

Authenticity

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Abstracts

Maria-Anna Aristova: *The example of Brutes': Civility Artifice and the Body in Jacobean Architectural Ornament*

Can architecture contribute to a debate about bodily comportment and genteel behaviour? This paper examines the ways in which the early-seventeenth-century decoration of Knole house in Kent engages with contemporary ideas of civility and courtliness. In the sixteenth century, expression, posture, gait and gesture all become highly charged signs of virtuous character. Yet at Knole, the Great Chamber - a space for genteel entertainment of the highest ranks of society - confronts the viewer with a multitude of rude and brutish bodies. Squirming, struggling, shouting and exposing themselves, these are far from the well-trained bodies of contemporary conduct literature. My paper examines how architecture engages the complex issue of the 'authenticity' of behaviour, exposing its many discontents. Here, decoration and ornament help highlight the tensions between inner and outer, honesty and dissimulation, nature and artifice, in which no term is unequivocally the winner. The straining, strange bodies of this architectural decoration probe the limits of the authentic and the artful, and suggest that 'being true to oneself' might have been far from desirable to an Early Modern viewer.

Melissa Gustin: *Emma Stebbin's Lotus-Eater: An Authentic Antinous between Winckelmann and Symonds*

Emma Stebbins's first major work of sculpture, *The Lotus-Eater*, is notable for its status as the first male nude statue by an American woman artist. Modelled 1857/58 and displayed in New York by January 1861, Stebbins' work purports to illustrate Alfred Tennyson's poem *The Lotus-Eaters* (1832)—in turn a reimagining of an episode from Homer's *Odyssey*. In this silent art history talk (a format pioneered by Griselda Pollock) I will put forward a visual and textual argument showing that the *Lotus-Eater*, rather than being influenced or even suggested by Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun*, is in fact a synthesized image of Antinous. I will let the images and texts speak for themselves, as it were, to show that Stebbins' work is part of a chain of received and reinterpreted images of Antinous as a historical, mythological, and artistic figure. This presentation will position Stebbins' *Lotus-Eater* as authentic an Antinous as Raphael's *Jonah*, the *San Ildefonso* marble and Nollekens' *Castor and Pollux*, Winckelmann's *Albani relief*, and John Addington Symond's poetic and ekphrastic work. I will further argue that this identification with Antinous, especially Antinous as Dionysus, is a calculated one, chosen to support the narrative of the Tennyson poem the sculpture took its subject from, as well as a display of Stebbins' skill and authority over her visual material as a professional artist.

Katie Harrison: *Questions of Authenticity in the St Cuthbert Window, York Minster*

Questions of authenticity pervade the study and conservation of stained glass. As a medium, it gives the impression of permanence, in part due to its role as a structural as well as decorative element. Yet its materials and construction create an inherent fragility which makes stained glass vulnerable to alteration, both through damage, as well as the whims of restorers through the ages. This paper aims to consider the various ways in which questions of authenticity affect stained glass, by considering the fifteenth-century St Cuthbert Window, York Minster, which has undergone at least four full-scale restorations, and numerous *in situ* repairs, since its creation. In order to study, understand and conserve the window for the future, the role of restorers and scholars, and their definitions and treatment of 'authentic' elements at various points in its past, must be understood and analysed. The problematic nature, and legacy, of such changing definitions will be considered in relation to both art historical study and conservation.

Clive Kennard: *Jewish Nostalgia and the Aesthetics of Victorian Christianity*

Jewish nostalgia blighted the Christian Victorians in the 1850s and 60s. If an artist depicted Jewish life as an authentic insider, he had an interested audience. It needed him to authenticate their faith with a visual account of their aesthetic-theological origins. In art history the implication is that the later aestheticism stands on the shoulders of religious doctrinal issues rather than its nationally atheistic origins in France decades later.

William Blake Richmond, a contemporary of the artist Simeon Solomon wrote that "no one but a Jew could have conceived or expressed the depth of national feeling" of his early work. Here was a "Jew of the Jews", an "Eastern of the Easterns". As Solomon moved from an assumed Hebraism towards "debased Roman art" – he was seen to take on an "artificial" vein, while on the other hand, if Solomon "consented" to be a Jew, "to think about designs and dream as a Jew", his work was worthy of interest.

Writers since Richmond took on these concepts of artificiality as a staple of queer aesthetics. Here however, the purpose of the religious transference onto Solomon's early ritual and biblical depictions points to something broader. Ritualism and the senses were set up by the theological discursive landscape among Christians especially since the religious emancipations in England over those decades. Sensing how an artist has an authentic or artificial vein is indicative of a wider issue to merely a homo-phobic or philo-Semitic sense of their work. Religious morality is connected to either validating or vitiating a sense of individuality which only then leads to a queer aestheticism. It is therefore the encouraged individualism of Solomon's religious faith depictions that leads to authentic individualism in the wider sense of identities we know of today.

