London Art History Society

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Review 2017

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From the Editor

This year we are marking three anniversaries: four hundred years since the birth of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo with a celebration of his work by Xanthe Brooke from the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool; the centenary of the Russian Revolution by Russian-art expert Andrew Spira; and the five-hundredth anniversary of the start of the Reformation and its impact on art considered by lecturer and writer on Northern European and Italian art, Joachim Strupp, to whom we pay tribute following his recent untimely death.

Chris Rogers discusses recent contemporary public sculpture in London, and Christopher Moock looks at the remarkable collector Cassiano dal Pozzo.

Kate Retford, Head of History of Art at Birkbeck, introduces the new London Art History Society Prize for Best Modern Period Masters Dissertation, and the two joint winners this year who have written articles on their dissertation topics: Anna Jamieson looks at madness as spectacle in eighteenth-century London; and Wil Roberts considers Queen Victoria and her use of post-mortem sculptures of Prince Albert.

I would like to express my appreciation to our contributors for their articles, to the Dulwich Picture Gallery, the Royal Collection, the National Gallery, and many other organisations for their help, and my colleagues on the editorial panel.

Barrie MacDonald

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FRONT COVER: *Bartolomé Esteban Murillo,* The Three Boys*, c.1670. Oil on canvas, 168.3 x 109.8 cm. By permission of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.*

Celebrating the art of Murillo for 400 years

Xanthe Brooke

In 1828, when the Scottish artist David Wilkie visited Seville, he was struck by the continued adulation amongst ordinary people and artists of the work of Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82).[1] Wilkie's admiration for this people's painter, whose popularity crossed social and intellectual boundaries, was perhaps influenced by his belief that good art should serve the needs of the people rather than a privileged elite. To judge by the crowded exhibition *Velázquez/Murillo* earlier this year in Seville's Hospital de los Venerables, intended to initiate the 'Año de Murillo' (Murillo Year) celebrating the 400th anniversary of the artist's birth (considered to be 1617, though his baptism is documented on 1 January 1618) his popularity is still firm. The catalogue, by the National Gallery's Director, Gabriele Finaldi, was out of print barely halfway through the exhibition. The appreciative comments I overheard about Murillo's work, especially from women, also confirm the nineteenth-century stereotype, which unfortunately was used to disparage his artistic reputation, that he was a 'lady's painter', his tender devotional imagery admired by women and painted by female copyists among the Spanish royal family and in the Louvre.[2]

Yet surprisingly Murillo was the most popular Spanish painter in Protestant England from the late seventeenth to the nineteenth century. His paintings, including many religious images, found their way into important collections across Britain. By 1744 the Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole owned five paintings by Murillo, all religious. Other eighteenth-century English owners of devotional paintings by Murillo may have had Jacobite sympathies, such as Charles Jennens (1700-73), the librettist for Handel's *Messiah*, who bought the *Christ Child asleep on the cross* (Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield) for his now-demolished Gopsall Hall in Leicestershire. Other devotional paintings which found their way to England in the nineteenth century, for example the recently rediscovered *St Peter Repenting*, which in 2016 was returned to its original Seville resting place in the Hospital de los Venerables, still retains its biblical quote in English on its frame, so redolent of that century's evangelical enthusiasm.[3] Murillo's canvases, often teeming with incident and human gestures, which could be simultaneously moving and amusing, appealed greatly to nineteenth-century British popular and art-critical taste. In Murillo's own lifetime he was best known outside Spain, and especially in England, for his secular 'beggar boy' pictures, copies of which, probably painted in Antwerp, had found their way into the collection of the Gray's Inn lawyer Sir Ralph Bankes by 1659. Murillo became so associated in England with this type of humble genre scene that when Velázquez's *Old Woman Cooking Eggs* was imported in the nineteenth century, it was as a Murillo. The celebrated pair of urchin paintings in Dulwich Picture Gallery *Invitation to a Game of Argolla* and *The Three Boys* (Front Cover), whose prominently-placed dirty-soled feet drove John Ruskin into paroxysms of published outrage, were almost certainly those bought by Earl [Sidney] Godolphin (1645-1712) in 1693, from the forced sale of the goods of the Jacobite-supporting 1st Duke of Melfort (1649-1714), a Catholic convert who had family connections to Spain.[4]

Fig. 1: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, St Thomas of Villanueva giving alms, *1668-9. Oil on canvas, 283 x 188 cm.*
© Museo de Bellas Artes, Seville

In Ruskin's day the presently-titled *The Three Boys* was misleadingly called *The Poor Black Boy*, his gesture misinterpreted in a nineteenth-century context as that of an indigent Negro boy begging food from two better-off white boys. Nineteenth-century society acknowledged the painting's racial element but misunderstood the social relationship between the boys. It considered the shod domestic slave and servant on an errand to be poorer than the shoeless street kids scrabbling about on the scrubland which pockmarked the city's margins since the devastating 1649 plague that had

killed nearly half the population. Intriguingly a recent X-ray of the painting revealed that Murillo had originally painted a more jeering grin on the child on the left, who might appear to be trying to pick-pocket the black boy.[5] The painting hints at an underlying racial friction in Seville's post-drought and post-famine society and demonstrates one of Murillo's strengths, the perceptive observation and empathy of his characterisation of children, whether in secular or sacred imagery. Nowadays Murillo's 'beggar boy' paintings are often thought sentimental.

Murillo's psychologically-aware naturalism again surfaced in the religious narrative that according to his earliest, but posthumous, biographer Antonio Palomino, was supposed to have been Murillo's own favourite work, *St Thomas of Villanueva giving alms* (Fig. 1), showing religiously-inspired practical charity, which the devout and socially-aware Murillo practised as a member of two confraternities. Its message is beautifully captured in the gestures and reactions of two children, the toddler silhouetted on the left, thrilled to receive some coins, and the suspicious glance of the bubo'd head of the teenager on the right, perhaps Murillo's acknowledgement of the seasoned benefit recipient wondering what the saint might want from him in return?

His facility at depicting children was perhaps reinforced by the sudden loss of his wife in 1664, leaving him a single-parent widower raising four children under 11, including a deaf daughter. The strength of his bond with his children is indicated by the inscription on his *Self Portrait* as a middle-aged man, in London's National Gallery (Fig. 2) which states that it was painted at the express wish of his children. It is among the most visually complex self-images, admired by later artists such as Reynolds, and revealing Murillo's sophisticated mastery of trompe l'oeil perspective. Murillo was often as interested in testing the boundaries of painting's illusionary qualities, creating the effect of a three-dimensional reality on a two-dimensional surface, as his older Andalusian compatriot Velázquez.

Significantly his National Gallery *Self Portrait* not only emphasises his painting skills – the pigments used to create the portrait laid out on the palette in the correct chromatic order – but balances those with his qualities as a draughtsman – a red chalk drawing of a youth's leg and a porte-crayon lie on the ledge beside the oval frame. Unlike his older contemporaries, Velázquez and Zurbáran, Murillo trained as a painter/draughtsman rather than as a polychromer of sculpture. He was first apprenticed to his cousin, Juan del Castillo (c.1590-c.1657), better known as a draughtsman than a painter, and continued to practise drawing skills at the Academy he helped found in Seville in 1660. The quality of Murillo's draughtsmanship has only recently begun to receive the publicity it deserves with Jonathan Brown's book, and Manuela Mena's small exhibition in Santander and subsequent catalogue raisonné.[6] Arguably, though, it still merits a larger show, and little research has been done into sorting his preparatory oil sketches and finished small-scale works and miniatures, from other artists' copies and pastiches that were painted from his lifetime through to the end of the nineteenth century. His drawings had in fact been admired by Spanish and English collectors from at least the mid-eighteenth century when the 2nd Conde del Águila, Miguel de Espinosa y Maldonado de Saavedra (d.1759) began his Old Master collection including a large number of Murillo drawings,

Fig. 2: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Self Portrait*, 1668-70. Oil on canvas, 122 x 107 cm. © National Gallery, London*

which were subsequently acquired by temporarily Seville-based English collectors such as Richard Ford (1796-1858) and Frank Hall Standish (1799-1840). The latter had lived his last decade in self-imposed exile in Seville publishing on the city's art and antiquities, his Murillo drawings filtering through to the Louvre and Hamburg museums, among other collections.

Over the last fifteen years there has been a succession of sporadic exhibitions, which have covered discrete aspects of Murillo's career, including his relationship with his patron Justino de Neve at the Prado and in Dulwich in 2012-13. Several of these have published the results of new archival research and conservation and technical analysis helping to reveal how Murillo created his celebrated softened silhouettes, and the evanescent luminous heavens of his altarpieces. The rediscovery in the Hospital de los Venerables of the original frame for the Murillo *Immaculate Conception*, commissioned by Justino de Neve and previously considered to date from the late 1670s, and its identification with a frame described in 1665, helped to radically re-date backwards Murillo's supposedly 'late' style by ten years.

