



The Treatises of Benvenuto Cellini on Goldsmithing and Sculpture

Benvenuto Cellini; Translated By C. R. Ashbee

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Few men mirror the passion and intrigue of the Italian Renaissance as clearly as Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), artisan, politician, sculptor, adventurer. Apprenticed to a goldsmith when he was 15, Cellini went on to produce a magnificent body of work in between bouts with Popes, princes and city administrators. He also wrote treatises on goldsmithing and sculpture that are the finest surveys-in-depth of these typically Renaissance crafts. Translated into English in 1898, when they appeared only in an edition of 600 copies, these treatises are filled with "the loveliest secrets and wondrous methods" of the 16th century: how did artists melt silver without burning it? what is the secret of "terzo" silver? How is enamel applied to gold and silver? What are the special qualities of Carrara marbles? How thick a shell of gesso should be applied to wax models to be cast? How are jewels set securely? The book also contains Cellini's own descriptions of his own work and methods, aesthetic insights, opinions on his contemporaries, and so on. To this edition, C. R. Ashbee added 19 pages of illustrations, showing such Cellini masterpieces as the Perseus 'statue and the Francis I salt-cellar. Translated not from the rewritten 1st edition, but directly from Cellini's much more spirited manuscript, the book breathes with the life and genius that Cellini poured into it. It is a must for modern craftsmen and for all students of the Renaissance and its artistic traditions. Unaltered, unabridged reprint of 1898 edition. Translator's Introduction. Glossary. Notes. xv + 167pp. of text.

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