

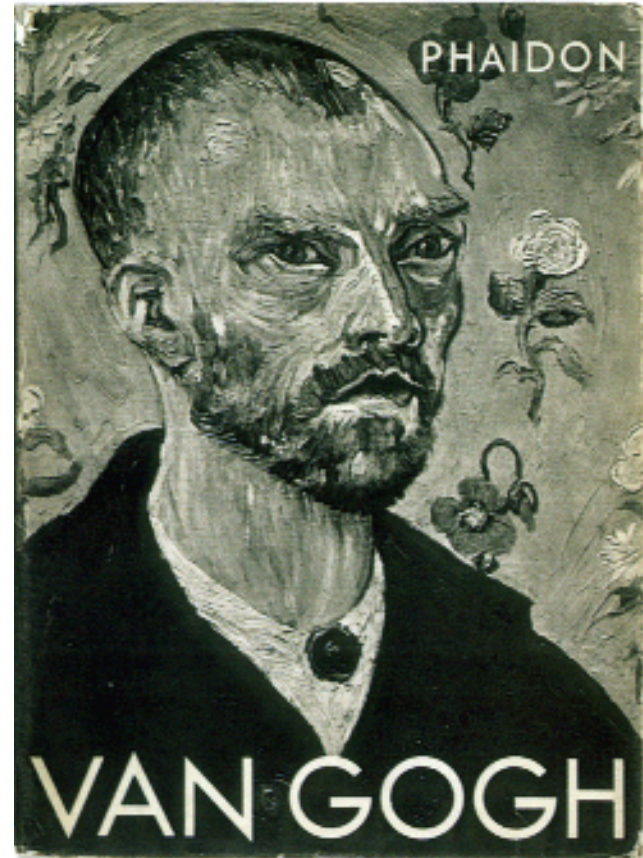
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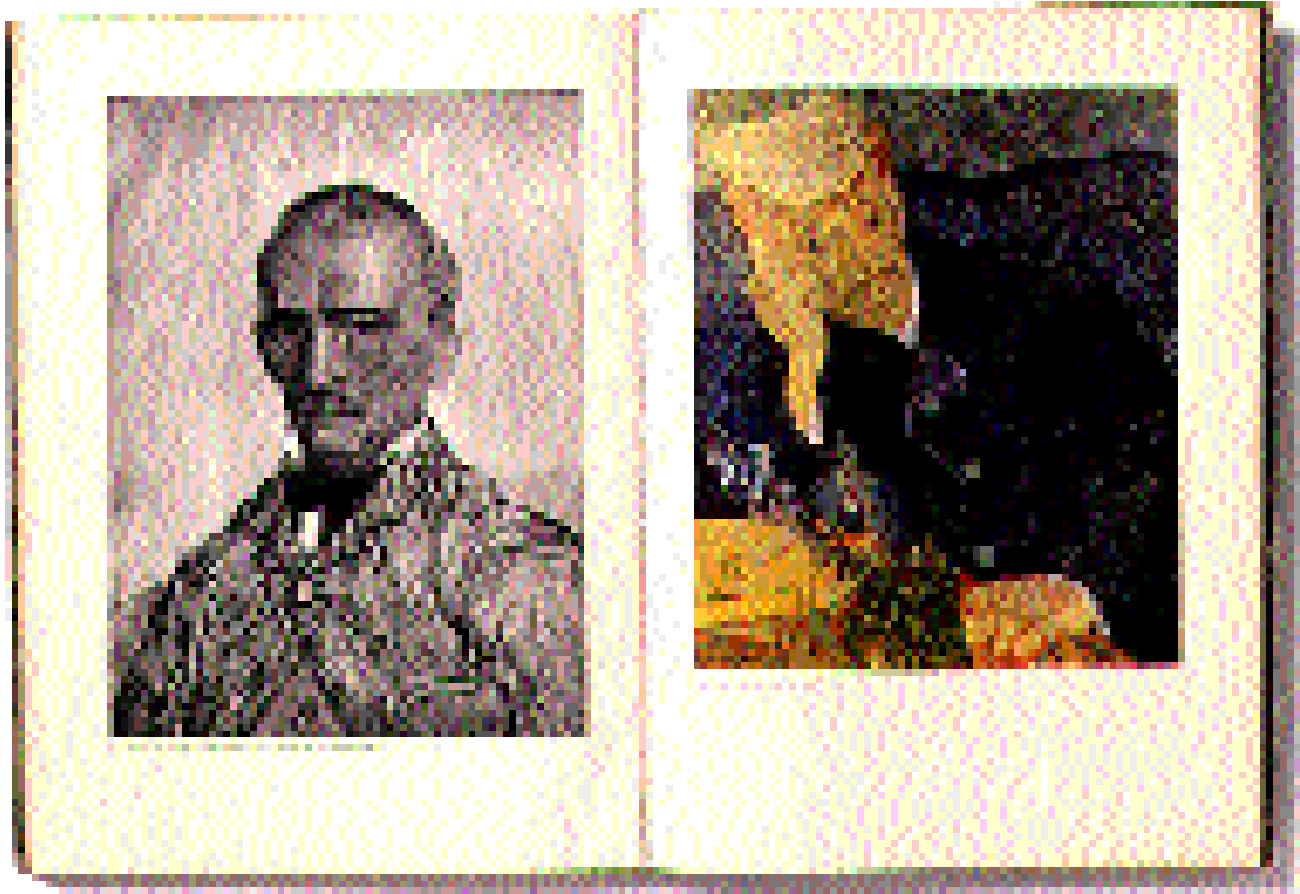
Vincent van Gogh died in 1890. At the time of his death – as everybody knows – he was hardly worth an obituary notice. His fame as an artist was nugatory: his paintings were mostly unsold.

Within the next half-century, Van Gogh became cherished as one of the world's favourite painters. Critics, dealers, friends and fellow artists played their part in this transformation of his reputation. Then philosophers, psychoanalysts and even pulp novelists helped too. The letters of Vincent to his brother Theo greatly animated the swell of popular recognition. But possibly the greatest impetus in redeeming and divulging the art of Van Gogh came from a publishing house called Phaidon.

It was in 1935 – the year of Irving Stone's catchy romance about the tormented Vincent, *Lust for Life* – that Phaidon's director Bela Horovitz toured the booksellers in Germany, collecting subscribers for a bibliographic venture. His proposal was a large format, generously illustrated and thriftily priced monograph on a single artist – say, Van Gogh. In 1922 the Piper Verlag of Munich had produced a text-dominated homage to Van Gogh in two volumes by Julius Meier-Graefe. Meier-Graefe was not above popularizing Van Gogh (he also produced a melodramatic novel about the artist) and, while books with pictures multiplied rapidly after the First World War, in 1922 few publishers thought of addressing big or 'sumptuous' art monographs beyond the cordon of collectors and dilettanti. The quadruple-decker catalogue raisonné of Van Gogh's works compiled by J. B. de la Faille belonged to that preserve. Though Horovitz's idea of a cheap folio edition was not an absolute novelty (the Swiss-based Albert Skira had launched something similar in 1934), the booksellers were dubious; still Horovitz convinced himself it was a gamble worth taking, and went ahead with the enterprise the following year.

A day or two after the official publication in 1936, Horovitz went to check that stock of the Van Gogh volume was available at his Vienna printer's warehouse. Exhausted staff told him that it had been – and was gone: 55,000 copies were already dispatched. It was technically out of print.





Thanks to the quantity produced then, and in rapidly successive printings (three German editions in 1936 alone), it is not difficult now to find second-hand copies of this book. And, turning the pages of the pre-war Phaidon Van Gogh today, one is still struck by its satisfying feel. Crown folio-size, cased in linen, it is both solid and durable. Either of the alternate dust-jackets – Van Gogh's stooping reaper, or a prickly self-portrait – would arrest any bookshop browser. The prefatory essay on the artist by Wilhelm Uhde is sufficiently brief, accurate and romantic. The typeface is bold and sans serif: giving a whiff of studied Bauhaus simplicity, but bound to the purpose of clear legible access. A dignified opening acknowledgement declares that the portfolio of plates was chosen by Ludwig Goldscheider, 'who also supervised the reproduction'. The monotones of the large photogravure prints serve to heighten Van Gogh's stumpy, hard-gained sense of form; tipped-in colour plates blaze in their midst like volcanic flares. Short of possessing an original canvas by Van Gogh – what else could anyone want?

The book was translated and sold abroad the next year in Britain, France and the United States. The initial price affixed on the monograph by its distributors in Britain gives some idea of the revolutionary sales pitch. Ten shillings and sixpence: for what it offered, in 1937, this was akin to the sixpenny Penguins launched by Allen Lane in 1935. Most unillustrated hardback novels retailed at five shillings or more. As for a substantial art book at the time – some tome from Studio or the Clarendon Press would normally come in terms of pounds, not shillings.

An urban artisan on average wages of 70 shillings a week would not feel fleeced by the Phaidon monograph. Clearly aimed at people for whom art books (such as they existed) had previously belonged to the category of luxuries, it delivered an obvious money's worth, and more.

Yet the success of Phaidon's enterprise with Van Gogh was threatened by two ideological efforts to detract from it – at least implicitly. In 1936 the Marxist critic Walter Benjamin – exiled to Paris from Berlin – published his essay on 'The Work of Art in the Age of

Mechanical Reproduction', in which he sought to argue that the mass reproduction of original paintings – via techniques such as photogravure, as then favoured by Phaidon and others – necessarily stripped art of its essential 'aura' or 'breath of life' and its capacity to astonish, enrapture and inspire the viewer. Benjamin's argument has gathered more dialectical importance in post-modernist discourse than it had at the time of publication: in retrospect, however, it is a significant coincidence with the Phaidon initiative. It was also a premature assessment. Had Benjamin lived to see the worldwide flourishing of the art of reproducing art – by Phaidon, by Skira, by Abrams and others – he would surely have conceded that art's 'aura' may survive the reproduction process: may be enhanced, no less. André Malraux's positive prospect of a 'museum without walls' made possible by reproductions (in *Le Musée imaginaire*, published by Skira in 1947) saluted that enhancement.