In Seville the Museo de Bellas Artes is using the 2017 'Año de Murillo' to undertake technical investigations of several of its own paintings as well as conserving, on behalf of Cologne's Wallraf-Richartz Museum, one of Murillo's largest paintings, *El Jubileo de la Porcíuncula*, (430 x 295 cm), the main altar for the former Capuchin monastery formerly in the centre of Seville, but demolished in the nineteenth century. In autumn 2017 the Museo will show an exhibition of all Murillo's works for that monastery, followed in November 2018 by a major monographic show on Murillo. In England the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool has embarked on a technical analysis and cleaning of its *Virgin*

Fig. 3: Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Virgin and Child in Glory*, c.1673. Oil on canvas, 256 x 169 cm. © Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool*

and Child in Glory (Fig. 3), and its preparatory modello which the Gallery acquired in 2016. By 1673 the altarpiece had been commissioned by the Archbishop of Seville, Ambrosio Ignacio Spínola y Guzmán (1632-84) for the lower chapel of the Archbishop's Palace. Though this was Murillo's single most important commission the altarpiece was secreted away in the archbishop's private chapel. There, during a vacancy in the see sometime before 1780, the central section of the Mother and Child's head and shoulders was removed and substituted with a copy. During the Spanish Peninsular War, the French Marshal Soult took over the Archbishop's Palace as his headquarters, and subsequently took the painting, with its inserted copy, to his Paris collection. The original central section was only reunited with the altarpiece in England in 1862. As the Walker owns not only the altarpiece and its modello, but also the previously inserted copy, the conservation project should reveal more about Murillo's deft and economical technique, on a large and small scale, and the dramatic fortunes of this painting. It is hoped that all the technical research, spurred by the 'Murillo Year' celebrations, will uncover more about his painting practice: his varying the colour of his priming according to the figures he painted on top; and his use of warm, perhaps pigmented, glazes to help create the smooth transparent transitions between golden heavenly glow and the cooler silvery blues of the billowing clouds of his many celebrated versions of the Immaculate Conception, all of which contributed to the ethereal, nebulous 'vaporoso' effect for which Murillo, the 'Sevillian Correggio', became so well known.

Xanthe Brooke is Senior Curator of Continental European Fine Art for National Museums Liverpool, based at the Walker Art Gallery. Since 1990 she has been researching, writing on and organising exhibitions about the work of Murillo, and has also published articles and lectured on the reception in Britain of other seventeenth-century Spanish artists, such as Velázquez and Ribera, and British collectors such as Frank Hall Standish.

Notes

1. Letter to Prince Dolgorouki 14 April 1828, in Allan Cunningham *Life of Sir David Wilkie* (London: John Murray, 1843), II, pp. 516, 486-87.
2. Xanthe Brooke, 'Seville and Beyond: the Taste for Murillo's Genre Painting across Europe' in *Murillo: scenes of childhood* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2001), p. 74, p. 158 n. 76.
3. 'And when he thought thereon, he wept', Mark Ch. 14, v. 72 from T*he Bible: King James Authorised Version*.
4. John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1853), vol. III, pp. 228-9; Xanthe Brooke, op. cit. pp. 56-57, 63 fig. 44, p. 156 notes 21-24.
5. Xavier Bray, *Murillo at Dulwich Picture Gallery*, (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 2013), pp. 26, 29 fig. 17.
6. Jonathan Brown, *Murillo: virtuoso draftsman* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012); Manuela Mena, *Murillo Dibujos. Libro de mano de la exposición* (Santander: Fundación Botín, 2012), displaying about half his known oeuvre; Manuela Mena, *Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-82). Dibujos. Catálogo razonado*, (Santander: Fundación Botín, 2015).

National Portrait Gallery stages its first exhibition of European Old Master drawings

Fifty drawings from Britain's finest collections are on show until 22 October 2017. Included are works by Leonardo, Dürer, Rembrandt, Rubens and eight portraits by Holbein from the Royal Collection. *The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt* provides extraordinary records of an artist's skill and a sitter's appearance, and also captures a moment of connection, an encounter. By including a display of the types of drawing tools and media used and considering the individuals depicted in these often intimate portraits the exhibition shows a new approach of studying the figure and the face from life.

Illustration omitted due to copyright restrictions.

Hans Holbein the Younger, Young Woman in a French Hood*, c.1553. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017*

Back out there? Contemporary public sculpture in London

Chris Rogers

Fig. 1: Conrad Shawcross, Paradigm*, 2016. Weathering steel, 1400 x 500 x 500 cm. The Francis Crick Institute, Midland Road, London © Conrad Shawcross/Marc Wilmot*

If you've visited the revitalised King's Cross, that swathe of land behind the two great Victorian railway termini which once housed sidings, warehouses and canals, you'll know that a remarkable effort of regeneration has brought new places to live, work, learn and play to this part of central London over the past decade. But as you nipped into one of the office blocks, watched people tempt the acrobatic fountains or simply wandered the streets of this freshly-minted quarter of the capital, did you notice the art?

Since 2006, a mix of artistic interventions has been seen across the estate. Most have been performance pieces, projections and installations, but the current three-year cycle, curated by Tamsin Dillon and Rebecca Heald, began last year with something more solid. Rana Begum's *No.700 Reflectors* is a large zig-zag wall running alongside Lewis Cubitt Square and faced with plastic prisms arranged in chevrons. The work recalls the tough former nature of the district and the repetitive forms of industry, and presents a changing pattern of colour throughout the day in reaction to the prevailing weather.

A few streets west, just beyond the purview of Dillon and Heald, things become even more robust. Standing on tiptoe outside the new Francis Crick Institute for biomedical research is a top-heavy tower of tetrahedrons made from weathering steel, a material whose surface oxidisation is a deliberate counter to further, damaging corrosion. This is *Paradigm* (Fig. 1), the latest in a series of similar forms sharing that name from sculptor Conrad Shawcross, the youngest living Royal Academician and the personal choice of the Institute's director. A popular choice among commissioners, Shawcross's output also includes the pretzel-like *Three Perpetual Chords* in Dulwich Park and a work for C. F. Møller Architects' Low Carbon Energy Centre at the Greenwich Peninsula development.

Elsewhere in London, the Fourth Plinth sculptures continue to provide Trafalgar Square with a new topic of conversation every year or two: a ship in a bottle, a skeletal horse, a more orthodox marble statue. The City of London has its own equivalent to the King's Cross scheme, with Sculpture in the City placing nearly two dozen contemporary works around and between the Square Mile's buildings last year alone. These, too, alternate between the abstract and the figurative, though here such a spread inevitably brings to mind the slightly self-conscious balancing act that the City Corporation maintains between its venerable and modern faces. Transport for London's Art on the Underground has been running since the Millennium, with sculptural elements including Knut Henrik Henriksen's very contextual *Full Circle* at concourse level within King's Cross St Pancras tube station and John Maine's street-entrance friezes at Green Park entitled *Sea Strata* (Fig. 2). And, sadly, there are the continuing additions to the sombre register of commemorations for the dead of war, terrorism and

Fig. 2: John Maine, Sea Strata*, 2011. Portland stone, granite. Green Park Underground Station, Piccadilly, London*
© John Maine/Art on the Underground

crime that quietly dot the West End, such as that marking the 2002 Bali Bombings at Clive Steps and the Iraq and Afghanistan Memorial on Victoria Embankment unveiled earlier this year.

It's clear, then, that there is a deal of new public sculpture around, and yet it seems equally apparent that some questions present themselves. Perhaps the most obvious are how did it all get there, who paid for it, and why? A few more might also ask why it takes the form that it predominantly does, and when did this apparently recent trend start?

These last can usefully be tackled first. Sculpture suffered a reduction in quantity and, arguably, accessibility with the advent of Modernism at the start of the twentieth century. Building designers were seduced by new doctrines that spoke of 'Ornament and crime' and 'Less is more'[1], whilst sculptors themselves developed forms of expression that moved further and further away from the literal.

Sculpture intimately united with architecture therefore became rarer and rarer as the century progressed, finally detaching itself altogether for the most part, whilst its form shifted toward the conceptual. The Festival of Britain attempted to present this positively, holding that 'sculpture could be an integral aspect of urban space without being assigned the decorative function typical of architectural sculpture'.[2] Three London buildings appeared afterwards to prove the point: the Time & Life Building, New Bond Street (Michael Rosenauer, 1951-53) with its Henry Moore terrace screen; the rebuilt John Lewis, Oxford Street (1954-60, Slater & Uren) sporting Barbara Hepworth's *Winged Figure* on its flank; and the rigorously Modern State House on High Holborn (Trehearne & Norman, Preston & Partners, 1956-60, since demolished) accompanied by the bronze form *Meridian*, also by Hepworth and now abroad.

Freestanding sculpture or statuary, so much a part of the Victorian built landscape, received fresh impetus after a period of decline. As part of the same national post-war settlement that included the Welfare State, the country's ravaged cities were beautified with art that was also intended to promote an uplifting message. In the capital, two schemes by the London County Council gifted schools, sheltered accommodation, housing estates and parks with sculpture, often by the same highly-respected artists involved in the New Elizabethan architecture. The New Towns surrounding London were also obvious and fertile grounds for this approach – Harlow became known as the Sculpture Town as a result. The scope and ambition of this brave new world was celebrated in Historic England's recent exhibition (and associated listing campaign) *Out There: Our Post-War Public Art*.

