

In a New Light: Giovanni Bellini's "St. Francis in the Desert"

Susannah Rutherglen, Charlotte Hale

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Giovanni Bellini's *St. Francis in the Desert* (c. 1476–78) is a masterpiece of Venetian Renaissance art that has inspired generations of visitors to The Frick Collection. This monumental panel painting portrays the beloved Christian saint alone in a mountainous wilderness, stepping forward from his simple shelter into a golden light that seems to transfigure him spiritually. For centuries, viewers have puzzled over the work's meaning; until recently, however, the artist's practical conception and realization of this extraordinary vision have remained largely unexplored.

In a New Light presents the collective findings of an unprecedented technical examination of St. Francis in the Desert. The recent discoveries provide a "glimpse over Bellini's shoulder" and open new avenues of research into Venetian Renaissance painting and its cultural and religious context. A richly illustrated monograph of a single picture, In a New Light comprises essays by leading experts in the fields of paintings conservation, Venetian art, the history of collecting, and Franciscan thought.



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