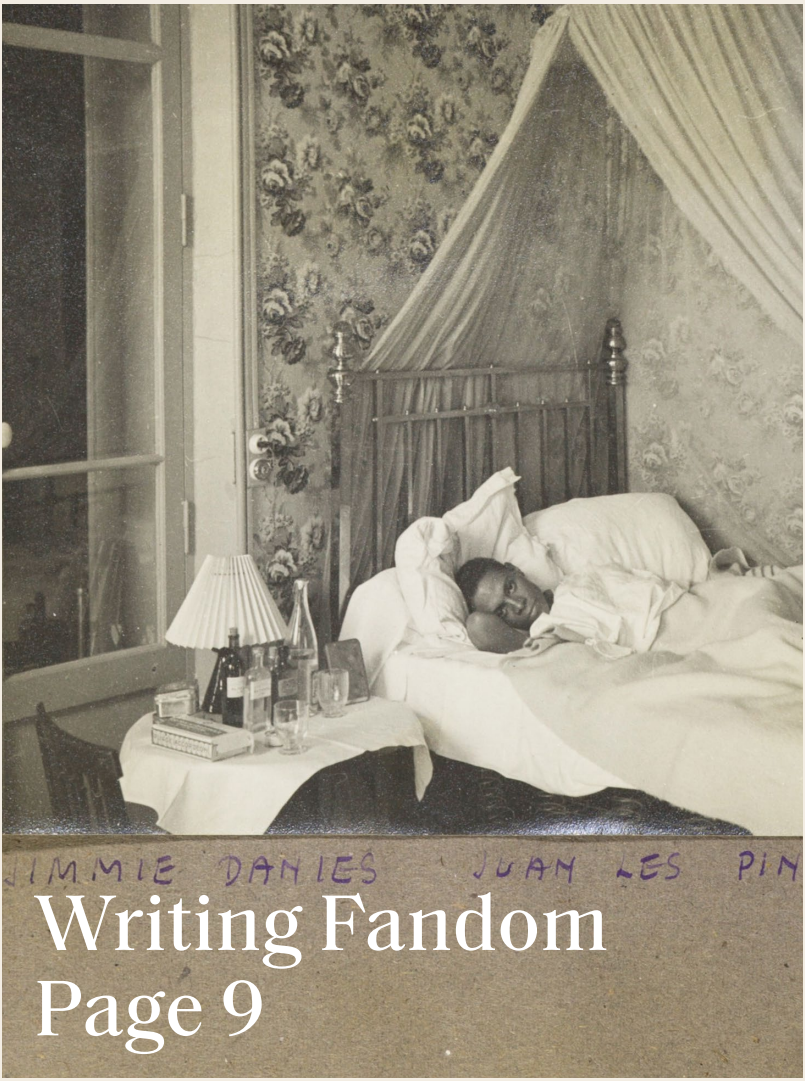
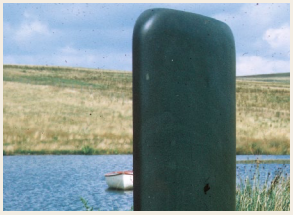
PMC Notes No. 18

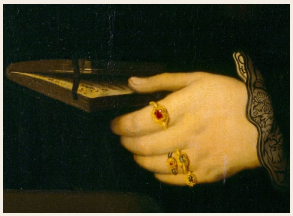


Writing Fandom Page 9

The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art is an educational charity committed to promoting original research into the history of British art and architecture. It is a part of Yale University and its activities and resources include research events, public lectures, publications, fellowships, grants programmes, and a library and archival collection. *PMC Notes*, the Centre's newsletter, is published three times per year.

PMC Notes No. 18





One of the shared motifs of this issue's articles and their illustrations is that of the handcrafted inscription or impression: a text carved into stone, a pattern tooled onto goatskin, a declaration drafted in paint.

Having experienced a year so suffused by online forms of communication, these traces of the mindful hand can be appreciated as a welcome reminder of the kinds of skill and care, and the types of aesthetic and tactile effect, that are too often flattened or repressed by the mediation of the digital.

Sometimes, however, these same kinds of craft and artistry can—almost magically—be brought to life by precisely the media to which they seem so antithetical.

I certainly felt this recently, when I worked on a short film about the eighteenth-century artist William Hogarth, and his pictorial series *A Harlot's Progress*. This film has now been released as part of the Centre's spring programme of public lectures, which focuses in depth on Hogarth's art, and in particular on the famous pictorial sequences that he described as his "modern moral subjects". I present the first two films in our programme, on Hogarth's *A Harlot's Progress* and *A Rake's Progress* respectively; these are followed by two films on the artist's *Industry and Idleness* and *The Four Stages of Cruelty*, presented by Meredith Gamer; and in our final two films, Elizabeth Robles discusses important responses to Hogarth's series by the contemporary artists Yinka Shonibare and Lubaina Himid. This set of

Director's Note

films, all of which have been made in collaboration with the filmmaker Jon Law, is available to watch for free at any time.

In our film on *A Harlot's Progress*, Jon and I focus in some detail on the hand-hewn graphic infrastructure of the series' six prints, made up of the many thousands of lines and dots the artist cut into each of his copper-plates with his engraver's tools.

Digital technology encouraged us to embark on this kind of examination. Jon's camera was able to magnify and rove across the remarkable, beguiling, and densely intermeshed pattern of marks crafted by Hogarth, and to do in a visually spectacular fashion—one, indeed, that seemed to operate beyond the capabilities, even, of the naked eye.

Having looked at these engravings for many years, and often in the flesh, I certainly felt as if, seeing them blown up on screen, I was seeing them anew. And in doing so, I became all the more aware of, and fascinated by, the manual dexterity and tactile intimacy that lay at the heart of Hogarth's practice as an engraver, and that shaped the development of his images prior to their passage through the printing press.

I hope the same sense of seeing and appreciating an object afresh, thanks to the contemporary capabilities of screen media, will be shared by anyone who watches the film, including those to whom Hogarth's works are already familiar.

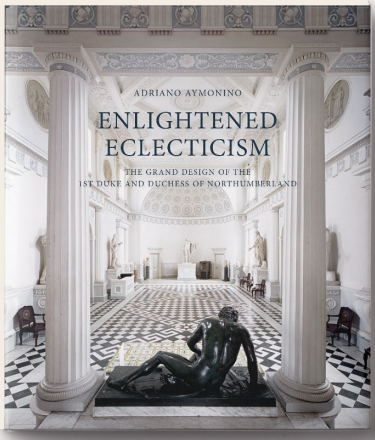
In this instance, at least, the intervention of the digital can be seen to have facilitated a potent and revealing encounter with the handcrafted work of art, and more precisely with the complex, elusive handiwork that underpins Hogarth's set of printed images.

Mark Hallett
Director of Studies

The central decades of the eighteenth century in Britain were crucial to the history of European taste and design. One of the period's most important campaigns of patronage and collecting was that of the 1st Duke and Duchess of Northumberland: Sir Hugh Smithson (1712–86) and Lady Elizabeth Seymour Percy (1716–76). This book examines four houses that they refurbished in eclectic architectural styles – Stanwick Hall, Northumberland House, Syon House and Alnwick Castle – alongside the innumerable objects they collected, their funerary monuments and their persistent engagement in Georgian London's public sphere. Over the years, their commissions embraced or pioneered styles as varied as Palladianism, rococo, neoclassicism and Gothic revival. Their development sheds light on the eclectic taste of Georgian Britain, the emergence of neoclassicism, and the cultures of the Grand Tour and the Enlightenment.

