THE 22ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF ART HISTORIANS UNIVERSITY OF NORTHUMBRIA AT NEWCASTLE

BEAUTY?

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

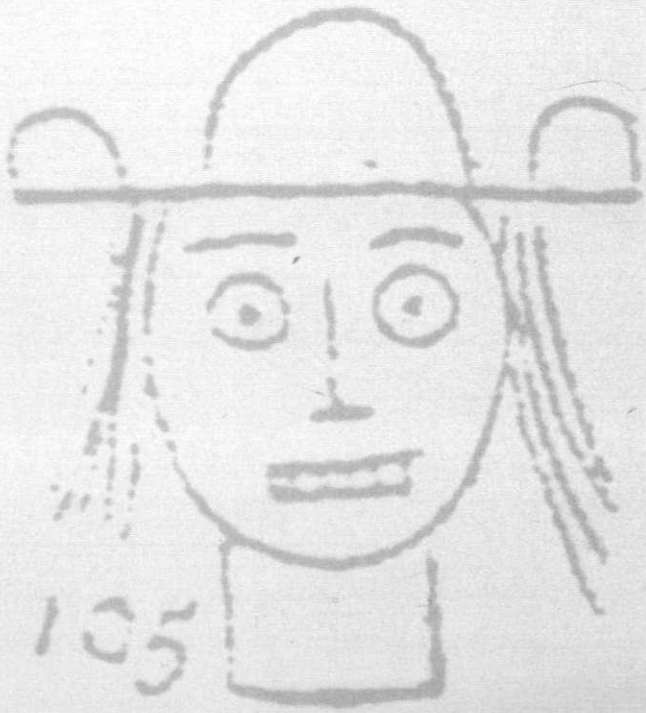
The Conference has been made possible through the help of numerous individuals and organisations: those who have contributed art works, convened strands, chaired panels, given papers or in some way participated in one or other of the various sessions; those who have assisted with visits, in particular, Howard Coutts, Hugh Dixon, Phoebe Lowery, and Roger Tillotson; student helpers; Kate Woodhead and the Executive Committee of the Association; those involved in previous AAH conferences who have given advice; the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Northumbria, Kenneth McConkey; immediate colleagues in the Department of Historical and Critical Studies at Northumbria, notably our redoubtable technicians, Tom Caisley and Vince Moore; colleagues in other parts of the University, in particular, Sheila Cowell, Richard Buswell, Clive Morphet, Frank Peck, Vicky Pepys and Rosalind Thom; those who have provided generous financial support or help in kind, namely, the Arts Council, Northern Arts, Northern Sights, the City of Newcastle upon Tyne, Air UK and our own University; Newcastle gallery curators, Michelle Hirschhorn, John Millard, Gavin Robson, Anthony Parton and Mara Helen Wood; and last but not least, our ever-patient designers, Gainford Design Associates. We thank them all most warmly.

Our special thanks, however, must go to the Conference Administrator and Book Fair Organiser, Sarah Kane. Sarah's competence, good humour and indefatigability have been our inspiration.

Malcolm Gee and

Paul Usherwood

Conveners



BEAUTY?

In proposing Beauty? as the theme of the 1996 conference our intention has been to establish a general theme of potential interest, not to assert any particular position on the role of the aesthetic in the practice and study of the visual arts. We do think that questions about that role are worth asking, however, not least because they tend to be avoided in academic discussion at least. "The question 'What is art? and the old answer that defined it as having aesthetic rather than utilitarian appeal has never seemed further from anyone's mind," commented Svetlana Alpers in 1977. More recently Eric Fernie has observed that although the "concept of beauty has probably had more written about it than any other aspect of the visual arts (...) In the late twentieth century the concept is not often appealed to by artists, and art historians refer to it less and less, choosing instead to discuss the issues raised by it in terms of quality."[1] As both these authors acknowledge, while the removal of some canonical notion of beauty in relation to visual form was both necessary and liberating for the discipline(s) we represent, it also poses some problems in terms of defining better its methods, scope and goals.

In examining beauty as a historically operative concept, the papers offered here, which cover an impressive and, we hope, exciting range of material, seem to fall into three principal categories. One group considers issues of beauty and 'taste' as applied to art, architecture and design within defined periods or places – Medieval and Renaissance Europe, late nineteenth-century England, the British city, the Soviet bloc, Africa. Another examines the myriad and complex relationship between ideas of beauty and representations of the body, mainly but not exclusively in modern European societies. A third group is concerned with beauty's 'other' – the ugly, the grotesque, the anti-aesthetic, the 'shadow' cast by normative theories of art and its objects. Questions of power, belief, gender and identity are constantly posed, reflecting the dominant issues in the art historical community today. Questions of pleasure are, perhaps surprisingly, less evident.

The Newcastle conference takes place in the context of the *Year of the Visual Arts* and in a place where the teaching of art and design is a central activity. We have made a particular effort to incorporate the display and critical discussion of contemporary art works into the proceedings. The works of our colleagues in the department of Visual and Performing Arts, of Jane Wheeler, Eddy Hardy, Mark Haywood, Karen Knorr, Jamelle Hassan and Orlan offer echoes and counterpoints to our academic discourse. They exemplify issues which are bound to concern us one way or another: what does it mean to make 'art' now? what will it mean in the future? and how should we talk about it?

1 S Alpers, 'Is art history?', reprinted in S Kemal and I Gaskell, Explanation and value in the arts, (Cambridge, 1993), p113; E Fernie, Art History and its methods (London, 1995) p328.

General Information

Conference Venue
The venue for the conference will be Ellison Building on the University of Northumbria's City Campus. The registration desk in the foyer of Ellison Building will be open from 9.30am and staffed continuously throughout the conference.

Badges
Delegates will be issued with badges at registration. It is essential that they are worn for the duration of the conference.

Student helpers
There will be a team of student helpers working at the conference, identifiable by conference T-shirts.

Refreshments
Coffee and tea will be served at a number of points throughout Ellison Building. On Friday and Sunday, lunch will consist of a buffet including several vegetarian options, to be served in Ellison Refectory (Castles). On Saturday, delegates can pick up a packed lunch from Ellison Refectory; a number of these will be marked 'vegetarian'.

The 1996 Art History Book Fair
The Book Fair will take place in Rutherford Hall just off the foyer of Ellison Building and will be open on Friday and Saturday from 9.30am until 5.30pm. Over twenty wide-ranging displays will feature the latest art books, magazines and periodicals, slide collections, as well as antiquarian, rare, and second-hand books. A catalogue describing each of the publishers and booksellers is to be found in the Delegates Packs.

Artworks
Various artworks have been commissioned for the conference. Jane Wheeler's wall painting *The Wardrobe Mistress* can be seen in the circular lobby just outside the main lecture theatre in Ellison Building. Karen Knorr's *Being for Another* will be shown in classroom A102 on the ground floor of Ellison Building. Mark Hayward's *Museum with Wall* can be seen in Ellison Refectory. Jamelle Hassan's billboard *Linkage* will be exhibited in the foyer of Ellison Building along with works by Eddy Hardy. Artwork by staff of the Department of Visual Arts will be on display in the foyer of Squires Building.
(For more on these, see pages 20-23.)

Receptions
On Friday evening, delegates may choose *either* the private view of the Baselitz exhibition at the University Gallery *or* a civic reception at the Laing Art Gallery, to be opened by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle. The Laing is presently host to a major exhibition of recent acquisitions by the Tate Gallery.

On Saturday evening, delegates are invited to attend a reception at the Hatton Gallery, University of Newcastle, which is currently staging an important exhibition of recent acquisitions by the Arts Council.

Eating Out
The two main areas for eating out are Stowell St (over a dozen Chinese restaurants, some of them expensive) and Dean St/The Quayside (Italian, Malaysian, Indian and French, a range of prices). Please note, restaurants can be rather full on Friday and Saturday nights. We therefore strongly recommend that you consult the restaurants list in the Delegates Pack and book in advance.

Visits
See noticeboard at the Registration Desk for details of where to join coaches, entrance charges, etc. Please note, if you wish to go on one of the Visits and have not booked, there may well be places still available. Please enquire at the Registration Desk.

Parking
Parking is in Lipman Car Park. Only those who have pre-booked a parking space may park there. Parking permits with the conference motif must be clearly displayed on the dashboard of each delegate's car. Delegates who for some reason did not receive their permit through the post should come to the registration desk for a replacement.

Taxis
The nearest taxi ranks to the Laing Art Gallery and the Hatton Gallery are to be found in Northumberland St. If you are phoning we would recommend:

Central Taxis	232 6464, 261 0900
Metro Taxis	232 2235, 232 2297
Newcastle Taxis	232 5656, 232 9864
Noda Taxis	222 1888, 232 7777

Students!
Members of the Student Committee will be present in the foyer during registration every day. Please do come and introduce yourselves and chat over a cup of coffee before the day's proceedings begin.

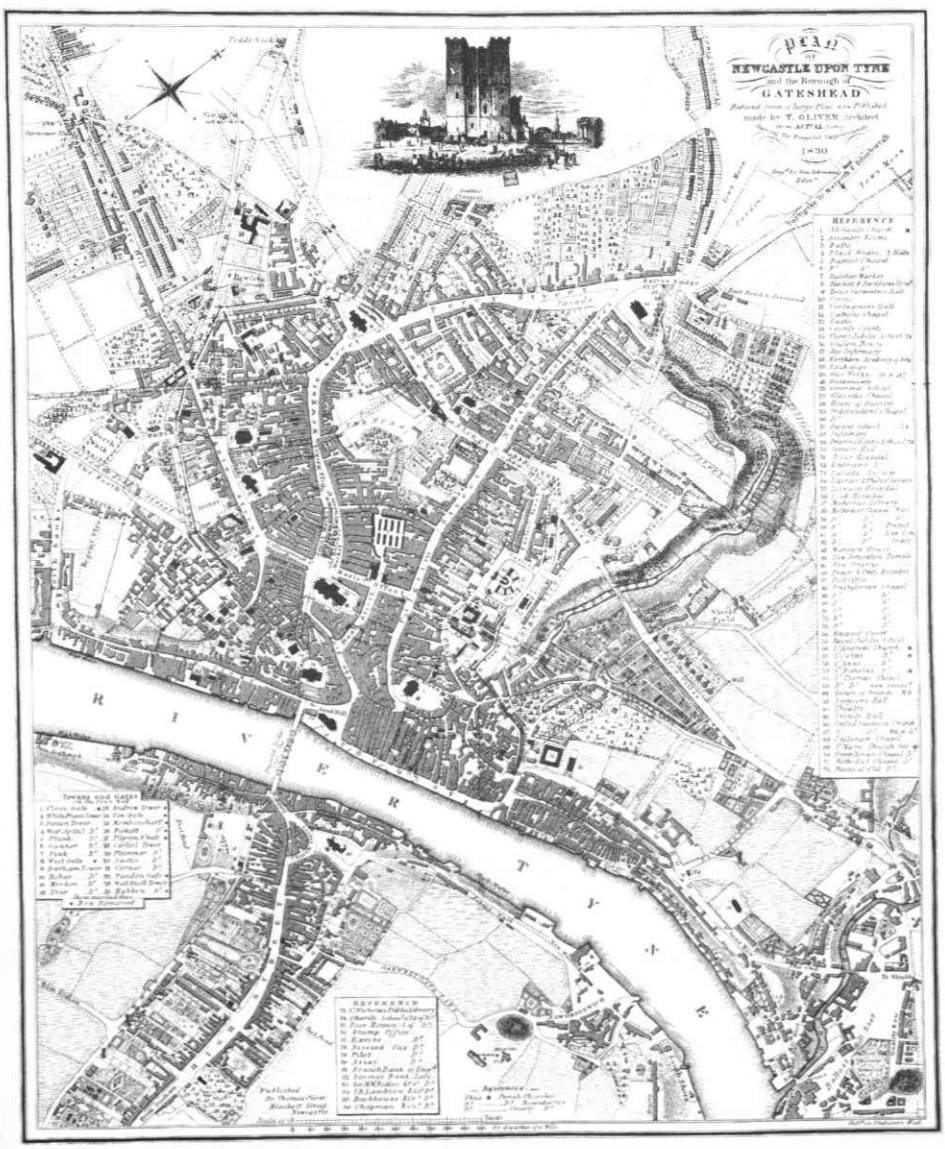
There is no need to feel anonymous or isolated, you will soon meet plenty of people, and this is a good way to start!

Telephone
A special telephone line has been set up for the duration of the conference. If you ring (0191) 227 3976 your call will come through to the registration desk in Ellison Building.

Note to speakers
Constraints of space in the conference catalogue have meant that it has been necessary in many cases to edit speakers' abstracts. We regret any inconvenience caused by this.

Introduction to Newcastle

The essays which follow explore aspects of Newcastle of particular interest to the art historical community. This is a city with a rich and varied architectural legacy in which the issue of construction versus conservation has posed problems for well over a century. They have tended to be resolved, Tom Faulkner argues, in a characteristically brutal way. The role of the region as a centre of heavy industry has been eroded throughout the twentieth century: the only (relatively) thriving remnant of Newcastle's nineteenth-century industrial giants is the Vickers (Armstrong) factory in Benwell. Since the 1960s the city has sought, with some success, to develop its higher education infrastructure as an element of its vocation in a 'postindustrial' society. (A characteristic irony is the recent installation of the University of Northumbria's Conservation section in the old headquarters of the National Union of Mineworkers.) The essays by M Scott and R J Buswell discuss two aspects of this recent history, from differing viewpoints and concerning the two, rival, institutions involved. As the recent series 'Our Friends in the North' has demonstrated, part of the cultural context of Tyneside is the persistence of numerous stereotypes relating to its industrial past and its geographical remoteness from the South East. These are matters that Paul Usherwood addresses, in the sphere of 'visual culture', in the final essay.



We also thought it appropriate to insert a short account of the Merzbau fragment by Kurt Schwitters in the Hatton Gallery, whose presence in Newcastle is itself a product of a distinctive art historical moment. You can view it by passing through a discreet door in the central gallery, currently displaying recent acquisitions by the Arts Council.

Tom Faulkner

"A spacious and extended place"?

If you arrive in Newcastle by train, look along the platform to the right at the unusual sight of the medieval castle framed by the outline of the nineteenth-century station roof. In fact, the railway line goes on through what was the Castle Garth, between the Keep and its main gatehouse, the Black Gate. In the early nineteenth century ancillary buildings and much of the castle wall were demolished to allow for this, indicating a ruthlessness which reflected not only what had gone before, but also, to a much greater extent, what was to come. Newcastle's record in preserving its 'heritage' has been mixed, to say the least. In fact, I have gone as far as to argue elsewhere that, over the years, the city has shown a propensity to destroy itself.[1] More of this later.

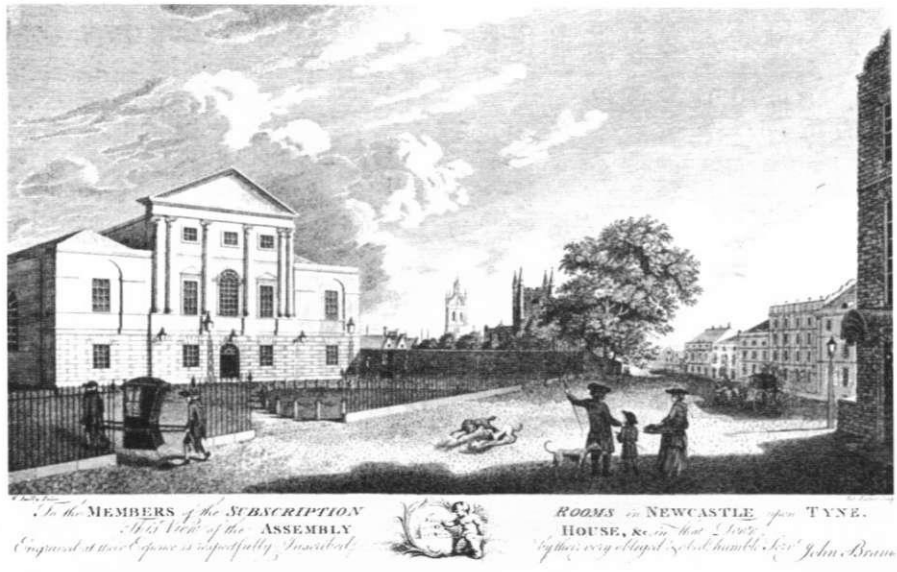
To the uninitiated, the city still conjures up an image of grim industrialisation, in spite of its unchallenged status as a regional capital. Rather, it has always been an important centre of commerce and trade, with heavy industry developing comparatively late and peripherally, along the banks of the Tyne. Newcastle's important pre-industrial history is shown by the survival of fragments of the old 'town wall' and a few other examples of medieval architecture such as the recently restored Blackfriars, near Charlotte Square. As early as 1334, Newcastle's wealth, founded largely on coal, was ranked third amongst English towns[2] and by 1700 it had become the fourth largest English city.[3] During the eighteenth century it became, in Defoe's words, "a spacious, extended, infinitely populous place";[4] elegant structures were being built such as the Assembly Rooms (Westgate Road, by William Newton: see fig 1) and the city's newspapers were filled with reports of the latest London gossip and events.

Mention of Newton (1730-98) reminds us that Newcastle has produced a number of outstanding local architects. After Newton came David Stephenson (1757-1819), the Stokoes, the Greens and, of course, John Dobson (1787-1865), famed for his austere, Northern classicism, although also a highly competent, and early, practitioner of the Gothic Revival in these parts. Pre-eminent among later Victorian Gothic Revivalists was R J Johnson (1832-92). In recent years, it should be noted that Terry Farrell, although not born in the city or practising in it, grew up in Newcastle and was educated at its School of Architecture. He is now planning the redevelopment of the east Quayside.

Newcastle originated from a Roman fort guarding the river and on this awkward site, streets and buildings spread up from the quayside within the old city wall (see fig 2). Even in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, expansion remained inhibited by the city's medieval street pattern (Newgate, Percy and Pilgrim Streets are survivals of this) and encircling walls, portions of which began to be demolished at this time. Commerce had centred on the quayside where several half-timbered merchants' houses still survive, and the upper part of town was inhabited by general traders and nobility. Indeed, Anderson Place (demolished in the course of important nineteenth-century 'improvements') was said to be the largest manor house within a city's walls in England. After the mid-nineteenth century building boom, Newcastle's evolution until after the Second World War was mainly suburban, although Collingwood Street was redeveloped around 1900 as a new commercial district and a few substantial, if unconnected, buildings such as the City Hall were added to the central area between the Wars. The Tyne Bridge (1924-28) consolidated the drift northwards, a process reflected in the construction, after many delays, of the new Civic Centre (begun 1958) and the emergence of Northumberland Street as the main shopping street.

Today, probably the best view of the city

Fig 1 The Assembly Rooms, Newcastle upon Tyne, opened 1776.



is to be had from the Gateshead side of the river (if you have time, walk across Robert Stephenson's celebrated High Level Bridge, which brought the rail link from London to Newcastle and further north). Here you can appreciate the old city's congested variety of buildings of different periods – including the Castle Keep, Cathedral and 'Moot Hall' – which seem to jostle for position up from the Tyne (fig 3). This heterogeneity is at least partially explained by Newcastle's inhospitable site and, because it occupied one side of the river only, the city's original haphazard growth northwards, rather than concentric development around a natural centre which could have been consolidated.