Inevitably, however, the pressures on public funds that arose in the 1970s restricted this campaign, whilst changed political priorities at the end of that decade suppressed it. Although most architectural sculpture was funded through private patronage, this too dried up at the same time and for much the same reasons.

Only in the 1980s did a revival of publicly-accessible sculpture occur, though in the decade of money and the markets it was inevitable that private means would be its enabler.

Finsbury Avenue Square, at the very edge of the City of London, was conceived by Stuart Lipton in the belief that prestigious financial firms would relocate to London if they could find the kind of very highly-specified office accommodation set within a managed private estate that had been commonplace in the US since the post-war years. In 1981, Lipton determined to build just that next to Broad Street railway station's goods yard. Designed by Arup Associates, three buildings made by fast-track assembly of a steel frame produced simple but flexible office space that formed two sides of a new square. This received as much attention as the architecture, and so was paved with granite setts, incorporated trees, a water feature and seating, and received a figurative and highly contextual sculpture by George Segal entitled *Rush Hour*. Crucially, the square and its shops, restaurant, pubs and small leisure centre were open to the public at all times.

Completed in 1988, the project was an outstanding success, so much so that Lipton commenced a much larger version to the east and north – for which Broad Street station itself was sacrificed – even before it was finished. Broadgate, as it was called, amplified every aspect of its antecedent, with muscular, Post-Modernist architecture (much of it, now, by the American firm SOM) and a large sculptural programme. This was as vital a component of the estate as the buildings, and aimed to evoke an aspirational, cultured image. Half a dozen pieces were

Fig. 3: Bob Allen, It Takes Two*, 2002. Bronze. Canada Square Park, Canary Wharf, London © Canary Wharf Group plc/Heini Schneebeli*

Fig. 4: Glynis Owen, Fruit Porter Bronze*, 2006. Bronze relief, 400 x 190 cm. Covent Garden Piazza, Southampton Street, London. Photograph © Derek Harper*

carefully placed around Broadgate, many executed in bronze, partly for pure aesthetic effect but also 'to act as visual foci and navigation points' in the manner of Palladian country estates.[3] Fernando Botero's five-tonne *Broadgate Venus*, Richard Serra's immense steel sheets entitled *Fulcrum* and Barry Flanagan's *Leaping Hare on Crescent and Bell* were among those to receive the most coverage, though not all of it was complimentary.

The achievement of Broadgate opened the eyes of a new generation of developers, tenants and regulators as to what private sculpture commissioned, sited and maintained thoughtfully within a public urban mix might accomplish.

Commercial schemes such as the City's Minster Court (1987-91), with its linked triplet of Neo-Gothic offices fronted by Althea Wynne's equine bronzes, and the vast Canary Wharf (1991-) with a spread of pieces including Bob Allen's *It Takes Two* (Fig. 3) typify what followed in two important districts. Westminster, with its older, smaller commercial stock and extensive residential, ceremonial and governmental areas, yielded fewer opportunities on this scale but did acquire a surprising number of smaller pieces, like Maggi Hambling's commemorative *A Conversation with Oscar Wilde* behind St Martin-in-the-Fields or Glynis Owen's *Fruit Porter Bronze* (Fig. 4) in Covent Garden.

The Odette Bequest – itself a helpful reminder of the continuing, if reduced, role of philanthropy in the field – allowed almost a dozen works to be installed across the London School of Economics' Aldwych campus.

Across London, Eduardo Paolozzi became a favourite during this period – fittingly, given that his career dated back to those post-war years. Commissions included a machine-age ventilation shaft cap above Pimlico tube station, the giant *The Head of Invention* lying on the quayside at Butler's Wharf for the Design Museum (both have now moved to Kensington), and the equally substantial *Newton after Blake* in the piazza of the new British Library. And if evidence of the act of carving was not, now, axiomatically to be found in architectural sculpture it could most assuredly be encountered in the sphere of architectural lettering. Consider *Lines for the Supreme Court*, a poem by Andrew Motion cut into a new bench opposite that institution's entrance, the Golden Jubilee Sundial let into the pavement by Parliament and the name of the National Gallery, finally inscribed above its doors in 2005. Those memorials remain somewhat but not entirely aloof from these considerations. Looming above all is the *Orbit*, not just London's but Britain's biggest piece of public art, designed by artist Anish Kapoor and engineer Cecil Balmond. Possibly appropriately, its precise significance beyond the stated purpose of signalling the London Olympic Park remains elusive.

Having now answered all of our questions, what can we conclude? All of these works fall somewhere about the line of artistry that extends toward us from antiquity, and for that reason alone the idea of something for nothing can't easily be dismissed. Debate over what those examples that have moved furthest from that line actually mean continues. It could be argued that amid today's cultural pluralism a consensus is not necessary, though where public funds are committed it ought at least to concern us if no one cares either way. The need for a fresh term to categorise something produced not by the reductive process that the word 'sculpture' suggests but by an additive one might usefully be addressed. But whilst there remains a nervousness on the part of many a patiently-observing citizen, both this and the works themselves might, too, merely validate the restless sense of change that often seems to characterise London life today.

Chris Rogers creates and leads architectural tours, working closely with architects and the preservation charity The Twentieth Century Society, and has written extensively on architecture and visual culture, including The power of process: the architecture of Michael Pearson *(Black Dog Publishing, 2010) and* How to read London: a crash course on London architecture *(The Ivy Press, 2017).*

Notes

1 Austrian architect Adolf Loos (1870-1933) coined the term in 1908 in an essay arguing for appropriate, rather than no, decoration for buildings. The phrase 'Less is more' is popularly ascribed to the Modernist architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886-1969), but in fact a young Mies overheard it whilst working in the studio of Peter Behrens

2 Robert Burstow, 'Modern Sculpture in the South Bank Townscape', in *Twentieth Century Architecture 5: Festival of Britain*, edited by Elain Harwood and Alan Powers (London: The Twentieth Century Society, 2001), p.100

3 Anonymous, English Heritage Advice Report Broadgate phases 1-4 (464273), 2011

Martin Luther, the Reformation and art for Protestants

Joachim Strupp

500 years ago, on 31 October 1517, Martin Luther published his 95 theses against the papal trade in indulgences. Whether or not he actually nailed them to the doors of Wittenberg's castle church, as the reformer later liked to recall, ultimately remains immaterial.[1] Their distribution and Luther's subsequent elaboration and dissemination of a new theology was hugely aided by Gutenberg's comparatively recent invention of the printing press using movable type.[2] As a result, within just a few years, Luther became a 'celebrity'. In 1517, however, he was still a little-known Augustinian monk and Professor of Theology at the newly founded University of Wittenberg. Wittenberg may have been the seat of Elector Frederick III of Saxony, one of the most powerful princes in the German Empire, but it was barely more than a small provincial town in the far north-east of Saxony. Yet, despite Wittenberg's remote location and Luther's lack of reputation, the 95 theses kicked off a schism of Western Christianity which changed the world for centuries to come.

At the heart of Luther's protest was a desire to purify the Church of false doctrines that the papacy had apparently allowed to develop. Luther wanted to return to the truths of the early Christian Church as established by Christ himself. These were only to be found in the Word of God, namely the Bible. Religious pictures and sculptures encouraging devotion to the saints were suspected of seducing gullible people into idolatry. Almost right from the start, the Lutheran Reformation not only led to a radicalisation of opposed theological and political parties, it also had a profound impact on the content, function and production of religious works of art and architecture.

Luther believed that religious images still had a function in spreading the gospel, though in his view this was primarily a mnemonic one. Yet his relatively conservative position was not shared by some of his more radical followers. Their chance came in 1521-22, while Luther – excommunicated by the pope and under imperial ban as a result of his refusal to recant at the Diet of Worms in April 1521 – was in hiding at the Wartburg, one of the strongholds of Frederick III. His former colleague at Wittenberg, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, seized the opportunity to stir up religious unrest. Karlstadt, who was soon followed by the Zurich theologian Huldrych Zwingli and later by John Calvin in Geneva, believed that the Ten Commandments had expressly forbidden the making of images. His message encouraged zealous mobs to break into churches and smash religious works of art. Horrified by these events, Luther returned to Wittenberg to preach in support of religious images. Nevertheless, countless works of religious art fell victim to an ongoing violent iconoclasm which culminated in the Flemish *beeldenstorm* of 1566. Distancing himself from such extremism, Luther enlisted the skills of Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553) – since 1505 court painter and chief designer to Frederick of Saxony – to create art for Protestants.