Enlightened Eclecticism: The Grand Design of the 1st Duke and Duchess of Northumberland
Adriano Aymonino

Publication date
June 2021
Dimensions
284 x 246mm
Pages
400
Illustrations
285



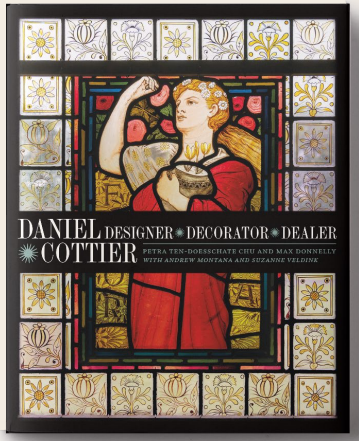
New Books

This book follows the phenomenal rise of Daniel Cottier (1838–1891) from an apprentice coach painter in Glasgow to the founder of Cottier & Co., a fine and decorative arts business with branches in London, New York, Sydney and Melbourne. This gifted designer and brilliant art entrepreneur keenly spotted one of the key aspects of late nineteenth-century bourgeois culture – its focus on family, home and church – and seized the artistic and commercial opportunities of the building and decorating boom that it brought about. Cottier was a proponent of the Aesthetic movement, an international trend in the history of culture, art and design from the mid-1860s to the late 1890s. Beyond biography, this book illuminates a significant event of late nineteenth-century cultural history – Aestheticism's cult of beauty meeting with the bourgeoisie's financial ability to possess it.

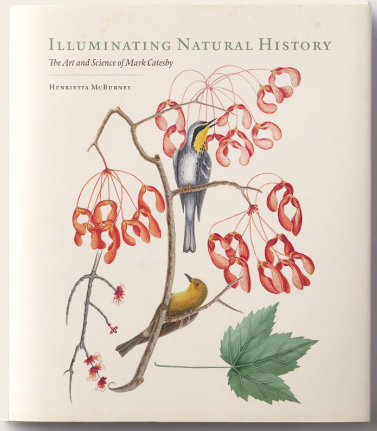
Daniel Cottier: Designer, Decorator, Dealer

Petra ten-Doesschate Chu, Max Donnelly

Publication date
May 2021
Dimensions
270 x 216mm
Pages
256
Illustrations
200



This book explores the life and work of the celebrated eighteenth-century English naturalist, explorer, artist and author Mark Catesby (1683–1749). During Catesby's lifetime, science was poised to shift from a world of amateur virtuosi to one of professional experts. Working against a backdrop of global travel that incorporated collecting and direct observation of nature, Catesby spent two prolonged periods in the New World – in Virginia (1712–19) and South Carolina and the Bahamas (1722–6). In his majestic two-volume *Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* (1731–43), he reflected the excitement, drama and beauty of the natural world. Interweaving elements of art history, history of science, natural history illustration, book history, garden history and colonial history, this volume brings together a wealth of unpublished images as well as newly discovered letters by Catesby, which bring the story of this extraordinary pioneer naturalist vividly to life.



Illuminating Natural History: The Art and Science of Mark Catesby
Henrietta McBurney

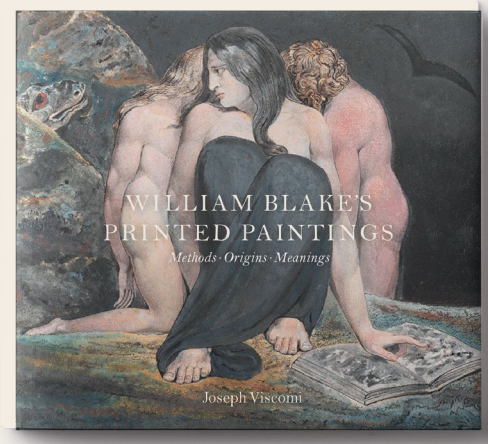
Publication date
June 2021
Dimensions
284 x 246mm
Pages
384
Illustrations
250

New Books

Among William Blake's (1757–1827) most widely recognised and highly regarded works as an artist are twelve colour printed drawings, or monoprints, conceived and executed in 1795. This book investigates these masterworks, explaining Blake's technique – one he essentially reinvented, unaware of seventeenth-century precursors – to show that these works are paintings and played a crucial role in Blake's development as a painter. Using material and historical analyses, Joseph Viscomi argues that the monoprints were created as autonomous designs rather than as illustrations for Blake's illuminated books. Enlivened with bountiful illustrations, the text approaches the works from the perspective of the studio and within the context of their time.

Blake's Printed Paintings: Methods, Origins, Meanings
Joseph Viscomi

Publication date
May 2021
Dimensions
270 x 216mm
Pages
256
Illustrations
180



In this essay, Dr Catherine Grant, Senior Lecturer at Goldsmiths, University of London, explores contemporary experimental writing on art – and writing as art – by drawing on her work for a recent episode of the Centre's podcast, *British Art Talks*. The episode belongs to a four-part mini-series, "Experiments in Art Writing", released this April and May, which asks different art historians and writers to describe the literary, poetic, fictional, and artistic materials that have shaped the form of their writing.

Experiments in Art Writing


WILD
IMAGINATIONS
TRANSFORM
CHAUVINIST
HEGEMONY


WHISPERS
INCREASE
'TIL CACOPHONIES
HEARD

When I was invited to choose texts that have inspired me for the Centre's podcast series "Experiments in Art Writing", it was very hard to whittle down a list. Reading for pleasure is something that I've done all my life, and texts often find their way into my art-historical research unexpectedly. To choose four authors for the podcast episode, I decided to reflect on innovations happening in the present. In recent years, there has been a renaissance of experimental writing about art, writing with art, and writing as art. I wonder whether our short and fidgety attention spans in the digital world mean we crave a good story. Some years ago, an eminent North American art historian told me: "Write short books. No one has time to read long ones anymore." Whether this is true or not, I have been intrigued by the ways in which art history can reimagine itself by drawing on literary forms, and how the adjacent areas of art writing, artists' writing, and art criticism are often experimental, creative, and playful spaces. As will become clear, my choices experiment with literary forms to find expression for feminist and queer identities and histories. I begin with fandom as an approach to writing that allows for emotional, passionate, and embodied responses, before moving to archival fantasies and fictional artists, ending with the epistolary as an address to the reader who is embraced as a committed and interested friend. These extracts are a small taster of the longer discussion in the podcast.

In Holly Pester's performance poem "Voice in my Head calling for Witchy Methodology", she calls up other ways of knowing apart from academic ones, in a text that writes alongside Anna Bunting-Branch's visual reimagining of the 1970s feminist collective W.I.T.C.H. (this originally stood for Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell). As you can see from the illustrations here, Bunting-Branch uses this acronym for her own series of poetic imaginings. Pester's text below was written in response to a film made by Bunting-Branch:

> In the film I begin in a dissident space, another world from academy. Feminist activism and struggle are written rudely, emblematically. A record gets played (the WITCHES REVENGE) and I go into a daydream. […] There are posters & CALLS that recall to me potency in writing. Spelling and SPELLING of an order—(acronyms for witch). Swap agency.) To misspell is a way to conjure ideas and images into being. (Holly Pester, "Voice in my Head calling for Witchy

Methodology", first performed at The Conch, South London Gallery, 2016. Text published in Matthew Hughes and Una Hamilton Helle (eds), *Waking the Witch*, exhibition catalogue, London: Legion Projects, 2019, 8.)

