

# The New Criterion

## Art

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### Late Titian in Vienna

by [Karen Wilkin](#)

On "The Late Titian and the Sensuality of Painting" at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

When I was in graduate school, a story about a mid-nineteenth-century teacher at the Ecole des Beaux-arts often circulated during breaks from marathon library sessions. "The history of art is easy," this pillar of the Academy is supposed to have told his students. "There are the Greeks. There is Raphael. There is Monsieur Ingres. And there is me." Those of us struggling to absorb the staggeringly various characteristics of hundreds of obscure and not so obscure artists found this straightforward, linear—in every sense of the word—account of our chosen discipline appealing. "If only it were that simple," we always groaned when this hoary anecdote was repeated and someone laboring on—say—arcane aspects of Renaissance drawings would point out, with some bitterness, that for people working on Modernism it *was* that simple; they could claim that everything started with Cézanne— ...

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