Fig. 1: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Portrait of Martin Luther as an Augustinian Friar*, 1520. Engraving, 169 x 116 mm. © Trustees of the British Museum, London*

Portraits of Martin Luther

Cranach shaped Luther's 'image' in seven types, starting with depictions of Luther as humble monk (1520 ff.) and learned university professor (1521), followed by those of him in secular disguise as brave Junker Jörg while hiding at the Wartburg (1522). A second 'series' starts with marriage and friendship portraits in 1525, when the reformer married the former nun Katharina von Bora, and continues with portraits of Luther as a mature and caring pastor (1530). The last type is that of death portraits from 1546 onwards. In order to underline the truth of Protestant doctrine, their smooth execution and peaceful expression demonstrate that the reformer was at ease with the world and with God, despite his excommunication and Catholic inflammatory writings – such as a pamphlet published a year

Fig. 2: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Christ Expelling the Merchants from the Temple*, and* The Pope Overseeing the Trade in Indulgences*, from Passional Christi und Antichristi, by Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon (Wittenberg: Johann Rhau-Grunenberg, 1521). Woodcut, 140 x 200 mm. British Library, London*

before his death, which claimed that Luther's tomb emitted sulphurous smells. Each type, therefore, adds another aspect to a persona which approaches saintly veneration. Even the earliest portrayal, that of Luther as a monk (Fig. 1), placed like a sculpture in a niche, holding his hand to his heart and looking up devoutly towards heaven, is reminiscent of depictions of saints. Ultimately, Cranach's likenesses made the reformer the best-known and most widely-reproduced face of the sixteenth century and have shaped our visual memory of him to this day.

Prints

Cranach also illustrated Lutheran writings with highly influential polemical woodcuts, while at the same time continuing to serve Catholic patrons, such as the powerful Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg, Elector and archbishop of Mainz and archbishop of Magdeburg – the original recipient of the 95 theses who has often been claimed to have been Luther's great adversary. The

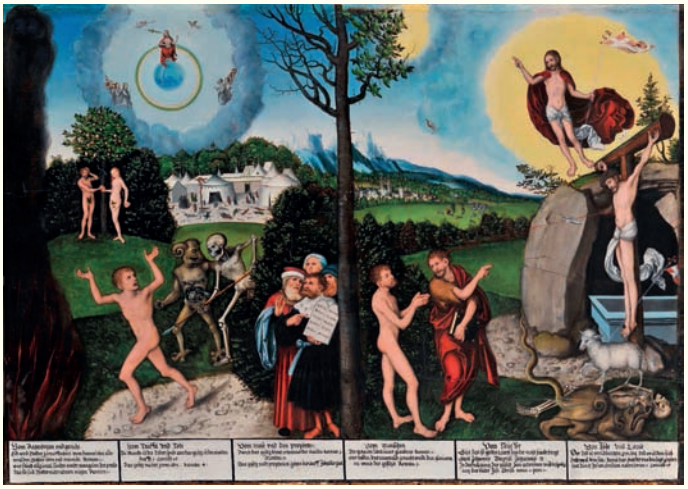

Fig. 3: Lucas Cranach the Elder, Allegory of the Law and the Gospel*, c.1529. Mixed media on limewood panel, 82.2 x 118 cm. Stifftung Schloss Friedenstein, Gotha*

1521 publication of the *Passional Christi und Antichristi* leaves little doubt about the reformers' criticism: by juxtaposing Good/Christ with Evil/the Papal Church in 13 pairs of words and images, short text passages at the bottom of the page are barely more than captions to Cranach's large woodcuts that speak for themselves (Fig.2).

Paintings

Cranach also produced panel paintings which translated Lutheran theology into art. The early *Crucifixion Altarpiece* in Schneeberg (1531/2-39), the Wittenberg *Last Supper Altarpiece* (1547) and the famous *Weimar Altarpiece* of 1555, completed by his son Lucas Cranach the Younger (featuring full-length portraits of Cranach the Elder and Martin Luther standing immediately behind St John the Baptist), all make use of the traditional polyptych format, but instead of displaying saints and their stories, they give expression to the Lutheran tenets of salvation by faith and grace alone and not – as the Papal Church insisted – through 'good works' (which included indulgences). Cranach had first developed this iconography in 1529 in a small devotional painting, the so-called *Gotha Allegory of the Law and the Gospel* (Fig. 3).

The *Gotha Allegory* takes the form of a diptych but is painted on a single panel, divided into two 'wings' by a central tree. On the left wing, dedicated to the Law, the tree is barren, but on the right, dedicated to the Gospel, it is in leaf. On the left, a man/the human soul, looked on by a group of prophets and Moses

Fig. 4: Interior, Palace Church, Torgau, Saxony

*Fig. 5: Pulpit, Palace Church, Torgau, Saxony (*Christ Expelling the Merchants from the Temple)

pointing at the tables of the law, is pursued by Death and the Devil into damnation. The three background scenes depict *The Temptation of Adam and Eve, The Brazen Serpent* and *Christ in Judgement*. All motifs on the left wing combined to demonstrate that law leads inescapably to hell when mistaken for a path to salvation. On the right, St John the Baptist directs another human soul – a 'New Adam' – to both *Christ on the Cross* and the *Risen Christ* above. In front, the Lamb of Christ triumphs over Death and the Devil. *Christ on the Cross* emits a thin jet of blood from his side to reach – via the dove of the Holy Spirit and the Baptist – the passive but faithful human soul. The *Risen Christ* directs the viewer towards a heavenly light at the top centre from where an angel descends to announce Christ's birth to the shepherds. Six Bible citations appear at the panel's bottom edge. The message is clear: through God's grace and through human faith expressed in observance of the three Lutheran sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist and Penance, humankind – even poor and simple folk like the shepherds – can and will reach salvation. Like many of Cranach's private devotional pieces, the *Gotha Allegory* not only contained a message that was easy to understand, it was also reproduced innumerable times in paint and print, reaching a huge audience of all levels of education.

Architecture

In terms of ecclesiastical architecture, purpose-built Lutheran churches soon followed. Of these, the palace church of Torgau on the Elbe (Fig. 4), consecrated by Luther himself in 1544, is one of the earliest of its kind. Its patron was Luther's own sovereign, John Frederick the Magnanimous, Elector of Saxony until the Battle of Mühlberg of 24 April 1547, which saw the defeat of Germany's Protestant princes by Charles V's Imperial Catholic army. The Torgau Palace Church is incorporated into a larger palace complex, and Luther himself in his dedication sermon declared that the building should not stand out from other houses where the Gospel was preached. Although the Torgau Palace Church has lost its old pictorial decoration, it was from the outset furnished with a single, plain stone altar table (an altarpiece by the Cranach shop was arguably added at a later stage), while the pulpit has become the focal point placed directly opposite the entrance, surrounded by two levels of galleries, and decorated with three stone reliefs depicting *The Washing of the Feet* on the altar side, *Christ among the Doctors in the Temple* on the door-facing front and *Christ Expelling the Merchants from the Temple* on the right (Fig. 5)[3]. The first and third reliefs are copies in stone of Cranach's corresponding scenes in the *Passional Christi und Antichristi* discussed above.

Conclusion

Thus, by the early 1540s Lutheranism had established itself in art and architecture. Even so, the implications for many of Germany's painters and sculptors were disastrous, since the market for religious art largely collapsed. Some sought employment elsewhere, whereas others were able to adapt to new secular markets. With the exception of portraiture, large-scale paintings and sculptures gave way to smaller works intended as collectors' items. It was only at the end of the sixteenth century and the impact of the Counter-Reformation that monumental art returned to Germany.

Joachim Strupp died in a car accident on April 3rd while this article was in press. He received his MA and DPhil from St Andrews, and was founder and Director of Art Pursuits Abroad (www.artpursuitsabroad.com), a company specialising in art historical Study Tours, Courses and Days. He had worked as a lecturer on Renaissance and Baroque art at the V&A, Rewley House at the University of Oxford, and as a Lecturer in Art History and Heritage Management at the University of Buckingham. He was a wonderful lecturer who was able to combine scholarship and deep knowledge of his subject with passion, enthusiasm and eloquence. Those who had travelled with him will also remember his kindness and courtesy. We are honoured to be able to publish this article as a tribute to a remarkable man who will be greatly missed.

Notes

1 For an excellent account of Luther's life and times see Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther: renegade and prophet* (London: The Bodley Head, 2016).

2 For an in-depth discussion of the impact of the printing press on Lutheran theology see Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther: 1517, printing, and the making of the Reformation* (New York: Penguin, 2015).

3 Joseph Leo Koerner, *The reformation of the image* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), p. 408.

Cassiano dal Pozzo and the 'Paper Museum'

Christopher Moock

In recent decades the 'Paper Museum' – a collection of over 7000 drawn and painted illustrations and prints brought together by Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657) and which he later referred to as his 'Museo cartaceo' ('Paper Museum') – has emerged as a key project of the seventeenth-century Roman art world and of wider European culture in general. A sustained intellectual aim underpinned this ambitious and groundbreaking enterprise which Cassiano took over from Prince Federico Cesi (1585-1630), the founder of the Accademia dei Lincei, the Roman scientific group of which Cassiano was a member from the early 1620s. Building on Cesi's embryonic collection of mainly scientific illustrations, Cassiano would go on to extend the subject matter of the Paper Museum into important new areas of artistic and archaeological endeavour illustrated by some of the most outstanding talents of the period.