But meanwhile the Right mounted its own more particular attack. In 1937 a Van Gogh self-portrait – one of the very pieces chosen by Ludwig Goldscheider for the Phaidon volume – was among those selected by coercion for the didactic Nazi exposition in Munich of 'Degenerate Art' (*Entartete Kunst*). The aim of this exercise was to display for public derision paragons of art deemed disfiguring, seditious or plain Semitic. Chief Nazi propagandist Goebbels gave the authority for the confiscation and eventual destruction of thousands of such proclaimed 'dregs'. The Viennese painter Oskar Kokoschka, a friend of Horowitz and Goldscheider, was one of the condemned degenerates. Greed suppressed principles in the case of the Van Gogh portrait, which was later disposed of at auction in Lucerne for 175,000 Swiss francs. But the boldness of Phaidon's agenda in promoting Van Gogh to a German readership is put into relief nonetheless.

Of course Phaidon's was not a financially disinterested programme. Photogravure reproduction entails the expensive incision of a screened image on to a metal drum or plate: the more copies printed off such an engraving, the better the chance of recouping the outlay on making the plate. So there were dividends to printer and publisher in targeting a wide readership. Yet a bonus devolved to readers all the same. The more copies printed, the easier it became to whittle down the published price per copy.



Walter Benjamin never did explain properly why he thought photographic copying radically different from olden reproduction processes of print-making (which was how, for example, Rembrandt gained his entirely indirect knowledge of Italian Renaissance painting). But even if we dispute Benjamin's apocalyptic conclusions, we may sympathize with his basic logic. What Phaidon represented was art diffused beyond the salon. This diffusion was backed by improved technology and motored by market forces, but it was fundamentally democratic. Once upon a time, art – and books about art – were predominantly possessions of an élite. Edwardian British tourists to Florence might return with a scroll of souvenir sepia prints of Uffizi masterpieces from Fratelli Alinari, and educated German-speakers had volumes of *Klassiker der Kunst* in their glass-fronted bookcases. But others were at best left gawping on the margins, more often plain excluded. Arguably Vincent van Gogh had sought all his life to paint on behalf of such ordinary mortals: not possible, however, without the canny evangelism of a mediator like Phaidon.

The industrial democratization of art has only happened in this century. Its risks and opponents at the outset are too easily forgotten. What follows here is a history of Phaidon's existence over seventy-five years. The firm has not been not alone in the mission of making art available on the domestic bookshelf. But it can rightly and proudly celebrate a pioneering status – in both its past and present achievements.

Phaidon was not actually conceived as a publishing house for inexpensive and divulgatory books on art.

The succession of monographs in the mould of the Van Gogh prototype was born of commercial opportunism compounded by combative spirit and established ideals. The combative spirit has been anticipated above: any publisher witnessing the proscription of liberal culture by Hitler and Goebbels might feel compelled to retaliate with the only weapons – fresh stock, new titles – at his disposal. But then, the established ideals of Phaidon's founders demanded such a response.



These ideals were present virtually at the launch of the Phaidon imprint, and certainly enshrined in its name. The two key figures in the formative history of Phaidon are Bela Horovitz and Ludwig Goldscheider. In fact at the very beginning there were three effective founders, with Fritz (later Frederick) Ungar making the trio; but Ungar soon left to set up his own Saturn-Verlag in 1926, operating in Vienna until 1939 (when he emigrated and relaunched himself in New York). Ungar had been at school with Horovitz and Goldscheider, and it was while they were still at secondary school, or gymnasium, that Horovitz and Goldscheider began putting books together. Historically they would belong to the 'lost generation' after the First World War. Both went from school to serve in the Austrian army, then came back to Vienna to study. (In contrast, Adolf Hitler, who had distinguished himself in the trenches, failed the entrance exam for the city's Kunstakademie.) Upon their return, Vienna was no longer capital of an empire; Europe had fallen apart. But European culture had survived. In 1923, at the ages of 25 and 27 respectively, Horovitz and Goldscheider instituted Phaidon Verlag. To them and their prospective customers, the title colophon of the press was a vivid epitome of its time-tested humanist values.

II

Phaidon is the title of Plato's dialogue on the immortality of the soul. Usually transcribed in English as Phaedo, this plangent tract features one 'Phaidon' as a witness to the ultimate discourse and death of Socrates. The old philosopher has been compelled to suicide by a caucus of tyrants. He stoutly maintains the independence of his psyche, and faith in reincarnation. He also declares that beauty is abstract and absolute. 'By means of beauty, beautiful things become beautiful', says Socrates to Phaidon and his friends. 'Does it not also seem to you?'

The books of Goldscheider and Horovitz would provide their resounding assent. This was their debutant credo. Beautiful words were their commodity: hand-set in beautiful type on beautiful hand-made paper, and beautifully presented in hand-sewn bindings. If that sounds nauseatingly purist then it is misleading. Neither Goldscheider nor Horovitz were overtly affiliated to the expensive austerity of contemporary design pioneered by the Wiener Werkstätte. They showed little affection for the avant-garde in Vienna or elsewhere: nor was

contemporary art reflected in the contents of the Phaidon art lists until very much later in the firm's history. So it is that in the chronicles of modernist book design, alongside the likes of El Lissitzky and Jan Tschichold (although in fact Tschichold did design a book on Egyptian art for Phaidon in 1936), the names of Horovitz and Goldscheider do not figure. Rather, Phaidon Verlag was the embodiment of affordable quality in the books market; built on a firm friendship, and a workable division of skills.

Horovitz, trained as a lawyer, brought the starting capital funds and would soon show his business acumen. Goldscheider, who had studied art history but was also self-taught in the fine arts, supplied the eye first for typography, then for layout and design. Both men were deeply versed in the Classics, and customarily recited blasts of Homer to their shaving mirrors; 'Herr Doktor' was how each liked to be addressed, though in Goldscheider's case this was purely honorific. Goldscheider was an aesthete who, not unrealistically, coveted the reputation of poet and artist as well as author, scholar and translator. Both he and Horovitz mixed with Vienna's leading literary figures – Stefan Zweig, Arthur Schnitzler and many others – in the years of l'entre deux guerres.

The infant Phaidon Verlag was not so precocious as to get everything right. Goldscheider's assemblage of lapidary opinions and verses on art, sex, God and the universe (entitled *Ruhe auf der Flucht*, or 'Rest on the Flight') looks as self-indulgent now as it must have done in 1924. For his part, Horovitz could kick himself for having turned down the chance to publish Erich Maria Remarque's international bestseller *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929). But otherwise the early Phaidon books were immediately distinguished by the craft of their production and the range of editorial interests. True, the works of Plato were there in the list, as were further 'classics' of European literature – Ovid, Calderon, Shakespeare and Goethe. Yet contemporary authors were not neglected, nor indeed subjects which might raise some eyebrows. Phaidon published Hermann Hesse's *Sketches of an Invalid* in 1925, and many works of the Expressionist writer 'Klabund' (Alfred Henschke). Stylish erotica appeared, if disguised as social history (such as Paul Englisch's *Sittengeschichte Europas* ('The Social History of Europe') of 1932, complete with a voyeuristic compilation of the





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latest corset advertisements); also pocket-sized anthologies of Oriental wisdom. The titles may have been recondite or elevated; already, however, the Horovitz commitment to a big print run was in practice. Take the Phaidon edition of Theodor Mommsen's intimidatingly solid *Römische Geschichte* ('Roman History'). Abridged to a thousand-odd demy octavo pages by Goldscheider, bound in blue, its first printing ran to 36,000, soon followed by a reissue of similar quantity.

Mommsen's 1856 doorstopper had not been written with illustrations in mind. Goldscheider's grafting of images on to the text gave it an instantly refreshed appearance and appeal. The same device of enhancing good writing with eloquent pictures worked even better for Jacob Burckhardt's account of Italian Renaissance culture. *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* had been first published in Switzerland in 1860 with a print run of 1,000 copies, and subsequently remaindered by its lackadaisical local publisher. By contrast, the Horovitz and Goldscheider edition of 1937 was typical of their hearty scorn for small quantities: 20,000 copies of Burckhardt revamped were printed, and the same again within a year. With some minor modifications, the edition has hardly been out of print with Phaidon ever since.

'Cultural history' was what Burckhardt constituted: the *Volksausgabe* or 'people's edition' was how Phaidon rendered it. On India paper, the entire works of Tacitus could be had for the price of 4 marks and 80 pfennigs. Shrewdly, Horovitz and Goldscheider meted out the same treatment to a number of 'classic' texts about individual artists which had gone out of copyright: hence Carlo Justi on Velazquez (1933), Hermann Grimm's lives of Michelangelo (1933) and Raphael (1934), and Woldemar von Seidlitz on Leonardo (1935). Other publishers – notably Wolfgang Jess in Dresden – had produced books of similarly dense elegance, but the 'Goldscheider touch' for selecting and arranging apt illustrations gave these Phaidon editions a singular appeal. Bela Horovitz would later say that it was Justi's *Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert* which persuaded him to make a commercial specialization of art books.



