

*Poetry in Beauty. The Pre-Raphaelite Art of Marie Spartali Stillman* by Margaretta S. Frederick and Jan Marsh. Wilmington: Delaware Art Museum, 2015. 160 pp. + 93 colour plates. ISBN 978-0-996-06761-4. \$29.95.

*The Last Amateur. The Life of William J. Stillman* by Stephen L. Dyson. Albany, New York: State U of New York P, 2014. x, 379 pp. + 31 b/w illus. ISBN 978-1-4384-5261-6. \$29.95.

The painter Marie Spartali Stillman, who made her exhibition debut at London's Dudley Gallery in 1867, lived until 1927. As her obituary in *The Times* put it: "She was the single survivor, since the death of Lady Burne-Jones seven years ago, of a group of women remarkable alike for beauty and ability, for gifts and character." Stillman's beauty was indeed extraordinary: she modelled for Dante Rossetti and her face can be seen in, for example, *Dante's Dream* (1871); she sat for Julia Margaret Cameron, and Cameron's photograph of her as "Mnemosyne," the muse of memory, shows a figure with long, thick hair and a preoccupied, serious, downward gaze – not unlike many of the women in Stillman's own canvases. Many observers looked back on Stillman as the lingering embodiment of earlier artistic taste; indeed, her painting regularly incorporates a wistful appeal to the past through its choice of subject matter, the poses of its protagonists, its historical allusions, and what American critic and collector James Jackson Jarvis called, in 1879, its "poetical sentiment."

Margaretta S. Frederick and Jan Marsh's *Poetry in Beauty* – the title uses two of the words most frequently employed by her contemporaries when discussing Stillman's work – is the accompanying volume to the rich and rewarding show that they curated at the Delaware Art Museum in 2015-16. Like the exhibition itself, it puts on display much more of Stillman's work than has ever previously been gathered together. Three essays – one jointly authored on "Marie Spartali Stillman and Her Cultural Milieu"; one by Frederick on "Marie Spartali Stillman in America: A Study in Transatlantic Cultural Interaction"; and one by Marsh on "Working Practices and Poetic Works" – together with their informative and interpretive catalogue entries, considerably deepen our knowledge of the artist. Especially when read alongside Stephen L. Dyson's *The Last Amateur: The Life of William J. Stillman*, *Poetry in Beauty* allows us to position Marie Stillman within the transatlantic art world of the later nineteenth century, and to understand some of the shared influences and significant differences that animated this world.

Marie Spartali Stillman, from a very well-to-do London-Greek family, was raised in a highly cultured atmosphere. Both she and her sister Christina (seen in Whistler's *La Princesse du Pays de la porcelain*, 1863-65) modelled;