However, certain areas have been carefully planned. In particular, the confidence and energy of Newcastle's eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century developers reshaped a still essentially medieval city in classical terms. The 'Grainger-Dobson' scheme of 1834-40 (so called even though it is now known that Grainger was himself almost entirely responsible for the street plan and made much use of other architects as well as

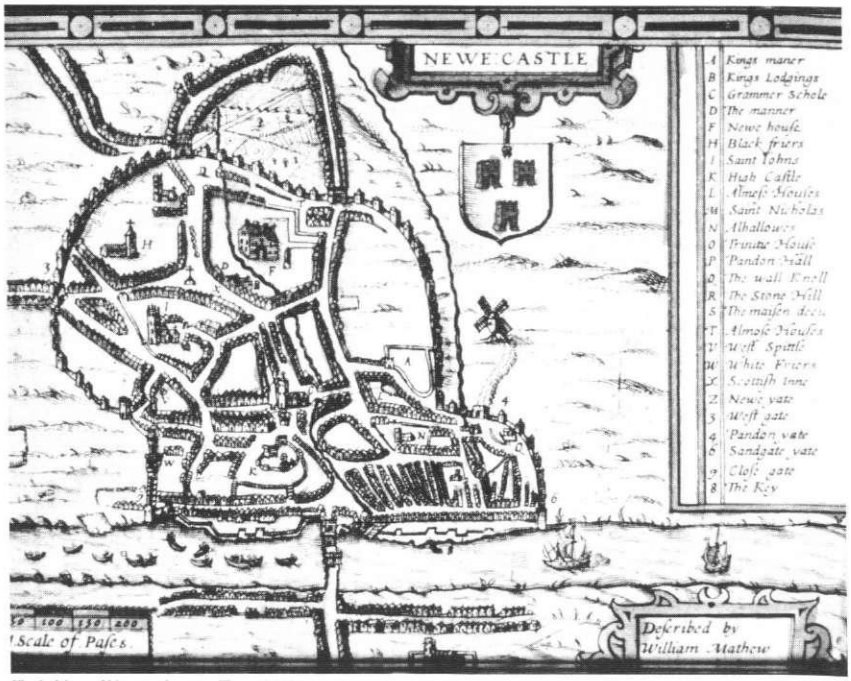


Fig 2 Map of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1610.

Dobson) created a new northward residential and commercial centre based on a coherent zone of impressive new streets including Grey Street (fig 4), Clayton Street, Upper Grainger Street and their intersections. Most of this still survives, although some noteworthy Grainger-Dobson buildings on the periphery of the scheme, such as Eldon Square and the Royal Arcade, fell victim to the brutal 'old is bad, new is good' mentality of the T Dan Smith years. Before the self-destruction of the 1960s, in fact, Newcastle appealed to those with an eye for dignified, ordered

Fig 3 View of Newcastle from the south.

Fig 4 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.

urbanism. In 1937, the planner Thomas Sharp praised its "proudly formal, sheerly urban streets"[5], while twenty years later Nikolaus Pevsner found it to be the best designed Victorian town in England.[6] Even if this view is slightly exaggerated – Grainger's scheme, for example, was not integrated town planning in the post-1945 Modernist sense with which Pevsner sympathised, but an essentially commercial redevelopment carried out only where an effect of grandeur could be achieved in a relatively short time – one can understand Pevsner's response to 1950s Newcastle. Indeed, the period from the end of the Second World War to the early 1960s may well have been one of the city's best. In spite of dilapidation and severe traffic congestion, Newcastle presented an image of dignity and, what is more, a sense of confidence in its unique character. An official guide book of the 1950s promised the visitor a matchless welcome – on one condition: "you have only to accept us as we are". Could or would this be said today?

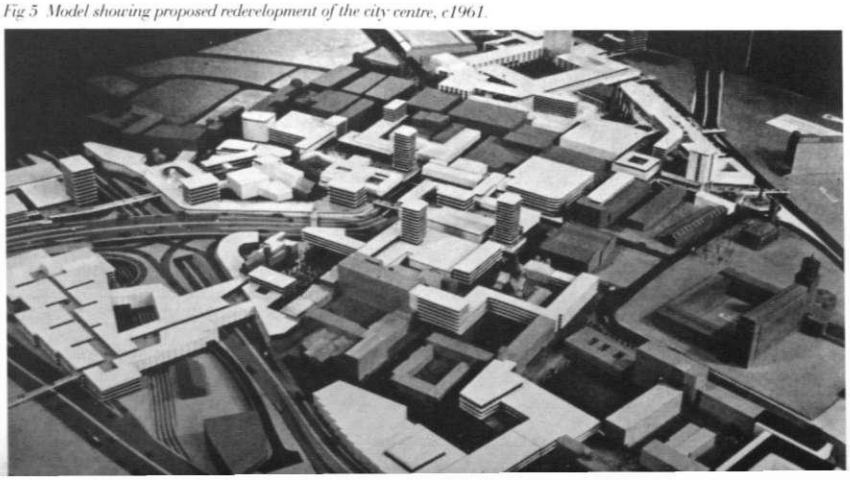
Newcastle's city centre, largely undamaged by bombing, had survived almost unchanged until the early 1960s as a coherent expression of Georgian and Victorian classicism. Unfortunately, it was in the main perceived as an area 'ripe for development'. An opportunity for conservation was missed. Instead, confidence evaporated. There seems to have been a feeling that Newcastle was falling behind the times and needed a new image copied from elsewhere in order to compete. T Dan Smith's notion of the "Brasilia of the North" captured both public and political imagination. Smith demanded an international, space age city (fig 5), moulded by the Modernist belief that only new buildings could spearhead economic growth. Motorways were driven through historic areas of the city and a high profile programme of 'comprehensive redevelopment' was hastily initiated; this was both over-ambitious and yet never completely followed through. The result is now an incompletely integrated amalgam of medieval, Georgian, Victorian and modern architecture.

Notwithstanding Newcastle's legendary reputation for nightlife, an air of decay, disunity and neglect persists in much of the city centre. Uncertainty prevails. The complete demolition of historic structures has now largely ceased; these may even be incorporated into new developments – look, for example, at Portland House, a complex opposite the Laing Art Gallery, built around Dobson's former Lying-in Hospital of 1825. However, 'facadism' has become a much more usual redevelopment technique. Meanwhile, on the fringes of the city centre, Post-Modern business parks spring up while older office buildings remain disused. Most curious of all, though not necessarily objectionable, is the pastiche neo-classicism of Monument Mall, at the top of Grey Street. After so much destruction of the kind of architecture which this seeks to imitate, has the wheel turned full circle at last? Welcome to Newcastle.

REFERENCES

1 'Conservation and Renewal in Newcastle upon Tyne', in T E Faulkner (ed), Northumbrian Panorama: Studies in the History and Culture of North East England (London, 1996), pp 123-48, on which part of this essay is based.
2 F Musgrove, The North of England: A History from Roman Times to the Present (Oxford, 1990), p147.
3 Ibid, p255.
4 D Defoe, A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain (1724-26), edition with an introduction by G D H Cole, London, 1927), vol ii, p659.
5 T Sharp, 'The North East – Hills and Hells', in C Williams-Ellis (ed), Britain and the Beast (London, 1937), p147.
6 N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Northumberland (Harmondsworth, 1957), p56.

Fig 5 Model showing proposed redevelopment of the city centre, c1961.



Marian Scott

Post-war Newcastle: The course at King's College and its impact on the City

The 1950s and early 60s in Newcastle could be described as a period of optimism, a 'golden age', which was characterised by a remarkable growth in interest and participation in the arts across the social spectrum. This was part of a general change in attitude towards the arts after the war but it could also be said to relate directly to post-war developments in teaching in the Fine Art Department of King's College, which later became Newcastle University.

In the early 1950s a dramatic change was made in the curriculum of the Fine Art Department at King's College. Prior to this the fine art course had been a traditional one with emphasis placed upon the Antique, the Still Life and the Life Model. To some extent this approach continued alongside what was to represent a dynamic push for changes in the way art was taught. In 1953 Lawrence Gowing, who had been appointed Professor of Fine Art in 1948, brought Richard Hamilton to King's to initiate a 'basic' course in design. He preferred a fine artist to teach the design aspect of the King's course. A year later Gowing appointed Victor Pasmore who, like Gowing, had been associated with the Euston Road School before his controversial change to abstraction. As Master of Painting, Pasmore was given the freedom to develop an experimental course in 'basic design'. The uniqueness of this was its application to the teaching of fine art. King's was one of only a handful of University Departments which offered an art course to degree level. Its autonomous status afforded it flexibility in the content of its courses, something which was not possible in the government run schools of art at that time.

Based on the Bauhaus principle of breaking the barriers between painting, sculpture and architecture, 'basic course' teaching was strongly influenced by the pioneering work of Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky and the pedagogical textbooks produced at the Bauhaus in the 1920s. Various names are mentioned in connection with its development in this country such as William Johnstone first at Camberwell and then at the Central where both Pasmore and Hamilton had taught prior to their appointment at King's. Also teachers from Leeds College of Art were very much involved in its development, Harry Thubron and Tom Hudson were, along with Victor and Wendy Pasmore, tutors on a series of Summer Schools held in Scarborough between 1954-57 which could be regarded as prototypes for the subsequent 'basic design' course in Newcastle. The courses consisted of investigations into basic elements, drawing from nature and technique and an emphasis on 'process' not end products, on means and causes rather than effects. These ideas were further developed at Leeds and Newcastle.

When Hamilton and Pasmore came to Newcastle, they appeared to be very different as artists. By the early 50s Pasmore was producing relief constructions from industrial materials considered to be anti-aesthetic in quality. The use of such materials is open to interpretation but could be read as the identification of the artist with the ordinary worker. However, aesthetic qualities were also important. Pasmore was interested in using theories of harmonious proportion instead of nature as a basis for abstract art. He drew ideas from the work of Matila Ghyka, J W Power and Jay Hambidge. Pasmore described these as 'laboratory experiments', an organic approach based on experimentation. His earliest attempts had a rough, handbuilt and unfinished appearance which relate to Dada assemblage. His later constructions display a strong interest in precision and machine finished quality. Pasmore was the leading member of the British Constructivists and in 1951 was introduced to the work of Charles Biederman, an American whose book *Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge* was published in 1948. This text was influential in the development of Pasmore's work both as an artist and a teacher. In 1954 he set up a room in the Fine Art department in which a few students carried out similar experimental work using basic forms. At the same time 'basic design' methods were 'being tried out on junior students'[1]. This was the beginning of his 'basic course' teaching at King's.

It is difficult to summarise the many sources of inspiration Hamilton drew on in the early 50s. Among the most significant was D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, whose book *On Growth and Form* explores "the way in which biological function determines form". Others included Kandinsky's and J J Gibson's studies in the psychology of perception which relate to Hamilton's own interest in the nature of mark-making and spectator response to suggestions of space. He drew on ideas of movement and stasis as explored by Cézanne and Duchamp, also photographic studies of movement carried out by Marcy and Muybridge which contain suggestions of time lapse. He also drew on contemporary life and developments in technology and mass culture which were of particular interest to the Independent Group at the ICA of which Hamilton was a leading member. The impact of these ideas is evident in his own work such as *Chromatic Spiral* 1950, the *Trainsition* paintings and his later *pop* paintings. They also relate to exercises such as sequential lino prints, cell division, optical illusions and space perception carried out by his students on the design course. These exercises, according to Hamilton, were "designed to allow only a reasoned result".

The implementation of 'basic design' studies at King's is a contentious issue. For some students its effect was innocuous, a brief introductory course at the beginning of the first year, followed by the freedom to explore individual ideas for the remainder of the year. For others, its insistence on the elimination of preconceived ideas represented a system of brain-washing and a denial of their working class roots. One student expressed a sense of deprivation due to a lack of training in traditional drawing skills. Others felt that they were never quite sure what was being asked of them in 'basic course' exercises. Judged by its graduates, however, the King's Course in this period was clearly a success. Many ex-students went on to make an impact nationally and internationally as artists, including Ian Stephenson, Matt Rugg, Mark Lancaster, Rita Donagh, Stephen Buckley, Tim Head, and Sean Scully[2]. Graduates from the King's course found themselves in demand as artists/teachers because they had the skills needed to implement the findings of the Coldstream report. Others have been successful in a diverse range of fields, developing their own specialist skills and interests. Some examples are: in writing – John A Walker; radio and television – John Walters; teaching film studies – Roger Powell; film-making – Murray Martin; poetry – Adrian Henri. Perhaps the most well known ex-student has to be Bryan Ferry.

Besides producing successful students, it could be argued that the presence of Pasmore and Hamilton and the implementation of a radical approach to the teaching of art at King's had a catalytic effect upon the cultural activities of the city itself. Far from being an 'ivory tower' the Fine Art department made strenuous efforts to encourage an interest in art among the general public. A tradition of collaboration between 'artists and amateurs' in Newcastle can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, and King's tutors continued this dissemination of ideas. In the inter-war years Robert Lyon had worked with the Ashington Group as part of a Workers Education Association project. This involvement continued after the war when King's tutors, Roger de Grey, Claude Rogers and Lawrence Gowing taught on evening and weekend courses and summer schools for 'amateur' artists. Later under Pasmore's influence, the courses developed to include experimental work in abstraction. Hamilton too was involved in these activities. The Extra-mural Department gave talks at the Laing Art Gallery, enabling interested members of the public to increase their knowledge of modern as well as traditional art. There was an unprecedented growth in art clubs at this time, many of which were linked to the Federation of Northern Art Societies, the first and largest formation of 'amateur' clubs in the country. Many of the members had attended and benefited from the extra-mural courses organised by the Fine Art Department at King's.

A number of exhibitions which demonstrate connections between the city and King's took place at the Laing during the 50s and 60s such as the Newcastle Festival exhibitions organised by students and *Construction England* shown in 1963 which included the work of Pasmore, Derek Carruthers, Scott Campbell and Matt Rugg. The Hatton Gallery, within the University itself and open to the public, showed an

Harry Lord, E Scott Dobson and Bill Smith sketching Tommy Steele at the Empire Theatre, Newcastle 1956.
(Courtesy of the Bede Gallery, Jarrow.)

extensive range of didactic exhibitions both traditional and contemporary and included work by 'amateurs'. The most important exhibition in terms of 'basic design' was *The Developing Process* shown there in 1959 and later at the ICA. A number of exhibitions were arranged due to Gowing, Pasmore and Hamilton having close connections with the London art world. This provided a unique opportunity in Newcastle to see the work of many leading twentieth-century artists. As part of the Fine Art Department, the Hatton offered the chance for staff to stage their own exhibitions. Hamilton had shown an interest in exhibition design before he came to King's having arranged *Growth and Form* as part of the ICA's contribution to the Festival of Britain in 1951. He organised the *Man, Machine and Motion* exhibition at the Hatton in 1955. Then in collaboration with Pasmore and Lawrence Alloway, *an Exhibit* in June 1957, shown at the ICA in London later the same year. This latter exhibition was 'environmental' in scale, made up of acrylic panels suspended on a modular framework, with strips of coloured paper added by Pasmore. Experience of the exhibition was based on the movement of the spectator through the exhibition space. This work is similar in intention to Pasmore's work in the design of Peterlee New Town and pavilion and his murals for the Rates Hall in Newcastle Civic Centre which emphasise the environment and spectator involvement. *an Exhibit* could be regarded as an early installation as well as a precursor of the *Happenings* of the 1960s. It also relates to American abstract painting and sculpture of the late 50s and early 60s and an exhibition by Ralph Rumney, Robin Denny and Richard Smith of 1959 entitled *Place*.

However, opportunities for exhibiting work in Newcastle were extremely limited. This situation prompted a group of 'amateur' artists in 1957 to set up their own gallery. Ross Hickling, Bill Smith, Harry and Alan Lord found premises in the basement of the Royal Court Grill in Newcastle's Bigg Market. Pasmore and Gowing "donated money to get the gallery started"[3]. Through his contact with Rex Nankivell of the Redfern Gallery in London, Pasmore was able to secure an exhibition for the opening of the Univision Gallery in 1957. The founding members had also been given support by Denis Bowen who ran the New Vision Centre Gallery in London. The gallery had a progressive policy which aimed to bring advanced abstract work to Tyneside. In 1960 the gallery closed for two years due to financial difficulties. It reopened in 1962 with a revised policy. No longer able to show experimental work it turned to local figurative and non-figurative art. Members of the FNAS and students from King's held exhibitions there.

an Exhibit: *installation view, Hatton Gallery, June 1957. Victor Pasmore and Richard Hamilton.*

A number of other small galleries began life in the city at this time. The Stone Gallery opened in 1958 and by the early 60s adopted a policy to bring twentieth-century international art to Newcastle, ahead of London. The Stone found itself at the centre of a controversial dispute over its status as a 'commercial' gallery and closed for a time in 1965 reopening later that year with a new policy to "cater for all tastes". Other newly formed galleries included the Westgate Gallery which opened in 1961, and the Gulbenkian Gallery at the People's Theatre in Heaton, the interior of which was designed by Hamilton.

Enthusiastic press reviews of local exhibitions and articles covering important issues and events were abundant at this time. Even the letter-pages of local newspapers during the 1950s and 60s stand as a testimony to the level of interest and excitement generated by these changes in the cultural life of the region. It was abstract art and the spending of rate-payers' money in particular which seemed to arouse the most heated debates. Pasmore must stand accused, for it was he who introduced non-figurative art to the North East wasn't it?

The post-war developments at King's and the impact they had on the city continued throughout the 50s and early 60s. By the end of the 60s the art scene in Newcastle was again transformed by the opening of a rival institution, the Polytechnic with its own art school. However, the changes which occurred as a result of this are another story.

1 D Carruthers: interview with the author 29/11/94.
2 An example of his work can be seen in the Ellison Building, University of Northumbria.
3 Bill Smith: Letter to the author, 13/12/94.

R J Buswell

The only thing to look forward to, the past

(Song: The Likely Lads)

In the last decade the number of students in higher education in England and Wales has increased to over one million located in excess of one hundred universities. The geography of higher education is now such that every major city has at least one university, the larger ones three or four. Only the rural corners of England and Wales are without one and even here plans are afoot for their foundation. But universities surely are *urban*. Historically, in this country at least, they have become more so. The map of urban places and universities is now almost coincident. It is to be hoped that there exists some bonding between the academic community and the place or places it inhabits. The question that might be asked is whether universities should try to establish this kind of place relationship. If they should, then surely an outline understanding of their history and geography would be useful. The 'University of Northumbria at Newcastle', your host at the 1996 Art Historians' Conference, offers an interesting case study in relationship to this issue, since it is the product of a very particular set of political, social and geographical circumstances.

First, what's in a name? The one finally adopted (after some contentious lobbying involving the University of Newcastle, itself a product of post Robbins expansion in higher education) brings together two contrasting signifiers of place. 'Northumbria' has little meaning in present day geography, but refers to a short-lived Dark Age kingdom associated with a brilliant flourish of 'Celtic' art and scholarship. The Newcastle element provides a powerful geographical image derived from industry, coalmining, shopping and nightlife – more the kind of thing the modern student can identify with. The two sit rather oddly together.

The University, like most Polytechnics, came into being from an amalgamation of former colleges: initially Art and Industrial Design, Technology, Commerce and later Education and Health and Nursing. It evolved from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century origins but at a variety of locations scattered throughout the city. In the 1950s the city fathers decided to rationalise much of the provision of further education in Newcastle: the management of this kind of higher education was very much a function of local government and it is not surprising to discover that this activity was 'planned' in much the same way as many other similar functions, both financially and physically. Further/higher education was a national service, locally delivered. Little capital funding has been available since Polytechnics (which were taken away from local authority control with no compensation) became Universities. Consequently what we see around us today is the product of forty years of development and planning. The University occupies a number of locations but the city centre site is the one that is mostly readily identified as the University of Northumbria (at Newcastle) and which epitomises the processes of place formation best.

The story begins in the late 1930s when the city of Newcastle wished to consolidate its further education. This coincided with the apparent desire to modernise the road lay-out and land-use of the central area and to develop to the north of the city centre a large area of land devoted primarily to civic purposes including a new town hall, cultural facilities such as library and concert hall, complemented by further education. To this type of land-use might be added the RVI hospital site and the former King's College although they were not, of course, under local authority control. Most of these ideas are summarised in the 1945 proposals for the Town Plan drawn up by the City Engineer's Department but undoubtedly influenced by generic town planning ideas of the late '30s. Once the broad outline of the plan was laid down it was remarkable how successive plans have all confirmed this type of land-use in this selfsame area.