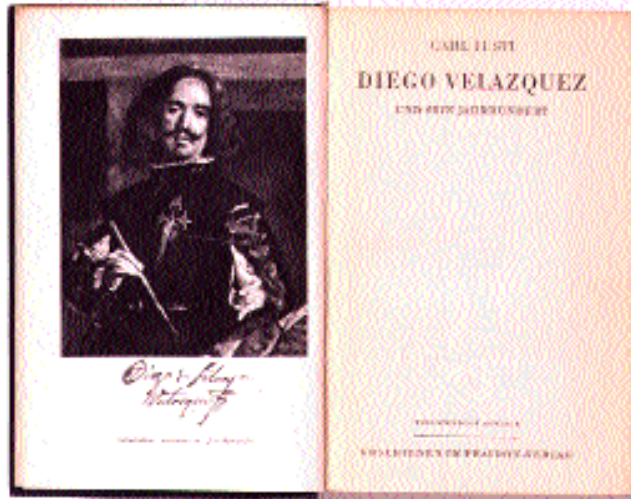


In Vienna the Phaidon team remained essentially a duo, in league with a couple of redoubtable secretaries. In due time, other publishers began to take notice of their success, and not only within the German-speaking world. One of the visitors to the Phaidon Verlag's surprisingly palatial premises on Vienna's Parkring during the mid-1930s was Stanley Unwin. Head of the London firm George Allen & Unwin, he observed that Horovitz and Goldscheider were generating 'excellent work'. More distrustful of Hitler than most British politicians of the time, Unwin advised Horovitz that if the excellent work were to continue, then he should leave Vienna forthwith.

In Sir Stanley Unwin's memoir of this encounter and its upshot – in *The Truth about a Publisher*, 1960 – there is the implication of complacency on the part of Horovitz. ('I urged the proprietor, Dr Horovitz, to get out. He seemed to think that he had plenty of time.') In the course of such a consistently self-congratulatory autobiography as Unwin's, this line may be sceptically received. In fact, Horovitz was well aware of the imminent threat to Phaidon from the Third Reich. Bookshops in Germany constituted 70 per cent of the Phaidon market, and Leipzig was a crucial centre for distribution. Already in 1933 there were public bonfires of books judged hostile to Nazism, and the Phaidon Verlag had not concealed its Jewish identity (for instance publishing in 1931 *Jude wohin?* – 'Whither Jewry?' – by Albert Londres). Given that Nazi-style rallies were held regularly on the Parkring in Vienna, right below the Phaidon offices and Horovitz family home, this was a brave statement.

Immediately after the Nazi assassination of the Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss in July 1934, Horovitz kept his family in Czechoslovakia for safety. For a while the Horovitz family's summer spa retreat in Marienbad seemed a possible permanent home for the Horovitz and Goldscheider families, and an office for Phaidon. Then, as political resistance to Hitler's plan for the Nazi takeover of Austria stabilized under Kurt von Schuschnigg, a return was made to Vienna. Anti-Semitism in both Austria and Germany did not abate, yet Horovitz believed he could outwit the crude discriminatory pressures being applied to the book trade by Nazi bureaucrats. In 1936 he was able, by personal petition, to persuade Fritz von Papen, the German ambassador to Vienna, that Phaidon books should be excepted from the prohibition



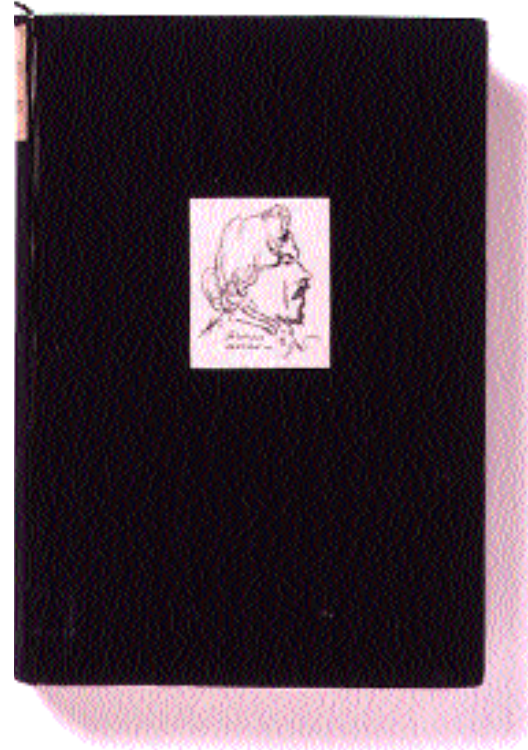


on Jewish-produced publications in Germany. Had not Phaidon glorified the great German artist Albrecht Dürer? Were Phaidon not publishers of such thumpingly pro-Teutonic historians as Leopold von Ranke and Theodor Mommsen?

For a few months Horovitz got away with it. But it was only a temporary respite. So the fostering of an English-speaking readership of Phaidon books began in earnest in 1936, when the first arrangements were made for co-editions in the United States with Oxford University Press. Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann were among the American friends of Horovitz who offered letters of affidavit to assist Phaidon's evacuation from Vienna. Then Stanley Unwin combined a shrewd business proposition with an ingenious gesture of mercy. If he purchased the Phaidon business it would no longer count as a Jewish enterprise, and could therefore operate freely and legitimately in Germany. The deal was complex and necessarily surreptitious, involving a loan made to Unwin by Horovitz himself. Unwin produced the required 'Aryan' credentials (his own were 'better', technically, than Hitler's), and forthwith bought all the Phaidon stock. With the George Allen & Unwin label pasted over each spine, this authentically 'Aryanized' stock was distributed to German booksellers in 1938. Almost all of it sold within forty-eight hours, releasing immediate cash for the production of English editions.

Back in Britain, Unwin launched a zealous publicity campaign for Phaidon books, calling upon such diverse Phaidon supporters as Rupert Hart-Davis, Anthony Blunt and Howard Spring to trumpet Phaidon's virtues to the unconverted. Unwin perceived that his home public did not match the continental appetite for books about art and high culture: hence it took a low-brow novelist such as Howard Spring to tell the uncouth British what they were missing – or rather, what they had suddenly gained with an anglicized Phaidon. It would be an embarrassing discredit to British taste, then, if the Phaidon books flopped.

Horovitz retained copyright over the Phaidon books, and 'goodwill' in the Phaidon name. He had just discussed the legal delicacies of this situation with Unwin in London in March of 1938 when swastikas were officially raised in Vienna: the Anschluss of Germany and Austria





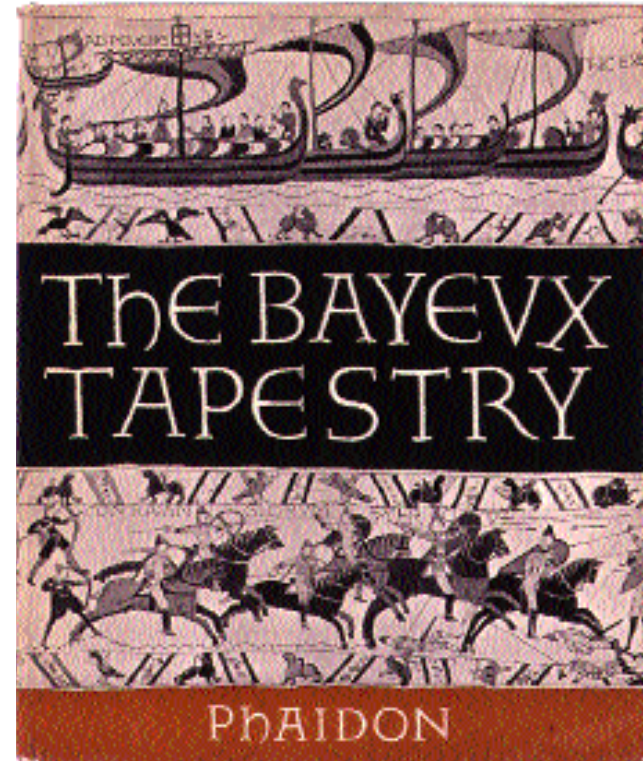
had been effected. One of Phaidon's Viennese authors, Egon Friedell, saw stormtroopers clattering down a street, and threw himself out of the window; the apocryphal record is that Friedell considerably yelled a warning to those below as he plunged to his death.

Nazi officials dispatched to confiscate Phaidon assets peevishly discovered that these were indeed the property of George Allen & Unwin. Stanley Unwin arranged visas for entry to Britain, though for an unpleasant couple of months the youngest of the Horovitz children, Hannah, was stranded in Vienna, being taught how to Sieg Heil under her nanny's tutelage. Horovitz's brother-in-law, the New York lawyer Jacques Schupf, was able to intervene. By June 1938 Horovitz and Goldscheider and their families had been successfully evacuated. Sigmund Freud made a similar move at the same time. Like Freud's, Phaidon's shift from Austria to Britain was done on a decisively one-way ticket.

Both Horovitz and Goldscheider were anglophiles of old. One of their very first books in 1923 had been a translated edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They had also published German renderings of Bernard Shaw and G.K. Chesterton. But a deep acquaintance with the works of Shakespeare, Wordsworth or indeed P.G. Wodehouse was not perfect preparation for refugee status in London and Oxford. Goldscheider's punctilious and archaic salutations to his new countrymen – 'Well met, fellow', 'Good morrow, sire' – and Horovitz's nice instructions to Cockney cab-drivers ('Wilt thou convey me to the square of Leicester?') – were gradually adjusted, though neither ever abandoned a palpably Viennese accentuation.

Under the George Allen & Unwin umbrella, despite the snags of publishing in wartime, the English Phaidon flourished. From a little office rented in the St Giles area of Oxford, Goldscheider and Horovitz scarcely paused in their momentum.