Cassiano had studied law in Pisa and been knighted young before becoming secretary in 1623 to his friend Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the nephew of Pope Urban VIII. Tuscan family connections were important indicators of loyalty for the Barberini, who hailed from Florence. Those connections included a dal Pozzo relation, the Archbishop of Pisa, who would become Cassiano's important contact with Cardinal del Monte, Caravaggio's patron and the representative of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Rome. The resulting stability of Cassiano's position and his contacts with the Barberini circle must have facilitated his own studies and interests considerably. Among these interests, Cassiano's patronage of the arts – albeit it on a more modest scale than that of his employer – was exceptional for a private individual. According to one historian, 'it is hardly possible to exaggerate his importance to contemporary artists'.[1]

Initially best known for his early and sustained patronage of Nicolas Poussin (who declared himself 'a pupil in his art of the house and museum of the Cavaliere dal Pozzo)[2], Cassiano features in Poussin studies that range from Anthony Blunt's monograph published in 1967 to Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey's *Nicolas Poussin: friendship and the love of painting* (1996). The centrality of dal Pozzo to the development of Poussin's career had already been underlined by Francis Haskell in the wider Roman context in his *Patrons and painters*, first published in 1962, where after a lengthy discussion of Cassiano's collection of paintings it was tantalisingly stated that 'his encouragement of scholars … was more important, and that side of his activities cannot be discussed here.'[3]

A large part of the Paper Museum is now in Britain, in the Royal Library at Windsor, after being acquired by George III in 1762. Some material is also in the British Museum, the British Library, the library of Sir John Soane's Museum, the Institut de France in Paris and a number of other public and private collections. An extensive project to recreate the Paper Museum was initiated with Francis Haskell and Jennifer Montagu. Haskell had written the introduction to the 1993 catalogue of a British

Fig. 1: Seventeenth-century Italian, Mural in Sant'Andrea Catabarbara, Rome'. *Watercolour and body colour over graphite, 343 x 243 mm. Royal Library, Windsor. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2017*

Museum exhibition that gave a foretaste of the scope of the enterprise and suggested the diversity of the material. The catalogue raisonné, a British Academy Research Project, is currently being published under the auspices of the Royal Collection Trust and the Warburg Institute in many volumes under three sections: Series A: Antiquities and Architecture; Series B: Natural History; and Series C: Prints.[4] The Series B volumes in particular have expanded our understanding of this great project.

The Series A volumes are of great interest in relation to traditional art history concerns, and especially those regarding Poussin and his circle. Anthony Blunt had already emphasised the close link between the painter and his 'best patron and friend in Rome'.[5] Perhaps reflecting the pro-French policy of the Barberini, Cassiano ultimately owned over 40 pictures by Poussin, as well as 14 by another French painter, Simon Vouet.

During a key period in Poussin's early career – when the newly-arrived painter sought employment in Rome, including

from Cardinal Francesco Barberini – Cassiano provided support in commissioning paintings that reflected his particular interests, such as *Hannibal Crossing the Alps* complete with a prominent elephant. Later paintings by Poussin such as those in the first set of *Seven Sacraments* painted for Cassiano from c.1638-42, were inspired by the archaeological discoveries in the Roman catacombs of Antonio Bosio, whose *Roma Sotteranea* was sponsored by Cardinal Francesco in support of a Counter-Reformation search for evidence of the truth of the history of the Church.[6]

The Paper Museum recorded early Christian material and contained depictions of several since-lost artworks, including mural paintings (Fig. 1). From the 1620s artists then lacking financial security (including Poussin, Pietro Testa and Pietro da Cortona) were employed on this encyclopaedic project. Commissioned drawings of the remnants of antiquity ranged from depictions of the built environment to documentary illustrations of details of Roman costume and military equipment. These feature in many of the Series A volumes.

Later, and by now established in his career, Poussin retained the habit of engaging with similar fragments of physical information, notably in his *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, 1655-7, (Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). In this picture Poussin borrowed a number of details from the Museum's watercolour illustrations (by an unidentified painter) of scenes representing the religious customs of the Nile delta, such as *Procession of priests passing along a causeway* (Fig. 2). Representations of the architecture of the same period from the great *Nile Mosaic* at Palestrina (a Barberini territory gained through Taddeo Barberini's marriage to Anna Colonna) are also incorporated as the artist notes 'to show that the Virgin who is there is shown in Egypt'.[7] This literal spirit in Poussin's mature art clearly derives from his early association with Cassiano's project. In the same letter Poussin noted that the mosaic shows 'the natural history of Egypt and Ethiopia'.[8]

Recently published volumes in Series B introduce us to many other depictions of the natural world and to other artists, taking us beyond the sphere of traditional art history as established by Blunt and Haskell. David Freedberg introduces this material,

*Fig. 2: Seventeenth-century Italian, P*rocession of priests passing along a causeway *(detail from the* Nile Mosaic*, Palestrina), late 1620s. Watercolour and body colour and pen and brown ink over black chalk, 332 x 480 mm. Royal Library, Windsor. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2017*

Fig. 3: Seventeenth-century Italian, Baked lignite clay. *Watercolour and body colour over traces of black chalk, 179 x 242 mm. Royal Library, Windsor. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2017*

both in his *The eye of the Lynx* (2002), and in his contributions to the individual volumes in Series B. The character of Early Modern science, before the Enlightenment, provides a different and fascinating framework around this subject. The Lincei apparently did not see a distinction between the arts and the sciences. This came later. Incongruous as it may seem to us today, science and papal propaganda sit happily alongside each other in the Museum – the observation of bees under a microscope illustrated in the lavishly-engraved broadsheet *Melissographia* by Johann Friedrich Greuter alongside a slavish tribute to the papal 'king bee' (bees featured as Barberini emblems, famously appearing all over Rome).[9]

Equally the suppression of Galileo's own research under Pope Urban VIII for challenging the inherited world view of cosmology sits oddly with the scientist's long-term membership of this Lincei group that operated so close to the papal family. The subjects covered in Series B are diverse, and in their own way similarly antique. The inclusion of fossil woods originated in Cesi's curiosity about these unusual objects excavated on his estate in Umbria, as the example of *Baked lignite clay* (Fig. 3) demonstrates.[10] Individual specimens are recorded as if on display in a Museum of Natural History. At the same time they display a kind of monumentality and surreal presence, weirdly and fortuitously prescient of Max Ernst[11] and Fernand Léger[12], both of whom later sought inspiration in similar material.

In these, and in the illustrations of fruit such as pineapples, a type of Baroque sensibility may be glimpsed that celebrates the unusual, the surprising (or bizarre), the deformed and the grotesque. Hence in contrast to the local focus on Rome characterising Series A (and to the taste of Poussin), this Baroque interest in the exotic now comes into its own throughout Series B. Mexico provided samples from the New World by way of the Linceans' contacts at El Escorial, where Philip II had combined a craving for knowledge with his imperial ambitions. Horticulture as practised in the botanical gardens of Italy was linked to medical practice. Ancient texts such as Dioscorides' *De materia medica* (c.60 A.D.) were updated in the illustrations to the

Fig. 4: Vincenzo Leonardi, European or Great White Pelican (Pelecanus onocotalus). *Watercolour and bodycolour heightened with gum over black chalk, 364 x 452 mm. Royal Library, Windsor. Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2017*

Erbario Miniato ('illuminated herbal')[13] which are annotated with a running commentary on the efficacy of plant materials used as treatments for ailments. A previously unknown painter, Vincenzo Leonardi (fl. 1621-46), comes to prominence within these volumes. Mostly associated with the natural history aspect of the project, Leonardi painted beautiful images of stones, vegetables, citrus fruits, fungi, crustaceans, mammals and birds such as the *European or Great White Pelican* (Fig. 4).[14] The pineapple and melons he painted for the *Erbario Miniato* are outstanding.[15] He was important enough to accompany Cassiano and his Cardinal on a papal legation to Paris in 1625, where he drew natural history objects as well as antiquities. When back in Rome he also drew Etruscan and Roman items ranging from the mundane (e.g. a Roman balance for weighing meat)[16] to relics such as the 'Iron shackle (?) and fragments of chains' apparently from the Roman catacombs, and associated with an early Christian martyr.[17]

An instructive comparison may be made with the contemporary painter Jacopo Ligozzi (c.1549-1627), active at the Medici court in Florence, who painted both Counter-Reformation altarpieces and devotional works as well as delicate illustrations of birds, plants (including a pineapple)[18] and animals for his patrons, the Grand Dukes of Tuscany.

Ornithological and botanical illustrations were previously thought to fit into a genre that art historians differentiated from the high art of Poussin. But in Cassiano, his fellow scholars and their artists as evidenced by the scope and variety of the contents of the Paper Museum, we see and engage with a more integrated appreciation of what would now be called visual culture.

