

**Alessandro Rossi**

**Media and Methodological Nesting.  
Two theoretical paintings by Lorenzo Lotto**

Two of Lorenzo Lotto's paintings, *Christ Taking Leave of His Mother, with Elisabetta Rota* (1521) and the *Portrait of Fra Gregorio Belo* (1547), are interpreted as *theoretical objects* according to the definition of this concept by Hubert Damisch. The compositional structure and iconography of these paintings illustrates the theory later made clear, independently, by William J. Thomas Mitchell. According to him the visual *medium* and the verbal *medium* cannot be separated, despite their having clearly different characteristics. The method used here brings together Iconology and Visual Semiotics as if they were embodied in each other. This allows us to recognize the *nesting media theory* expressed in Lotto's two paintings, beyond the specific historical subjects they represent.