In *The Winter’s Tale* (1610–1611) Shakespeare goes even further in incorporating visual art into his drama. In a gallery scene, Paulina presents Hermione, King Leontes’ rejected wife who is now presumed dead, as a statue modelled—supposedly—after the living woman. When Paulina unveils the statue, the spectators are at first silent, then express their amazement:

*Leon.* Her natural posture!
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed
Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she
In thy not chiding; for she was as tender
As infancy and grace. But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So aged as this seems.
*Paul.* O, not by so much.
*Paul[rixenes].* So much the more our carver’s excellence,
Which lets go by some sixteen years and makes her
As she liv’d now.
*Leon.* As now she might have done,
So much to my good comfort as it is
Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,
Even with such life of majesty, warm life,
As now it coldly stands, when first I woo’d her!
I am asham’d: does not the stone rebuke me
For being more stone than it? O royal piece!
There’s magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjur’d to remembrance, and
From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee. (*Winter’s Tale* V.iii.23–42).¹

This entire scene is built on illusion and deception. For this is not a real statue but the living Hermione, who with aid of art (*ars*) is simulating a

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The result is extremely life-like, for the purported creator of the art work even managed to depict the intervening years—a masterpiece of perspective or temporal enargeia. This so affects the viewer Leontes that he starts speaking to the “stone”; it in fact moves him as deeply as if it were a living figure. This movere comprises both the Aristotelian anagnorisis and catharsis: Leontes acknowledges his guilt and begs his wife for forgiveness. Shakespeare here gives a new twist to the well-known Pygmalion motif, in which a stone image of a living creature comes alive and acquires an identity of its own among other living creatures. What this drama shows is that the addition of a moral issue to the mimetic and epistemological aspects of the motif can yield a complex plot involving guilt and reconciliation.

The following pages will be devoted to examples from Shakespeare’s work that elucidate the relevance of the perspective of the viewer—more precisely, the viewer of art—in terms of the aspects mentioned above.

Shakespeare’s epyllion The Rape of Lucrece (1593–1594), based mainly on a story in Ovid’s Fasti (II, 711–852), contains various descriptions of paintings. They are closely bound up with the lamentable fate of the protagonist. She seeks comfort, for example, in a painting of the Trojan War:

At last she calls to mind where hangs a piece
Of skilful painting, made for Priam’s Troy,
Before the which is drawn the power of Greece,
For Helen’s rape the city to destroy,
Threat’ning cloud-kissing Ilion with annoy;
Which the conceited painter drew so proud,
As heaven, it seem’d, to kiss the turrets bow’d.

A thousand lamentable objects there,
In scorn of nature, art gave lifeless life:
Many a dry drop seem’d a weeping tear,
Shed for the slaughter’d husband by the wife;
The red blood reek’d to show the painter’s strife,
And dying eyes gleam’d forth their ashy lights,
Like dying coals burnt out in tedious nights.

There might you see the labouring pioner
Begrim’d with sweat and smeared all with dust;
And from the towers of Troy there would appear
The very eyes of men through loop-holes thrust,

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