



# Caravaggio

*By John T. Spike, Michelangelo Merisi Da Caravaggio, Michele K. Spike*

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**Caravaggio** By John T. Spike, Michelangelo Merisi Da Caravaggio, Michele K. Spike

The result of over 20 years of research by a leading authority on Caravaggio, this work reproduces every known work of the artist. John T. Spike explores in detail Caravaggio's scandalous life and provocative work. Placing Caravaggio within the broad panorama of society and ideas at the turn of the 17th century, the author sets a detailed stage for an artist who has been called "the first modern painter." Caravaggio (1571-1610) reflected in his canvases his own desires and spiritual crises to an extent no one ever had imagined possible, and he shocked his contemporaries by portraying the saints and virgins of Christianity with the faces and bodies of his companions and lovers in Rome's demimonde. Accompanying the book is a CD-ROM in which all of Caravaggio's extant paintings, as well as lost and rejected works, are described. Each entry specifies the work's medium, dimensions, location, and provenance, and provides an annotated bibliography of sources. Most of the entries conclude with a brief technical analysis.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Library Journal

Spike's opus is suspended between two eras of the technology of literacy. A well-illustrated text is given over to a chronologically structured study of the artist's life and work, while an enclosed CD-ROM provides a densely detailed catalogue raisonné. While the mass of documentation found in the electronic component of this catalog will be of considerable value to serious students of art history, the book proper does little to advance our understanding of the art or enlarge our appreciation of the significance of the artist. Sporadic efforts to relate the artist to a broad range of contemporary scientific and religious thought, while at times insightful, can also sometimes seem excessive and improbable. Consistent formal scrutiny is also too often slighted in favor of iconographic readings that range from the erudite but plausible to the recondite but strained. Catherine Puglisi's *Caravaggio* (LJ 4/1/99) is a superior introduction to the artist and his works, while Helen Langdon's *Caravaggio: A Life* (LJ 6/1/99) is a superior biographical and contextual study.

Robert Cahn, Fashion Inst. of Technology, New York

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### **About the Author**

John T. Spike, an internationally respected critic and historian of art, received his doctorate from Harvard. He has recently published major books on the Florentine Renaissance, including *Masaccio* and *Fra Angelico* (both Abbeville and both also available in Italian and French editions). Since 1989 Dr. Spike has been General Editor of Abaris Books, publishers of *The Illustrated Bartsch*, the multivolume compendium of European prints executed before 1750. A resident of Florence, he has organized numerous exhibitions of Italian art.

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