But why here? The answer lies largely in the physical geography of the site. Late eithteenth century Newcastle was cut across by a series of steep, short valleys, downgrading to the incised Tyne including Pandon Burn. Slowly, and beginning with those ravines nearest the historic core of Newcastle, these were filled in to provide desperately needed building land as the rapidly growing industrial and commercial city expanded.

This University stands astride the upper part of the Pandon Burn which in the early eighteenth century was an uncultivated steep sided valley in the countryside between Newcastle and the villages of Jesmond and Shieldfield. To the north the valley was converted into gardens and walkways and a series of mills and

millponds. It became a place of recreation, "a very Romantick place, full of hills and vales", according to Bourne, a local historian, writing in 1736.

In the early nineteenth century the built form of the town began to push into this area with John Dobson's St Mary's Place laid out like the buildings of a cathedral close around his new church of St Thomas. Contemporary maps show a new suburb being built focussed on Ellison Place, described by Mackenzie in 1827 as:

"retired, lofty and airy (...) doubtless, the genteelest and best built part of the town."

The land between Northumberland Street and Pandon Dean took on between about the 1820s and the 1880s many of the characteristics of an *urban fringe belt* – a very mixed pattern of land use, part commercial and industrial, part recreational, part residential and part educational, with the new Dame Allen's Schools designed by R J Johnson (1883) and the new Medical School by Dunn, Hanson and Dunn (1887).

Housing was added to this levelled ground, an "estate" of terraced houses begun in the 1860s and 1870s. To the south of the newly laid out Sandyford Lane were more houses and shops. Built into this new middle class housing district were the attendant cultural infrastructural elements such as the Churches – especially the non-conformist versions that were so strong in late Victorian Newcastle – the Congregationalists with their huge church of St James (T Lewis Banks 1882) and the Baptists with their Trinity Church (Marshall & Dick 1895).

The origin of the campus in *educational* planning terms dates from the late 1930s but the war meant that it could not be implemented until the 1940s. However, the 'Scheme for Further Education' submitted to the Ministry in 1949 bears little relation to its predecessor. At its heart was to be a College of Technology to replace the Bath Lane premises to the west of the city centre. The physical master plan was very ambitious recommending building on all of the site south of Northumberland Road and demanding demolition of Trinity Church, St. James's Church, Northumberland Road School and most of the north side of Ellison Place. Rutherford College of Technology had to be built in stages as capital grants became available from central government. A complex of artificial stone and green Westmorland Slate – the heart of the present University – was constructed over 30 years. By the time Stage 5 of the college came to be built between 1962 and 1965 some of the original new buildings had to be demolished to make way for more ambitious plans.

By the mid 1960s then, George Kenyon, the city Architect, had designed and built a late modernist structure orientated around a high-rise core and a 'traditional' college quadrangle, accompanied by a tower block Hall of Residence (Claude Gibb Hall).
It is important at this point to retreat a few years. The 1949/1953 FE Scheme called for all the FE to be improved together. The take-over by the College of Commerce of the Dame Allen's Schools and of some houses in Carlton Terrace and Ellison Place had given it a locus in the area. The original scheme of 1949 had not included an Art School but this was added in November 1952. Thus, over most of the post-war years different kinds of further education were being located or relocated to this zone. The city plans of the '40s and '50s had already identified the possibility of a comprehensive scheme for most of the area. This may have had the effect of blighting other forms of development. The new plan was brought to the full council in October 1960. The chairman of the planning committee, T. Dan Smith, reported:

"What we plan is the creation of an educational precinct the like of which, in my opinion, cannot be repeated in any other city in the world (...) side by side with the University, we are seeking to create university and education precincts of outstanding merit which will not only be advantageous to the city and region today but will be relevant to the needs of the citizens of the next hundred years."

This coincided with the appointment of Wilfred Burns as the city's new planning officer and the establishment of a new planning department. Others have written extensively on the development and political power of this new cadre of professionals. Its influence on the FE Precinct in Newcastle

Ellison Place. Photo: Miles Turnbull.

is readily detectable; Wilfred Burns, the city's new Planning Officer, had helped plan the precincts in Coventry.

This notion of a large block of land given over to one planned use had been recognized as important by Smith and his planners but it required considerable political will to bring it about, resulting in nothing short of a battle between the ruling party and local residents. The plan involved establishing a Compulsory Purchase Order for the site which in turn required finding the proper value of the properties to be acquired and the owners compensated accordingly. 200 families and 40 business premises would have to be displaced. The residents organized themselves into a very effective opposition, the Citizens Defence Committee. It had no political party allegiance but it was often supported by the Tory minority in the Council. The battle was prolonged and bitter, and threatened to become bloody, but in due course the Council prevailed.

Once properties were acquired demolition could begin and the plan began to take on concrete form with the FE college beginning in 1960, the College of Commerce in 1963, the original Library in 1966 and the Squires Building of the Art and Design Faculty of the new Polytechnic in 1971. The precinct was planned as "one of a series of loosely defined zones in the city centre" with access from St Mary's Place to the shopping and public building zone. It was conceived as "an educational expression of urban grouping (...) a series of open spaces usable by students but not by vehicles (...) a series of interconnected pedestrian spaces providing a series of constantly changing views (...) based on five squares or quadrangles, the principal one of which was to be bounded by the Library, the Students' Union, the FE College and the College of Commerce." After more protest the two churches were to be retained, despite T. Dan Smith's comment in council that he wasn't aware that they were of outstanding architectural merit and that he couldn't see that the replacement of a church by a College of Art or a museum was a step in the wrong direction.

Over the next quarter of a century between the founding of the Polytechnic in 1969 and the present day the Plan slowly evolved as capital became available, to include a College of Education and a multistorey Library for the Campus. Some battles remained but they were not with local residents since none remained. Instead they were with *conservationists* over, for example, the retention or conversion of some of the original street architecture.

What sort of a *place*, then, has been created? It is clearly the product of both national and local forces operating at a variety of spatial scales. It is the product above all of *planning*, planning for further and higher education and planning for city land-uses. It is a product of a modernising and modernist vision of the 1960s influenced by planning and architectural ideologies prevalent at that time. What has been produced, however, has been constructed at some considerable human cost – a wider, community-needs provision has been forced through at the expense of views about private residential and commercial property. Whether the present University community appreciates this history of the place they inhabit is doubtful but how else can any *attachment* be developed?

Ellison Building. Photo: Miles Turnbull.

Paul Usherwood

True North: a visitor's guide

This essay looks at two images that are central to the cultural identity of the North East: industry and fun.[1] As will be shown, neither is wholly indigenous. Both must be seen in part as attempts by people in the region to identify with the range of ideas about the North East circulated in the South.

'Stronger Stuff': the industrial image

North Easterners first fully embraced the industrial image in the mid-nineteenth century when it became clear that the South saw the region as predominantly a place of mining and manufacture. Thus it was specifically the successful publication of a major biography of George Stephenson by a London-based writer, Samuel Smiles, in 1857 which prompted the region to raise a monument to the locally-born 'Father of the Railways' outside Newcastle's main railway station (Fig 1). And it was the visit to Tyneside, in October 1862, of a celebrated member of the metropolitan political establishment, W E Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which provided the occasion for the region to celebrate its new-found industrial character in a large-scale and concerted way. The speech Gladstone made at South Shields during this visit was especially seized upon by the local press.

"I know not where to seek, even in this busy country, a spot or a district in which we perceive so extraordinary and multifarious a combination of the various great branches of mining, manufacturing, trading and ship-building industry: and I greatly doubt whether the like can be shown, not only within the limits of this island, but upon the whole face of the globe."[2]

Nowadays, most of the yards and factories along the Tyne lie silent. Tyneside's economy depends more on shops and students than it does on shipyards and steel.[3] Nonetheless, industry lives on as one of the most potent themes in the region's cultural discourse. Richard Deacon's *Once upon a time ...* commissioned by Gateshead Council in 1991 is a case in point. A large welded relief on the abutment of one of the bridges over the Tyne, the piece evokes both the six stupendous bridges of differing ages between Newcastle and Gateshead and the shipyard skills that once were so important to the life of the river (Fig 2).

Indeed, the image of macho men who manufacture things very much retains its appeal. In 1990, for instance, Newcastle City Council issued a poster seeking to lure businesses to the city. The text claimed that traditional Geordie qualities make North-Easterners ideal employees: 'perseverance and strength' (eg Bruce Oldfield, fashion designer, and Steve Cram, local athlete); 'foresight' (eg George Stephenson and his son, Robert); 'versatility and creativity', (eg Rowan Atkinson, comedian, and Sting, singer); and 'an unparalleled sense of humour' (eg producers of Britain's best-selling comic, *Viz*). However, the accompanying strap line told a distinctly different story. In the kind of bold sans serif lettering favoured by nineteenth-century railway companies, it proclaimed: A city made from coal and steel A people made of stronger stuff.[4]

And nowhere is this tendency for the region to dwell on its industrial past more in evidence than at the North of England Open Air Museum, Beamish. There shops, sheds, houses, chapel, railway station, and even a school have been reconstructed alongside a mine to form a kind of composite North East community as it might have been in 1913. Why 1913? Because heavy industry, it is assumed, is what visitors to the region will want to see and 1913 was one of the last moments when North East industry

Fig 1: Detail of the Stephenson Monument, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1862 (Photo, the author).

thrived. And it works. Visitors flock to Beamish to discover for themselves the hardships of industrial life. However, as the museum's Director points out, many of them are local. It is not just people from outside the region who prefer the 'stronger stuff' image of the region; North Easterners do too.

'Vomit and love bites': the fun image

The fun image of the region – 'all vomit and love bites'[5] in the playwright Alan Bennett's happy phrase – is more recent. Over the last few years reporters have regularly come to the region intent on finding titillating stories of exotic, Breughel-ish debauches in Newcastle's main club and wine bar district, the Bigg Market. A recent article on Newcastle in *The Independent on Sunday*, for example, begins by paying ritual tribute to the lost skills and values of industrial Tyneside but then focuses on the Bigg Market and what it calls 'carnival Newcastle'.[6]

"It's almost Italian the way the crowds, the walkers, parade up and down in designer finery and sloppier dress. Or Undress. The wind is blowing icebergs off the Tyne, but here are people – girls actually, they're the macho ones – in sleeveless tops, lacy blouses, T-shirts, shorts, skirts that are shorter than shorts … "No dancing" the pub signs say, but who are they kidding? What else could you do? Not talk anyway. You can't hear yourself drink."

Fig 2: Richard Deacon, 'Once upon a time …', Dunston, 1991 (Photo, the author).

Fig 3: Geoff Weston, From the series 'Bad Taste', (Photo, the artist).

In fact, Newcastle is now said to be the eighth 'most lively' city in the world: according to a recent survey of 8,000 US travel agents, in the same league as Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans, and Las Vegas!

"The entire economy … revolves around the mighty pub. There is a stretch in the downtown area where countless pubs connect like shops in a mall. People – especially on Monday night (yes, Monday night) – mob the streets."[7]

A photograph of smiling, gyrating dancers was used to illustrate *The Times* report of the US survey. More telling perhaps would have been one of the photographs from Geoff Weston's *Bad Taste* series, his sardonic meditation on working-class alienation, consumerism and artistic expression in the shape of deadpan shots of Geordie vomit drying on the pavement (Fig 3).

However, remarkably, North Easterners remain sanguine. One only has to look at their response to the reporting of riots on estates on the outskirts of various cities around Britain in the summer of 1991. The Southern press predictably focused on Tyneside because scenes of looting and arson endorsed its carnivalesque notion of the region. Indeed, a *Daily Mirror* cartoon of the time even went so far as to link the headlong pursuit of fun in the Bigg Market with the violence of bored, disaffected youngsters in Elswick, Scotswood and Meadowell by showing a bottle-waving youth being rescued from a burning building with the caption, 'Steady now, sir. Don't lose your bottle.'[8] Yet, typically, no one in the North East objected. Such reports merely lent weight to the region's own favoured image of itself.

The fact that the youth in the *Mirror* cartoon bore a certain resemblance to the celebrated footballer, Paul Gascoigne, no doubt helped. In the last few years 'Gazza', a native of Dunston on the outskirts of Gateshead, has been involved in a number of much-publicised incidents in Newcastle nightclubs which have gained him a position as the prime present-day personification of North East fun.

Fig 4: Griffin, 'Steady now, sir. Don't lose your bottle', Daily Mirror, 13 Sept, 1991. (By permission of Mirror Group Newspapers.)

American accents

It should be noted that North East fun frequently comes in an American guise. Thirty years ago the vomit and love bites image was personified by the singer, Eric Burdon. Burdon's group, The Animals, were touted as at once 'One of the most uninhibited groups on the scene'[9] and typically North Eastern. However, unlike 'Gazza', in order to communicate their lack of inhibitions and their North Easternness, they turned to the United States. The setting for their greatest hit, 'The House of the Rising Sun' (No 1 in Britain and the States in the summer of 1964, and currently featured in Martin Scorsese's new film, *Casino*), the ballad which confirmed their rugged, authentic, un-Beatle-ish reputation, was American – 'There is a house in New Orleans ...' And so too was Burdon's accent.

It ought to have been absurd: a 23-year-old Newcastle boy in a 'Mod' suit, tie pulled loose and beads of sweat dribbling down his face, pouring out his remorse at having strayed into a life of 'sin and misery'. But in 1964 no one demurred when Burdon claimed that as a working-class boy from the North East he had personal knowledge of the kind of suffering experienced by blacks in Mississippi and hence had a special right to sing of such matters.

Jimmy Nail, the North East's latest balladeer success, follows in this tradition (Fig 5). In the early 1990s he played the eponymous hero of *Spender*, a BBC series about a Geordie cop with style and a dissolute air who has been brought back to his home town to fight crime. North East stereotypes abounded, most especially, the Tyne Road Bridge, the icon of Newcastle.[10] Nevertheless, in form the series was deeply indebted to Hollywood.

Since then Nail has retained his Americanness. He has written and starred in another TV series, *Crocodile Shoes*, about a Geordie welder-turned singer who travels to the States to pursue his career, and he has begun making Country-and-Western-style records. One might imagine this would impugn his North Eastern credentials. But on the contrary, as with Burdon in the Sixties, it has had the opposite effect. In the case of 'Big River', his hit single of last autumn, it is his Americanness which allows him to lament the demise of the great shipyards where his father once worked whilst at the same time embodying the hedonistic image of the North East (Fig 5). In fact, paradoxically, it is an American accent which allows him to be the true Northerner of our time – 'stronger stuff', 'vomit and love bites' all in one.

FOOTNOTES

1 This is a short version of an essay which will appear in the catalogue for *Artlanta*, an exhibition of the work of North East artists to be held in Newcastle in May 1996 and Atlanta, Georgia, later in the year.

2 *The Newcastle Daily Chronicle*, 9 October, 1862.

3 Northumberland Street, Newcastle, is one of the busiest shopping streets in the UK and the giant MetroCentre on the fringes of Gateshead is the second largest shopping mall in Europe. As for students, there are now some 42,000 students in Newcastle alone.

4 The phrase 'Coal and Steel' had a particularly nineteenth-century ring in that it was reminiscent of *Iron and Coal*, the title William Bell Scott's 1861 picture of heroic workmen hammering away at a forge in Stephenson's Newcastle locomotive factory at Wallington Hall, Northumberland.

5 See the entry for 'Newcastle' in the index of *Writing Home*, London, 1994, p412.

6 Blake Morrison 'Brave New World on the Tyne', *The Independent on Sunday*, 4 December, 1994.

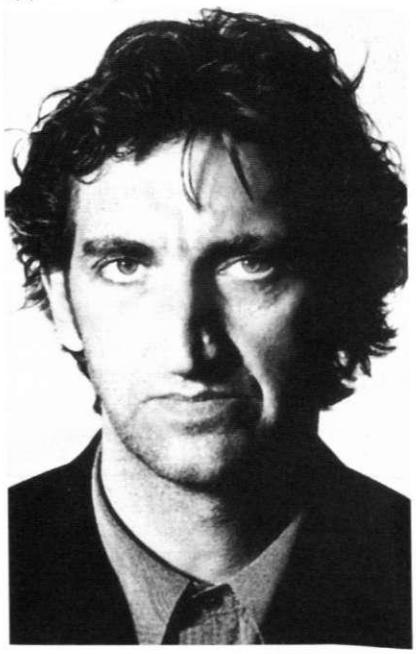
7 *The Times*, 20 September, 1995.

8 *Daily Mirror*, 13 September, 1991.

9 *New Musical Express*, 14 August, 1964.

10 The bridge is featured in almost every film or TV series about Newcastle up to and including *Our Friends in the North* earlier this year.

Fig 5: Jimmy Nail publicity photo for 'Big River', 1995. (By permission of Warner Music Inc.)



Inspecting the Merzbarn (Mark Lancaster)

The Merzbarn Wall installed in the Hatton Gallery.

Malcolm Gee

Kurt Schwitters's Merzbarn at the Hatton Gallery

One could establish an art historical relationship between Damien Hirst's chilling and bombastic assemblage and the work of Kurt Schwitters. It might be considered appropriate, from this point of view, that Schwitters's final *Merzbarn* is an invisible companion to Hirst's work in the central room of the Hatton Gallery during the current Arts Council exhibition. The temporary isolation and enclosure of the Schwitters wall is in fact fitting in another way: it reproduces, in the form of a somewhat melancholy pastiche, the artist's own approach to the display of his 'total work of art'. The original *Merzbau* was discreetly housed in a Hanover apartment block. As it grew, its parts were incorporated into an architectural 'skin'. The collections of 'Merz' made up individual 'grottos' in the whole structure, partially and sometimes totally invisible at first sight. Rudolf Jahns was invited to go to its centre and record his impressions: he compared it to 'both a snailshell and a cave'.[1] The *Merzbau* was private and discreet – it was also infused with an exalted, if extremely personal, concept of pure art.

The work conserved in Newcastle was probably Schwitters's fourth version of a *Merzbau*, although the Hanover work, built up over more than ten years during the most settled and successful period of the artist's career, was the only full development of the concept. The news that it had been destroyed in an allied air raid in 1943 was an added incentive to attempt a new version in his second land of exile. But whereas the original *Merzbau* had been conceived in and as a fragment of urban 'modernity', this final effort was marked by an engagement with nature. Schwitters had moved to the Lake District with Edith Thomas in 1945. He took great pleasure in the landscape, with its myriad associations, and painted it frequently. The new ensemble which he embarked on after being awarded a grant of $1000 from the Museum of Modern Art New York was sited in a barn at Elterwater on land owned by a landscape architect, Harry Pierce. It incorporated references to this environment both in its constituent parts and in its overall structure. Elements in the relief include stones, the sprinkler from a child's watering can and the rim of a wheel. They are placed within a painted relief in plaster which eschews the geometrical forms used in Schwitters's work of the 1920s. The composition employs curved and spiralling forms; parts of the surface are textured to reiterate the effects of weathering on stone found in the barn itself. Over time the piece would have grown to occupy the whole space of the building. It would then have become a strange modern version of a garden grotto, a place of peaceful contemplation, negotiating the boundary between culture and nature with charm and wit. Sadly Schwitters died only a few months after beginning work, and the piece as it stands gives only a partial sense of his intentions.

In the early 1960s Harry Pierce decided that the condition of the Merzbarn was such that Schwitters's relief should be moved and conserved in a public institution. Obvious possibilities, including the Tate Gallery, fell through. By a combination of luck and enthusiasm, the Department of Fine Art at King's College was able to take it and install it in its extended Hatton Gallery. The separation of the wall from the barn and its transport and installation in Newcastle, overseen by Fred Brookes, a studio demonstrator in sculpture at the University, was a triumph of practical conservation.[2] It was appropriate enough that this last fragment of Schwitters's oeuvre should be housed at King's. The Fine Art Department was a leading centre for the development of artistic sensibilities informed by the European avant-garde tradition to which Schwitters belonged. It was also an institution which stressed the importance of art historical awareness to art students. While viewing it in its present position, however, we should also bear in mind his warning to critics in 'Me and my aims': 'If you want to give me particular pleasure, try to recognize the important artists of your own times. That will be more important for you, and my joy will be greater, than if you discover me at a time when I will have been long discovered.'