Both Pester and Bunting-Branch contributed to the volume *Fandom as Methodology*, which I co-edited with Kate Random Love in 2019. We explored the possibilities of fandom as a set of practices for artists and writers, as a way of engaging with a subject that is embodied and emotional, as well as critical and transformational. Pester's work on fanfiction takes the idea of fandom as methodology and conjures it into a set of demands and possibilities:

> The illegitimate knowledges of FANFICTION are non-totalising of history. They are desire-led and born to collectives who care carelessly. Fanfic tactics say, like speaking to myself, debate the source of knowledge by fictionalising laws of truth to many alternatives>>>materials of fantasies speaking outside themselves. (here I am in it.)
> (Pester, "Voice in my Head calling for Witchy Methodology")

This fictionalising of knowledge to create a powerful fantasy runs throughout my next choice: the debut novel *LOTE* (2020) by Shola von Reinhold, which was introduced to me by James Boaden and Isabel Waidner. The narrative begins in a fictional version of the National Portrait Gallery archive, with a researcher, Mathilda, uncovering a little-known artist associated with the Young Bright Things. This artist, Hermia Druitt, captures Mathilda's imagination, and sets off a chain of events that lead to a beautifully decadent romp through the past and present of queer Black lives in and out of the artworld. In this extract, Mathilda sees a photograph of Druitt for the first time:

> Beyond photographs taken for colonial documentation, I wasn't sure if I'd ever seen a photograph of a Black woman, or man, from this era, with hair this texture, that hadn't been ironed or lye-straightened. Certainly never in such a setting. An excruciation of coil and kink, for it made me ache with jealousy and bliss. In a chain-mailed hand she clutched a champagne coupe like a holy grail. The other palm was angled

JIMMIE DANIES JUAN LES PINS 1935

JIMMIE 1944
11 FITZROY SQ.

Coda would stop to talk to Corinna and me about so many things. His piercing good looks held us hostage along with his equally fascinating knowledge of life strange and beautiful. The Wahoe Indians and their sacred *de'ek wadapush* (Standing Gray Rock), which you can see across the lake from Meeks Bay, if you look toward the east. The hummingbirds of Lake Tahoe. Fishing for trout. John Lennon. The woman in the California desert who was badly bruised but survived the meteorite that blasted through her roof on January 3, 1957.

But most importantly, Coda encouraged Shasta to play with me at the edge of the lake.

As a child, I desperately longed for a dog. Coda recognized my hunger and nourished it.

○ ○ ○

Coda is a photographer of Lake Tahoe and its nearby lakes (Echo Lake, Donner Laker, Fallen Leaf Lake), as well as the Truckee River, the Sierra Nevada, the coastline of Northern California, huge boulders on the beaches of Point Lobos, sand dunes, ice crystals, windblown California cypress trees, the roots of redwoods, mushrooms, kelp, caves, and the body in the tradition of Edward Weston. But for Coda, the body before his camera is always male. Young males. Subterranean treasures. Secret stone flowers carved out of aching rock, which will never fully blossom.

Coda took his first photographs of me throughout my tenth summer, in shorts and T-shirt, often just my shorts: climbing up the craggy rocks off the beach, the lone figure within a panorama of mountain peaks, the trail of a river, the opening of a cave. He would often focus on that most noticeable thing about me: my belly button, alive as a rose not plucked.

He had never photographed a child before. I do not know what happened to those pictures of me as a child. And I do not want to see them. Photographs force-feed memory, causing me to forget the real time and remember only the photograph.

It was not until I was eighteen that I would become Coda's model for his series and artist's book, *The Temptations of a Mirror Maker*. For

. . . like the navel of a dream . . .

> just a bit away from the lens, fingers arranged in an obscure saintly message, but at the same time holding a cigarette. I was about to call out to Agnes again, but instead found my hand with the photo in it slipping under the table towards my coat pocket.
> (Shola von Reinhold, *LOTE*, London: Jacaranda Books, 2020, 28)

Druitt becomes one of Mathilda's "Transfixions": figures from the past who offer ways of being in the present. Although Druitt is a fiction, many of the other Transfixions in the book are real, and the illustration included on page 14 is an example of one that sits between the world of the book and the world of the author. These photographs of Jimmie Daniels – an actor, cabaret performer, and member of the Harlem Renaissance – were posted on von Reinhold's Instagram, leading me to explore the wonderful photo albums of the photographer Barbara Ker-Seymer in the Tate Collection, now scanned and available online, moving me from the novel's fictional world to its intersection with our own.

The photograph of Daniels reclining in bed links to the charged interchange between photographer and model in my third extract, *Like a Lake* by Carol Mavor. This novella imagines a version of post-war Northern California, with a cast of fictional artists that draw on real-life examples. In this extract, a photographer named Coda Gray is described by the protagonist of the book, a young boy called Nico. Here Nico reflects on being his model:

> It was not until I was eighteen that I would become Coda's model for his series and artist's book, *The Temptations of a Mirror Maker*. For those pictures, I often posed nude, but I did not mind. I liked the way the camera felt on me. It was liberating. […]
>
> But they really aren't pictures of me. They are photographs of Coda. He is there, he is just too close to see. I can still feel the eye of Coda's giant camera atop his tripod. I can still hear the slip-slap of the film being shifted in the magazine as I become him.
>
> I am not a famous person, but my nameless nude body was made famous by Coda Gray.
> (Carol Mavor, *Like a Lake: A Story of Uneasy Love and*

Photography, New York: Fordham University Press, 2020, 22, 24)

Mavor writes an account of being photographed with the license of fiction, creating a space that goes beyond the analytical, moving into the affective, tactile, and suggestive realm of relationality. This is something she has explored for many years in her art-historical writing, with the difficulty of theorising these encounters having preoccupied many art historians. Here she allows fantasy to take over.

My last extract also speaks to an intimacy between two people, but here it is an exchange of letters rather than the taking of photographs. Lubaina Himid's epistolary essay "Letters to Susan" (2011) sets out a history of her three landmark exhibitions in the 1980s and the display that commemorated them at Tate Britain in 2011–2012. By writing this history through a series of letters that respond to unseen questions from "Susan" (most likely the artist and researcher Susan Walsh who contributed archival material to the exhibition, and was involved in Himid's research centre "Making Histories Visible"), Himid speaks to a reader who is presumed to be a collaborator, friend, and supporter. This is not an incidental point, but a political way of creating space for a history of Black British art – and in particular, of Black British women artists – within an art history that often minimises or ignores their contributions. These extracts come from the final letter in the essay:

> Dear Susan,
>
> I cannot believe that we really have managed to bring together seven of the artists from the 1980s shows in such a beautiful room at Tate Britain. I'm convinced that my letters to you have galvanised the goddess of exhibitions into action. I love the sensation of being in the room with the work itself, the selection of archive material and your video show reel with its footage from *The State of the Art*[…]
>
> My exhibitions and displays are always an invitation to develop any ideas an audience might have to take up the challenge and build upon whatever it is the art in the space has initiated. It is a strategy that sometimes works in this competitive bear-pit in which venue attempts to outwit venue and academics are squeezed into leading double lives by having to communicate effectively within and without the

> institution. Unfortunately, artists' histories can still easily disappear amidst all this and often only a few re-emerge as awareness surges then fades, seemingly for no reason. Many are still making very good work indeed. It causes pain. (Lubaina Himid, "Letters to Susan", in Lubaina Himid (ed.), *Thin Black Line(s)*, Preston: Making Histories Visible Project, Centre for Contemporary Art, UCLan, 2011, 24–25)

I'm grateful to Dorothy Price and Ella S. Mills who generously shared their brilliant research into Black British art from this period while I was exploring Himid's "Letters to Susan".

