

Taschen
EL GRECO (I)

Michael Scholz-Hänsel

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EL GRECO (I)

A prophet of modernism

Strong colors and sinuous figures

El Greco (1541–1614) was born Doménikos Theotokópoulos in Crete in 1541. He arrived in Venice in 1566, where his work was greatly influenced by Titian and Tintoretto. However when he made an offer to the Pope to paint over Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* in the spirit of the Counter Reformation, he incurred the wrath of Roman artists to such an extent that a career in Italy was no longer conceivable. El Greco settled in Spain, in Toledo, where he received numerous commissions from the Church and the nobility. Between 1586 and 1588 he created one of the great works of European painting, the monumental *Burial of the Count of Orgaz* for a chapel altar in the parish church of Santo Tomé in Toledo. El Greco confined his palette to a small number of very expressively used shades, with an evident preference for pale purple, pink, and yellow and greyish tones. He located the iconographical events in a space that he dramatized by means of light and atmospheric phenomena. His oeuvre had a wide-ranging impact on art up to and including modern 20th-century painting. Paul Cézanne and later Picasso and the Expressionists regarded El Greco as a prophet of modernism.

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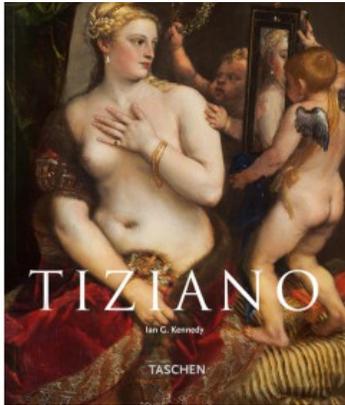
The author:

Michael Scholz-Hänsel studied art history, history, theatre studies, and Hispanic studies in Berlin and Hamburg, earning his doctorate in 1984. He has taught at Leipzig University since 2002 and has published widely, especially on topics relating to the Hispanic world. His research focuses on cross-cultural influences in the Mediterranean area, for example in the work of El Greco and Jusepe de Ribera.

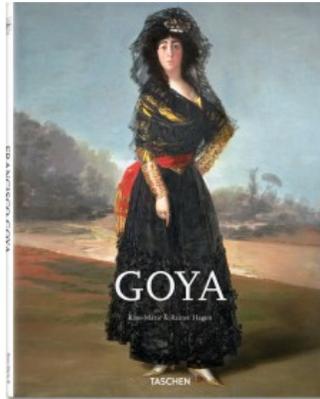
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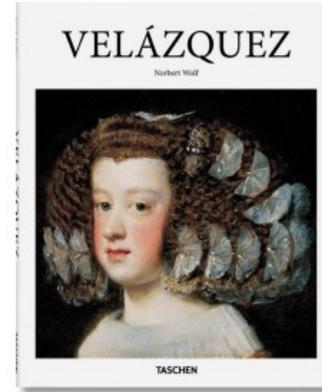
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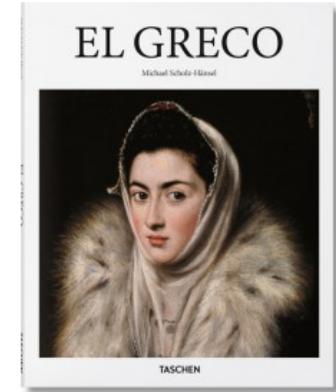
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