens to Ringling* successfully puts Corbino on the map as an important twentieth-century American artist. The Londravilles are excellent storytellers and this book is one of several biographies on arts and humanities figures written by the pair. The authors do a fine job contextualizing Corbino the artist and teacher and his work in the mid-twentieth century New York art scene. Their scholarship is top-notch including thorough endnotes, an extensive bibliography, and a clear index. Though minor exhibition catalogs and one retrospective have been written throughout the years, this is the first full documentation of Corbino’s life and artwork, and as such is recommended for all art libraries. Those interested in the twentieth-century New York art scene, regionalist or immigrant artists will want to read this book.

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