Christopher Moock is a painter and art historian. He teaches painting and art history at Heatherley's School of Fine Art in Chelsea, and lectures at Birkbeck, University of London, especially on seventeenth-century art. His academic work is underpinned by his practical experience of painting. His publications include articles on Baroque art and on contemporary painting.

Notes

1 Torgil Magnuson, *Rome in the age of Bernini* (New York: Humanities Press, 1982), vol. 1, p. 245.

2 Anthony Blunt, *The paintings of Nicolas Poussin* (London: Phaidon, 1967), text vol., p. 101.

3 Francis Haskell, *Patrons and painters: a study in the relations between Italian art and society in the age of the Baroque* (London: Yale University Press, 1980), p 113.

4 The finished catalogue will comprise 20 parts and 38 separate volumes, divided into the three series noted. The work is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

5 Blunt (1967), p 100.

6 Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey, *Nicolas Poussin: friendship and the love of painting* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), ch. 3.

7 Blunt (1967), p. 312.

8 ibid, pp. 310-12.

9 David Freedberg, *The eye of the Lynx: Galileo, his friends, and the beginnings of modern natural history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), ch. 6, *The chastity of bees*.

10 Freedberg (2002), ch. 11, *Fossils*, figs.11, 7.

11 Werner Spies (ed.), *Max Ernst: a retrospective*. Exhibition catalogue. (London: Tate Gallery / Munich: Prestel, 1991), chapter IV, *Frottage and histoire naturelle*.

12 Pontus Hulten, *Fernand Léger: la poésie de l'objet*, 1928-1934. Exhibition catalogue. (Paris: Musée National d'Art Moderne, 1981), cats. 24-30, 33-35.

13 Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi and Fabio Gabari, *Flora: the 'Erbario Miniato' and other drawings in the Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo: a Catalogue Raisonné*. Series B Natural history, Part VI, 2 volumes. (London: Royal Collection Publications / Harvey Miller Publishers, 2007).

14 Freedberg (2002), ch. 1, *The Paper Museum*.

15 Tongiorgi Tomasi and Garbari (2007), vol. 2, cat. 279, 281.

16 Lucy Whitaker and Martin Clayton, *The art of Italy in the Royal Collection: Renaissance to Baroque* (London: Royal Collection Publications, 2007), cat. 130.

17 John Osbourne and Amanda Claridge, *Early Christian and Medieval antiquities, The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo: a Catalogue Raisonné, Series A, Part II* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2000), vol. 2, cat. 30.

18 Alessandro Cecchi, Lucilla Conigliello and Marzia Faietti, *Jacopo Ligozzi "pittore universalissimo"*, Exhibition catalogue, Palazzo Pitti, Florence, 2014, (Livorno: Sillabe, 2014) cat. 15.

Further reading

The notes to this article contain many suggestions for further reading. The following titles may be of additional interest.

Amanda Claridge et al., *The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo*. Exhibition catalogue. (London: British Museum/Olivetti, 1993).

David Freedberg and Andrew C. Scott, *Fossil woods and other geological specimens. The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo: a Catalogue Raisonné. Series B, Part III* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2000).

Henrietta McBurney, 'Poussin et le Museo Cartaceo de Cassiano dal Pozzo' in Pierre Rosenberg and Louis-Antoine Prat, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*. Exhibition catalogue. (Paris: Grand Palais/ Reunion des Musées Nationaux, 1995).

Christopher Moock, *Sophisticated connoisseurship: Cassiano dal Pozzo's illustrated herbal* (London: The Art Book, vol. 16, no. 2. May 2009, pp. 12-13).

Art and the Russian Revolution

Andrew Spira

To mark its first centenary, London museums are reflecting on the art of the Russian Revolution. *Revolution: Russian Art 1917-1932* was held at the Royal Academy from February until April this year; and the dreams of what a revolutionary capital city might look like, as conceived in the minds of architects in the 1920s and early 1930s, was the subject of *Imagine Moscow* at the Design Museum from March to June. The British Library's *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy and Myths* is on until August; and then, from November until February next year, Tate Modern will be showing *Red Star Over Russia*, comprising posters, photographs and graphic works produced in Russia between 1905 and the death of Stalin in 1953.

For contemporary art to be taken really seriously these days, it has to be political. Artists and curators are frequently required to justify their work by highlighting its political significance. Anselm Kiefer and Jeremy Deller score highly on this front; Jeff Koons and David Hockney, less so. If the work is not political in itself, it has at least to be seen or made to be political – for instance by explicating the factors that determine the social constituencies to which it might appeal. The National Gallery explored the grey area between artistic creation and commodification in its 2015 exhibition *Inventing Impressionism*. This revisionist show exposed the socio-economic conditions that turned what has become a somewhat anodyne epitome of pure 'apolitical' art into a cultural phenomenon with 'disturbing' significances that lie beyond the purely artistic concerns of the Impressionists themselves. To what extent are artists complicit in the fact that they are making elite commodities?

From another perspective, there is plenty of art that uses political iconography to make 'statements' about political situations, often insulting political orthodoxies or ridiculing them through absurd, ironic juxtapositions. But in what sense are they truly political? We have become so confused that we cannot always tell the difference between art and politics – to the extent that when the Russian ambassador to Turkey was assassinated at the private view of an art exhibition in Ankara in December 2016, many people thought at first that it was some kind of 'performance'. A photograph of the event – taken against a display of picturesque photographs – could not have been composed more 'artistically', though this bizarre outcome obviously involved an enormous amount of 'luck'. The fact that, in February 2017, the photo was selected for the top World Press Photo prize completes the contextualisation of the occurrence as a 'cultural' phenomenon, to be judged as such, rather than as a social and human tragedy. Politics became art. It was reduced to art.

But does art become politics? Can it become politics? Or, by aestheticising it, does it actually anaesthetise us against politics? What is it that actually constitutes the political dimension of a work of art? Is it enough to comment on politics? Perhaps

Fig.1: Agit-train, *circa 1919. Photograph.*
© David King Collection.

we should turn the question around and ask it another way, observing the political effects of art rather than its professed intentions. Which works of art have really had a political effect? Although Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) – an expression of agony and outrage at a political act – is often considered to be the epitome of a 'political' work of art, what political effect did it actually have, i.e. beyond its artistic influence? And, in a contemporary context, how has artistic activity contributed towards the Brexit and Trump debacles? And, conversely, how much use of art have the promoters of the various agendas at work here made? If we seek to measure the political status of art through its political effects, question marks hang over it.

Or so they do – in the West. Maybe this is because western avant-garde artists have traditionally tended to assume the role of a 'minority' or the 'opposition'. It feels strange when they become 'academicians'; suddenly it seems impossible for them to be political. For a completely different view of the political potential of art, we could do worse than reflect on its role in the early years of Soviet Russia. During the 1917 Revolution and its aftermath, art was used not just as a medium through which to comment on political events but as an active agent, or instrument, of political change. Art was taken out of the galleries and into the streets. Viewers were not expected to appreciate it and behave, 'exiting via the shop'. Flooded by sensations of beautiful redness (*krasivi krasni*), they were expected to run and shout, let the uncontainable joy of conviction flow through their arms on to banners and flags of their own making – to be used, in their turn, as billowing instruments of excitement and change. True or legitimate art did not need to be politicised; it was innately political.

Fig. 2: Alexander Rodchenko, Books on all branches of knowledge*, 1925. Poster, 62 x 88 cm. © David King Collection.*

For many revolutionaries, the concept of 'art' referred to the purely aesthetic dimension of an image and, as such, it had its own rationale – the kind of artistic rationale that was worked out by the Impressionists – independent of political implications. For some radicals, however, this aspect of art was not simply apolitical. By refraining from actively and manifestly promoting the new political status quo, it was seen to be dissociating from it; it represented a secret territory in the minds of its creators and consumers in which subjective thoughts of difference could reside. Radicals required images to function socially and politically; what they called 'easel painting' therefore – a bourgeois genre of commodity, created for its own sake or for aesthetic pleasure – was suspicious. There were two possible alternatives. Firstly, all aesthetic endeavour could be channelled into design, and if the outcome was a utilitarian product – like a teapot or a machine part which could be used by everybody, ignoring taste and class – its social legitimacy was clear. However, it was not enough for an object simply to be functional; it had to function well. The efficacy of a utensil was determined by scientific principles – the design of a chair, for instance, should be determined by the physiological properties of the body – not by aesthetic preferences which in many cases resulted in whimsical objects that were so random that they were unusable. Secondly, imagery could be propagandist, explicitly promoting the agenda of the Bolsheviks. Posters and leaflets were widely disseminated. 'Agit-trains' were loaded with cinematic film projection equipment and printing presses, and were driven deep into the countryside, often stopping between stations 'in the middle of nowhere' to bring vital information and ideas to remote villages (Fig.1). On the one hand, propaganda could advertise simple useful products; on the other, it could highlight the ideals and achievements of the regime through documentary photography and film – for instance, in relation to the benefits of literacy (Fig. 2). To idealists, the concepts of art and politics were mutually exclusive. To be legitimate, a visual phenomenon had to subject its aesthetic potential to its political agenda to the point at which it ceased to exist as such. Feeding these thoughts back into our own system, have we become so aesthetically refined, or so attached to the idea of art, that we have become politically useless, and are now paying for it?