Goldscheider in particular was conspicuously prolific in those years. Between 1939 and 1945 he produced no fewer than six substantial monographs by himself – apart from his usual editorial advice and solicitous ministry of illustrations. Possibly he was over-prolific: his 1941 folio volume, *Etruscan Sculpture*, was archly castigated in a review by the *Oxford Classical*





THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY

by

St. Frank Stenton (General Editor)

Stenton, Bertram R. Allen Brown - George Wingfield Digby
Charles H. Gibbs Smith - Sir James Mann - John L. Nevins
and Francis Wormald

WITH 130 ILLUSTRATIONS

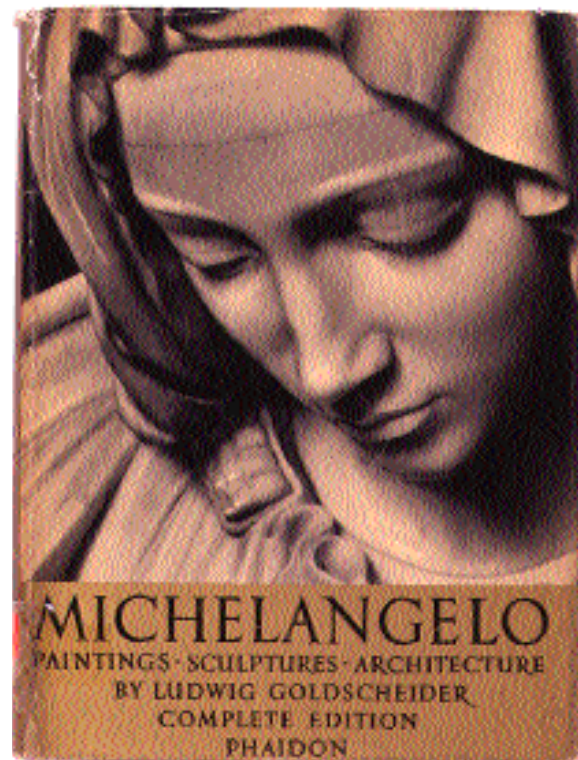
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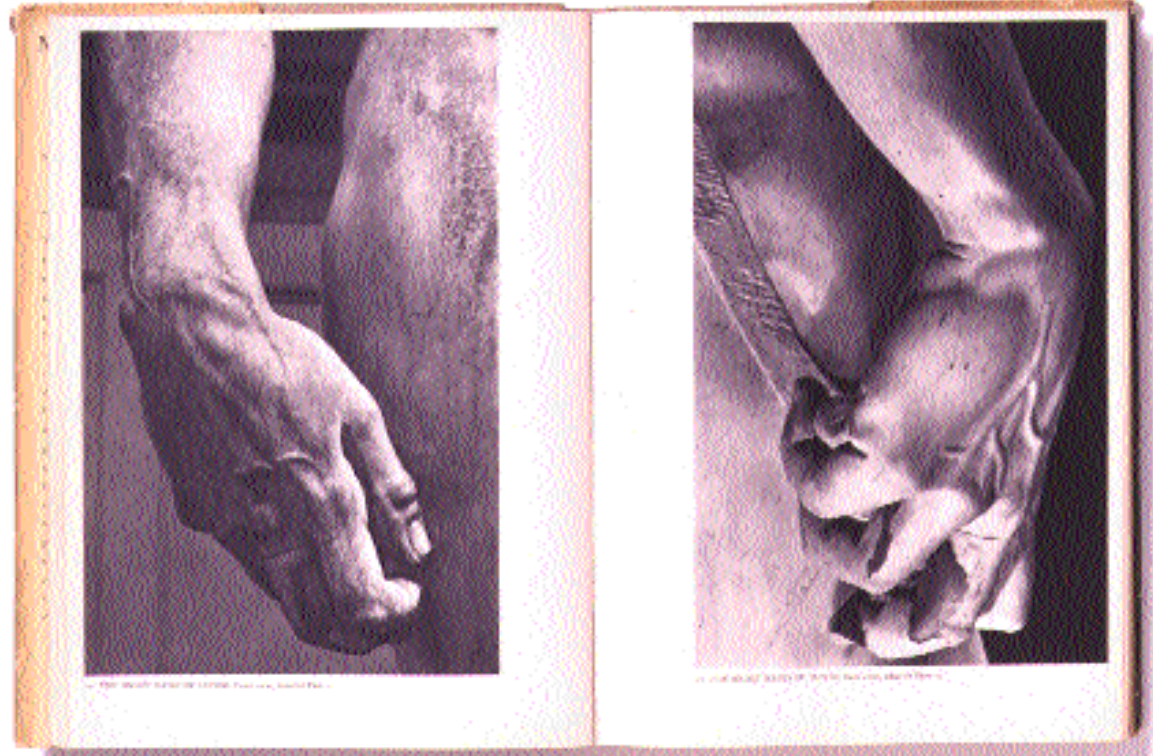
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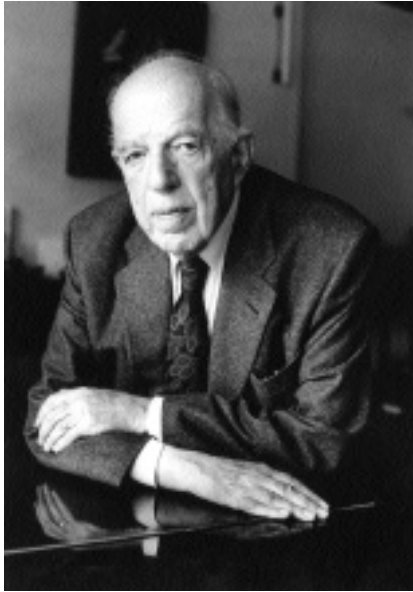
archaeologist J.D. Beazley as 'a hasty and confused compilation, rich in false dates and glib generalisations'. Yet Goldscheider's catalogues of Michelangelo have proved durably useful to generations of scholars, and formed the basis for a subsequent one-volume Phaidon edition of Michelangelo's paintings, sculptures and architecture which has stayed in wide demand.

Of course museums and art galleries routinely maintain their own archives of images for publication. But the Phaidon practice was then, as it is now, to commission fresh photography with specific aims. The black-and-white pictures taken by Ilse Schneider-Lengyel for Goldscheider's Roman Portraits of 1940 provide hauntingly memorable examples of this art, perhaps only truly appreciated by anyone who has ever tried to take photographs of precious objects under the hovering glare of a nervous custodian. (The ingratiation subsequently required of Phaidon representatives in the 1950s to persuade the Mayor of Bayeux to permit the Bayeux Tapestry's glass frame to be removed was legendarily epic.) Goldscheider occasionally accompanied the photographer, ensuring editorial direction from the outset. To these choice images Goldscheider brought a secondary, but no less important, publishing skill, that of 'cropping' an illustration to emphasize its effect on the page. Some use of close-up details in art books had been tentatively tried by others: Wilhelm Worringer's *Formprobleme der Gotik* (1911) is an early effort in that direction, subsequently developed by Yukio Yashiro in his studies of Botticelli (first published in 1925). But otherwise the artifice of photographic enlargement had been little explored. Though Goldscheider himself habitually declared immediate disenchantment with a book once it was printed, the Goldscheider eye for framing a detail – chisel rasps on a marble thigh, blood vessels proud on the David's hand – continues, for many, to constitute a classic hallmark of formative Phaidon style. Faces and facial expressions were ever a Goldscheider penchant: his 1937 paper gallery of *Fünfhundert Selbstporträts* ('Five Hundred Self-Portraits') remains a classic treasury for the armchair physiognomist.

George Allen & Unwin distributed Phaidon books for over a decade. The agreement was brought to an end in 1949 at Horovitz's understandable insistence. Though Horovitz







Ernst Gombrich (photograph by Jane Bown)

remained deeply grateful to Unwin, who had rescued not only Phaidon as a publishing concern, but also two families from probable death in Dachau, the working rapport between both men had turned acrimonious. Unwin grumbled about the amount of space occupied in his warehouses by the giant Phaidon books; Horovitz fumed at what he perceived as the inefficient distribution of those very same piles. At root, Unwin was not an art publisher. Horovitz emphatically was, now virtually by vocation.

After the war there was no question of returning to Vienna. Horovitz was driving the firm in a cosmopolitan direction. New Phaidon commissions were in hand, including publication of Old Master drawings in the Royal Collection; and new Phaidon premises were set up in Cromwell Place, South Kensington, in 1946. Goldscheider had devised the logo of the Greek phi character to brand their products – a logo which, though latterly updated in form by Pentagram designer David Hillman, remains the firm's distinctive hieroglyph. Meanwhile, Horovitz cultivated local talent in writing art history that was thoroughly researched to Viennese art-historical standards, yet not pitched at cognoscenti. John Pope-Hennessy first entered the Phaidon list in 1947: he described Horovitz as a 'wonder-worker' implacably devoted to raising standards of art book production. Initially aloof and fastidious, Kenneth Clark was persuaded by Horovitz that writing for commoners did not necessarily entail compromise with mob fodder, and delivered his Piero della Francesca in 1951. Eventually Clark hymned Phaidon books as germane to the development of any young artist or art historian. But the most fruitful Horovitz scoop came from an exiled former compatriot, first encountered during the war. This émigré was the young Ernst Hans Gombrich.

With more than six million copies sold globally to date, and thirty renderings beyond English (latterly Icelandic and Albanian), E.H. Gombrich's *The Story of Art* has had an influence upon generations of readers that is hardly quantifiable. The sculptor Antony Gormley is only one of many practising artists who locate their determined choice of métier with *The Story of Art*. Gombrich himself acknowledges that a single paragraph in the book – some remarks upon an early twelfth-century candlestick made for Gloucester Cathedral, conjured up simply because Goldscheider happened to have a nice photograph of the object – may have

helped secure his first senior academic appointment. The Courtauld Institute's director T.R.Boase, who had reviewed the book anonymously for the Times Literary Supplement and especially praised Gombrich's insight on medieval iconography, was an influential elector to the Slade Professorship of Fine Arts at Oxford – which Gombrich was offered in 1950, as successor to Kenneth Clark.