Through the letters and the Tate exhibition, Himid experiments with the different ways of keeping her artistic histories alive, so that they can be discovered by future generations, like von Reinhold's researcher Mathilda in the National Portrait Gallery archive, Mavor's imagined encounter between modernist photographer and model, or the residues of feminist activism in Pester's writings and Bunting-Branch's art.

Found across these four extracts are the themes of intimacy, archival fantasy, and a commitment to the politics of representation. These politics weave together fact and fiction, the personal and the public, historical reality and future possibility, but all demand the reader's attention, and all of them have captured me.

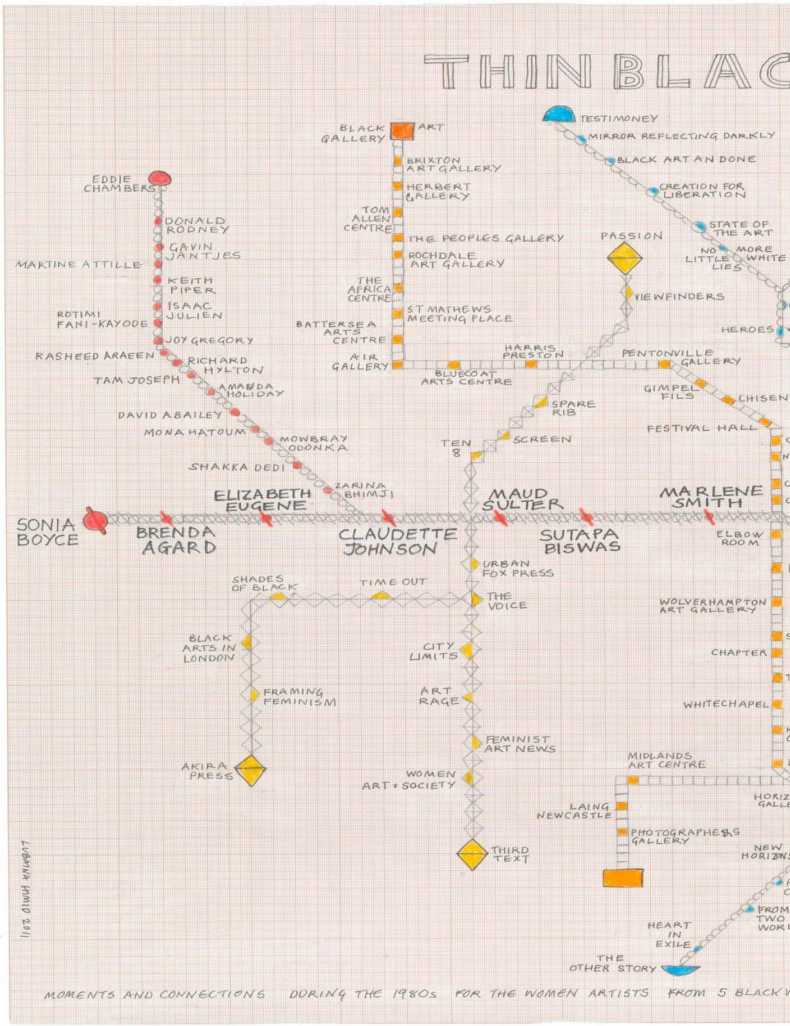
Pages 10
Anna Bunting-Branch, *W.I.T.C.H. ("Wild Imaginations Transform Chauvinist Hegemony"—Redux)* (detail), digitally printed poster, 2020. Image courtesy of Anna Bunting-Branch.

Page 11
Anna Bunting-Branch, *W.I.T.C.H. ("Whispers Increase 'Til Cacophonies Heard")*, oil and acrylic paint on folded aluminium sheet, 2016. Image courtesy of Anna Bunting-Branch.

Page 14
Barbara Ker-Seymer, *Photograph album page 8: Three photographs of Jimmie Daniels*, 1935–February 1944. Tate (TGA 974/5/7). Image courtesy of the estate of Barbara Ker-Seymer / Tate.

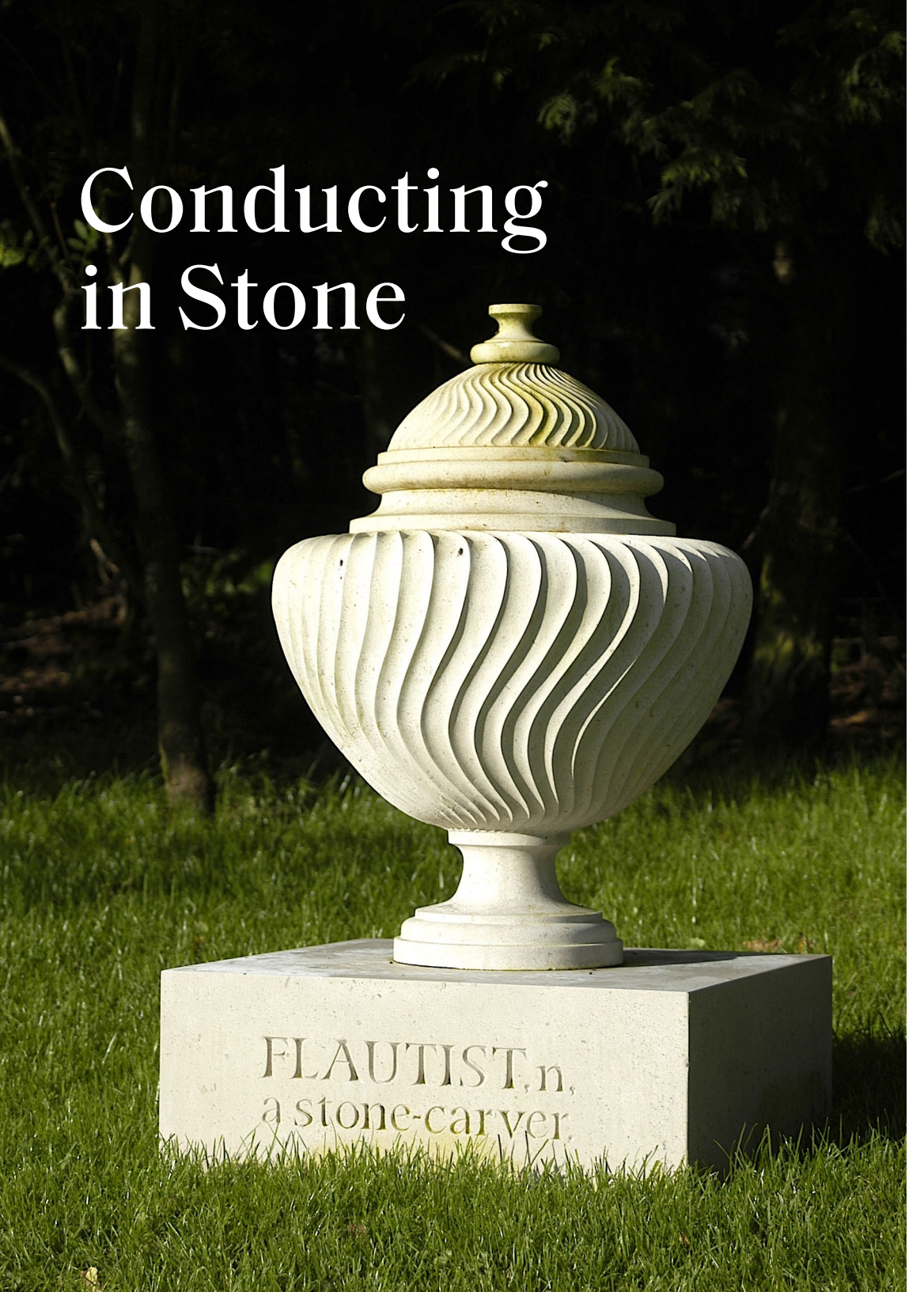
Page 15
Carol Mavor, *Like a Lake: A Story of Uneasy Love and Photography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2020), p.22-23 featuring the photograph *Tom Murphy, San Francisco, February 1948* by Minor White. Image courtesy of Carol Mavor / the Trustees of Princeton University / Fordham University Press.