This brief account is indebted to Sarah Wilson's essay on the English years in Schwitters, Centre Pompidou, Paris 1994. My thanks also to Anthony Parton and John Milner of the University of Newcastle.

1 Quoted in Dorothea Dietrich, *The Collages of Kurt Schwitters*, Cambridge University Press 1994, p204.
2 Recounted in Fred Brookes, Merzbarn *Studio*

'This is my body. . . this is my software'

The current project of the famed French multi-media and performance artist Orlan, initiated in Newcastle on 30 May 1990, makes use of cosmetic surgery ('chirurgerie esthetique') to transform the artist's face in the manner of Hindu deities who change their appearance in order to accomplish new works. Initially this entailed the artist having her face altered to fit a computer-generated 'morphed' synthesis of her own face and famous Renaissance and post-Renaissance idealized images of female beauty. More recently, however, she has moved on from this, giving herself two 'horns', bumps on each of her temples, using the kind of implant which cosmetic surgery employs to sculpt cheekbones, and, in her next operation, having her nose lengthened to School of Fontainebleau proportions. In the words of the philosopher Michel Onfray, 'What nature had done, culture undoes, then makes over. Blind chance gives way to voluntary decision.'

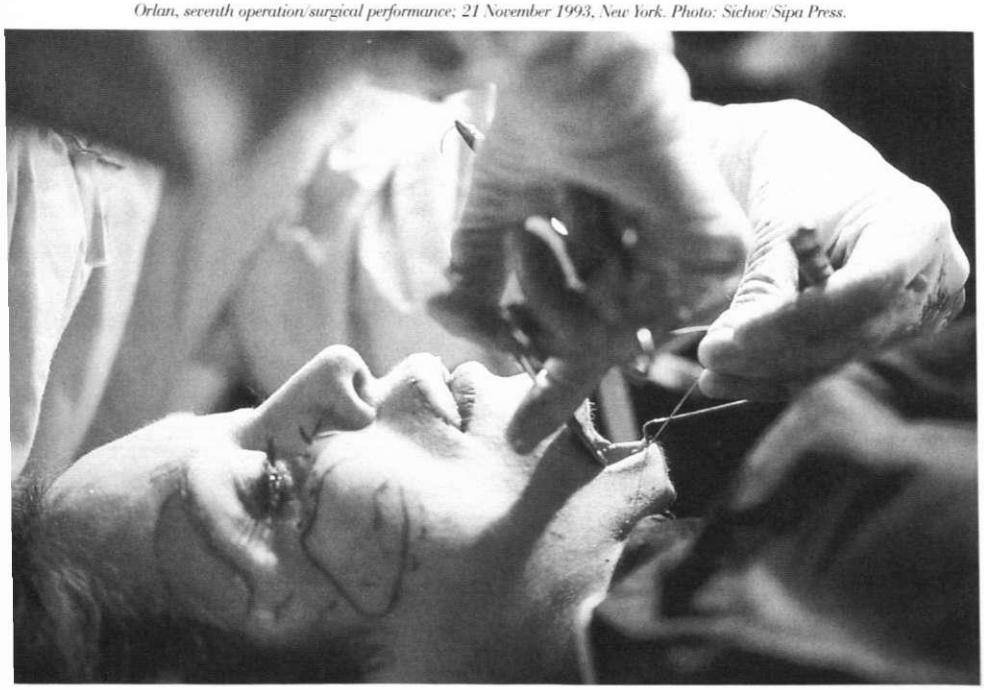
The operations (she has had nine to date) are conducted under local anaesthesia, using a risky operation known as epidural block. This allows the artist both to control what is going on and to converse with others around the world who are linked up to the studio by means of fax, modem and video-conferencing. During each operation she makes a point of reading an extract from *La Robe* by Eugénie Lemoine Luccioni, which she regards as of key importance to the project as a whole.

'The skin is deceiving; in life we only have our own skin but there is always a catch: we are never quite what we have … I have an angel's skin but I am a jackal … a crocodile's skin but I am a little doggie, a negress's skin but I am white, a woman's skin but I am a man; I never have the skin of that which I am. There is no exception to the rule because I am never that which I have.'

Predictably there are those who object to medicine straying beyond the boundaries of the therapeutic and curative, those who cry 'megolamania, delusions of grandeur, histrionics, mystical delirium'. But increasingly, commentators like Onfray take a positive view, seeing Orlan as asking important and urgent questions about, for instance, the implications of the new technologies of the body (genetic engineering, genetic fingerprinting, the combining of animal and human tissue etc) and identity – 'the rift between essence and existence, between what one is deep down and the way one looks to others'.

Orlan, three days after operation, 24 November 1993, New York. Photo: Sichov/Sipa Press.

Orlan, seventh operation/surgical performance; 21 November 1993, New York. Photo: Sichov/Sipa Press.



'This is my Body … This is my software', a touring exhibition of photographs from Orlan's seventh operation/surgical performance will premier at Zone Photographic Gallery, Westgate Road, Newcastle (11 April-26 May). The exhibition is accompanied by a substantial, fully illustrated CD Rom and printed publication with essays by Parveen Adams, Sarah Wilson, Sandy Stone, Michel Onfray, Serge Francois and a foreword by Michelle Hirschhorn (Curator, Zone Gallery).

A panel discussion of Orlan's work, preceded by an address by the artist will be held at 6.30pm Saturday in the Students' Union Theatre – see Panel Sessions.

Mark Haywood

Museum with Wall

My research involves the history and application of visual strategies that have enabled artists and designers to achieve results often termed 'beautiful' or 'sublime'. I am concerned with defining enduring archetypes and considering the factors which have allowed their perpetuation. In earlier works (*City Museum of Art and Design*) I have suggested that the creation of classically beautiful objects is now an activity perhaps more appropriate to designers.

Museum with Wall contains elements, which though formalised in antiquity, continue to underpin many of our attitudes to beauty. It is based on Belsay Hall, the neo-classical home of Sir Charles Monck, who, following an eighteenth month honeymoon tour of the sites of antiquity, designed his new residence after the Athenian Temple of Theseus. The wall is hung with a collection of computer generated 'Ideal Sculptures', unrealisable outside the digital world of a 3D CAD program. They chart the genealogy of aesthetic conventions affirmed by the Grand Tour and education of a "gentleman of taste".

The principal framing device of the sculptures is a sky dome, often used in computer graphics to create an apparently seamless backdrop against which an object can be animated. Its boundaries revealed and inverted, it passes from the realm of the sublime into the category of the beautiful. This is not classical beauty, but a form which recalls the tympanum of churches and an ordered vision of the universe more usually associated with medieval aesthetics. In the twelfth century Hugh of St Victor wrote that 'visible beauty is an image of invisible beauty'[1] – a reflection of the hand of God, which was of course, infinitely more beautiful. Umberto Eco observes: 'There is an almost Romantic sense of the inadequacy of earthly beauty, which provokes in him who contemplates it, that sense of dissatisfaction which is a form of yearning for God.'[2] Nearer to our own time, it evokes those first photographs of our planet from outer space. Perhaps their emotional resonance indicates post-modern longing for a lost unity, which manifests itself in meta-theories such as the Gaia concept.

The sculptures make reference to the writings of Burke and Hogarth, both of whom gendered beauty as female. Today it is possibly easier to appreciate these principles when they occur in the sine recta curves of the Barcelona chair or in a piece of anthropomorphic furniture. Ironically such encounters are more intimate than those of a purely retinal variety and imply an underlying sensuality at the heart of beauty. Perhaps Philippe Starck's popularity is in part due to his fulfilling an enduring need for new objects that embody the psychological properties of devices such as the serpentine line.

1 Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, Yale University Press, 1986, p56.
2 *ibid*.

Jane Wheeler

The Wardrobe Mistress

A wall drawing to be made in the main lecture hall lobby in Ellison Building.

A woman with long curling red hair, wearing a trouser suit with embroidered lapels, crouches on her hands and knees, hidden by the office desk. She hears the filing cabinet open and papers being removed. She focuses the camera, but the polka dot skirt briefly moves back across her field of vision and she hears the door close. The light catches something under the desk; she picks it up with a gloved hand, drops it into a plastic envelope,

Jane Wheeler: The Wardrobe Mistress. Acyrlic on coat.

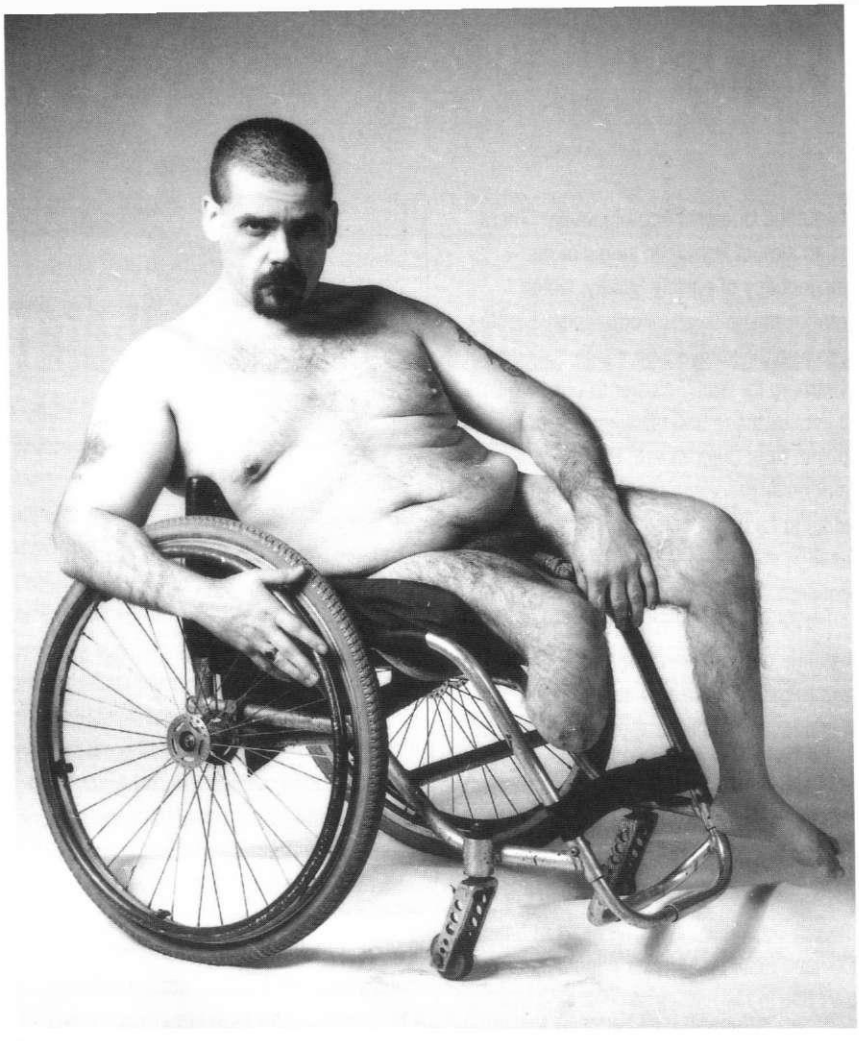
and leaves.

I felt at peace with myself. I felt I had finally fulfilled my destiny. I felt great relief and was much more worried about what clothes I was going to buy than anything else. I was embarrassed that my real sex was finally out in the open, but I decided that I couldn't hide any longer. I destroyed every photograph, burnt all Trevor's clothes; another life was begun. I bought dresses; I have never worn trousers since.

He glanced at the floral lace pattern of her red panty-hose, stretched out on her fleshy upper thigh in baroque splendour, as she sat back on the bed, relaxed now that she was in control. Her powerful arms supporting her weight, she lazily surveyed his dishevelled state, suggesting, with a wave of her hand, that he help himself.

The Italian brocade for the wedding dress cost £1,300; with the crystal and pearls for the bodice the bill came to £7,200. Her jewellery cost £35,000. Imam only wore this wonderful dress for about two hours, but she felt it was a fair price for her virginity.

A bar of light across her shoulder and breasts threw a spider's web of shadows from the filmy black lace dress onto her pale skin. I glanced around the long basement room, but we were alone; there was no possibility of being overheard. Above us, in the rest of the house, the party roared on, at its wildest. Abruptly sobered by this necessity for confrontation, she turned away, exclaiming angrily, "I never meant to ... I didn't mean ..." but broke off with a muffled gasp of exasperated laughter as I tripped over a child's toy and crashed to the floor.



Eddy Hardy

The body is the focal point of our individual identity, in that we not only have *but in a sense* are *our bodies: however distinct the body may be conceptually from the self which experiences and knows it, that which experiences and knows is by its nature an embodied self, a self whose social identity and whose location in time and space are contained and defined by their individual embodiment.*

Keneth R Dutton, *The Perfectible Body*

My work is an attempt to challenge the stereotyped image of disabled people. Through using my own body, I am trying to destroy the myth that disabled people have no sexual identity.

Jamelle Hassan

Is War Art?

In an exhibition titled 'Is War Art (Beyrouth)?' at the Forest City Gallery (1980), Jamelle Hassan documented the ruins of Lebanon in photographs taken on a trip to the Middle East. As part of the installation, however, one gallery wall was torn down and debris strewn inside the exhibition space and outside the building. The demolition of part of the gallery referred literally to the destructiveness of war, but it also functioned as a complex metaphor for rupturing the border between the secluded spaces of art and the everyday world, and for the artist's own practice. Born in Canada of Lebanese parents, Hassan's work has consistently explored how cultural boundaries can be crossed and connections made. 'Primer for War' (1985) reproduced facile statements made in a book published in 1914 urging the USA to intervene in the First World War and juxtaposed these with photographs of West Germany, then a divided nation and the site of East-West confrontation. Included in the photographs were pictures of a swan as a symbol of aggression and as an image of beauty associated with a woman and children. Hassan's billboard, 'Because ... there was and there wasn't a city of Baghdad' (1991-92), reproduced a mosque from one of the world's oldest and most beautiful cities in close detail, revealing its sumptuous decoration and putting into question stereotypes of Iraq in the Gulf War as barbaric.

At the Conference, Jamelle Hassan will be showing her billboard ***Linkage*** (1993). *Linkage* shows an area of southern Iraq mythically identified as the earthly site of the Garden of Eden. The vision of palm trees is overlaid with texts referring to nostalgic ideas about paradise in childhood and the Bible and to the ruination of this original beauty by the pollution generated by the Gulf War.

Linkage, 1993, Jamelle Hassan.

Karen Knorr

Being for Another (Academies)

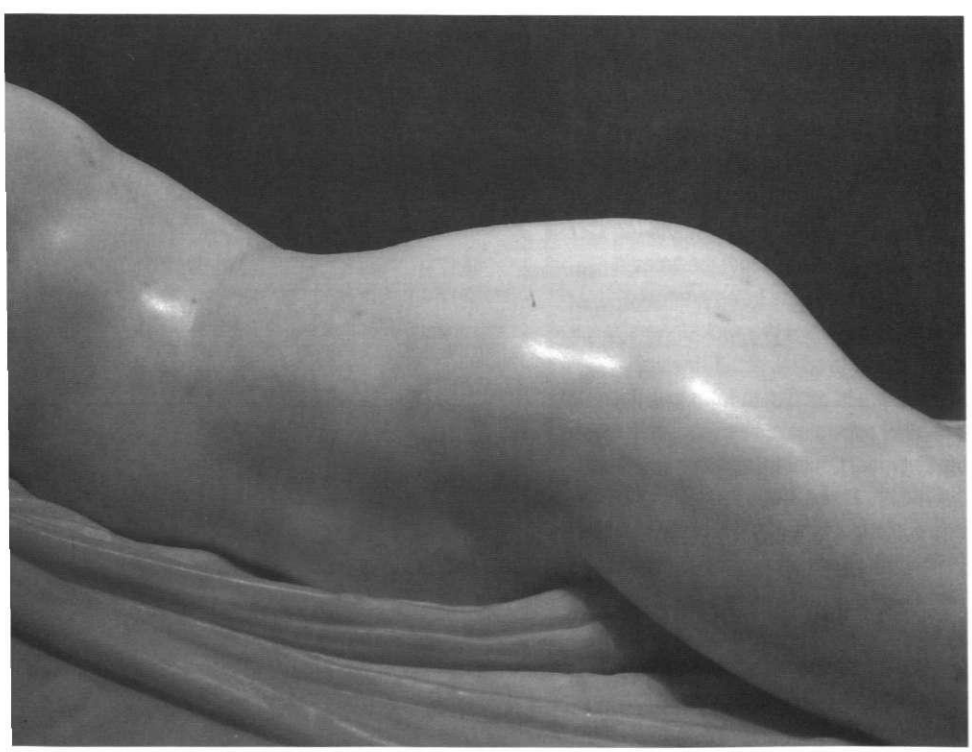
Academies (work which includes photograph texts, video and wolves) proposes a critique of the eurocentric classical aesthetic predominant in the academy until the nineteenth century which still epitomises popular taste regarding how 'real art' should look. (*The Three Graces* by Canova was recently bought for the British nation.) The project uses the different academies and museums of Europe in order to examine and explore the status of the 'academy', its exclusions, contradictions and changing formations in the twenty-first century. *Academies* is a development from the earlier work *Connoisseurs* (1986-1993) which attempted to examine taste and beauty in High English culture (published in *Marks of Distinction*, Thames and Hudson, 1991).

Sculpture appears in my work as representative of the beautiful ideal so beloved of classicism. This normative aesthetic has enduring appeal as the popular conception of what sculpture should be: an imitation of an idealised nature which uplifts by its beauty. My more recent work, of which the video work *Being for Another* forms a part, is concerned with classicism, and a critique of the Aryan model of art history, its definition of the beautiful and of the feminine. The first part of this work recently exhibited in Paris refers to the mythological origins of sculpture.

Canova's white *The Sleeping Nymph* at the Victoria and Albert Museum is fragmented into fetishistic 'blazons' and caressed by a disembodied black hand disrupting the framed space of cold, inanimate beauty. The line and the shadow haunt the Platonist pretence of ideal forms. The title alludes to Hegel who reminds us:

Nothing has a Spirit that is ground within itself and dwells in it, but each has its being in something outside of and alien to it.

The Phenomenology of the Spirit



'Being for Another', 1996 © Karen Knorr, from: Academies.

Panel Sessions

Saturday 11.30am-1.00pm

"Can we create a situation here, Jim?"
'The new beauty can only be a beauty of situation' (Debord, 1955). The subject of this discussion will be Situationists' and Letterists' formulations, practice and legacy. Panellists will be Phil Edwards (author of a forthcoming book on Debord), Simon Sadler, Tonya Carless, and the artist Heather Rogers. The session will be chaired by Lucy Forsyth (University of Central Lancashire).

The Art of Being Digital
This panel discussion will address the extent to which information technology influences and enables our work as teachers or researchers. Behind the 'information superhighway' hype are serious questions about how useful the technology really is, how good the 'content' is, and about how prevalent its use will become. The panel members have been asked to talk about the projects with which they themselves are associated and the impact of information technologies on the working methods of the historian of visual cultures. Each presentation will last about 15-20 minutes and it is hoped that a broader discussion of shared interests and concerns will ensue. The panellists will be Dr Tony Gill, Project Leader, ADAM (Art, Design, Architecture and Media Internet Gateway), Yvonne Deane, Director, AXIS (Visual Arts Information Service), and Professor Tim Benton, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Open University, who has been involved in the Art Explorer, Cubism, and Stoke Dry parish church projects. Tony Gill's presentation will address the problems of access, relevance and quality for the teacher and researcher wishing to use the Internet in their work; Yvonne Deane's will explore the ways in which artists and multimedia information service providers can work together to provide a resource for art historical teaching and research, and Tim Benton's will address the contribution which multi-media approaches to the design learning materials can make to the teaching of art and design history. The chair of the session will be Professor Chris Bailey, Head of Historical and Critical Studies at the University of Northumbria.