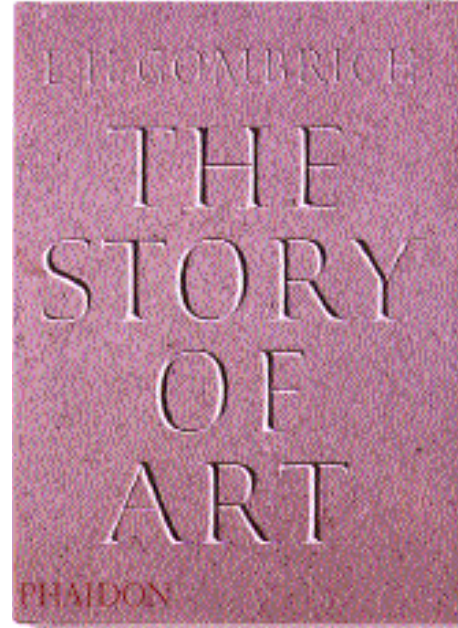
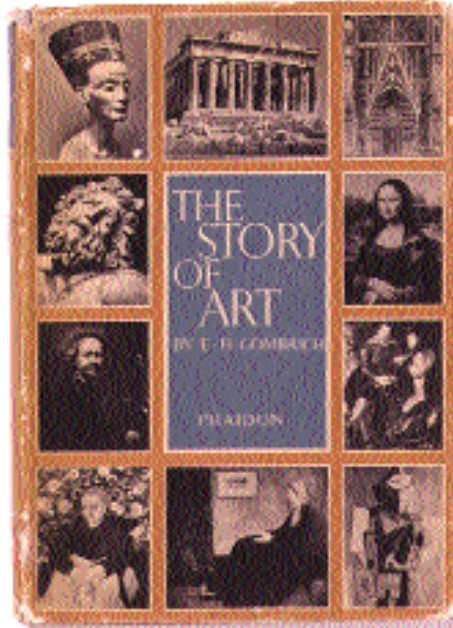
In that same TLS review, Boase had cautiously ventured that Gombrich's *The Story of Art* 'may well affect the thought of a generation'. Horovitz had inklings of much greater longevity of influence for the book as soon as he had squeezed the manuscript out of its author. Gombrich had come over in 1936 to London to work as a research assistant at the Warburg Institute, itself transferred from Hamburg in 1933. But before he left Vienna, Gombrich had written a child's guide to world history (*Weltgeschichte für Kinder*, commissioned by Walter Neurath for the Steyermühl Verlag) which had turned out to be an instant minor classic (it is indeed still available today in several European languages). A sequel on world art for children had been mooted, though Gombrich doubted its feasibility.

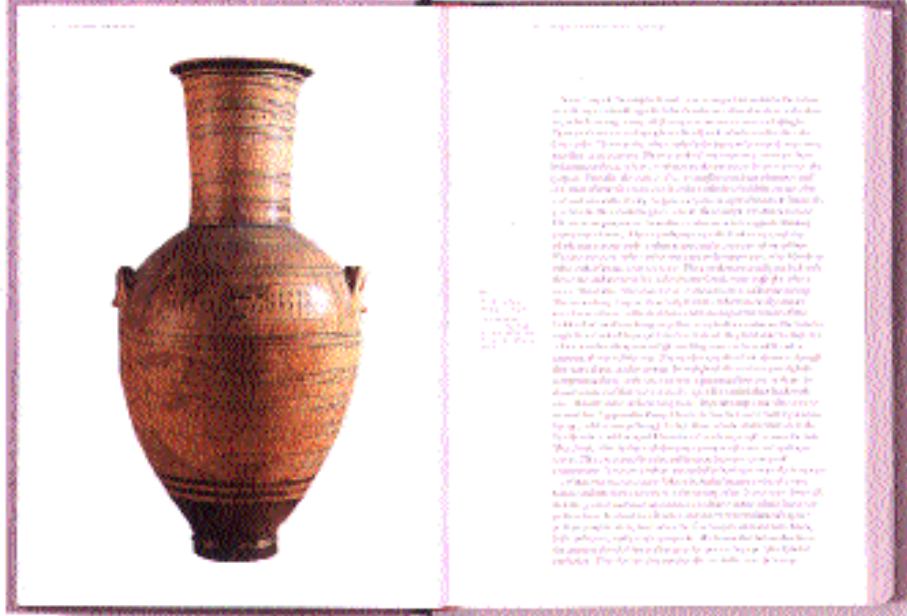
Gombrich had drafted a few chapters of such a book: his partial typescript, translated into English by Elisabeth Senior at the British Museum, and dusty from the Blitz (in which the translator lost her life), had been shown to Faber & Faber, but Messrs Faber had not committed themselves. (At about that time, Messrs Faber also rejected George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.) But while Gombrich was doing war service for the BBC by listening to German broadcasts, Bela Horovitz wrote to him lamenting a dearth of manuscripts. The two men met at a hotel in Reading in 1942, and Gombrich mentioned the drafts shown to Faber & Faber. The same chapters were tested on Horovitz's teenage daughter Elly, who enthusiastically approved. Horovitz offered an advance of £50: not ridiculous to a married scholar whose annual stipend at the Warburg was austere. Spending most of his hours with ears full of Nazi broadcasts, Gombrich was unable to work on the scheme, and soon regretted it altogether – to the point of trying to return the cash. For a time Gombrich dreaded going up to Oxford to visit his parents, in case he bumped into Horovitz. But Horovitz persisted. So eventually, when returned to the Warburg after his German radio duties (one of his last tasks was to

inform Downing Street of the news of Hitler's death), Gombrich set aside a series of dictation sessions with his secretary. Six years away from regular sholarship, his source was chiefly whatever he could remember about art through history without looking things up. Illustrations were mainly suggested by the encyclopaedic German picture resources of *Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte*, though Goldscheider later worked his usual magic on image selection and layout. Rather than attempt excellent reproductions of great paintings, colour was mainly reserved for applied art. The resultant narrative – certainly 'a story', if not 'the story' of art – would become the lynch-pin of Phaidon's return to independence as a publisher.

The Story of Art was announced in the Phaidon autumn catalogue of 1950 as 'a book to be enjoyed by young readers and by adults with young minds'. Although Horovitz printed a mere 20,000 to begin with, he had inklings that successive print runs would be manifold. The price of 21 shillings, or one guinea in old terms, was pegged to the minimum needed to break even. With Oxford University Press distributing half the initial print run in the States, it was soon clear that Gombrich, Horovitz, Goldscheider and their teenage consultant had combined to produce a genuine bestseller. *The Story of Art* has been described (by Clive James) as Phaidon's 'cash cow' – steadily yielding profits throughout the firm's vicissitudes over five decades. Gombrich had been offered a one-off payment by Horovitz, unusually generous for the time (£700); he was wise to have followed his friend Karl Popper's advice and opted for royalties instead.

However, complacency was not affordable, nor, in any case, a part of the Horovitz style. Direct competitors were burgeoning at home (Walter Neurath, also displaced from Vienna to London, founded Thames and Hudson in 1949) and abroad (from Switzerland, Albert Skira's 1947 *History of Modern Painting* made unprecedentedly expansive use of colour in an art book). Soon Paul Hamlyn would come forward with a patently down-market and colour-laden series of 'Books for Pleasure', printed in runs that even Horovitz would have balked at – 350,000 or so – and distributed in department stores. Still, the relatively monochrome elegance of the Phaidon list was given further authorial distinction in 1952 when Bernard





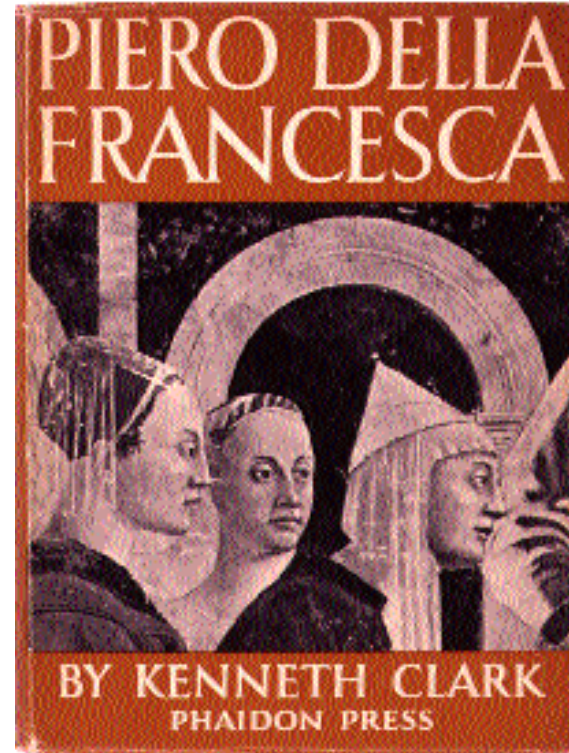
Berenson's essays on Italian Renaissance painters began to appear, and again in 1954 when Anthony Blunt contributed his volume on the Old Master drawings at Windsor Castle.

Horovitz was busy in New York recruiting such estimable projects when he collapsed, in March 1955, with a heart attack. 'Are you allergic to anything?' asked the doctor who came to his aid. 'Yes,' groaned Horovitz, 'America.' They were his last words.

Aged 56 at his death, Horovitz naturally left a wake of pledged and planned undertakings. Among these was a true loss-leader and article of faith, the so-called 'East-West Library' of Jewish learning, published by Horovitz from 1944 onwards as testimony to his own determination that the Holocaust should not, after all, flag the end of Jewish identity. But could the identity of Phaidon survive the demise of its dynamic proprietor?

Elly, the same Horovitz daughter who had so astutely recommended publication of Gombrich's *The Story of Art*, herself joined the firm a year before her father's death. It was her husband, Harvey Miller, who became Managing Director of Phaidon in 1955. Though he hankered for a life in a physics research laboratory, Miller had some experience of publishing, from a year apprenticed with Robert Maxwell. The manifold commissions inherited from Bela Horovitz – for example, publishing the contents of the Samuel H. Kress Collection in the Washington National Gallery of Art and elsewhere – were all properly honoured, so in this respect the Phaidon profile scarcely altered. Ludwig Goldscheider, never personally interested in taking a managerial role at Phaidon, continued to be involved in all stages of book production. The death of Horovitz struck him hard: as his daughter Gaby recalls, the news of his friend's demise was the only occasion when Goldscheider was seen to weep. During the Miller years and up to his death in 1973, Goldscheider generally retreated to work at home, where his 20-foot desk overlooked a leafy Hampstead garden.