Pages 19–20
Lubaina Himid, *Moments and Connections*, 2011. Image courtesy of Tate.


THIN BLAC
BLACK ART GALLERY
BRIXTON ART GALLERY
HERBERT GALLERY
TOM ALLEN CENTRE
THE PEOPLES GALLERY
ROCHDALE ART GALLERY
THE AFRICA CENTRE
ST MATHEWS MEETING PLACE
BATTERSEA ARTS CENTRE
AIR GALLERY
BLUECOAT ARTS CENTRE
HARRIS PRESTON
EDDIE CHAMBERS
DONALD RODNEY
GAVIN JANTJES
MARTINE ATTILLE
KEITH PIPER
ISAAC JULIEN
ROTIMI FANI-KAYODE
JOY GREGORY
RASHEED ARAEEN
RICHARD HYLTON
TAM JOSEPH
AMANDA HOLIDAY
DAVID A BAILEY
MONA HATOUM
MOWBRAY ODONKA
SHAKKA DEDI
ZARINA BHIMJI
ELIZABETH EUGENE
SONIA BOYCE
BRENDA AGARD
CLAUDETTE JOHNSON
MAUD SULTER
SUTAPA BISWAS
MARLENE SMITH
TESTIMONEY
MIRROR REFLECTING DARKLY
BLACK ART AN DONE
CREATION FOR LIBERATION
STATE OF THE ART
NO MORE LITTLE WHITE LIES
PASSION
VIEWFINDERS
HEROES
PENTONVILLE GALLERY
GIMPEL FILS
CHISEN
SPARE RIB
FESTIVAL HALL
TEN 8
SCREEN
ELBOW ROOM
URBAN FOX PRESS
THE VOICE
SHADES OF BLACK
TIME OUT
BLACK ARTS IN LONDON
CITY LIMITS
FRAMING FEMINISM
ART RAGE
AKIRA PRESS
FEMINIST ART NEWS
WOMEN ART + SOCIETY
THIRD TEXT
WOLVERHAMPTON ART GALLERY
CHAPTER
WHITECHAPEL
MIDLANDS ART CENTRE
LAING NEWCASTLE
PHOTOGRAPHERS GALLERY
NEW HORIZ
FROM TWO WORL
HEART IN EXILE
THE OTHER STORY
MOMENTS AND CONNECTIONS DURING THE 1980s FOR THE WOMEN ARTISTS FROM 5 BLACK


CK LINE(S)
BLK ART GROUP
BLACKWOMENS CREATIVITY PROJECT
OBAALA
LENTHAL ROAD PRINT WORKSHOP
SLADE
WOLVERHAMPTON
LEEDS
WIMBLEDON
BATH
ST MARTINS
NOTTINGHAM
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE
ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART
CHELSEA
LONDON COLLEGE OF FASHION
S.O.A.S
STOURBRIDGE
GOLDSMITHS
VERONICA RYAN
CHERRY LAWRENCE
MARGARET COOPER
ANDREA TELMAN
JEAN CAMPBELL
MUMTAZ KARIMJEE
CHILA BURMAN
LESLEE WILLS
INGRID POLLARD
THEATRE OF BLACK WOMEN
D-MAX
AUTOGRAPH
BLACK ARTS ALLIANCE
TALAWA
SANKOFA
BLACK AUDIO FILM COLLECTIVE
THE IMAGE EMPLOYED
INTIMATE DISTANCE
DAUFUSKIE ISLAND
INFLUENCES
NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK ARTISTS
CARIBBEAN EXPRESSIONS IN BRITAIN
HEROINES
NEW ROBES FOR MASHULAN
INTO THE OPEN
REFLECTIONS: THE BLACK EXPERIENCE
BLACK ART NOW
GOLD BLOODED WARRIOR
ESSENTIAL BLACK ART
PLACES OF CULTURE
CAMERAWORK
NICOLA JACOBS
COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE
CORNHOUSE
JENNIFER COMRIE
HOURIA NIATI
I.C.A.
LUBAINA HIMID
THE THIN BLACK LINE
UNRECORDED TRUTHS
BLACK WOMAN TIME NOW
5 BLACK WOMEN AT THE AFRICA CENTRE
SOME OF US ARE BRAVE
DEPICTING HISTORY FOR TODAY
MAPPIN SHEFFIELD
IKON BIRMINGHAM
YAA ASANTEWA CENTRE
PAN-AFRIKAN CONNECTION
SOUTH LONDON GALLERY
TATE
KETTLES YARD CAMBRIDGE
DRILL HALL
HORIZON GALLERY
5 BLACK WOMEN + BLACK WOMEN TIME NOW + THIN BLACK LINE ARTISTS
OTHER ARTISTS
SHOWING SPACES
EDUCATION
EXHIBITIONS
CREATIVE GROUPS
TEXTS & PUBLICATIONS
LACK WOMEN AT THE AFRICA CENTRE 85
BLACK WOMAN TIME NOW 85
THE THIN BLACK LINE 86

Conducting in Stone



Dr Greg Thomas, author of *Border Blurs: Concrete Poetry in England and Scotland* (2019), shares his recent conversations with the carver John Andrew, whom he met researching Ian Hamilton Finlay's artistic collaborators. This research was carried out for the Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation, which promotes public understanding of Scottish art and creativity, and cares for a collection of over 600 works. In 2019, the Foundation donated approximately 250 publications on Scottish art to the Centre's library and, in February 2021, co-organised a public talk on French art and the Scottish Enlightenment (now available online).

In his 1977 essay "Ian Hamilton Finlay: An Imaginary Portrait", Stephen Bann chooses the analogy of the orchestral conductor to evoke one aspect of the collaborative processes that Finlay's practice had invited since his 1966 relocation to Stonypath Farmhouse, in the Pentland Hills south of Edinburgh. By this reading, the artist-collaborator is not just a brilliant technician but also "takes the risk of performance … conducting the project in a virtuoso style which draws a large measure of attention to his own deliberate extension of the possibilities latent in the score".