Delegates will be able to attend demonstrations of the projects described by the panellists between 1.00pm and 2.00pm on Saturday 13 April.

Meet the Publishers
In this session, issues of mutual interest to publishers and delegates will be debated. Panellists will be Marcia Pointon (Editor of *Art History*), Hugh Merrell (Merrell Holberton Publishers), Ellie Miller (Harvey Miller Publishers), Simon Mason (OUP) and Nikos Stangos (Thames and Hudson).

Meet the Artists
This panel will feature the artists commissioned to show work in Ellison Building: Eddy Hardy, Jamelle Hassan, Mark Haywood, Karen Knorr and Jane Wheeler. The Chair will be Stuart Morgan, the critic and organiser of last summer's *Rites of Passage* at the Tate Gallery.

Students' Forum
This session will consist of three papers by research students which have previously been given at the Student Group conferences around Britain. This will be an opportunity for the speakers formally to present their work to others, and for the audience to learn about the types of research which are being produced. Jonathan Hughes of Warwick University is scheduled to speak about Hospital Architecture in relation to town planning: two other papers have been chosen from the Liverpool Conference, which was held last month. Emma Roberts, the chair of this very active group, will introduce the speakers.

Tate Panel
This panel will look at the Tate Gallery's recent acquisitions policy in the light of the exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery (see Exhibitions). Panellists will be Jeremy Lewison (Deputy Keeper, Modern Collection, Tate Gallery), Christopher Want (Kent Institute of Art and Design), Brandon Taylor (Winchester School of Art) and the artist Tania Kovats, whose work, *Grotto*, is on display in *Ace! Arts Council Collection New Purchases* at the Hatton Gallery.

Conservation
Delegates will have an opportunity to view and discuss current research projects (both easel paintings and works on paper) being undertaken by students on the University's MA Conservation of Fine Art programme at its home, Burt Hall. The latter is a fine 1896 building (close to Ellison Building) which used to be the headquarters of the Northumbrian miners' union – well worth a visit in itself.

Saturday 6.00-7.30pm

Orlan
To coincide with her exhibition at the Zone Gallery (see Exhibitions), the French performance artist Orlan will be giving a presentation, to be followed by a round-table discussion. Panellists will be Francette Pacteau (author of *The Symptom of Beauty*), Michelle Hirschhorn (curator of the Zone Gallery), Sarah Wilson (Courtauld Institute of Art), Parveen Adams (psychoanalyst, Brunel University), and Johann Reusch (Bucknell University).

Georg Baselitz
To coincide with the exhibition at the University Gallery (see Exhibitions), the art historian Professor Siegfried Gohr will be giving a special lecture on Georg Baselitz. The lecture is taking place courtesy of the Goethe Institut, Manchester.

Visits

Tour Friday 10.30am-12.30pm

Architectural Tour of Newcastle
A tour of Newcastle's city centre taking in the elegant stone classical streets (1834-39) laid out by various architects for the developer Richard Grainger, including the winding, sloping Grey Street described by Pevsner as "one of the best streets in England"; and the Quayside, with its view of the various bridges over the Tyne, the recently completed Crown Court and the offices/leisure development of the East Quayside currently under construction (overall plan, Terry Farrell).

Visits Saturday 1.30-5.30pm

Bowes Museum*
A grandiose neo-Renaissance-style palace set amidst the rugged landscape of Teesdale, the museum houses an extraordinary collection of European paintings (Tiepolo, El Greco, Boucher, Canaletto, Sassetta etc) and decorative arts (furniture, ceramics and costumes). Described by an early twentieth-century visitor as 'a veritable "South Kensington" set down in the loneliness of a Northern wild'. Howard Coutts, keeper of ceramics, will act as guide.

Durham Cathedral*
The famous twelfth-century cathedral perched above the River Wear, where the buttress, rib-vault and pointed arch of the Gothic were first demonstrated. Once described by Pevsner as "one of the great experiences of Europe to those with eyes to appreciate architecture". Eric Fernie's contribution to the session Medieval Perceptions of Beauty will be given on site.

Alnwick Castle*
On the outside the suitably grand home of the Duke of Northumberland is a fascinating mixture of medieval Gothic, very fanciful Gothick by Robert Adam and weighty Victorian Gothic by Anthony Salvin. Amongst the treasures inside are pictures by Titian, Tintoretto, Palma Vecchio, Sebastiono del Piombo, Claude Lorrain, Van Dyck, Dobson, Canaletto and Turner.

Cragside*
This highly picturesque early Norman Shaw mansion was built for Lord Armstrong, the Newcastle engineer and arms magnate, in the 1870s and 1880s. In Pevsner's words, "the site is Wagnerian and so is Shaw's architecture". Hugh Dixon (National Trust) will be the guide.

Belsay and Seaton Delaval*
Seaton Delaval (1718-29) is a highly individual house in the Baroque style by Sir John Vanburgh. Pevsner describes it as at once 'sombre' and 'theatrical'.

The main attraction at Belsay is the severe Neo-Classical house in the Greek Doric style (for further details see Mark Haywood exhibition). There is also a fine fourteenth-century castle and a ruined Jacobean mansion, connected to the house by a picturesque quarry from which the house was built. Tom Faulkner (University of Northumbria) will lead the tour.

Wallington*
The home of the Trevelyan family, Wallington is a fine eighteenth-century country house with a central saloon designed in the 1850s by the local architect John Dobson on the advice of John Ruskin. The latter is the setting for a fascinating series of large paintings illustrating scenes from Northumbrian history by the Pre-Raphaelite circle painter, William Bell Scott. Phoebe Lowery (National Trust) will lead a guided tour.

Byker and Civic Centre*
The redevelopment of the Byker district of Newcastle in the 1970s (architect, Ralph Erskine) has been cited as a milestone in community architecture as well as an early instance of postmodernism. Roger Tillotson (University of Newcastle) will be the guide. The lavish Newcastle Civic Centre (1960-68) is an extraordinary testament to a short-lived moment of civic pride; in its way it might be described as the last of the great Victorian town halls.

Coaches for these visits will leave from the front of Ellison Building at 1.30pm. Please consult the notice board in the foyer of Ellison Building for final arrangements.

1

Beauty and the Body:

Defining the feminine

Hilary Moreton (University of Northumbria)
Cheryl Buckley (University of Northumbria)

The aim of this session is to examine the ways in which the female body has been aestheticised from the mid-nineteenth century to the present with relation to visual culture. In particular, we would like to consider the ways in which feminine identities have been defined and redefined within the areas of fine art, fashion, and the media. The central concern is with the relationship between women and beauty, and the significance of this with regard to issues of women's power/powerlessness.

Cheryl Buckley (University of Northumbria)

Just like a film star: fashion, femininity and modernity in Britain between the wars

During the 1920s and 1930s images of modernity were closely tied to popular representations of the sexually and socially emancipated lifestyles of specific groups of women. Fashion played an important role in the construction of these representations by connecting femininity and modernity. The physicality of the cinema, the visual style of the films, and the star images, although ostensibly reaffirming stereotypical images of femininity, also offered women new ways of presenting themselves as feminine which ultimately represented a challenge to patriarchy. Young women smoked, dyed their hair, painted their faces, and combined wide 'mannish' jackets with figure-hugging gowns in defiance of patriarchal authority and middle-class interference. Hollywood glamour provided the visual language with which to do this, and Hollywood film provided some viable role models, albeit problematic ones. This paper aims to explore aspects of the inter-relationship between fashion, femininity and modernity in Britain between the wars.

Hilary Moreton (University of Northumbria)

Glamour, women and fashion in the late nineteenth century

In this paper I wish to examine the significance of the female body with relation to high fashion in the late nineteenth century. In a period of transition with regard to female identity, images in fashionable iconography represent a complex combination of monumentality and eroticism. It is the point at which we see the beginnings of the process of the commodification of femininity as we know it through an expanding fashion media and its associated advertising. Here on the cusp of modernity we find allusions to the reproductive and the sexual emphatically and consistently conjoined in dominant imagery. These visually powerful, highly stylised images in which the voluptuous female body is celebrated and fetishised are traditionally interpreted as anachronistic in a period of increasing awareness as regards female sexual and political agency. They are, it is true, grounded within a highly structured class system and speak of privilege and wealth but they also represent an accommodation of female sensuality and appetite as well as an acknowledgment of female reproductive identity, all of which are soon to be marginalised in the construction of a so-called modern femininity.

Jane Beckett (University of East Anglia)

There she goes: just looking at the 60s

Thirty years on, the magazines (mostly French), pop songs and underground papers that had significant effects on the fantasies which shaped formations of femininity c1964-5 have been obscured in mythologies of "the sixties". This paper excavates those conditions to discuss the economic determinants on everyday dress.

Rosemary Betterton
(Sheffield Hallam University)

Body horror? Food, sex and the feminine in contemporary women's art

The dominant ideal of a slender body in twentieth-century western culture has been represented as a desire to contain the body's margins, a desire that is encoded both morally and socially in relation to food. In a powerful analysis of the control of the female body, Susan Bordo has argued that production of the 'normal' feminine body is one of the central disciplinary strategies of our society. For women in particular, fatness is frequently represented both as a loss of bodily control *and* as a failure of feminine identity.

The pathology associated with eating, fear of bodily excess, and the horror provoked by the unregulated female body are all themes which pervade contemporary culture and can be found in both popular and avant garde forms. In this paper, I suggest that works by contemporary artists such as Helen Chadwick and Laura Godfrey-Isaacs that explore the female body and its appetites, offer a prototype for examining the complex role of food and corporeality in the constitution of the feminine (speaking) subject. Drawing on a range of imagery from viscera to chocolate to discover the abjected boundaries of the body, their work provokes reflection on the close contiguity between disgust and desire. In dealing with the body's margins as a focus of anxiety *and* pleasure, it reveals the ambivalent fascinations with and fears of our own changing, consuming and desiring bodies.

Ysanne Holt (University of Northumbria)

Augustus John and the Mothers of a Tribe

Before the First World War, Augustus John consciously adopted the persona of an anarchic bohemian artist in revolt against the conventions of Edwardian society. Despite this outsider stance, however, the paintings of his extended family posed amidst barren and remote moorlands, found a growing audience amongst

a cross section of critics, writers and gallery visiting public. To account for that popularity, this study will examine John's figure-in-landscape compositions partly in relation to contemporary discourse on the countryside, but particularly in terms of the artist's representations of his wife and mistress as new, and eventually much emulated, icons of female beauty. John's paintings of Ida and Dorelia achieved a fashionable synthesis of the current revival of types of beauty established by the Pre-Raphaelites, Burne-Jones and Rossetti and the contemporary taste for more robust, primitive forms in painting. The result, described by one critic as images of 'primitive matrons, sealed in knowledge, mysteriously smiling', might be regarded as the creation of potentially new archetypes for femininity and motherhood at a time of growing debate over racial decline and imperialism.

Anne Anderson (Southampton Institute)

Metamorphosis or changing states: The Femme Fleur in nineteenth century fine and decorative art

In Victorian literature and art, Woman and Flower were frequently collated as a metaphor: Woman was as delicate as a flower and required nurturing and protection. The concept of the Femme Fleur went further, by physically grafting a Woman to a Flower. The Femme Fleur emphasized Woman's difference from Man by linking her to the vegetal: biomorphic imaging. Such images played on man's greatest fears, exposing the inherent danger of Woman as the harbinger of death and decay.

The external beauty of the woman-flower could conceal inner corruption; the Fleur de Mal highlighted the schizophrenic character of woman, of beauty concealing ugliness. Female beauty was an illusion, transitory and doomed to decay. The Femme Fleur explored the fantasy of seeing a Woman revert to Nature; that "Nature will out". In this way the images became cathartic, realising the worst and in so doing releasing the terror. Most images hinge on the moment of change, the figure oscillating between human and vegetal. Metamorphic images encapsulated the very essence of change: Woman caught on the cusp between two worlds. This paper will illustrate the development of the Femme Fleur, as both a concept and a manifestation in the fine and decorative arts.

Monica Lea (The London Institute)

Role models: fashion mannequins in the high street 1946-1966

It has long been a firmly-held belief within the retail display profession that a garment cannot successfully convey a sellable fantasy without an image of its wearer. In the link between reality and fantasy provided by display, it is via the fashion mannequin that these two concepts ultimately converge, in an environment where a purchase can be just a few seconds away. The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of display mannequins in womenswear outlets as a means of conveying beauty to a consuming public in the post-war High Street. Did the image offered reflect the dreams of idealised beauty held by ordinary women? What was the relation between the mediated representation of femininity portrayed in a store window, and that of a fashion photograph in a magazine? The paper will compare the British approach to store display and its use of mannequins with the pioneering visual merchandising methods adopted in the US. Finally a focus will be made on the British firm Adel Rootstein Ltd, creator of undoubtedly the most well-known mannequins since the early sixties, innovative in its promotion of the 'natural look' by being the first to base its mannequins on real fashion models and celebrities. To what extent did Rootstein's mannequins mirror the turning point in the sixties that gave rise to a redefinition of the feminine?

Tag Gronberg (Birkbeck College, London)

A physiognomy of effacement – the 1920s shopwindow mannequin

French advertising theory of the first decades of this century posited the shopwindow fashion mannequin as one of the most advanced and modern manifestations of *publicité*. The veristic wax dummies on display in barbershop windows and old-fashioned shop vitrines were now outmoded, replaced (it was claimed) by a more streamlined 'stylised' mannequin. Such modern mannequins were acknowledged as an intrinsic component of the fashion industry and in particular of Parisian *haute-couture*. This stylisation of the female body took a variety of forms, the gilding in gold or silver of the mannequin's 'skin', for example. The most important distinguishing feature of the modern mannequin, however, was identified as its facelessness, an eradication which was deemed necessary to the effective display of *haute-couture* garments. As indicated by the Surrealists' fascination with the shopwindow dummy, advertising theory of the period, as well as the mannequins themselves, constituted not only modes of marketing but also the means of defining and orchestrating a modern urban gaze. This paper explores some of the implications involved with the circuits of looking associated with the 1920s stylised mannequin and considers the significance of a gaze predicated on the emphatic erasure of the female face.

Gail-Nina Anderson

Frankenstein created Bimbo

Amongst the screamers and femmes fatales who typify the female characters in Horror and Science Fiction cinema, there lurks the more disturbing incarnation of the man-made woman, the female Creature or Monster. This paper, centred on Hammer Films' *Frankenstein Created Woman* and drawing on related themes in such films as *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *Stolen Face*, *Flesh for Frankenstein* and *Frankenhooker*, explores the culturally resonant notion of woman as a created object. The films, taking their hint from Mary Shelley's novel, tend to present the making of a female as secondary entirely to male needs; created to be sexually available/fertile/beautiful. Female beauty as something to be constructed and consumed, and its links with necrophilia, death and the inevitability of decay, are viewed within the generic conventions the Horror film imposes and occasionally transcends.

Jane Wheeler (University of Northumbria)

Painting the female body

"Where one says, for example, 'that is a beautiful woman', what one in fact thinks is only this, that in her form nature excellently portrays the ends present in the female figure." (Immanuel Kant)

The concept of "beauty" as applied to women, is normative – it draws a line, excluding the excessive, and the deviant. It is associated with youth, health and cleanliness – in other words, with "the ends present" in the female body – and produces a construct of femininity which pervades our society. The conversion into Art of the female form, through the nuances of paint handling, treatment of light, and formal construction of the image, can give an appearance of a different kind of beauty, in that it is fictionalised by the artist, but just as conventional, and as prescriptive. I would like to talk about both the image of a beautiful woman, and the beautiful image of a woman, and how these conventions can be subverted, re-presented and opened up by a critical studio practice.

2

Beauty and the Beast:

the aesthetics of the male body

Michael Hatt

What does 'beauty' mean when applied to a male rather than a female body? What is invested in the concept socially, artistically, politically or psychically? How do criteria of masculine beauty change?

The subject of this session will be the aesthetics of the male body and the ways in which ideals of beauty inflect, and are inflected by, definitions of masculinity. Although the session will be quite closely focused on beauty, it is hoped the papers will represent a diverse range of questions from a variety of methodological perspectives, and will explore not only social historical issues around, for example, class and race, but also more specific art historical questions of material, technique, patronage, and function, as well as broader philosophical debates about aesthetics and corporeality.

Penny Florence (Falmouth School of Art)

Why is beauty like the phallus? Female homoerotic appreciation of male beauty

This is a speculative paper which takes up elements of the recent debate about aesthetics and the sexed body, and opens up the question of how developments in reconceptualising female subjectivity may relate to the male body.

Beauty stands in the same relation to women as the phallus because we are it and, therefore, within this paradigm, we can't have or know either it or its power. The question that then arises is not only 'How might beauty be redefined?', but also, 'What is invested in its definition as lack?'. One element is the elevation of the transcendent and 'spiritual' over the erotic. Another is the radical repression of the feminine in relation to the male body. Recent reconceptualisations of female subjectivity have repercussions here for the male body and responses by different subjects to its sexed beauty. Analysis of an embodied aesthetic response from the point of view of the lesbian spectator of the beautiful male body reveals further contradictions in the supposed neutralities of idea and/or transcendent beauty.

Pam Bracewell (Open University)

The man behind the eyes: dualities of mind and body in the work of Wyndham Lewis

The preoccupation of philosophical aesthetics which conventionally pursue definitions of 'beauty' and 'taste' in relation to the visual arts must be dismantled and reconstructed in this discussion along with assumed 'others'. Analogous to, but rupturing the duality of 'beauty/beast', an 'Apollonian' art advocated by Lewis defines itself against the 'other' of Dionysus which is 'irrational', 'indistinct', and associated with the 'feminine' as a type of philosophical generalization rather than a fixed or specific physical sexual identity.

Lewis's misogynistic persona, dedicated to the superiority of the intellect over the animal body, is externalized in a hard-edged, austere and uncompromising style that effectively 'masculinizes' its subjects, whether male or female. There is a whole range of parodied values against which Lewis ultimately defines his philosophical position in the 'war' of space (the stasis of art, line, 'masculine' rationalism) and time (demands of the body, flux, 'feminine', irrationalism). Such values deliberately and provocatively exploit the base characteristics of sexual stereotyping, but in Lewis's terms they also function as serious polemical and necessarily disruptive metaphors in the presentation of an artist's 'philosophy of the eye'.

Gen Doy (De Montfort University)

Women artists, art critics and the male body in French neoclassical painting

The aim of this paper will be to question and reassess some current views of women as spectators and producers of art in early bourgeois society. Are women inevitably locked into 'male' spectatorship when they look actively at images representing male and female figures? Is a specifically female pleasure in looking articulated by women art critics in what is consistently referred to as 'patriarchal' society? What do these women art critics say about homosexuality in David's *Leonidas* or the male nude in his *Intervention of the Sabine Women*? If David's studio and his particular re-elaboration of a modern classicism were entirely male-orientated, why was it his female pupil Mme Angélique Mongez who committed herself to taking forward Davidian neo-classicism after the master's death, and whose work was viewed by several critics at the Salon of 1827-28 as the classical counterpoint to Romanticism? I'll be looking at Mongez's classical history paintings and her representation of the nude male body in attempting to explain how her work was received by critics (male and female).

Tim Barringer (Birkbeck College, London)

'The pride of manly health and beauty': masculine beauty and the labouring body in Victorian visual culture

The paper examines the ambivalent responses of artists to the male labouring body in the mid-Victorian period. In representations of labour, conceptions of beauty are inflected by considerations of class and race: while the developed musculature of the body of the manual labourer offered parallels with the classical athletic ideal, the body of labour, socially considered, was other to ideals of civilisation and high culture. Accordingly the labouring body, often partially unclothed as a result of physical exertion, was a source both of fascination and of middle-class anxiety.