The Goldscheider touch may be detected in fading measure at Phaidon during the 1960s. Monographs once assembled by Goldscheider, including the vintage 1936 Van Gogh, were transmogrified into a series called 'Colour Plate Books', and many new titles added within



that format. In 1955, on the eve of releasing Thames and Hudson's World of Art series, Walter Neurath had declared: 'The book buying public may not know much about the production of art books, but it certainly knows what it likes and that is plenty of colour' (actually a dictum more honoured in the breach by the World of Art books). Bela Horovitz, having broken new territory with standards of reproduction, co-editions and affordable pricing in art books, left not only successors but jostling imitators. Neurath at Thames and Hudson was one such; while across the Atlantic, as Harvey Miller recalls, Jason Epstein of Doubleday openly acknowledged his emulation of the Phaidon model as bequeathed by Horovitz. With his imprint of Anchor books, Epstein in particular followed the lead of Viennese Phaidon in producing what he called 'egghead paperbacks' – classics of literature, philosophy and history reprinted at knock-down prices.

The Harvey Miller period at Phaidon was marked, if anything, by an upmarket turn. The catalogue raisonné became a typical handsome feature of the annual list. Among the new Phaidon authors who became stalwarts in these years was Gisela Richter, who produced not only beady-eyed inventories of Classical antiquities, but a widely used and dependable Handbook of Greek Art. Otto Benesch brought to conclusion his comprehensive opus on Rembrandt, and between 1955 and 1963 Pope-Hennessy produced his classic volumes on Italian sculpture – whose revision for a fourth edition, published in 1996, was that scholar's swan-song. Steady editorial continuity within the workforce at Cromwell Place was provided by an ex-Viennese scholar called Innocenz Grafe (who for a perhaps obvious reason preferred to be known as simply 'Dr G.'). And the nature of the firm in these years was still cosy. Staffing numbers were minimal: individuals were versatile, tasks not exclusive. As long-serving editor Simon Haviland recalls, one might break from reading proofs to take a turn at production manager; and as Elly Miller remembers, a few lessons with Goldscheider could qualify a picture researcher to tackle layout.

The potential for growth at Phaidon was however limited so long as it remained a family firm. In 1967, with partial or grudging consensus from the heirs of Bela Horovitz, Harvey Miller sold up to an outfit which seemed to have the corporate power necessary to

strengthen Phaidon's presence in the increasingly competitive international arena of art book publishing. The buyer was Frederick Amos Praeger of New York. Praeger was himself a Viennese, born in 1915, who had escaped in 1938; Frederick A. Praeger Inc. was a subsidiary of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (which despite its name was not British but Chicago-based).

Changes were immediately registered at Cromwell Place. Senator Hubert Humphrey was Vice President of Britannica and his VIP visitations to Phaidon's offices were soon followed by increases in personnel. A politically-oriented imprint called the Pall Mall Press had also been acquired by Praeger, and this was housed nearby, with Roy Arnold appointed Managing Director of both Phaidon and Pall Mall. Arnold's unusual but perhaps valuable qualification for this task was his experience as a prison inspector.

In the short term the Praeger ownership appeared a boon to Phaidon. In the National Book League's competition for the best-designed British books in 1970, for example, all five entries submitted by Phaidon won a commendation – a sweep not equalled by any other publisher, and harbinger of many further awards for book design garnered in Phaidon's recent history. Grand projects that were by now part of Phaidon tradition, such as the triple catalogue of the Leonardo da Vinci drawings at Windsor Castle, by Kenneth Clark and Carlo Pedretti in 1969, might have indicated residual profitability at Phaidon. But the shield of Encyclopaedia Britannica was not a guarantee of sustainable growth. Britannica had its own problems. In 1974, merely a year after Phaidon's own confident jubilee celebrations, a sale was made. Phaidon passed into the hands of Elsevier, a Dutch-based publishing house of centuries-old pedigree, intent on modernizing.

In retrospect the Elsevier years cannot be presented other than as a betrayal of Phaidon's founding ideals – and an episode of botched asset-management.

As far as Phaidon staff were concerned, instant dismay was generated by the rumour that Elsevier executives planned to cast their gaze over the in-house telephone list and sack every alternate name on it. Such indiscriminate slaughter never took place; but the South

Kensington offices were relinquished in favour of a move to Oxford, where Phaidon would join 'Elsevier International Projects'. As longtime Phaidon authors such as Pope-Hennessy were left to desert the lists, so the policy expanded of importing ready-made copy and – more damagingly – ready-made illustrations from abroad. Horovitz had indeed promoted the practice of international co-editions but, with an important edge of self-respect, he had always been careful to stay predominantly on the supply side ('I cook with butter', as he put it).

So it was that distinct oddities began to figure in the annual Phaidon catalogues. In 1975, for example, Elsevier-Phaidon published *How Mammals Live*, followed in 1976 by a nifty handbook entitled *Guide to the Pigeons of the World*. This was of doubtless utility to pigeon-fanciers around the globe, but peculiarly juxtaposed with a triple-tome exposition of the seventeenth-century Netherlandish painters, or some item of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*. All that seemed to unite the books of the hybrid Elsevier-Phaidon was the fact that they were illustrated – apeing, as one editor shrugged, 'Mitchell Beazley-style books'. Thus battlesites, butterflies and botany – 'diversification' by one analysis, but with hindsight a painful squandering of the intrinsic prestige carried by the Phaidon name. Luckily for the accounts department, Gombrich remained in the stable: in 1978 the thirteenth edition of his *The Story of Art* came out with its more or less normal yearly English print run of some 90,000 copies. But Gombrich alone could not counter the dilution of Phaidon's identity under the Elsevier arrangement. For its part, Elsevier's campaign of absorbing multiple minor imprints around the world in a bid to dominate international book distribution was now admitted as a failure. Recognizing that failure, George Riches, the Managing Director installed by Elsevier at both Phaidon and Elsevier International Projects, proposed a management buy-out of Phaidon in September 1981. It was amicably accepted by Elsevier, and with three colleagues – the Finance Director, Director of the Book Packaging Unit and the Distribution Director – Riches set up a holding company called Musterlin.

The pigeon-fancying almanacs were immediately dropped. Though Riches himself was not a connoisseur of fine art – he came from a background in advertising – his skills of presentation were highly honed, and eminently suited to the rising entrepreneurial spirit inspired by

Margaret Thatcher's government. In 1986 the Musterlin Group plc floated on the London Stock Exchange, and the prospectus for potential shareholders shamelessly displayed Phaidon titles as a glossy enticement to invest in a 'high quality' product. 'Shamelessly', because in fact Musterlin's directors were not principally interested in Phaidon's development as an art and art history imprint. Their main financial stake was in a packaging enterprise, called *Equinox*, established with the Phaidon buy-out in 1981. 'A product was required', explained Musterlin's prospectus to the City, 'which was capable of being exploited both multi-nationally and in multiple-market channels.' The result, called the *Multi Exploitation Project*, was a series of encyclopaedic reference books covering various fields. Pigeons were out, but mammals were still in – whether under the *Equinox Encyclopaedia of Animals*, or *Desmond Morris's demagogic Manwatching*.

As the strain of pursuing multi-exploitation called upon one cash injection after another, ideas for Phaidon books or series came and went. There were attempts to clone a Gombrich-style success with *The Story of Craft* (by Edward Lucie-Smith), *The Story of Architecture* (by Patrick Nuttgens) and *The Story of Modern Art* (by Norbert Lynton). A novice in art appreciation, one Sister Wendy, was given her debut by Phaidon, writing on contemporary women artists. A cohort of 'Phaidon Cultural Guides' launched in 1985 made some effort to poach territory already mastered by the Blue Guides. A 'Phaidon Gallery' of artists briefly appeared, using a stock of indifferent art transparencies belonging to a Spanish encyclopaedia firm. (Goldscheider's posthumous horror may readily be imagined at the very thought of it.) An initiative in 1982 to combine with the auctioneers Christie's spawned a range of titles aimed at collectors – of pots, maps, fine wines and antique woodworking tools – and an 'Artists' Book Club' was formed. There were also some 'complete guides' of practical instruction produced for budding painters, calligraphers or woodworkers.

A few salutary extensions of Phaidon interests were accomplished: notably, books on architecture and contemporary building at last began to be commissioned by Phaidon editors, beginning auspiciously with *Modern Architecture Since 1900* by William Curtis in 1982. But in general it was a dispiriting time for anyone concerned with the maintenance or



renewal of Phaidon's reputation as an art publisher. Roger Sears, who came to Phaidon from Orbis in 1978, and who served Musterlin as Phaidon's Commissioning Director, remembers a perpetual struggle to balance specifications, price and print run. If economies of cost were too harsh at the production stage, a downward spiral ensued from which it was impossible to escape. Essentially, a poor product would not sell: the Horovitz equation of quality and affordability made possible by the big print run was by now a forgotten arcane formula. In his time, Horovitz had installed Jacob Burckhardt on the shelves of anyone with three shillings and sixpence to spare. The 1988 Phaidon edition of Burckhardt's *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Italy* retailed at £75: no wonder it was felt prudent to print no more than 7,000 copies of it. In the end George Riches could not deliver what his surname promised. Bankruptcy was declared by the Musterlin Group in the summer of 1990, and the receivers were called in. Following usual procedure, the holdings of Musterlin were advertised for sale in a small notice within the *Financial Times*.

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It was a sign of Phaidon's resonant erstwhile presence in the art books world that there was no shortage of predatory interest in the business as advertised in late summer of 1990. From abroad, the French house Flammarion and the American Rizzoli were among the interested parties. But disentangling the strands of Musterlin required close surgery. Two operations acquired by George Riches as subsidiary publishing ventures, Lennard and Canongate, were respectively allowed to expire and returned to former ownership. *Equinox*, partially the cause of Musterlin's collapse, was hardly attractive to anyone, but was taken under the wing of *Andromeda*, a company formed four years previously by former employees of the Musterlin Group. The Phaidon-Christie's amalgam was one which Christie's were grateful to terminate. This left the Phaidon Press Ltd. Its eventual purchase as a single concern would not have surprised a business analyst (Phaidon sales were respectable enough even throughout the upheaval of receivership) nor a publisher (Phaidon was Phaidon, after all). But the identity of Phaidon's new owners took everyone unawares.