Ian Hamilton Finlay (1925–2006) was a poet, visual artist, and gardener, and is now recognised as one of the most significant Scottish artists and writers of the twentieth century. His practice is particularly associated with the creation of poetry in visually arresting and three-dimensional forms, partly as an extension of concrete poetics. The expansive grounds of Stonypath were vital to the realisation of Finlay's plastic-poetic vision, but so too were an array of highly skilled artisans, including ceramicists, carpenters, and stonemasons, who helped him to bring his concepts to fruition. Indeed, by 1977, when Bann drew his analogy, the garden was well on its way to becoming Little Sparta, a transportive environment of poem-objects whose thematic and topographical scale involved some 55 collaborators (as calculated by Jessie Sheeler and Patrick Eyres for Sheeler's 2015 text *Little Sparta: A Guide to the Garden of Ian Hamilton Finlay*).

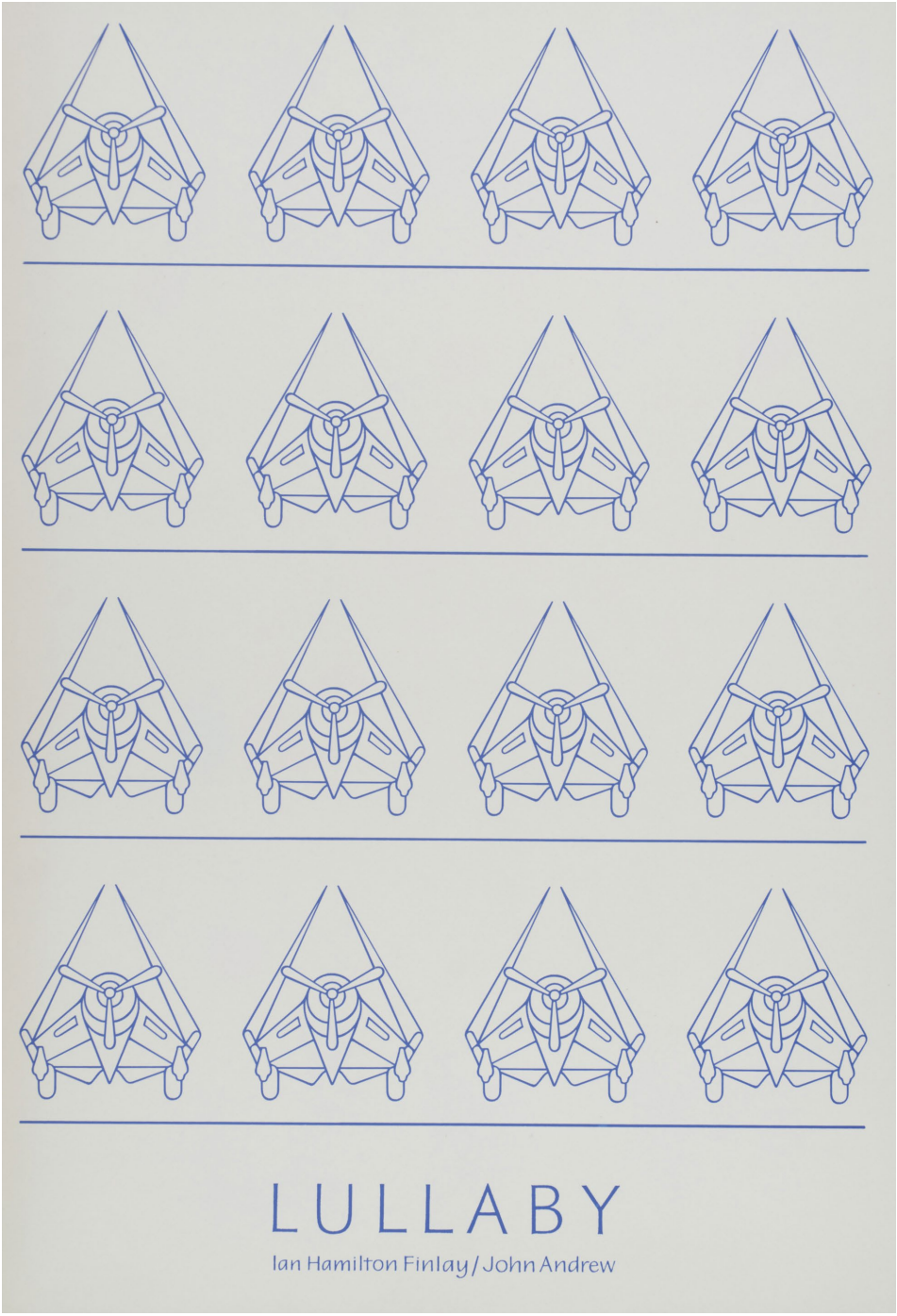
What type of collaborator did Finlay seek out? And what was the experience of these associates working with an artist whose sense of communal production seemingly involved a heady mixture of exactitude and creative openness? It is in part to answer such questions that the Fleming-Wyfold Art Foundation has commissioned a project to identify and interview a number of Finlay's living collaborators, including the stone carver John Andrew, responsible for 32 works in the garden, whom I spoke to and had the pleasure of getting to know during November and December 2020. We can work back to the questions just posed via John's lucid reflections on his place in Finlay's poetic universe.

To understand those reflections, however, we need to consider John Andrew's life. He was born in Bethnal Green, East London, in 1933 but moved to Elm Park in 1936, as part of the first wave of mid-century working-class migration from central London to planned communities across Essex and surrounding counties. Wartime evacuations followed, to Manchester and then to Twickenham, where he attended a secondary technical school before securing an apprenticeship at Kingston Masonry Company, whose owner, Fred Relph, counted Eric Gill among his clients. John's terms of employment included a day's educational release per week, which allowed him to enrol in the sculpture department at Kingston School of Art, where he could soon be found every weeknight as well, working on letter and stone carving.

John's most prescient childhood memories include modelling with plasticine "until it all turned brown" and carving a wolf's head for his scout pack, but his creative inclinations were hemmed in – perhaps by a sense of work as economic necessity – until after his national service in Germany during 1956–1958. On his return, he studied sculpture at the Royal College of Art (RCA), standing out as a stone carver amid a cohort of clay modellers. He was taken on as an apprentice by head of department John Skeaping to work on a wall-carving for Imperial College, but his lack of interest in clay work – considered a necessary skill by his tutors – obliged him to shift course and he graduated with a degree in graphic design (providing him with an unusual dual skillset which his work for Finlay would utilise).

Reynold Stone, the pre-eminent woodcutter and letter-carver of the post-Gill generation, taught part-time at the RCA and invited John to Litton Cheney in Dorset to work as his assistant upon his graduation in 1961. Here, John found his background thrown into relief against the company that Stone and his wife Janet kept, among Britain's 1960s intelligentsia:

"They had lots of weekend house parties: great socialites … I met Benjamin Britten there, John Betjeman, Cecil Lewis, Iris Murdoch, Compton Mackenzie … names who were just on the spines of books as far as I was concerned. This East End kid meeting the whole establishment of English society: it was always interesting".


LULLABY
Ian Hamilton Finlay / John Andrew

It was through Stone that John secured the kind of prestigious, technically demanding, traditional stonework commissions that attracted Finlay (John's clients included landed families with an appetite for heraldry and headstones). Finlay was already working with Stone's previous assistant, the letter-cutter Michael Harvey, who recommended John as a technically brilliant direct carver in the tradition revived by Gill and his peers.