Ford Madox Brown, in *Work*, found in the figure of the English navvy an archetype of male beauty which he considered appropriate to fulfil the role of hero in the Reynoldsian scheme of history painting as well as the Carlylean discourse of labour. A contrasting and more explicitly idealising presentation of the labouring

body is incorporated in Frederic Leighton's frescoes in the V&A, *The Arts of Industry as Applied to War and Peace*. Adopting historical periods distant from the present, these frescoes attempt to divorce ideals of beauty from the class and gender politics of Victorian Britain. However, their position within the South Kensington Museum, an institution explicitly created to address the elite sections of the working class, insists on the return of questions of labour under industrialisation.

Anna Athanasopoulou (Courtauld Institute)

Artistic identity and the phallic artist: 'art', 'beauty' and male subjectivity in Gilbert & George's 'Living Sculptures' (1969-1975)

Since 1969, when they first resumed their identity as *Living Sculptures*, Gilbert & George have constructed a tautological universe in which notions such as artist and self, and private and public intersect. A dialectic between art and non-art, fiction and reality is established as the boundary between the real and the aesthetic is blurred by their continuous performance. As 'sculptors', they blend late 1960s avant-garde yearnings with Wildean gentility to experience a form of aestheticism in which 'Life' approximates 'Art' and 'Beauty' becomes an essential ingredient of everyday formalities. Moreover, as *Living Sculptures* Gilbert & George emulate all the mannerisms of male gentility, consistently fashioning their artistic image in the manner of the well-groomed bourgeois gentleman, and their public persona as the dandy, the epitome of male refinement. In their world, beauty is associated with masculinity. An intriguing 'male beauty ideal' is suggested in the narcissistic mirroring of their composite self, consisting of two men in similar attire. The deep irony underlying this 'male ideal' has a deconstructive effect on conventional cultural views of male subjectivity, in general, and on the social image of the heterosexual male artist, in particular. Exposing popular notions of masculinity as social constructs, Gilbert & George's *Living Sculptures* unveil their unfixed nature and create room for alternative types of artistic/male subjectivity.

John Lynch (Leeds Metropolitan University)

AIDS and the representation of the male body

The paper will examine how the representations of the male body have been reconfigured since the advent of AIDS. I would argue that this category has been subject to fundamental change in the light of AIDS and the way that the disease was conceptualised around physical (moral) decay. From Rock Hudson to Freddie Mercury masculine stereotypes can no longer be seen to be taken for granted. The political nature of the investment in particular representations of masculinity and the 'threat' posed by homosexuality to this is explored. The advertising campaign in America that uses HIV+ models is assessed to explore how representations of those living with HIV and AIDS can be subverted.

Martin Myrone (Courtauld Institute)

The body of paint: technique and gender in British history painting, c1768-1810

With the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768, the male nude was officially promoted to a central place in British visual culture for the first time. As an emblem of cultural continuity and as the ultimate test of artistic facility the idealized masculine form was greatly esteemed in Academic practice and discourse. Yet in the history painting produced over the last decades of the eighteenth century by Henry Fuseli, James Barry and others, the ideal body was disrupted or disarticulated through highly individuated pictorial codes. I will examine selected representations of masculine heroism in the light of the contemporary debates about painterly purity which implicated issues of gender, nation and subjectivity. In the Academy lectures, criticism and pedagogic literature of the late eighteenth century, a complex of profound anxieties about the materiality of paint is evident. Posited as, alternatively, definitive of the modern British School, and a source of corruption resistant to artistic agency, the matter of paint was invested with tremendous symbolic import. A struggle between the artist and his material was projected, which purportedly put at stake the figuration of the ideal male body and the production of masculine artistic identities.

Anthea Callen (University of Warwick)

Ideal masculinity and the medical anatomy

There is no such thing as a 'natural' body: all bodies – whether our own, an historical anatomy or a Raphael nude – are all socially produced; they are all representations which embody a complex web of ideas including materiality, spirituality and (of particular interest to me) race, class and gender. Anatomies can serve both medical and artistic needs; they concentrate on outwardly visible structures: the skeleton and the superficial muscles. This paper concentrates on the skeleton, and in particular on Albinus's *Human Skeleton*, published in Leiden in 1747. My interest is in decoding the visual language of anatomies: the messages contained not simply in their subject matter, but in the choice and use of medium, of pose types, proportions, setting and accessories. What view of masculinity was constructed in medical and artistic anatomies, and how was that view materially embodied? In a close visual analysis of the Albinus, I want to show what such material can reveal.

Richard Martin
(Metropolitan Museum, New York)

Assuming Adam: the male body in contemporary fashion

Contemporary menswear addresses and assumes significantly different options in the ideal bodies of men. Projecting specific ideal bodies in accordance with design objectives, contemporary fashion poses distinctive archetypes of the physique, ranging from Thierry Mugler's broad-shouldered paradigms of power, Gianni Versace's callipygean bodybuilders, Jean Paul Gaultier's fragile *fauves* of downtown sensibility, Anna Sui's narrow-waisted models of 1970s revival, and Nikos's heroic/hyperbolic standards of phallic masculinity. Apparel is abetted by catwalk model and advertising/style imagery to generate these specific male archetypes. In each instance, the contemporary fashion designer imagines a male paragon, creating an ideal.

Randall Rhodes (Buffalo State University)

Versace's 'culto del corpo'

In his recent menswear collections' catalogues, the Milanese couturier, Gianni Versace has re-created the image of man, draped and undraped. Realized through the photography of Herb Ritts, Richard Avedon, and most importantly, Bruce Weber, Versace devises a marketing strategy wedding merchandising to neoromanticism. Divorced from the commercial runways, the models, championing their perfect pectorals and shuddering quads, populate homosocial clublands governed by the 'Romance of the Rose' and *amor socraticus*. As the knights in the era of New Chivalry and as the 'minnows' of Tiberius' Capri, Weber's ephebi with their paraphernalia of allure motivate the homoerotic gaze and inspire Freudian narcissism and fetishism. This paper will examine Versace's aesthetic strategies and the implication of the libidinisation of consumption within a publication aimed at the modern male audience.

3

Ugliness

Shearer West (University of Leicester)

Although canons of beauty have long been debated and established, considerations of ugliness have more often been evaded or deflected. Ugliness has become another form of 'otherness' in aesthetic theory, and a taboo in high art before the twentieth century. This session is meant to consider the idea of 'ugliness' in as broad a way as possible: from medieval gargoyles and Renaissance grotesques to eighteenth-century caricatures and other 'low' modes and genres. The papers should range from those which focus on theoretical or aesthetic issues, to considerations of specific historical circumstances and examples.

Sue Wragg (Nene College)

Vile bodies and faces of dogges: depictions of cannibalism in the 'New World'

This paper sets out to explore an iconography of Colonialism in the context of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century depictions of the Americas. In particular it will focus on the ways in which those existing graphic conventions used to show the supposed brutalities of the Jews and the imagined horrors of witchcraft could be harnessed to create imaginery 'Indians'.

Columbus brought back reports of peoples with the "faces of dogges" who ate human flesh; witches who also might be cannibals were often portrayed as ugly; Jews who drank human blood were known to look inhuman – they had tails. Such subversive behaviour imputed to the indigenous population externalised the shock of encounter as a fear of savagism. Thus the brutality meted out to them would be rationalised as a civilised and civilising process.

Ann Storey (University of Washington)

Ugliness, death and laughter

Death is the ultimate ugliness for mortals who fear the inevitable end. This paper will examine the contemporary Mexican *calavera* figure (the personification of death as a skeleton), which both represents death and critiques humanity's terror of it. An ambivalent figure, it is the mirror of our own dread. Originally created in the context of a religious folk tradition as well as popular arts, the *calavera* eventually became a secular hero during the pre-revolutionary period (mid-nineteenth century) in the hands of artists/caricaturists like José Guadalupe Posada, serving as a protagonist in the battle with political corruption and social hypocrisy. Through the Mexican muralists and Frida Kahlo, it has literally invaded the fine arts of the twentieth century in Mexico. This figure has become a complex impresario and continues to assume a powerful position in the Mexican cultural imagination. Using the technique of symbolic reversal, the *calavera* is also an ironic and playful culture hero – the dead are reanimated into artistic life to poke fun at the living.

I will investigate the historical context and present use of the Mexican *calavera*, and provide a theoretical analysis of some of the issues relevant to this perceived ugliness within ourselves. Death can be thought of as the ultimate "other" because of fear we project onto it, yet these bones and skeletons are us.

Michaela Giebelhausen (University of Essex)

"To defy the principles of beauty": the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Victorian press

Ugliness was one of the main objections which the art critics of the Victorian press voiced against the early work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. This paper aims to investigate the refractions of meaning and implicit judgements of value which were attached to this term.

Firstly, I will examine the conceptual and linguistic parameters of the Victorian art review and will show to which extent its notions of value were based on the binary systems of academic art theory. In a selection of Royal Academy reviews I seek to establish the patterns and boundaries of their limited and repetitive rhetoric as well as to disclose some aspects of their function. I will argue that this rhetoric could not accommodate the Pre-Raphaelite project of an alternative aesthetic which aimed to challenge the traditional canons of academic art theory, its concept of beauty and hierarchy of genres.

Secondly, I will focus on the critical reception of the early Pre-Raphaelite works of 1849 and 1850. In a detailed analysis of reviews taken from the *Athenaeum*, the *Art Journal* and the *Times* I will investigate the strategies which the limited rhetoric of the art review mustered to defend its position against the Pre-Raphaelite 'threat'.

Anne Anderson (Southampton Institute)

The grotesque revival and the Victorian high renaissance

The Victorians were attracted to the Ugly, as much as to the Beautiful. From the 1860s there was a growing interest in Italian High Renaissance art, the forms of which are frequently found in Victorian architecture and interior design. The style known as "Queen Anne" made much use of terracotta decoration using Renaissance forms, particularly the Grotesque and Vase designs and patterns. The Grotesque was popularised by the new found interest in Italian Maiolica, large collections of which had been formed by the South Kensington Museum and by private collectors. The Grotesque soon appeared on contemporary ceramics, especially Minton Majolica.

By the later 1880s and 90s many tiled interiors were ornamented in an Italianate Manner. The Vase panel often incorporated the Grotesque and was used for the enrichment of buildings both inside and out. The Grotesque became popular both for its decorative appeal and its

symbolic connotations as the meandering patterns were used to signify eternity and infinity.

This paper will examine the forms and materials of this revival. It will also address the reasons for the popularity of Grotesque decoration, particularly how it combined Western traditions with those of the Islamic East. Finally it will demonstrate the importance of this revival in the context of the English Aesthetic Movement.

Christa Grössinger (University of Manchester)

Ugliness and the body's two faces in the late middle ages

I shall be discussing the two faces of the human body with its two openings, the mouth and the anus, separately and in conjunction. What are their uses, how do they complement each other and what it their meaning?

In the Middle Ages ugliness was associated with evil, and made most relevant in derisory gestures which could be emitted from both 'faces', in particular, at Christ's Passion or the Martyrdom of Saints. The power inherent in ugliness, its relationship to the human passions, the seven deadly sins, and the Devil personally will be studied. Also, the question of how ugliness affects class and gender will be examined.

Examples will be taken from manuscripts, prints and paintings, as well as misericords and woodcarvings. As there will be a concentration on the marginal arts, some of which verge on the obscene, scatology and humour, too, will be considered.

Marjorie Trusted (Victoria and Albert Museum)

"Failures as works of art": ugliness in Spanish Baroque sculpture

Spanish baroque sculpture has been viewed with distaste and suspicion by visitors to the country, particularly Protestant British travellers. The eminent writer on Spain Richard Ford (1796-1858) felt that pieces of Spanish sculpture were "failures as works of art". Both the subjects and the way they were depicted caused uneasiness: images of the dead Christ, the sorrowing Virgin, and martyrdoms of saints were unpalatable to many. To intensify the realism of these figures by means of colour, or even the addition of glass eyes, eyelashes, wigs and draperies of linen or silk was felt to be inartistic and repellent. In addition, the lavish use of gold for altarpieces was seen as gaudy and unnecessary. I shall discuss in my paper why certain subjects, especially scenes from the Passion, were favoured in Spain during the seventeenth century, as well as why they were so dramatically portrayed. Secondly, I shall look at the responses of nineteenth-century British observers to such images. Political, cultural and religious attitudes will be shown to be indissolubly linked to aesthetic responses.

Ann Stieglitz (University of Essex)

Max Klinger's 'Malerei und Zeichnung' (1891)

Although Max Klinger's ideas on art were firmly embedded in the liberal humanist tradition of the German Enlightenment (particularly Lessing's *Laokoon*, 1766), where the male body was still seen as being of supreme centrality to the aesthetics of painting and drawing, it was his formulation of the idea of the 'Ugly', which resonated most widely in the works of twentieth-century modernists. This paper will examine how, in his theoretical treatise, *Malerei und Zeichnung* (1891), he separates the spheres of painting and drawing into the ideas of 'Beauty' and the 'Ugly' in order to define more closely the aesthetic – and unifying – role of 'Phantasy'. The concept of the 'Ugly' becomes a slippery term, signifying, at times, physical 'Hässlichkeit', or ugliness, but more often, 'das Ungeheuerliche', the horrific and the fantastic, notions taken from German Romanticism, especially 'Märchen' and 'Novelle' (fairytales and short stories). With the 'liberation' of Drawing from Painting, the stylus (the 'Griffel') becomes the tool to explore, not only the realm of the fantastic, but also the erotic and psychological 'extremes of Being'.

Nicholas Watkins (University of Leicester)

Ugly colour and good taste

It has become an axiom in histories of twentieth-century art that colour in modernist painting challenges prevailing notions of good taste. The brightly coloured 'fauve' paintings at the 1905 Salon d'Automne in Paris were lambasted in the popular press as the 'barbarous and naive games of a child playing with a box of colours' and as the product of 'sick imaginations'. Even Leo Stein, who bought Matisse's *Woman with the Hat*, could still describe it as 'the nastiest smear of paint I had ever seen'.

This paper sets out to investigate, firstly, why bright colour caused such offence when introduced into 'high art' and, secondly, why ugly colour in itself has come to be regarded as a sign of good taste in modernist painting.

Diane Radycki (University of Houston)

Pretty/ugly: morphing Paula Modersohn-Becker and Marie Laurencin

This paper compares the critical discourse on the work of the early modernist contemporaries Paula Modersohn-Becker (1876-1907) and Marie Laurencin (1885-1956) – two artists who have been characterized as respectively, (too) ugly and (too) pretty. My work examines the morphing in modernist discourse of the terms 'pretty' and 'ugly' when mapped onto the work of women to consider 'otherness' (and shifting taboos) in the twentieth century when the gender of the artist comes to bear. In doing so it seeks, to paraphrase Harold Bloom, "recurrent patterns of error in the act of looking ... patterns of error rooted in aesthetics, rather than self." It concentrates on the German Modersohn-Becker's adolescent nudes and the French Laurencin's images of emaciated and bruised women versus the image of women produced by Picasso, Matisse, Kirchner and Modigliani.

Marsha Meskimmon (Staffordshire University)

The grotesque and the ugly: on the uses of excess in women's self representation

What is ugly? What is grotesque? What is at stake for women artists who wish to engage in the problematics of beauty and ugliness in their self representations? These issues have been critical to the work of a number of women artists who challenged these boundaries and used their own bodies as the material in recent years.

Artists such as Diana Thornycroft-Pura, Jenny Saville, Jo Spence and Anne Noggle have played with concepts of excess in their self portraiture. Their works overspill into socially-unacceptable representations of 'woman' through strategies of masquerade and scale or in their frank treatment of illness and ageing. The body becomes a contested site for control and conflicting definitions of 'woman' are deconstructed.

By looking at some of these strategies within the context of theories of the carnivalesque, abjection and masquerade, this paper intends to open up a dialogue on the role of beauty/ugliness in women's art and, most particularly, in notions of female self representation.

4

Representing War and the Limits of Depiction

Sue Malvern (University of Reading)

Art and war are two terms which seem to hinge on a series of oppositions. Art and creativity are said to be the antitheses of war; art is not disruption, pollution, mutilation, destruction, abjection, violence and horror. The actuality of war is repeatedly named by witnesses as indescribable and unspeakable, an experience for which no visual language seem sufficient. By contrast, because spectacle and mystification may be fundamental to its conduct, going to war is sometimes described as the discovery of a terrible beauty, a sublime which is impossible to mediate to the non-participant. But attempting to represent the indescribable and giving form to human suffering raise issues of decorum for art about the limits of depiction and what lies beyond in an unbridgeable gulf between experience and representation.

This session seeks to explore the representation of war and the limits of depiction. Papers will draw on theoretical texts and a range of visual imagery including film and popular media. Issues and questions to be discussed include: differences in war art by veterans, combatants and non-combatants; war and gender; shifting standards of decorum in war art; censorship and self-censorship; war memorials. Is beauty in war art impossible? Can meaning be made out of war? Can war, should war be depicted?

Emma Roberts (University of Liverpool)

Modernism, lyricism and war: Barbara Hepworth and the International Political Prisoner Competition

'Beauty' is a word which is often used in connection with the sculptor, Barbara Hepworth, and not war or conflict. However, Hepworth's lyrical sculptures are often produced in reaction to war, for example her 'Project: Monument to the Spanish War 1983-89'. Also significant is her participation within the International Political Prisoner Competition in 1952-53, which represents Hepworth's principled concern for freedom of speech and for peace.

I shall explore the efforts that Hepworth and her contemporaries made in order to counteract a disturbed and warring world in the 1940s, and the motivation which lay behind the Modernists' entering of the Competition. I am particularly interested in why it was that Modernists approached the subject of the political prisoner in a positive lyrical mode in 1952-53, whereas New Generation sculptors tackled the subject in an aggressive manner, allowing form to express content. Throughout, I will be exploring issues such as creativity and suppression, morale and brutality, and in particular, the role of catharsis.

Paul Gough (University of the West of England)

'That appalling beauty': spectacle and the sublime on the Western Front 1915-1917

The years of static, siege warfare on the Western Front laid blight to hundreds of square miles of contested territory. The ruination brought with it fundamental shifts in the appreciation of space and time; a new iconography predicated on emptiness and on transience emerged. A number of the young soldier-artists had to temper their modernist formal experiments to meet the requirements of the official commissioning agencies, but many painters, including many of the establishment academic figures, learned to adapt their reading of the empty battlefield to convey some of the truths of modern warfare – with its conditions of flux, dispersal and emptiness. The artillery barrages, huge mine explosions and scorched earth policies of the middle years of the war gave rise to moments of awesome power that defined a new category of sublime experience. This paper identifies and examines several aspects of a 'battlefield sublime' – one predicated on new notions of the desolated landscape as man-made desert, glutinous ocean, and awesome chasm. By examining the work of such painters as David Young Cameron, Willima Orpen, Paul Nash, William Rothenstein and Paul Maze, the paper proposes a new reading of much of the battlefield landscape work painted during and immediately after the war.

Hans-Martin Kaulbach
(Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart)

Peace and War in allegorical images, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries

The contrast of the 'horrors of war' and the 'benefits of peace' is a subject mostly to be found in the context of allegories of 'good government' or of the good and just ruler, in paintings commissioned for town halls or galleries of princes as well as in printed political allegories and illustrated broadsheets. Beside a few themes from mythology, like Mars and Venus, the means to represent these subjects was the combination of personifications. But some motifs of everyday life were used in many images, too. A different view, in the context of 'history', can be seen in illustrations for the frontispieces of books on history, and in cycles of allegorical images of the deeds of rulers.

One question is how these types of allegorical representations are connected with different concepts of war and peace. The other is how these concepts changed c1650, after the peace of Münster, when war and peace were no longer regarded as states of government, within a community, state or republic, and became an issue of the relation between different states.

Jamelle Hassan (London, Ontario)

Is War Art?

Jamelle Hassan's work on art and war seeks not only to empower the viewer to resist the seductions of war but also to celebrate the desirability of peace. Her presentation of her own work will address key issues in this session on beauty, decorum and the representation of war.