Richard Schlagman and Mark Futter were absolute newcomers to publishing. Young though they were, they knew plenty about doing business: while still at university the pair had

started from the streets, dealing in consumer electrical products; then, in 1981, they seized the chance to buy the declining Bush brand name in radio and television for £600,000. They refurbished Bush with new imported products, and capitalized on its High Street presence. Three years later, Bush was floated as Bush Radio plc and subsequently sold on for £16 million. Schlagman and Futter took time out, waiting for a new opportunity. A further four years on, Phaidon was that opportunity.

It seemed, as Schlagman put it, 'like buying Harrods': or rather not so, since a department store, however heritage-laden, would have been a much more straightforward acquisition. Schlagman was a collector of twentieth-century art, and had a number of Phaidon books at his home, but he had very little idea of how books were made and marketed. However, his interest in art and design, and in books about art and design, was patent enough to those charged with selling Phaidon as a firm. His companion buyer's curiosity about Phaidon's products was less marked. However, in **October 1990**, Schlagman and Futter became joint owners of the Phaidon Press, its name, archives and copyrights, author contracts and stocks. Debts were not assumed.

Before long it was clear that a proper rehabilitation of Phaidon's prestige was in hand. It was also clear that Mark Futter was indeed not enjoying his apprenticeship in the book trade. Futter was bought out after a year by Schlagman, who by contrast brought to publishing the direct enthusiasm of the newly-converted and autodidactic, along with natural reserves of sheer chutzpah. Few existing employees at Phaidon survived the new owner's impetuous zeal; rival publishers broadcast doom or at least nervous breakdown to all who stepped over Phaidon's new threshold. But one of Schlagman's more diplomatic gambits was with Ernst Gombrich, now deep in retirement from academia at his Hampstead home, yet still a best-selling author on Phaidon's books, and by no means retired as a writer. Schlagman asked Gombrich to hold faith and stay with the renascent Phaidon. On the dual condition that Phaidon refrained from (i) printing pornography and (ii) diversifying into burger chains, Gombrich agreed.

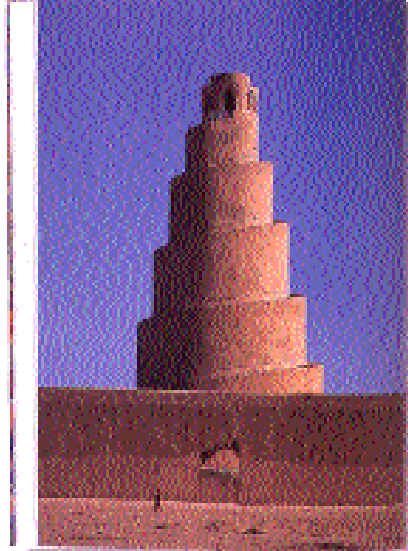


The results of Richard Schlagman's seizure of Phaidon are largely self-evident. From a historical perspective, his immediate achievement was effectively to unite the divided roles of Horovitz and Goldscheider into one. Schlagman became both proprietor and master designer: relying, like Goldscheider, on a sure eye for detail and overall effect, he imposed a basic consistency of house style and production standards on Phaidon books from his first proprietorial catalogue in 1991. The influence of the design firm Pentagram was soon manifest, even upon books whose interest might have been regarded as essentially antiquarian – for example, in the 1992 Adam Style, judged Book of the Year by Apollo magazine. The sixteenth edition of Gombrich's *The Story of Art* was a radical redesign of the book for international distribution, and largely by Schlagman's own crafting. In business parlance Phaidon reverted, under Schlagman, to product-led management.

'Hands on' is another piece of jargon to describe Richard Schlagman's style. But it has not been a one-man show. As Phaidon returned to London – first to premises at 140 Kensington Church Street, then the present offices by Regent's Wharf, just north of Kings Cross – staff numbers increased; and two individuals within the company have been germane to Phaidon's fresh impact on art publishing. Both have served vital supporting roles, one in finance and business matters, the other in all editorial and aesthetic concerns.

Andrew Price was sent by Price Waterhouse as a consultant on the first day after the acquisition in October 1990. Making a quick impact on the new owners, he officially joined 'new' Phaidon on its second day; he has provided financial and management counsel throughout this period of growth and investment. He has also been instrumental in stage-managing the expansion of the Phaidon brand in the United States. In the early 1960s Phaidon had attempted to sell books in the States by the simple expedient of dispatching one tweed-suited Englishman (Simon Haviland) and a wagonload of books to sell from wherever he parked. Later there were co-publishing arrangements with various American firms – Abbeville, Abrams, Rizzoli. Then a distributor was hired for Phaidon books in the States, using mostly freelance reps. Finally, in 1998, the Phaidon name achieved a full transatlantic presence, with its own dedicated States-wide sales force and distribution facility in Pennsylvania – an effort overseen by Andrew Price.





Great Mosque of Cordoba, Spain

The minaret's stepped structure is a direct result of the tradition of the Roman tower, which was used as a watchtower or as a watchtower and later as a tower for the city's walls. The tower's stepped structure is a direct result of the tradition of the Roman tower, which was used as a watchtower or as a watchtower and later as a tower for the city's walls. The tower's stepped structure is a direct result of the tradition of the Roman tower, which was used as a watchtower or as a watchtower and later as a tower for the city's walls.

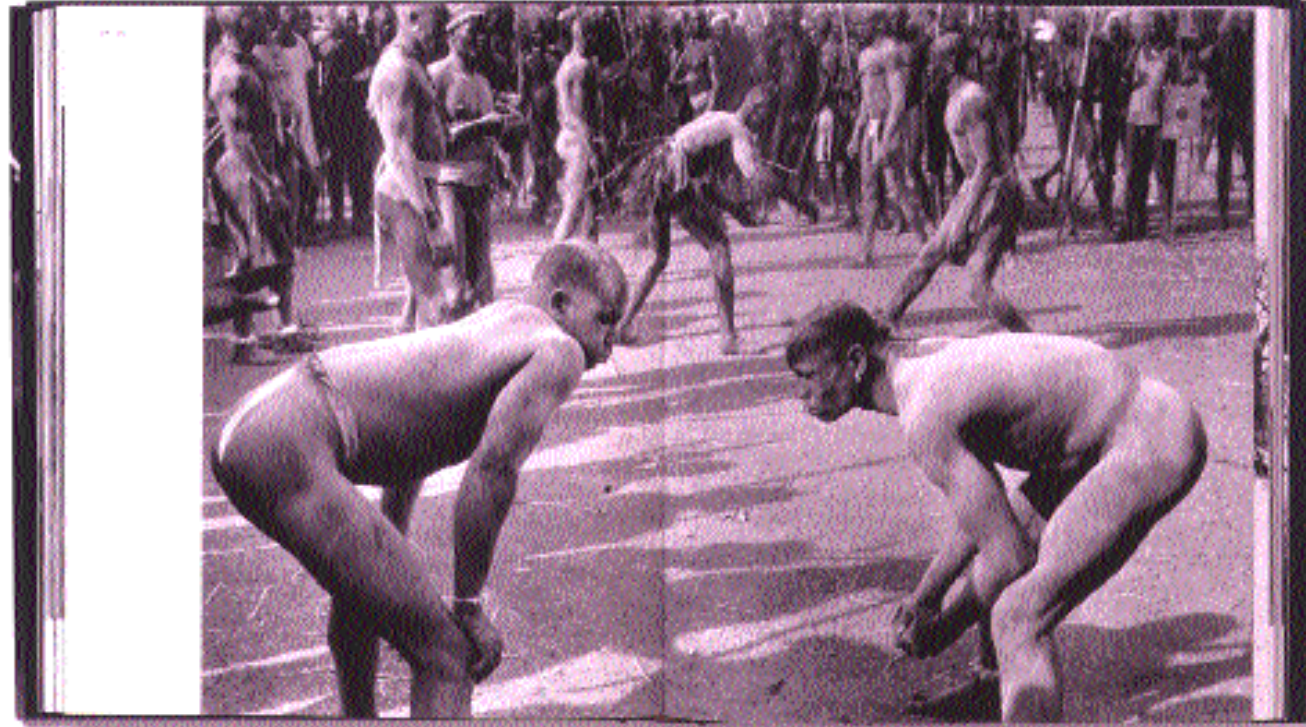
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Amanda Renshaw was working in the Impressionist and Modern Paintings Department at Christie's when she first encountered Richard Schlagman as a collector. Her expertise in art history, tried sensibility of modern design and innate sense of what would make a successful title offered Schlagman the solid and vital support he needed in creating a new and dynamic list. Amanda Renshaw now occupies the office of Deputy Publisher – a salutation to the fact that every book and series proposal has been put to her creative scrutiny.

An atelier of individuals can likewise be revealed behind the shaping of the distinctive publishing profile for the present phi symbol. Production – the task of translating visions into tangible items – was energized by Frances Johnson. Phaidon sought out a new standard of print and reproduction quality largely in the Far East. The fruits of this policy are immediately evident to anyone browsing through, for example, Norbert Lynton's 1993 monograph on Ben Nicholson, or Minimum, John Pawson's 1996 visual essay on simplicity. Currently Operations Director, Frances Johnson additionally oversees scheduling – that part of publishing which some would describe as most conducive to nervous collapse. In 1991 David Jenkins began commissioning many new titles for the architecture list, bolstered at the same time by the acquisition of the architectural and design publisher ADT. An ADT series of monographs on individual buildings was subsequently reshaped into the Phaidon 'Architecture in Detail' library, now over sixty titles strong. International in range, these soon secured a reputation within the constituency of practising architects for presenting substantial technical information in an attractive layout, and they have collected the Series Award from the American Institute of Architects each year since 1995. Tadao Ando, Norman Foster, Nicholas Grimshaw, Richard Meier, Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers are among the roll call of architects now featuring in Phaidon's muscular architecture list.