From the early 1970s, then, John found himself communicating – initially remotely – on a regular stream of jobs at Little Sparta, at a time when Finlay's poetic vision was drawing together the iconography of Greco-Roman mythology and twentieth-century warfare. One of John's earliest tasks was therefore to execute the plinth-mounted stone models of toy aircraft and ships found in the Roman Garden at the front of the house. "It's difficult to remember the exact order of jobs", he notes, when asked about his first commission, "because I did pretty well everything".

John and Finlay didn't meet face to face until the end of the decade, though exact dates and motives are again hard to recall. John's description of a typical visit is, however, wonderfully evocative:

"Quite often I would go up there to add lettering to carving someone else had done … and I stood up in little streams and carved keystones over arches and bridges, and Ian would supply waders … He used to put me up in a little bedroom for visiting artisans above what he came to call the Garden Temple … It was pretty freezing. I think we had some little paraffin stove or something. So, you know, it was a Spartan existence".

Commissions followed across the whole garden, including the dazzling polished slate slab of *Nuclear Sail*, marking the near shore of Lochan Eck and illustrated here on page 28. Besides his work at Little Sparta, John realised a number of other stone-based works for Finlay, including the military-themed relief tablets of *A Wartime Garden* (1990).

John's analogy for his working relationship with Finlay is characteristically diffident:

"I saw a comparison between my chisels and Ian with collaborators. There's a thing called a pitcher and there's a punch, there's a claw, then there's a fine riffle or a polishing rub stone, and so on, all of them useful for particular tasks. And really, that's exactly how he worked with the collaborators. He was selecting people who could execute particular ideas".

The statement indicates the practical aspects of John's attitude to work – "most of the time it was about paying the mortgage" – and perhaps also the more scrupulous aspects of Finlay's instruction: "he was very clear as to what he wanted", as John delicately puts it. No doubt his good-natured openness to Finlay's directions partly secured the creative friendship.

However, musing on the topic of artisanship, John reveals a knowledge of

contemporary and historical reference points for his role which Finlay would surely also have valued:

"The early twentieth century saw the revival of direct carving, brought back to public esteem by artists like Jacob Epstein, Eric Gill, Henry Moore, and Barbara Hepworth … They revived a strong English tradition dating back at least to the Middle Ages and the mason carvers working on various subjects, to the glory of God and not egotism. And that's where I'm at—I'd put myself with the medieval carvers, I'd say".

Perhaps a guildsman's egalitarianism explains John's humility about his creative contribution at Little Sparta. But he was also a conductor in stone, one of many creative interpreters who helped to realise a brilliant *gesamtkunstwerk* in the grounds of a semi-derelict farmhouse in the Scottish lowlands.

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Ian Hamilton Finlay with John Andrew, *Flautist*, 2001, hopton wood stone on plinth. Little Sparta. Photograph by Robin Gillanders. © Courtesy of the estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay / © John Andrew.

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Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Lullaby*, 1975, screenprint on paper, 58.9 x 40.7 cm. Tate (P11939). © Courtesy of the estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay.

Page 25
Ian Hamilton Finlay with John Andrew, *Aircraft Carrier Bird Table (Iwo Jima)*, 1975, portland stone with incised and relief details. Little Sparta. Photograph by Robin Gillanders. © Courtesy of the estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay / © John Andrew.

Ian Hamilton Finlay, *Stonypath Garden and Gallery Series postcard design*: *'U.S.S. Nautilus'*, 1975, printed card, 22 x 15.3 cm. Tate (TGA 20012/42). © Courtesy of the estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay.

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Ian Hamilton Finlay with John Andrew, *Nuclear Sail*, 1975, slate, photographed by Demarco during an Edinburgh Arts 1975 visit to Stonypath (named Little Sparta from 1980). Little Sparta. Photograph courtesy of The Richard Demarco Archive & Demarco Digital Archive, University of Dundee. © Courtesy of the estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay / © John Andrew.

Ian Hamilton Finlay with John Andrew, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 1976, hopton wood stone, 28.10 x 28.00 x 7.60 cm. National Galleries of Scotland (GMA 1583). Photograph by Antonia Reeve. © Courtesy of the estate of Ian Hamilton Finlay / © John Andrew.


ET IN ARCADIA EGO
After Nicolas Poussin

A Sombre Binding

Lucy Kelsall, Assistant Librarian at the Centre, encounters an unusual object in our collection: a centuries-old "sombre-bound" book that previously belonged to the art historian, critic and collector Paul Oppé. The Oppé Library and Archive, allocated to the Centre in 2017, has now been fully catalogued and is available for consultation.

The Centre's Library holds more than 50,000 items, including books, periodicals, auction catalogues, exhibition catalogues, and theses. Its collections are intended for the support of research into the history of British art and architecture, and much of its material has been selected and acquired to that end. However, the library also holds a number of more unusual items, whose connection to art history might not be immediately apparent. One of these is a seventeenth-century Book of Common Prayer, which previously belonged to the art historian, critic and collector Paul Oppé (1878–1957).

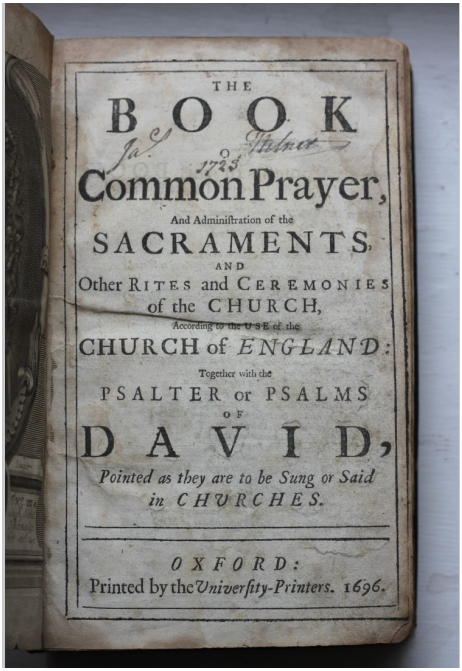
Oppé's archive and personal library were allocated to the Centre in 2017. The Oppé library consists of more than 1,300 volumes, spanning a period of more than 400 years, from the sixteenth through to the twentieth century. Much of this material relates directly to Oppé's own research interests: prominent subjects include early British drawings and watercolours, practical works on colour and artistic technique, and works on aesthetics and the philosophy of art.

The collection was clearly used as a working library, and the condition of an item does not appear to have been a priority for Oppé when making purchases, with many volumes showing signs of wear. Included are around 150 early printed books, most of which are bound in styles and materials typical of their eras, including sheepskin, goatskin, calfskin, parchment, paste paper and marbled paper. As a cataloguer unpacking and working through these books, I was familiar with much of what I saw. However, a few months into the project I came across a small book which, although not expensively or elaborately bound, I found very exciting, due to its "sombre" binding. Although I had read about this bookbinding style before, this was the first time I had ever seen such a binding "in the wild".

The sombre style is one of the more unusual bookbinding fashions of the early modern period. The style was popular during the period between 1670 and 1720, and its key characteristic is a striking lack of colour: sombre bindings frequently feature black leather, blind tooling and black edges. They are most commonly found on devotional texts, and bookbinding historian Howard Nixon has suggested that books bound in this way would be "supplied for mourning use and for Lenten observance". The example opposite, in the collection of Rare Book School at the University of Virginia, is an eighteenth-century psalter.