Claudia Stumpf (University of Reading)

Remodelling war and peace: Voltaire, Gibbon and Montesquieu

Edward Gibbon and his fellow philosophical historians had no illusions about 'telling history as it really was'. They abandoned the seventeenth century historical Pyrrhonist's attempt to reconstruct the past through painstaking literary research and remodelled history instead.

A tangible example of this new discourse

– which despite its methodological novelty continued to be conducted within the paradigm of the history of Rome and used the traditional classical source material – is Montesquieu's and Gibbon's antithetical presentation of the emperor Trajan and Hadrian. Montesquieu, for whom the entry of man into civil society marks the beginning of a state of war, chose Trajan, the heroic warrior and preserver of ancient Roman values, as his hero. Gibbon, who advocated peace as the only foundation for the progress of mankind, made the moderate and cultivated Hadrian his role-model whose peaceful rule marked the onset of the one "period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous".

Enlightened historians changed the value of established models according to the context they appeared in – a purely academic exercise? Or did "reality" ever enter into the debate?

Peter Hoti (Berlin)

Demystifying history: Askoldow's film "The Commissar" (Die Kommissarin) (Soviet Union 1967/1988)

This film tells the story of a woman fighting as a red commissar in the Russian civil War, 1921, who became pregnant and had to take time off from the war to change from a soldier into a wife and mother. It narrates her difficulties in assuming and maintaining this role. The film was forbidden for more than twenty years. This paper will examine the reasons for the censorship of this film. The paper also argues that the film was one of the most beautiful to be produced in the former Soviet Union.

Nancy Rose Marshall (Yale University)

"The Altar of Humanity": The 1864 Metropolitan Sanitary Fair and the representation of the Northern American Civil War

In this paper, I will investigate the territory negotiated by the organisers of the 1864 Metropolitan Sanitary Fair in New York City, the purpose of which was to raise money for the medical treatment of Union soldiers in the American Civil War. Balancing the need to expose the wounded body of the Union in order to stimulate fundraising with the desire to mask the horrors of a conflict that was beginning to erode national morale, the Ladies' Executive Committee produced complex and at times contradictory representations of the Civil War. Examining images of the Fair in the illustrated periodicals of the day in conjunction with its official handbooks and publications, newspaper accounts, and contemporary commentary situates this particular visual construction of war in its historical context. Drawing on exhibition practices established in European World Fairs, the Sanitary Fair emphasised visuality and encyclopaedic content to encourage feelings of patriotism and national identity. As the organizers clearly intended Union soldiers in the field to receive reports and images of the event, depictions of it served multiple purposes. In the visual culture of the Fair, war became spectacle in a carefully controlled and aestheticized manner, remaining a central focus while being simultaneously marginalized.

Sue Malvern (University of Reading)

Realism, representation and censorship: British official art and World War One

Truth is said to be the first casualty in war. Yet, when the work of official British war artists was published in 1917-18, it was accompanied by official rhetoric asserting the 'truthfulness' of the artists' grim, anti-heroic imagery. Post-war retrospective opinion has subsequently endorsed the efforts of British propaganda by equating visual ugliness in depictions of modern war with testimony. 'Truth-telling' in official art was compromised by the notorious incident of Nevinson's censored painting *Paths of Glory*, depicting slaughtered soldiers. Modern opinion has taken such evidence of censorship as a guarantee of the authenticity of a representation. This paper will argue that Nevinson did not so much transgress a moratorium on the depiction of dead bodies as breach decorum in the conduct of official art in the life of a nation at war. Rather than viewing censorship as a prohibitive instrument of repression and negation which distorts a 'faithful' transcription of a 'fixed' reality, I will argue that censorship is always an active and provisional process of negotiation. In this period, there was a covert and much more repressive campaign to suppress pacifism, then often conflated with socialism and calls to reconstruct the social system. Nevinson had developed a more literal painting style, closer to reportage than fine art, and actively sought a broad popular audience, one whose loyalties could not be guaranteed. Unlike Paul Nash, who escaped censorship, the repression of Nevinson's work does not so much suppress a 'truth' about the war as reveal the extent of contemporary anxieties about the coherence and ordering of the social fabric.

Alex King (Cambridge University Library)

Commemorating death in modern war: idealisation, abstraction and reality

This paper will discuss how modern war is represented through the commemoration of those who die in it. Memorials and ceremonies are usually reticent or ambiguous in their direct references to warfare, but they have been understood as conveying a range of quite specific assertions about its nature, origins and results, which go well beyond any explicit references present in them. This paper is principally concerned with the process of interpretation which allowed such limited imagery to be understood to mean so much. It will argue, first, that this depended on a willingness to interpret commemorative imagery by reference to other forms of representation, especially literature and journalism; and second, that willingness to do this was stimulated by the organisations which promoted war commemoration. This kind of interpretation of commemorative imagery was at its height in the 1920s and 1930s, when commemoration of the First World War dead established practices which survive to the present day. The paper will describe the origins and development of these practices, focusing in particular on the production and contemporary interpretation of physical memorials (monuments, other forms of building and dedicated spaces).

John Glaves-Smith (University of Staffordshire)

Tales told in stone: the Monument aux Morts in Soissons

The Monument aux Morts in Soissons, in its present form the work of the sculptor Lamourdedieu, is striking among memorials to the 1914-18 war in its range of historical and local reference. One relief depicts the fifth century king of the Franks, Clovis as mediated through the flattering historical vision of Gregory of Tours in the apocryphal tale of the smashing of the Vase of Soissons. Other reliefs show Joan of Arc's passage through Soissons and the citizens of the city fleeing its bombardment. The unusual character of the monument is the result of its particular history. It was originally commissioned from Bartholomé two years before the war to honour the history of the city rather than as a specific war memorial. The pressures of history further changed the monument when during the Occupation the depiction of single combat between a French and German soldier was effaced. The monument, then, speaks of different histories. There is the structuring of national and local histories combined with the unwitting testimony of the monument's own fractured history.

5

Socialist Realism and Aesthetic Value under Stalinism and Destalinisation

Susan Reid (University of Northumbria)

In the Soviet Union aesthetics was only established as a distinct discipline after Stalin's death. But the status of specifically aesthetic values within socialist realism has always been highly problematic, both in Soviet theory and practice and in western treatments of the subject.

The aim of this strand is not to redeem socialist realism in aesthetic and marketable terms but to open up alternative approaches to its theory and practice. Can traditional aesthetic categories such as beauty, taste, the sublime, be usefully applied to the study of socialist realism? How did Soviet artists and theoreticians address the relation between ideological content and specifically artistic quality at different times? What role is there for aesthetic pleasure in the Soviet conception of art? Can stalinism itself be regarded as an 'aesthetic phenomenon' and the entire Soviet order as 'Stalin's total work of art', as Boris Groys has argued provocatively? If 'aesthetics is the ethics of the future,' as Maxim Gorky proclaimed, and if socialist realism remodelled the world according to laws of beauty, then what canons of beauty informed this ideal new order? If, on Chernyshevsky's authority, ideals of human physical beauty are socially determined, then to whose ideal of masculine and feminine beauty were the exemplary new Soviet man and woman to conform? How was the relation between physical beauty and inner, moral beauty conceived? How did normative concepts of good and bad taste operate in the aesthetics of everyday life?

Brandon Taylor (Winchester School of Art)

Lenin at Smolnyi

Isaak Brodskii's much-reproduced painting of 1930 appeared at a time when relations between history painting, agitational art, photography, verisimilitude and concepts of the documentary were in fierce debate in the Soviet Union. Brodskii's career was also in hiatus in the years of the first Five Year Plan, while conceptual traditions latent in icon painting remained fundamental to the appeal of his manner. What emerged from the debates surrounding Brodskii's practice was an official cultural doctrine in which his example was once again considered to exemplify the aesthetically 'good'.

Stanley Mitchell (University of Derby)

Mikhail Lifshits and Soviet aesthetics

This paper addresses Lifshits's role in the development of realism as an anti-modernist aesthetics, his collaboration with Lukaćs in the 1930s and his setting up of a Marxist aesthetics on the basis of his compilation of all Marx's and Engel's utterances on art and literature. It will also look at the journal *Literary Critic*, which formed a tendency in the 1930s round the ideas of Lifshits and Lukaćs. Beauty figures more in Lukaćs's writings than in Lifshits's. But he does have a concept of beauty which in general he shares with Lukaćs. It finds expression in a discussion of the *Kunstperiode*, a term coined by Heine to describe the Goethe period and which Lukaćs elaborates in his studies of Goethe and Pushkin. Lifshits applies the term in greater detail to Pushkin and the Renaissance. In the case of Lukaćs beauty signifies the direct, unmediated representation of an integrated human personality. For Lifshits it is more a question of relationship to the people. *Narodnost'* or the popular has always been a powerful artistic criterion in Russia. Both writers note that beauty cannot last in a class society, that it is possible only in short, transitory periods.

Catherine Cooke (Open University)

'Beauty' as a route to the svetloe budushchee (the radiant future): responses of Soviet architecture

This paper will address the implications and meaning for architecture of the concept of *svetloe*, in *'svetloe budushchee'*: the radiant future which it was all directed to creating. The question of how *architecture* embodies and transmits these key sentiments, when (as Stasov and others had noted in the nineteenth century) 'architecture cannot depict it, it can only affirm', is central to the whole professional problem of producing Socialist Realist architecture. *Svetloe* is the main synthetic concept defining what is 'beautiful', embracing all the specific notions of the socialist hero, myth, etc. that formed the detailed subject matter. At the same time, it is the very embodiment of the 'optimism' which crucially distinguishes Socialist Realism from the capitalist socially-critical *Realism*.

Karen Kettering (University of Dayton, Ohio)

'Ever more comfortable and cozy': the ideal of the beautiful interior for the Soviet family in the 1930s

As Vera Dunham and Sheila Fitzpatrick have argued, during the 1930s and 1940s Soviet citizens entered into a 'Big Deal' with their government in which they exchanged political loyalty for a bourgeois life style. In the 1920s party theorists had feared that women's 'natural' tendency to desire fashionable clothing and attractive furnishings might distract men from their social responsibilities and pressure them to fall back into bourgeois acquisitiveness, a practice that threatened the Party's vision of a communal domestic configuration. Only a decade later, Soviet artistic and mainstream publications were encouraging their readers to educate their taste and to indulge their desires for well made clothing and beautiful objects without guilt. Nevertheless, aesthetic values of the interior were closely monitored. For critics of architecture and design, the question was how to reinstate the attractive single-family interior without simultaneously succumbing to bourgeois culture. In my paper I will attempt to demonstrate the specific historical conditions (a radical reworking of Soviet femininity and the unacknowledged reinstatement of class) that inflected aesthetic values in the period before the Second World War. Both the exemplary images of this new Soviet domesticity, centred on the traditional family unit, and critical debates about standards for interior design in the 1930s will be examined.

Victor Buchli (Cambridge University)

Khrushchev, modernism, and the fight against petit-bourgeois consciousness

This paper will examine the revival of the cultural revolution under Khrushchev. In particular it will look at the renewed ideological battle against petit-bourgeois consciousness in popular taste within the context of a growing socialist consumer society. Specifically, the articulation of modernist design principles in all aspects

of design and the visual arts will be examined. Rationalizing taste at the points of production and consumption, these modernist principles will then be counterpoised with the urgent problem (envisaged by Soviet Marxist theoreticians) of a burgeoning consumerism that simultaneously legitimized the authority of the Soviet State and threatened to undermine that authority when the rules of taste were not applied and Soviet consumers behaved 'irrationally'.

Susan E Reid (University of Northumbria)

Destalinisation and the re-aestheticisation of art and life, 1954-1962

Reformers in the official Soviet art world in the Thaw sought to redress the damage of the Stalin period by reaffirming beautiful artistic form and the aesthetic specificity of art. This was part of a broad campaign by the liberal cultural intelligentsia to reappropriate from stalinist bureaucrats its traditional prerogative to define cultural standards in the name of the people. Art and design professionals accused industrial managers, trade and ministerial officials of corrupting popular taste by imposing their regressive and 'philistine' personal taste on mass consumer goods production. Through education and the 'aesthetics of everyday life', the reformist intelligentsia set out to refashion 'the people's' aesthetic judgement in its own modernising and internationalist image, identifying good, 'contemporary' taste with truth to materials, functionality, simplicity and moderation.

By 1959-62, when the campaign for popular aesthetic education peaked, it had the full support of party ideologues responsible for drafting the new Party Programme for the imminent transition to communism. An important ideological role was envisaged for aesthetic pleasure in the formation of the fully rounded citizen of communism, who, as Marx promised, would be free to realize his/her human essence in creating 'according to the laws of beauty.' For, 'Communism implies not only the abundance of material blessings. It is also the realm of the beautiful.'

David Crowley (University of Brighton)

People's Warsaw/popular Warsaw

Studies of 'totalitarian' culture have often tended to reproduce and perhaps even to exaggerate its singular, 'official' character. However, the relative variety of forms of expression, differences of approach and even traces of dissidence within the official culture of Socialist Realism in the People's Republic of Poland are increasingly being researched.

This paper takes as its theme the reconstruction of Warsaw between 1945 and 1956. It will set out to identify three main contemporaneous discourses of reconstruction: i) the national/international rhetoric dealing with the task and achievements in the rebuilding of the capital produced by figures like First Party Secretary Boleslaw Beirut; ii) a professional/architectural discourse focusing on Socialist Realism; iii) a popular discourse directed at the citizens of the capital. Although all three were circumscribed by the same power system, ie. Stalinism, and were overlapping, some distinctions seem to emerge, however, in the way in which the rebuilding of the city was represented in each discourse. Consequently, this paper deals with ideology rather than the actual process of rebuilding. In particular this paper will probe the tensions between the case made for a new Warsaw rising from the 'zero hour', (ie what might be characterised as modernist visions of the capital) and a 'historicist,' popular case.

Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius
(National Museum, Warsaw)

A 'New Face' for a 'New Nation' and the search for its prototypes. A chapter in the advancement of socialist realism in Poland, 1949-55.

The paper will deal with the part played by Polish museums under a Stalinist regime firstly in the creation of a 'usable past' for the 'new society', and secondly in the revision of 'traditional' art history by providing the aesthetic and historical justification for the 'absolutism of realism'. The main issue is the search for the iconographical prototype for the new Socialist Realist image of the nation. The victory of Socialist Realism was emphasized by relegating avant-garde art from the galleries and by displaying only the 'realist' movements throughout the ages, with special attention to 19th century 'critical realism'. Likewise, the superiority of the new hero and heroine of Stalinism was justified by museum curators through the selection of those paintings from the past which represented robust workers and peasants as producers, while representatives of the 'feeble' noble classes were vilified as abusers and traitors of the nation.

Pat Simpson (University of Hertfordshire)

Visions of new socialist woman 1949-50: beauty, nationality and gender roles

In 1949 Sergei Gerasimov's *Mother of a Partisan* (1943) and Tatiana Yablonskaya's *Before the Start* (1947) were de-legitimated by Party critics, ostensibly for 'impressionistic' technique. They recouped their positions 1949-50 by works which presented significantly different visions of New Socialist Woman to those in the rejected works. What were the specific parameters of female beauty that may have operated in the construction and evaluation of these images?

I want to argue: 1. that the parameters of beauty were contingently informed by perceptions of nationality and gender roles relating both to the subject matter and to the artists; 2. that the parameters were constructed in silent collusion between artist and critic. This approach raises historiographical questions about the adequacy of recent theorisations of Socialist Realism offered by Boris Groys and Matthew Cullerne Bown. Do they compound the marginalisation of the issue of imaging women typical of Stalinist art theory? In addition, by their tendency to perceive artists as passive in the construction of Socialist Realist aesthetics, do they also perpetuate a cold war myth that quality in Soviet art can only be judged by the artists' disconnection from the creation of Stalinist values?

James Aulich
(Manchester Metropolitan University)

Socialist beauty and the political poster in central and eastern Europe 1945-1968

Socialist Realist beauty was a complex amalgam of the archaic and the new. It saw the re-utilisation of tradition through nationalism and established an iconography of the new Communist states. It exalted militarisation, international solidarity, youth and labour in the contexts in urban reconstruction, technological progress, industrial and agricultural production. Iconographies of heroic endeavour established visions of the socialist present, where beauty was found in an identity with life itself. The artistic ideal and life no longer contradicted each other, and aesthetic expression acquired meaning and beauty through the values of communist doctrine.

My contention is that these iconographies are established by the time of Stalin's death and remain more or less unchallenged. But simultaneously, in its national characteristics, and particularly in style, Socialist Realist beauty contained the seeds of its own destruction. It allowed for the creation of incipient identities in opposition to Soviet and official aesthetic orthodoxies.

6

Taste

Paul Barlow (University of Northumbria)
Shelagh Wilson (University of Northumbria)

What is the value of taste? Taste is a concept which is continually in circulation but is rarely addressed directly. It can be used to denote consumerist valuation of free choice, to identify aesthetic judgement or to discriminate between the forms in which different social groups identify common experiences and pleasures. Can we use the concept of taste as a tool for defining significance or is it inevitably located in history itself?

This session will seek to explore the variety of historical experiences of taste. Papers will examine the ways in which taste has been formed, reformed, justified or denigrated. What is the origin of modern attitudes towards taste? How is taste related to comparable terms such as elegance, beauty, value and quality? Is there a relation between the recognition of quality in materials and the identification of 'quality' of thought in their use? How has the experience of taste as pleasure been related to its role as marker of status?

Is there a problem with the very idea of taste itself, or does it continue to have substance? Is there matter to matters of taste?

Tom Huhn (Wesleyan University, Connecticut)

Kant's account of the failure of taste

Kant formulates what is absolutely central to taste: that the judgment of beauty is inevitably mistaken. There's nothing beautiful to be experienced. Thus Kant claims an object is not cause but only occasion for our experience of beauty. But why do we make this mistake, and why is it so persistent?

Beauty, according to Kant, is also a social, and constitutive, mistake. The mistakenness of beauty is then a mistake about society and one that constitutes at once both society and the subject, the person who makes the judgment.

My talk will describe Kant's conception of the mistakenness of taste and then turn to explain the sublime as the central, constitutive aesthetic judgment. The sublime succeeds beyond taste because it avoids objective subreption, Kant's term for the mistaken gesture that attributes aesthetic qualities to an *object* – mistaken because aesthetic judgment is a *subjective* harmony of faculties. Beauty merely evidences this mistake. The sublime thwarts this mistakenness insofar as it fails to present anything objective. I will argue that the sublime succeeds where beauty fails because the former prolongs and problematizes the project of generating a self-subsistent and unified subject, whereas beauty merely (but pleasurably) confirms subjectivity's self-misrecognition.

Sarah Richards
(Bath College of Higher Education)

The practice of good taste in the age of Goethe

A 'Magazine for the Friends of Good Taste' (*Magazin der Freunde des guten Geschmacks*) was published in Leipzig during the 1790s. Certain features indicate the publisher's 'progressive' concerns in late eighteenth-century Germany, and the *Magazin* was influential among an affluent readership in central Europe. Particularly noticeable is the emphasis on the construction of good taste in material terms in order to provide a context in which to engage the intellect, the emotions and sensibilities which occupied the imagination, and formed the conduct of the new landed gentry who had acquired wealth in banking, manufactures and colonial enterprises.

A critical dimension to the practice of 'good taste' is apparent in Goethe's novella *Elective Affinities*. Incidents and debates in the narrative reveal social and ideological tensions in the creation of 'tasteful' environments designed to support fashionable sensibilities; environments which bear a close resemblance to those recommended in the *Magazin der Freunde des guten Geschmacks*. This paper investigates the notion of Taste as a social and cultural practice which required carefully constructed 'sites'. With reference to Goethe's novella it also considers how disruptive the practice of 'good taste' could be for those whose interests were in conflict.