A major commissioning project in newly written and newly illustrated paperback monographs on art history was undertaken by Pat Barylski. With some 130 titles gathered around the general scope of 'Art and Ideas', this series aimed to offer 'up-to-date, authoritative, enjoyable and thought-provoking books on every aspect of the history of art around the world' – an ambition which it so far shows every sign of attaining, whether with the studies of individual





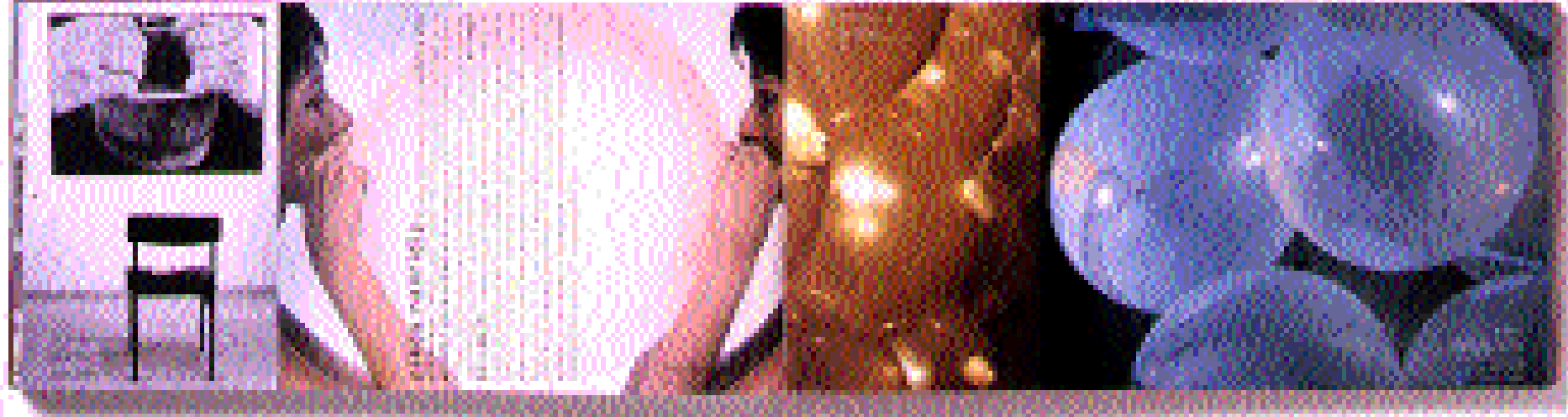
artists (such as Anthony Hughes's powerful Michelangelo, 1997) or the broader surveys (such as Islamic Arts by Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, brought out in spring 1997 and already reprinting).

As a collector of contemporary art there was no obligation on Richard Schlagman to publish books about it. However, in 1994 he enlisted Iwona Blazwick, formerly Director of Exhibitions at London's Institute for Contemporary Arts, to expand the Phaidon list in this direction for the first time in the firm's history. A series of monographs began in 1995, adhering to a quintet of basic criteria: the artist must be truly contemporary, i.e. alive; must have exhibited for a decade; be internationally recognized; working in any media; and not yet properly published. Richard Deacon and Antony Gormley are two of the beneficiaries of this attention, usually reserved for the retrospective of some venerable figure. The practice of allowing these studies to be 'multi-vocal' – carry several authors – reflects the late twentieth-century acceptance that art has a plurality of stories. In 1998 a team of ten international critics selected 100 emerging artists from around the world for cream, an innovative exhibition in a book, which quickly established itself as a landmark event, unprecedented in publishing.

The history of twentieth-century art was also made a more conspicuous element of the Phaidon catalogue; and photography too was now taken seriously as an art form, as spectacularly demonstrated by Sebastião Salgado's *Workers* of 1993, and *Humanity and Inhumanity*, the lifetime retrospective of George Rodger (one of the founders of Magnum) in 1994. That design in its own right should qualify for a commemoration in a well-designed book was long overdue: Phaidon accordingly saluted Pentagram with *Pentagram: A Compendium* in 1993; and in 1996 invited the firm's regular design consultant, Alan Fletcher, to do his own thing in *Beware Wet Paint*.

So the effect of Schlagman and such key associates at Phaidon has been distinctive. From receivership in 1990 it has plainly been a turnaround. 'Renaissance' is a tempting alternative description; but to talk of a rebirth of Phaidon as an art publisher in the 1990s is strictly

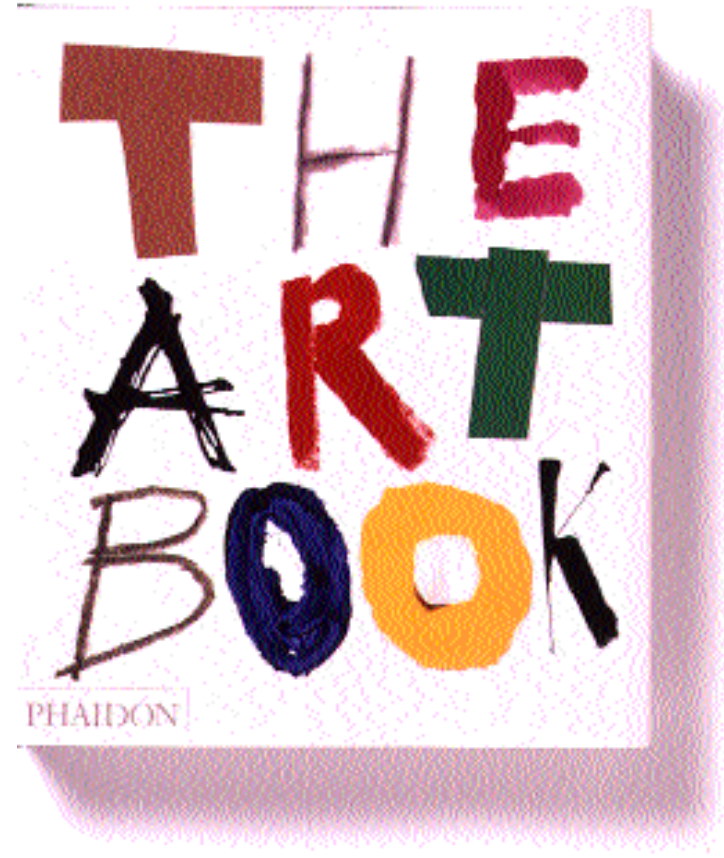




inaccurate: as we have seen, Phaidon's founders were hardly modernizing in their approach to book design, and still less in their representation of twentieth-century art, architecture and photography. If Phaidon still evoked, for some nostalgic bookbuyers, the image of a solid folio multi-volume catalogue of a noble private collection, then they would not be disappointed: Michael Jaffé's edition of the Chatsworth collection of Italian Old Master drawings was one of several projects in Phaidon's recent history which have satisfied such nostalgia. Yet there remains a genuine sense in which, seventy-five years on, a basic symmetry between Phaidon past and Phaidon present has been struck.

In 1994 Phaidon produced *The Art Book*. The genesis of this hugely successful book, whose paperback version topped bestselling book charts in May 1997, came about from a casual suggestion. Alan Fletcher observed that the Phaidon archives contained thousands of fine colour transparencies once deployed in this or that art book: someone ought to bundle up a selection and publish them with a little commentary on each. It could be by artist, alphabetically arranged: some nice juxtapositions might occur. Others at Phaidon chipped in with hesitant approval: perhaps two hundred artists might be represented? Then the spirit of the founders was echoed in Richard Schlagman's insistence that the number of artists be raised to 500, that the crucial image from each artist be used whether in the Phaidon archive or not, and the cost of the book be pegged below £20.00.

The Art Book was, as it were, 'the story of art' for those who needed no story. But perhaps more significantly, Phaidon had once again reached readers not normally counted as members of the art book public. Machine-fitters and dealers in futures have bought *The Art Book*. It offers an abundance of what Ludwig Goldscheider would have called 'art without epoch' in a package that is unpatronizing, straightforward and plain good value. At the same time, its adroit inner layout and sexy exterior made *The Art Book* irresistible to those who might scarcely have needed its informative contents. In such a way copies have entered the homes of creative individuals all around the world.



Klimt 1872-1918

Spencer Platt/Getty Images
The Austrian painter Gustav Klimt (1872-1918) is best known for his work in the Vienna Secessionist style, which was a part of the broader Art Nouveau movement. He was a pioneer in the use of gold leaf and decorative patterns in his paintings.

The Sky

Spencer Platt/Getty Images
This painting, titled 'The Sky', is a study of light and color. It features a central figure, possibly a woman, with a face that is a mix of light and dark tones, set against a background of soft, hazy colors.

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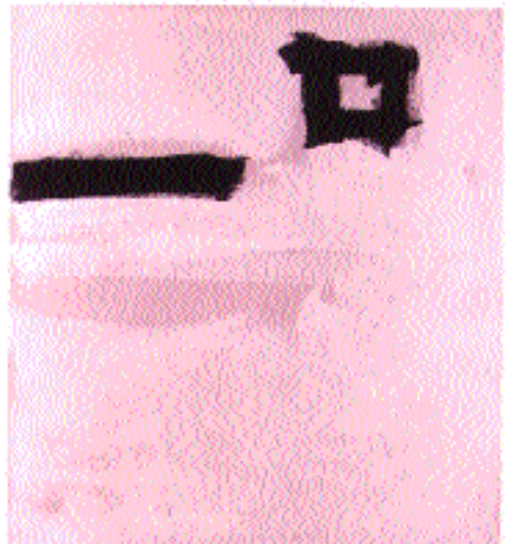
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And, in such a way, a readership is rightly disposed to buy a new book for no other reason than that Phaidon has produced it.

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Nigel Spivey lectures in classical art and archaeology at Cambridge University, where he is also a fellow of Emmanuel College.

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