Sombre bindings are typically bound in black goatskin, though some examples exist of such bindings in very dark brown calfskin. In bookbinding terminology, "tooling" refers to the process of impressing decorative patterns into the leather using heated metal tools. This could be done using gold or silver leaf to create a striking metallic effect, and many of the more lavish bindings of the early modern period employ an abundance of gold-tooling. In blind-tooling, the embossed impression is left by the pressure of the tool only: when used on dark brown or black leather, the resulting effect is even more subtle. As an additional touch, the edges of the leaves could be stained in black.

Alongside the restricted colour palette appropriate to their mourning or Lenten use, sombre bindings also made use of a particular set of decorative styles and motifs. Such bindings are often elaborately tooled and geometrically balanced: in some instances, the cover has been divided into a number of distinct squares, which are often further emphasised by the use of hatched lines. Others feature a "cottage-roof" design, described in the classic reference *ABC for*


THE
BOOK
OF
Common Prayer,
And Administration of the
SACRAMENTS
AND
Other RITES and CEREMONIES
of the CHURCH,
According to the USE of the
CHURCH of ENGLAND:
Together with the
PSALTER or PSALMS
OF
DAVID,
Pointed as they are to be Sung or Said in CHURCHES.
OXFORD:
Printed by the *University-Printers.* 1696.

Book Collectors as featuring a rectangular panel where "the top and bottom … slope away from a broken centre, thus producing a sort of gabled effect". Decorative tools used on sombre bindings include acorn, tulip, and pyramid shapes, along with many other floral motifs. However, there is also a great variety of tools and designs and it is now thought that, though the sombre aesthetic was short-lived, many different binders produced work in this style.

The sombre binding which was allocated to the Centre as part of the Oppé Library, seen opposite, is one of the earliest volumes in the Oppé and Centre collections, and covers a Book of Common Prayer printed at Oxford University in 1696. This text is illustrated by engraved plates featuring biblical scenes, and has been bound together with a Book of Psalms printed in London in the same year "by W. and J. Wilde, for the Company of Stationers". Many of the typical elements of the "sombre" style are in evidence: the leather is black goatskin; the boards have been tooled in blind with a design incorporating both geometric squares and "cottage-roof" elements; extensive use has been made of closely spaced parallel lines; and both tulip and pyramid tools are prominent. The edges of the leaves have not been stained black or decorated, but the endpapers are brightly marbled and there is a small amount of gold-tooling on the turn-ins, providing a colourful contrast when the book is opened.

Although Oppé frequently marked his books via bookplates, inscriptions, and extensive handwritten annotations, this volume, as with many of the earlier works in his collection, bears no markings relating to his ownership. The book is also something of an anomaly within the Oppé Library: it is the only devotional work in the collection and does not provide an obvious link to Oppé's research interests. How it came into his possession is unknown. Bibles and other religious texts were frequently passed down within families, however, there is no evidence for a family connection here. The volume does contain the inscriptions of two previous owners. On the title page is inscribed "Ja. Milner 1723", and on the front pastedown and endpaper: "Mary Smith". A section has also been cut away from the head of the frontispiece of the Book of Common Prayer, a likely indication of an inscription which was removed by a later owner.

Howard Nixon described the practice of binding books in the sombre fashion as "exceedingly common" during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. However, their window of popularity was relatively brief, and such bindings are correspondingly rare

among the many other styles found in institutional special collections today. Although visually austere, their ornate tooling and dyed calfskin or goatskin covers would not have placed them among the cheapest bindings available. This contrast provokes questions about whether such a volume would have been intended for public display or private devotion. In paintings depicting mourning, books are sometimes visible as symbols of status and piety. Hans Eworth's mid-sixteenth-century painting of Mary Neville, Lady Dacre (which appears at the beginning of this essay) portrays her surrounded by markers of her widowhood, including the small book with black edges which she holds open. According to art historian Elizabeth Honig, "[a] n illuminated letter glimpsed on the page indicates that this is one of the devotional works that were considered fitting reading material for a woman". This painting is too early for the book held by Mary Neville to be tooled in the sombre fashion, but highlights the wider tradition of books styled for religious observance.

Bookbindings in portraits can be important clues for added context and, in some instances, have even been used to identify the sitters. However, the subtle blind-on-black effect of a sombre binding does not lend itself to visual representation and, in this sense, such bindings are largely invisible. This invisibility is also reflected to a certain extent in library catalogue records: detailed bookbinding information is not always recorded unless an institution has the time and resources for specialist cataloguing, and there will be many sombre bindings which cannot be located in this way. We hope that Oppé's sombre binding, as well as the other interesting early printed books in his library, will be valuable to researchers not only for their connection to Oppé's own life and work, but also for their broader bibliographical and historical interest.

the time? And there
good way off from th
herd of many ſwine fe
So the devils beſought
ſaying, If thou caſt us
ſuffer us to go away i
herd of ſwine. And
unto them, Go. And
they were come out,
went into the herd of
and behold, the whole
ſwine ran violently do
deep place into the ſe
periſhed in the waters.
hey that kept them fled,
ent their ways into the
nd told every thing,
hat was befallen to the
ſſed of the devils. An
old, the whole city
t to meet Jeſus: and
ey ſaw him, they beſ
n that he would depa
their coaſts.

Chriſt rebuketh the Winds. *Mat. 8.*

And behold there aroſe a great tempeſt in the Sea, inſomuch that the Ship was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep. v. 24. And his Diſciples came to him and awoke him ſaying L^d ſave us. v. 25.

The fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

The Collect.

O Lord, we beſeech thee
keep thy Church
ſhold continually in
religion, that they
ean only upon the
hy heavenly grace,
more be defended by
ty power, through Je
ſt our Lord. *Amen.*

The Epiſtle. Col. 3. 12.
lt on therefore (as
elect of God, holy
ed) bowels of mer
kin

Pages 29
Hans Eworth, *Lady Mary Neville, Lady Dacre* (detail), 16th century, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 63.5 cm. The Vyne, Hampshire. © National Trust Photographic Library / Derrick E. Witty / Bridgeman Images.

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N. Brady and N. Tate. *A new version of the Psalms of David, fitted to the tunes used in churches*. London: Printed for the Company of Stationers, 1706. Ex Chrono 1706. Object Identifier 17369. Provided courtesy of Rare Book School at the University of Virginia. Photo by Nina Thomas.

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Inside book plate of the Oppé Library's sombre binding, *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments*. Oxford: Printed by the University-Printers, 1696. Paul Oppé Library, OPPE-1696-1. Photo by Lucy Kelsall.

Cover of the Oppé Library's sombre binding, T*he Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments*. Oxford: Printed by the University-Printers, 1696. Paul Oppé Library, OPPE-1696-1. Photo by Lucy Kelsall.

Title page of the Oppé Library's sombre binding, *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments.* Oxford: Printed by the University-Printers, 1696. Paul Oppé Library, OPPE-1696-1. Photo by Lucy Kelsall.

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Plate inside the Oppé Library's sombre binding, *The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments.* Oxford: Printed by the University-Printers, 1696. Paul Oppé Library, OPPE-1696-1. Photo by Lucy Kelsall.

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