Of course, avant-garde artists did not always live up to their high-minded ideals. The graphic and photographic work of Alexander Rodchenko continued to be profoundly influenced by his aesthetic explorations of pure abstraction long after he abandoned the practice of painting in 1922 (Fig. 2). And although George Krutikov's dream of satellite-dormitories, from which workers would commute to Earth during the day-time, presented itself as a socio-technical project, it was ludicrously beyond the practical possibilities of 1928 when he conceived it. Moreover, although avant-garde artists dispensed with all explicit references to the past, partly to make it possible for people to appreciate their work without an elite education, much of it remained incomprehensible to the peasantry and workers who were the audience they aimed to liberate.

In 1932, Stalin used the limited comprehensibility of avant-garde art as a pretext to ban it, in favour of the more legible Socialist Realism in which clear realism of style was made to signify obvious factuality of content: if the workers in a painting of a cornfield are seen to be content, they (and, by extension, all farm workers) must be happy (Fig. 3). His brutal suppression of avant-garde artists, many of whom were murdered for their pains, inclines us to sympathise with their quest. But, at the same time, we should be careful not to let our revulsion at Stalin's brutality merge with our aestheticising inclinations to the point at which we overlook the brutal realities of the Soviet agenda before Stalin came to power. From the moment westerners discovered Russian avant-garde art in the 1920s, we have tended to use it to complete our own story – that is to say, to document the achievement of abstract art – and, above all, non-objective art – which European art history seemed destined to realise: for strangely, the most avant-garde artists in the West – Picasso, Braque, Matisse, the German Expressionists – went to the threshold of abstraction but they did not leap over it. Malevich (Fig. 4) and Kandinsky were by no means alone in their modernity (think of Delaunay, Kupka, Mondrian) but they took this remarkable step into the unknown and became integral to the history of European art as a result. But we aestheticise Russian avant-garde art at our peril. In Russia, abstraction was more an instrument of political change than an independent mode of self-expression.

Fig. 3: Aleksei Alexsandrovich Vasilev, They are writing about us in Pravda, *1951. Oil on canvas, 99.06 x 154.9 cm. Springville Museum of Art, Jerald Jacobs Collection, Utah.*

Fig. 4: Kasimir Malevich, Suprematism (Supremus No. 58)*, 1916. Oil on canvas, 79.5 x 70.5 cm. State Russian Museum, St Petersburg.*

Several years before the Revolution, many of its proponents sincerely believed that art and politics would come together to create a just society from which poverty and prejudice would be banished, and their art is a powerful and inspiring expression of that belief. But the reality was very different. For a vast majority of the population, the erasure of personal identity did not lead to a state of transpersonal grace. It led to monotony, deprivation, helplessness, poverty. If we aestheticise their art – no matter how tenuously it may have furthered their cause – we ignore their condition. And if we are too casual about our own predicament, we may miss a trick here too.

Andrew Spira studied at the Courtauld Institute, before working at the Temple Gallery, London (specialists in Byzantine, Russian and Greek icons) and the V&A. He was subsequently Programme Director at Christie's Education for 14 years. He is the author of The avant-garde icon: Russian avant-garde art and the icon painting tradition *(Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2008).*

The London Art History Society Prize for Best Modern Period Masters Dissertation at Birkbeck

Kate Retford

It has been my great pleasure as Head of History of Art at Birkbeck, University of London, to have contributed to a strengthening of the longstanding ties between the Department and The London Art History Society. Last year, we agreed on a new initiative: The London Art History Society Prize for Best Modern Period Masters Dissertation, to be awarded alongside the Murray Bequest Prize for Best Early Period Masters Dissertation. This is a very welcome development indeed. The winners are awarded cash sums of £50, but of much more value is the prestige that comes with such awards. In a climate in which both funding for PhD research and careers opportunities in the Arts are becoming ever more competitive, these prizes help to signal postgraduates of exceptionally high calibre.

The cohort who completed their Masters study in History of Art last year was especially strong, and we were pleased to discover that we would have to split the prize between two students who had received equally stellar marks for their dissertations. Both Anna Jamieson and Wil Roberts were awarded an outstanding 90%, both achieving overall distinctions. Anna worked on the spectacle of madness at Bedlam hospital in eighteenth-century London, while Wil explored post-mortem sculptures of Prince Albert, and their role for Queen Victoria. A grade of more than 85% indicates work 'of a calibre beyond what is expected at MA level', containing 'a high degree of independent and original thought'. I am therefore delighted that both Wil and Anna have plans to continue as doctoral students. Anna has been awarded funding for a PhD which builds on her Masters dissertation, working with me and Suzannah Biernoff as supervisors.

I am sure you will enjoy the following summaries of their dissertations, which so richly deserved the shared The London Art History Society prize.

Dark tourists at Bedlam: madness and spectacle in eighteenth-century London

Anna Jamieson

In 1770, Bethlem Royal Hospital, often known as Bedlam, opened its doors to visitors for the last time. Throughout the eighteenth century, London's only public hospital for lunatics had served as a space where spectacle, entertainment and enlightened thought collided. By far its most infamous practice had been the admission of paying visitors, allowing the hospital to exploit public curiosity towards its inmates whilst raising funds.[1] Visiting had been encouraged by Bethlem's governors so that individuals or groups were able to wander through the public galleries, where the insane were displayed to inspire pity and charity.[2]

Its closure was highly symbolic, relating to a change in attitudes towards madness which was simultaneously represented within visual culture. Whilst the mad had previously been portrayed as animalistic and terrifying, a combination of developed medical understanding and treatments, alongside the reliance on 'specialist' physicians rather than healers, led to 'the first psychiatric revolution'.[3] This saw attitudes towards madness soften, and the insane were understood as unfortunate individuals who needed help. By 1770, Londoners no longer felt comfortable visiting Bedlam's 'freak show' and the hospital was closed to visitors.

This change was captured through representations of the mad, both at Bethlem and further afield. Some still portrayed the mad as monstrous or freakish, and the asylum a space where society's darkest fears were made manifest. Prints such as Robert Blyth's 1781 *Nebuchadnezzar recovering his reason* show a frightening figure, whilst Henry Fuseli's drawings from Rome's Santo Spirito Hospital depict a panoply of barely human figures. Similarly, William Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* (Fig. 1) displays a cast of deranged characters within a gallery-like setting, emphasising how the mad were seen as objects to be viewed. Whilst these representations waned, they can be understood as an integral way for the madman's threat to be circumvented. The unnerving realities of Bethlem were entertainment, and a bestial inmate proved far more remote than one resembling a human being.

Fig. 1: William Hogarth, A Rake's Progress *(Plate 8: In the Madhouse), 1735 (retouched 1763). Engraving, 25.4 x 41 cm.*

Fig. 2: Thomas Lawrence, Mad Girl*, 1786. Pastel on brushed vellum, 46 x 36.5 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Purchased with the SmithKline Beckwith Corporation Fund, 1985.*

Yet increasingly, these representations ceased, and were replaced with the figure of 'Crazy Jane'. As the gender of the lunatic shifted from male to female, so too did representations of raving madness shift to melancholia. Popular poetry such as William Cowper's *The Task* (1785) were accompanied by images of pitiable lovesick heroines. Shown against a stormy backdrop, Jane was morose, melancholic and desperate. Thomas Lawrence's archetypal *Mad Girl* (Fig. 2) shows a sobbing woman, with a crown of straw to show she was an inmate at Bedlam; a far cry from the animalistic figure in Blyth's print. Other representations were seen in ballads, scores, and even Wedgwood china. By 1824, 'Crazy Jane' was the star of her own play at Drury Lane. Satirical printmakers also joined in, as prints such as Thomas Rowlandson's *The Hypochondriac* (1788) relied on parodying this new, highly sensitive trope.

This refined form of madness proved far more ameliorating than its freakish counterpart. Despite being mad, images of Crazy Jane became popular.[4] As these images proliferated, Bethlem no longer was presented as a site of otherness in popular culture, but represented a potentially civilising space and an opportunity for the spectator to be recast into a humane and caring role.

Anna Jamieson is a freelance writer living in London. She will return to Birkbeck in October 2017 to begin her PhD on female madness and 'dark tourism'.

Notes

1. Roy Porter, *Mind-forg'd manacles: a history of madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (London: Athlone Press, 1987), p. 130.
2. Noted in Jonathan Andrews with Asa Porter and others, *The history of Bethlem* (London: Routledge, 1961), pp. 181-182.
3. Elaine Showalter, *The female malady* (London: Virago, 1987), p. 8.
4. Sander L. Gilman, *Seeing the insane: a cultural history of madness and art in the western world* (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 127.