Ciarán O'Neill: *Column Bodies: Authenticating the Caryatid as a Motif in the Work of Frederic Leighton through his Drawings and Sketchbooks*

Frederic Leighton's sketchbooks at the Royal Academy and the collection of his drawings at Leighton House Museum offer an exceptional insight into the formation of the artist and his practice. Together they display the origins of his painted figures in certain figure types which he sketched and drew repeatedly, each of which varied from the previous one but nonetheless appeared as a reiteration of the same motif. Several female figures in Leighton's paintings have been reductively described by scholars in terms such as 'static',

'stiff', and 'isolating'. However, an examination of his drawn figures from the 1860s onwards elucidates the complexity that underlies them. Specifically, the drawings present a sequence of iterations which show the development of the artist's interest in an interplay between the female body, sculpture, and architecture. These ultimately demonstrate his continuous probing of the expressive possibilities of one particular architectural and sculptural motif, which has been much neglected in studies of art and architectural history - the caryatid. Two particular characteristics that relate Leighton's drawn figures to caryatids predominate, an association with columns and the act of bearing objects on their heads. Drawings of figures featuring these characteristics were used as collective models for female figures that appeared in his paintings between the 1860s and 1890s, often through an amalgamation of different figure types. This paper will argue that these iterations, acting as anthropomorphisms of the caryatid, confirm the influence of the motif in his working process and consequently reveal its expression in his painted women.

Melanie Polledri: *An Authentic National Art? William Goscombe John, 'Welsh' Art and National Identity at Amgueddfa Cymru, the National Museum of Wales.*

"'Celtic Art' is no more traditional and characteristic of Wales than Gothic or Renaissance Art" (William Goscombe John, 1928)

In the wake of political and cultural Welsh nationalist revivals at the turn of the twentieth century, notions of what constituted Welsh art were keenly debated. This paper examines how the Welsh New Sculptor, elite Royal Academician, and benefactor to the newly established *Amgueddfa Cymru*, William Goscombe John (1860-1952), asserted his notions of authentic Welsh art appropriate for a national collection.

In a bid to raise the status of Welsh artists, including himself, John donated many of his most important works. He also helped stage the Museum's first exhibition of works from Welsh artists or artists of Welsh "extraction". John rejected the popular idea that authentic Welsh art was derived from Celtic styles and subjects. He argued that Welsh art was the product of the Welsh artist, regardless of formal design or narrative subject. Furthermore, the only way to perpetuate true Welsh art was with the "enlightened and generous patronage" of Welsh people for their artists.

This paper returns to centre stage the important contribution John made. He asserted particular notions of authenticity in Welsh national art at the Museum within late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century curation practices.

Jiyi Ryu: *"Within, Within, Within: The Principle of Visualising the British Imperial World"*

The Queen's Dolls' House displayed in the Palace of Arts at the British Empire Exhibition (Wembley, 1924 and 1925) epitomises an officially commissioned miniature, constructed by the professional craftsmanship of a number of artists and makers. Following the suggestion of the royal family in 1920, Edwin Lutyens, one of the most architects of the early twentieth century, took on the project, which ultimately involved some 250 craftsmen and manufacturers, 60 artist-decorators, 700 artists, 600 writers, and 500 donors.

When the Dolls' House was completed in 1924, a limited edition of two volumes was officially published: *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House* and *The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House Library*. In addition, *Everybody's Book of the Queen's Dolls' House*, the condensed version of the

first volume was published by The Daily Telegraph. The Dolls' House gained tremendous popularity, and was visited by 1,617,556 people during the exhibition season.

Through exploring the Queen Mary's Dolls' House at Wembley, this paper analyses the principle of visualising and miniaturizing the British imperial world, in a moment of post war national and imperial renewal, centring upon the two dominant motifs of wealth and nostalgia.

Emma Woolfrey: *Eighteenth-Century Gothic: The Creation of an Authentic Idiom.*

The three eastern clerestory apse windows of Westminster Abbey consist of an array of reappropriated historical glass which includes significant elements of the abbey's pre-Reformation glazing. Their creation took place at the opening of the eighteenth century during Sir Christopher Wren's restoration of the abbey when serving as Surveyor, 1698-1723. Within this campaign was an evident agenda to re-establish what was understood as the "Gothick form" of Westminster Abbey. The decision to re-use medieval glass within the three most prominent windows of the building must thus be approached within this agenda, raising interesting questions regarding the significance afforded to medieval glazing in the creation and experience of the Gothic during this period. In order to address these questions, this paper will consider the implementation of stained glass within the eighteenth-century 'remaking' of Westminster Abbey which included not only the reappropriation of medieval glazing but also the insertion of newly painted glass into other prominent windows of the building. Through this contrasting employment of stained glass the significance of aesthetic and fabric with regard to the creation of an 'authentic' Gothic idiom will be explored thus highlighting the complexity and ever changing concept of authenticity in relation to style within the discipline of Art History.