



# HISTORIES OF BRITISH ART

## 1660-1735 RECONSTRUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION

### ABSTRACT: ANNE PUETZ

**Anne Puetz** (Courtauld Institute)

‘Useful, profitable and curious: the emergence of the design print in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Britain’

The print trade is widely acknowledged to have been a major contributing factor to the international recognition of British artists and designers by the end of the eighteenth century. I propose to investigate how, between the 1660s and 1730s, a viable market came into being for a particular, newly emerging British print genre: the ‘design print’.

This type of printed image, which offered a repository of ornamental motifs and representations of designed objects, served as a source of inspiration to craftsmen and decorative artists and more rarely, as a model in the workshop. It had a long tradition on the European mainland, going back to the fifteenth century, but was only very rarely produced in Britain before the 1730s. British craftsmen and artists instead relied on imports of printed material from the Netherlands, France and Italy and on occasional publications by visiting or immigrant foreign designers.

In Britain, the design print is marginalised in conventional histories of British art and, to an extent, of print-making but was, I argue, of considerable economic and cultural significance. My talk outlines a story of beginning import substitution: of the evolution of a British production of, and trade in, design prints in connection to wider contexts of immigration, infrastructural improvements, changing patterns of, and attitudes to, consumption, and an evolving sense of the value of ‘design’.