‘Life itself’: Victoria and Albert as living statues

Wil Roberts

> Theed’s[1] bust is life itself. I have a cast in my room & when I go to my Dressing room at night, I go first to kiss it, & it feels so like all we loved & love! The dear hand too, I have put near my bedside & when I can’t rest – & the agony of desolation is at its height – I lay hold of it, & clasp it, & it soothes me.[2]

Queen Victoria thus described her interaction with sculptures formed from the death casts of Prince Albert. Her words had haunted me for many years: I wanted to know what psychological, physical and imaginative processes caused this practice to bring comfort to Victoria, rather than serve to emphasise her loss. I was particularly intrigued by the notion of animation suggested by her experience of cold plaster as warm flesh, and by the reversal of subject and object revealed by her phrase *‘it soothes me’* (italics added).

The aim of my research was to lay bare the architecture of this physical entanglement between person and sculpture, and to seek potentially-universal components embedded within its structure, in order to offer a model against which other haptic relationships with works of art might be considered. This demanded that I examine the case with forensic focus and from multiple perspectives. My paper was informed by historical and cultural scholarship and by psychological and philosophical ideas, and relied upon visual evidence found in the Royal family’s own drawings and photographs, supported by Victoria’s rich legacy of written testimony. I also brought a phenomenological approach to the work in order fully to explore and encourage a deeper understanding of anthropomorphic response to touching figurative sculpture.

Beginning with an investigation of cultural context, the Christian belief in eternal life emerged as fundamental to Victoria’s use and experience of the post-mortem sculptures of Albert. Rather than providing a stimulus for memory, these objects performed an alternative, dual function: as physical surrogates for Albert’s perceived continual spiritual presence and as confirmation of future reunion on the spiritual plane, a functionality that proves demonstrably representative of nineteenth-century European and American experience. The contemporary custom of taking physical recordings of the dead reinforced inherent links between statue and corpse that amplify the power of sculpture derived from this source.

The Queen’s use of the post-mortem sculptures is exposed in photographs that show the Royal family in mourning, in which the bust of Albert performs a pivotal role. These images record subtle exchanges of subject and object, presence and absence, of connection to and negotiation away from death, and of de-animation and animation in both person and statue. Seeking an understanding of those complex, interwoven shifts, I reflected upon Victoria’s practice in direct relation to the trope of the ‘living statue’ in myth, drama and literature (aided particularly by the scholarship of Kenneth Gross[3] and Lynda Nead[4]).

The imperatives and instruments that can invite the living statue to manifest, and the push-pull nature of human relationships with it, run parallel to Victoria’s experience: her profound grief, her rank, isolation and withdrawal from public view can be perceived to place her upon the boundary that separates the living from the non-living and thus transform her into a living statue (a perception evidenced by contemporary cartoons). As a living statue, Victoria invited the object to balance her deathliness and triggered its operation as subject; thus Albert’s statue also ‘lived’ and hybridity occurred between object and beholder.

For insight into the significance of touch to this scenario, I looked to the writings of Rainer Maria Rilke[5] and Susan Stewart[6]. Both writers articulate how the act of touching dissolves the barrier between subject and object and, furthermore, both propose that touch introduces a third element into the dynamic between the two. This notion of a ‘third’ led me to draw upon the fields of object relations and analytical psychology, specifically D. W. Winnicott’s ‘transitional object’[7] and Carl Jung’s ‘transcendent function’[8]. These share a conception of a fruitful meeting of opposites within liminal territory that not only echoes fundamental patterns of the trope of the living statue, but also the notion of an active third element. Analysis of Victoria’s haptic encounters with Albert’s statue through those theories shows how her practice might be understood as having opened a safe space (‘the third’) in which she gained respite from her grief by achieving a tangible negotiation between the dream of eternal life and reality’s stark indifference to her loss.

Wil Roberts attained a BA in Fine Art in 1983 and has since practised as an artist, concurrently working in the field of sculpture conservation. She gained her Masters with Distinction in History of Art at Birkbeck in 2016, and intends to pursue further studies at doctorate level.

Notes

1. William Theed (1804-91) was an English sculptor who specialised in portraiture, especially of Queen Victoria and her family.
2. Letter of Queen Victoria to Vicky, Crown Princess of Prussia, 27 January 1862. RA/VIC/ADDU32/27 Jan. 1862, as quoted in Eoin Martin, *Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and the patronage of contemporary sculpture in Victorian Britain 1837-1901*. PhD thesis, University of Warwick, (2013), p. 198
3. Kenneth Gross, *The dream of the moving statue* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992)
4. Lynda Nead, *The haunted gallery: painting, photography, film c.1900* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007)
5. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Auguste Rodin*, translated by Jessie Lemont and Hans Trausil (New York: Sunwise Turn Inc., 1919)
6. Susan Stewart, ‘Prologue: from the Museum of Touch’ in Marius Kwint, Christopher Breward and Jeremy Aynsley (eds.), *Material memories* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), pp.17-36
7. Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and reality* (London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2005, first published 1971)
8. Jeffrey C. Miller, *The transcendent function: Jung’s model of psychological growth through dialogue with the unconscious* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2004)

PROGRAMME 2017-2018

LECTURES

Monday 9 October 2017
The Sobieski Hours
Jenny Stratford, currently teaching palaeography and manuscript studies at the University of London, discusses the rare Gothic manuscript 'Book of Hours', originally illuminated in Paris around 1430, and currently held by the Royal Collection

Saturday 25 November 2017
(The Maria Shirley Lecture after the AGM which begins at 14:00)
San Vitale and the aesthetics of Imperial Authority in sixth-century Ravenna
John McNeill reviews the relationship between authorship and audience in the context of a building of immense aesthetic ambition

Wednesday 10 January 2018
TBA

Tuesday 6 February 2018
Insurrection and Impressionism: Tannhäuser in Paris
Charlotte de Mille, currently curating the music programme at The Courtauld Institute of Art, traces the remarkable intersection of Wagnerian opera and radical Impressionism through the infamous premiere of *Tannhäuser* in 1861

Monday 12 March 2018
TBA

Tuesday 10 April 2018
Giotto and the hidden women: mothers and daughters in the Arena Chapel
Laura Jacobus, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History of Art at Birkbeck asks who were the women who used the chapel, what did they see, and what did they think?

Check the website for latest information about lectures

Lectures are free to members, and are held at The Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AT, starting at 18:00, except for the Maria Shirley Lecture following the AGM which begins at 14:00 on 25 November

COURSES

20 September-18 October 2017
Wednesdays 11:00-13:00 (5 weeks)
Arts of Mughal India, c.1550-1750
Leader: **Ursula Weekes**
Venue: Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

12 October-9 November 2017
Thursdays 14:30-16:30 (5 weeks)
Manet and Modernism
Leader: **Charlotte de Mille**
Venue: Conway Hall

8 November-6 December 2017
Wednesdays 14:00-16:00 (5 weeks)
The art of Ancient Macedonia and the Hellenistic Kingdoms
Leader: **Christina Grande**
Venue: Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

10 January-14 March 2018
Wednesdays 14:00-16:00 (10 weeks)
The Renaissance: Part One
Leader: **Geoffrey Nuttall**
Venue: Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

23 January-20 February 2018
Tuesdays 11:00-13:00 (5 weeks)
5 x 5: five exhibitions across five decades of contemporary art
Leader: **Anna Moszynska**
Venue: Swedenborg House

25 January-1 March 2018
Thursdays 11:00-13:00 (6 weeks)
English medieval cathedrals in context
Leader: **John McNeill**
Venue: Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

SEMINARS AND SCHOOLS

23 October-13 November 2017
Mondays 14:00-16:00 (4 weeks)
Seminar: *Body ideal and the suffering body: the nude in early modern Italian art*
Leader: **Kasia Murawska-Muthesius**
Venue: Keynes Library

16-18 May 2018
Spring School: *Studiolo and Kunstkammer: the Renaissance collector north and south of the Alps*
Lectures and Museum visit
Leader: **Clare Ford-Wille**
Venue: Conway Hall and the V&A Museum

STUDY DAYS, VISITS AND WALKS

Tuesday 26 September 2017
11:00-16:30
Study Day: *Florence and the Medici, 1434-94*
Leader: **Siân Walters**
Venue: The Art Workers' Guild

Monday 2 October 2017
11:00-13:00
Walk: *Fizzing around Fitzrovia*
Guide: **Andrew Davies**

Monday 9 October 2017
18:00-20:00
Study Visit: *Simmons & Simmons Art Collection*
Leader: **Curator**
Venue: CityPoint

Tuesday 17 October 2017
11:00-16:30
Study Day: *Surrealism*
Leader: **Jacqueline Cockburn**
Venue: Keynes Library

Tuesday 7 November 2017
11:00-16:30
Study Day: *Russian art at the time of the Revolution*
Leader: **Natalia Murray**
Venue: Conway Hall

Additional study events will be announced during the year

STUDY TOURS

12-17 September 2017
Study Tour: *Villas of the Veneto*
Leader: **Carlo Corsato**

13-16 October 2017
Study Tour: *Marseille*
Leader: **Alexandra Gajewski**

4-10 June 2018
Study Tour: *Malta*
Leader: **Juliet Rix**

Design: www.fredd.co.uk