Marcia Pointon (University of Manchester)

Quakerism, business and material culture

The vast mass of documentation that Quakerism offers the researcher has often been drawn upon by historians of English and American non conformism. My reading, however, questions the notion of a simple negative relationship between Quakerism and visual culture (meaning questions of representation in general, questions of the production and consumption of luxury goods, questions of the aesthetic, of taste, and questions of visual pleasure). It is arguably a group like the Quakers – with their procedures for monitoring display – who recognised and systematically sought to control the political power of the visual.

Robert W Jones (University of Wales)

The tasteful feminine: economies of judgement in eighteenth-century England

This paper focuses on British accounts of *Taste* during the period 1750-1770. During this period British theorists remained capacious in their concerns and rarely saw the discussion of 'Beauty' aside from questions of social and cultural address. Critically, the ambiguous social position of women was central to British accounts of what constituted a refined taste. At its most severe such discourse represented women either as aberrant consumers or as dangerous temptresses ever to be repudiated by the male connoisseur. More sympathetically, women could be thought of as providing a crucial indicator of how art objects were to be examined and enjoyed by the cultivated viewer. The issue was a complex one: some accounts suggested that looking at an object of beauty required the viewer to adopt the sensible responsiveness proper to a refined sensibility, while others argued that the proper examination of art required the viewer to respond as if he were looking at a beautiful woman. The ambiguities of this role produced a discourse on taste which required that women observe the strictest adherence to social norms and protocol. Accordingly the ideal of beauty was transformed into a vocabulary for marking out the proper and the obscene nature of femininity.

Maura Coughlin
(Institute of Fine Arts, New York)

Making devotional kitsch of Jean-François Millet's 'Angelus'

In both late nineteenth-century France and America, layers of pious myth grew up about J F Millet. The mythic 'Millet', painter of the *Angelus*, appealed to those who felt anxious about older ways of life that were slipping away in the face of industrial modernity. Many of Millet's images of seasonal or daily rural labour were read by the late nineteenth-century viewer as having especially evocative religious overtones. This response culminated in the *Angelus*, an image so frequently reproduced in the popular culture that it took on the status of a modern icon. Reproduced as a vignette or motif, the *Angelus* decorated numerous domestic objects, becoming a hallmark *par excellence* of mechanically reproduced kitsch. The prominence to which such an image of pre-industrial rural piety rose in the popular visual culture of late nineteenth-century France is telling of an intense longing, loss, fetishization and nostalgia for an authentic 'Olde France' that was rapidly disappearing, or perhaps never was at all. The kitsch status of the reproduced image is examined in light of the problematic nature of French religious art of the nineteenth century.

Lewis Johnson (Goldsmiths College, London)

Beauty beyond taste: fin-de-siècle art and consumption

A key contention of this paper will be that the study of visual art and beauty tends to be arrested by a preoccupation with taste, a problematic of repeatable values. This will be demonstrated – and different directions for the study of visual art and beauty suggested – in consideration of some of the achievements of visual art that appear to exceed the problematics of modern consumerism, as they came to the fore in late nineteenth-century France.

'Neurasthenic' culture offers two apparently different ways of conducting pleasure in the beautiful beyond the limits of enjoyment: either, in classical Kantian style, the object is exceeded in the pleasure of a play in the contemplation of a work, a process which I shall seek to point to in relation to some works of Fantin-Latour; or, tracing a path through some works by Redon, the look is enticed to let the lure of beauty lead it beyond the capacity to recognise its desire. Initially, therefore, the works of these two artists will be proposed as exemplifying the Lacanian analysis of the fate of desire in relation to beauty: that is, where "excitement is not refracted but reflected, rejected ... but there is no longer any object" and where desire "has a sense of being taken in, and this is manifested by the splendour and magnificence of the zone that draws it on".

Robert Radford (Winchester School of Art)

Fashion and authenticity in the evaluation of contemporary art

There is a long and intellectually formidable tradition of regarding Fashion as a detrimental quality of art. It is regarded as standing in fundamental opposition to the principle of Authenticity. This fear of fashion is reinforced by an inherited discourse of puritan rejection which is both moral and ideological in origin. The term 'Fashion' is taken here as a dimension which comprises three governing elements: seduction, novelty and marginal differentiation; it absorbs but enhances the concept of ephemerality. 'Authenticity', on the other hand, resists ludic charm and easy access; it aims for permanence of value and originality of statement. It represents the characteristic mode of address of Modernist art, whereas Fashion is broadly characteristic of Post-modernist art. However a sense of confusion of values still hovers over the judgements released by popular criticism which probably reflect accurately the views of the public at large. This conflict between the values of Fashion and Authenticity can be effectively noted in the case of the reception of Damien Hirst. In an effort to establish the concept of fashion as a useful and *value free* term in art discourse, it is proposed here to draw attention to the study by Gilles Lipovetsky of the vast and insufficiently recognised strategic role which is played by the mode of fashion in shaping all aspects of modern, Westernized cultures.

Oliver Hawkins (Northbrook College, Sussex)

Beauty and possession: reflections on a photograph of Denys Sutton

My theme is the relationship between aesthetic theory and ownership, taking Lord Snowdon's portrait of the late editor of Apollo as a starting point, and extending the analysis through Sutton's editorials of twenty-five years. While the role of connoisseur exemplified by Sutton would seem to be essentially antithetical to traditional (Kantian) concepts of aesthetic disinterest, I would hope to demonstrate that the experience of ownership is potentially closer to contemporary aesthetic *habitation* theory as expounded by, eg Steven G Smith. In this context Sutton's constant references to travel, food, drink, and other apparently inconsequential details can be seen as significant to his construction of beauty.

Stefan Muthesius (University of East Anglia)

Elegance

Elegant is still the most frequently used aesthetic term of praise. In matters sartorial it may still mean the highest praise. In design and architecture we say it usually because it comes to mind most readily, but we would rarely claim that it constitutes the highest possible, or the most expert kind of praise. What accounts for this combination of ubiquity and devaluation? The term took its origin in the rhetoric of Classical Antiquity, but after mid-eighteenth century, it loses its rank and enters fashion journalism, but not the new kinds of philosophical aesthetic treatises. It does, however, acquire a social dimension, marking a new sphere within the broad transition from inherited to acquired noblesse. 'Un/e élégant/e' ('Dandy' / 'Man of Taste') can be anybody who excels through speech, manners and attire. As the nineteenth century went on, elegance could be acquired through commerce; there was also a growing sense of individualist craftsmanship which developed into the notion of 'savoir faire'. A seemingly ever-increasing sophistication in formally relating detail to whole points forward to Modernist methods of design. Recurring waves of 'simplicity', 'simple elegance', advocating lack of added-on ornament, reinforced that trend. By the early twentieth century the high art claims of couture, as well as the ubiquitousness of 'elegance' further reduced the status of the term. To an extent, however, 'simple elegance' appeared revived in Modernist design.

Gérard Mermoz (University of Coventry)

Making the transcendental visible: reflections on the dematerialisation of desire

Using a variety of texts including Plato's *Symposium*, Dante's *Convivio*, and Irigaray's *Ethique de la différence sexuelle*, I hope to open up some fruitful perspectives on the relation between knowledge, desire, materiality and metaphysics, at the level of their constituent metaphors. Throughout the paper, taste will be shown to constitute an ambiguous metaphorical mediation, (as ambiguous as the vicissitudes of desire) between the material – and contingent (finite, enclosed, impure ...) – and the absolute.

7

Anti-art and the Anti-aesthetic

David Hopkins (University of St Andrews)

This session will explore iconoclasm in a twentieth-century context, charting the 'chronology' of anti-art impulses from Dada through to Lettrism, Fluxus and the Situationist-inspired tendencies of the sixties, and looking at the continuation of aspects of this (anti) tradition in recent photography and Latin American art. In tandem with this interrogation of art in its broad institutional sense (ie as linked to inheritance, taste, morality or ethics, galleries and museums, economics/social/political context etc) and related issues such as the extent to which art can successfully be undermined from within art itself, other papers will discuss 'negating' strategies in modernism which attempted to challenge the notion of the 'aesthetic' on its own terms.

Debbie Lewer
(Manchester Metropolitan University)

Managing iconoclasm: Dada strategies in Switzerland and Germany

This paper examines the tension between Dada's "anti-aesthetic" and the procedures and forums of its public practice. Dada identified in the aesthetic and cultural values of the bourgeois audience its "mortal enemy" (Richard Huelsenbeck) and hence, its rationale. However, there are significant instances of Dada's *convergence* with and even *subjection* to the mechanics, rituals, spaces and conventions of this audience and culture.

The paper argues that this tension defined crucial aspects of early Dada. It looks at the locations, economics and administration of Dada in Zurich from this perspective and investigates the nature and extent of its much-mythologised conflict with state (legal) and civilian (moral) authority. It thus opens the question of whether and where the "anti-aesthetic" is extricable from the "anti-social". It proposes that Dada strategy in later Zurich production and under very different conditions in Germany increasingly negotiated and *mobilised* this tension into a sophisticated counter-strategy of promotion and (self-)parody. The paper's review of the consequences for Dada of controlling aspects of culture and society thus seeks to contribute both to Dada scholarship and to wider debates around the problematic relations between radical iconoclasm and the management of effective cultural action.

David Hopkins (University of St Andrews)

'Men before the mirror': anti-art postures

This paper will initially examine a collaboration between Man Ray and Duchamp on a remarkable text published to accompany Man Ray's *Photographies 1920-1934* of 1934 entitled 'Men Before the Mirror'. This will provide a springboard for a discussion of issues of masculine identity in relation to Dada/Surrealist iconoclasm. The fact that the text was originally authored by a German female friend of Man Ray and then appropriated as a 'readymade' by Duchamp in the guise of his female alter-ego, Rrose Selavy, raises interesting questions about the extent to which Dada/Surrealist transgression relied on 'translations' from the 'feminine' sphere to the 'masculine' and vice versa simultaneously parodying and reinforcing dominant avant-garde assumptions.

The strategic subversion of Catholic iconography in other works by Duchamp, Picabia and Max Ernst can be shown to borrow part of its impetus from social fears about the secretive and conspiratorial nature of Masonic/Rosicrucian groups. A final discussion of the artists' allusions to the exclusivity and ritualistic nature of such male societies will show how the authorial duplicity and gender reversals of their work effectively pit the radical cultural politics of Dada/Surrealism against a more questionable gender politics.

Michael White (University of Essex)

Directions for de-composition: Theo van Doesburg and the constructivist anti-aesthetic

Between 1924 and 1927 Theo van Doesburg produced a series of paintings known as the *counter-compositions*. After concentrating almost solely on architectural projects for the previous three years, van Doesburg's decision to return to brush and canvas leaves many questions begging. Certainly the rhetoric of theoretical writing continued to disparage the traditional status of painting, declaring, also in 1924, that "painting which is separate from architectural construction (that is, easel painting) has no *raison d'être*."

Rather than investigate these paintings from the point of view of their 'dynamic' qualities, as has been the common approach, this paper is concerned with van Doesburg's exploration of aesthetic categories such as intuition and expression. Above all it will be shown how the real subject of these paintings lay in the distinction between *composition* and *construction*. Proposing neither a form of decoration nor autonomy, the *counter-compositions* suggest a manner in which painting could survive "the end of art" to find its place in a newly constructed environment.

Sarah Wilson (Courtauld Institute)

Dada's new Messiah: Isidore Isou and Lettrism

Isidore Isou's 'Lettrism' movement which emerged in Paris in the early 1940s created a new formalist poetics, the 'revolution of the letter' with its own critical terminology ('amplique'/'ciselant') and version of an evolutionary modernism. The movement has not hitherto been contextualised in terms of the Russian futurists (Iliazd), Berlin dadaists (Hausmann) and French experimentalists (Camille Bryen) active in France at the time, nor the rediscovery of Kurt Schwitter's phonetic poetry. The movement anticipated 1960s semiotics, concrete poetry, and was involved with proto-happenings and

experimental cinema. The painting produced by the movement is little known, attention having been displaced by recent studies and exhibitions of the breakaway Situationists. Beyond the formal developments of lettrism, the deliberately Messianic rhetoric of the movement will be examined in terms of its explicitly Jewish nature, which was effectively deployed as part of the group's anarchist political agenda (Isou's nom de plume referred to Jesus, as well as Isidore Ducasse (Lautréamont) and alliteratively to Tristan Tzara). Isou's comic-strip pornography and Gabriel Pomerand's explicit addressing of homosexuality anticipated the sexual revolution of the 1960s, just as Isou's early manifesto in favour of a youth uprising anticipated the events of May 1968. The movement is still active and creative in Paris.

Peter Van der Meijden (University of Essex)

The European Mailorder House and Fluxshop

The standard story about Fluxus describes it as a group of artists under the leadership of George Maciunas, who based themselves on Dada and John Cage, and indulged in some of the most radical anti-artistic clowning of the 1960s. Up to a point, this is true, but it leaves much unsaid and does not give nearly enough credit to the individual artists involved. Fluxus was a truly multi-disciplinary movement, and a truly international one as well. Chroniclers of Fluxus usually tend to focus on New York, but that leaves out the artists who have never spent a longer time in the United States, important though their role may have been.

This paper examines a virtually unknown episode from the history of Fluxus: the establishment of the European Mailorder House, PO Box 2045 in Amsterdam, by the Dutch Fluxus-artist Willem de Ridder. De Ridder has, for a short period of time, been one of the special favourites of George Maciunas, as their ideas about art and the art world were very similar, but there were differences as well. The paper gives a general impression of De Ridder's ideas and charts the activities surrounding the European Mailorder House, thus giving an inside view of Fluxus activity outside the United States.

Simon Faulkner (Manchester)

Shooting up swinging London: anti-art and art

In 1968 the London based pro-Situationist group King Mob produced a poster celebrating Valerie Solanis' attempted murder of Andy Warhol. The poster also recommended the shooting of a number of personalities associated with what had been known since 1966 as 'Swinging London'. The poster was headed with the proclamation: 'The death of art spells the murder of artists. The real anti-artist appears.'

As well as being an anti-art statement, this poster can be interpreted as a repudiation of all that the 'Swinging Sixties' involved. For King Mob 'real' anti-art not only entailed the conventional concern to liberate art from the confines of the art world, but also art's liberation from a range of associations with the media and the commercialised counter-culture. Such anti-art practices are produced within a discourse – structural to the artistic field – which ascribes to art a special power to criticise society. A power premised on the separation of art from ordinary social life, and commercialised and institutionalised culture. Using the example of King Mob this paper will discuss anti-art practices in terms of these discourses, and through this will position anti-art firmly within the structures of the artistic field, rather than in the external position which such practices are understood to occupy in some writings on anti-art.

Peter Suchin (University of Northumbria)

Disaffirmation and recuperation in contemporary art

This paper will consider the work of Terry Atkinson, amongst others, as an example of a 'critical' approach to current practice.

Dawn Ades (University of Essex)

The anti-aesthetic in Latin America

An/art or anti-art strategies such as those of Marcel Duchamp have in Europe and North America often been directed towards an accredited avant-garde and its institutions.

This paper will survey some anti-aesthetic tendencies in Latin America in contexts very different from those of Europe, and will examine in particular Duchamp's legacy there.

Mark Durden (Staffordshire University)

The visceral vs the aesthetic: Andres Serrano's Morgue Photographs

In framing Andres Serrano in a session on the anti-aesthetic, this paper immediately upsets assumptions about his practice. What can be more aesthetic and beautiful than a photograph by Serrano? But what I'd like to examine in this paper is the precise nature of Serrano's dialogue with aesthetics, his dialogue, that is, with Western art from Christian iconography to Modernism. Through a particular focus on his representation of death in *The Morgue* photographs I'll show how the referential power of photography, its facticity, upsets the aesthetic allusions his pictures make; a borrowed aesthetic from painting is deliberately set against an often shockingly raw referentiality. What emerges, I will argue, is a renewal of the power of the photographic image, but one which exceeds, indeed critiques, the aesthetic. The shock of such an explicit imaging of human death in *The Morgue* cannot be contained by the overt formal tropes and iconographic allusions these pictures make. Indeed, it is the tensions between the two, which makes these photographs so challenging.

Richard Hooker (University of Glasgow)

Anti-art history or anti Art History?

Three sections:

1 When we deal with anti-art, whose subject is often its own dubious status, it is specially important to be aware of the different levels at which our own arguments absorb and project value onto the work we discuss. Part 1 will consider various ways value is implied by the normal practice of art history.

2 Part 2 will survey various critical strategies which attempt to foreground the issue by reconfiguring relationships between criticism and its 'object' (eg Ullmer, "The object of post-criticism" in Foster *Postmodern Culture*). Particular attention will be given to those arguments which have emphasised a blurring of the relationship between anti-art historian and object. Whilst suggestive, such strategies are often literary or philosophical in origin, and not necessarily directly relevant to anti-art history.

3 Using examples of Conceptual and Body Art, I will suggest that by considering these anti-art forms as modes of behaviour we relate to, as well as objects we describe, it is then possible to develop parallel anti-art historical behaviours. These would be defined both in response to a particular anti-art work, but also in their critical relation to the practice of Art History; as such, they would be conceived as anti Art History.

8

'Other' Bodies:

Representations of Beauty across Cultures

Colin Rhodes (Loughborough College of Art)
Belle Smith (Loughborough College of Art)

This session is concerned with different cultural perceptions of beauty, principally with reference to the body, although architecture will also be addressed. Some papers will deal with the complexities of cultures representing and defining themselves through descriptions and formulations of ideals of beauty. Others deal with Primitivism and how western perceptions of 'other' bodies or cultures, either positive or negative, have been used to define or transform the occidental 'self'. It is the colonial body that is addressed in the main, in the context of the hegemony of Western scientific thought and concepts of beauty.

Claudine Mitchell (University of Leeds)

The oriental garden: beauty, torture and desire

In 1902 Ambroise Vollard published Octave Mirbeau's *Jardin des Supplices*, a novel set in China in the late 1890s, with twenty illustrations by Auguste Rodin. Contemporaries remembered these images as the first complete formulation of the 'new drawings'. Though each illustration is keyed to his text, Mirbeau's writings have never been considered to provide an interesting access to Rodin's later drawings. Similarly, when one thinks of 'Rodin and the Orient' nowadays one no longer has Mirbeau in mind, rather the series of Cambodian dancers. The collaboration between Rodin and Mirbeau at the turn of the twentieth century brings an interesting perspective on Western perceptions of Oriental Art as providing cultural justification for erotic art. This paper argues that Rodin's Cambodian series represents the comforting side of the artist's later drawings since Cambodia represented the 'smiling face' of French colonialism. Mirbeau's interpretation of the Orient of Sensuality and Cruelty was received as an anti-colonialist political metaphor.

Fassil Zewdou (University of Pennsylvania)

Analogical character of beauty in Italian colonial architecture

There were two competitions for the Piazza della Cattedrale in Tripoli in 1929 and 1930. Although no prizes were awarded for projects in the first competition, in recognition of its uniqueness, one of the reports from the 1929 entry was published in 1930 in 'Architettura ed Arti Decorative'. In 1931 the same journal documented the four prize-winning projects from the second competition. This paper will address the factor that was indispensable for the emerging awareness of beauty as exhibited in the designs of Italian colonial architecture of this period, showing how the architects showed their desire to relate aesthetic cognition and judgement to architecture and moral values: how the affinities between architecture and the concept of beauty have conventionally been perceived in their common endeavour to express and embody non-material ideal beauty in a physical form through the arrangements of common forms. This includes a discussion of Pietro Romanelli's 1923 essay in which he described the buildings and motifs of Tripoli, by relating the ornamental capitals and the general shape of its residential buildings, as typically Near Eastern. Yet, he also claimed that its buildings more nearly resembled Roman houses than the 'Oriental' house plan. His conclusion that the genesis of Tripoli's architecture was authentically Italian was not upheld by Gruppo 7, for whom the achievement of beauty in design was driven by connecting the two strains: the local and the foreign; the past and the present. The perceived virtues of drawing inspiration from local 'primitive' forms becomes crucial in the definition of beauty for Italian Colonial Architecture.

Pauline de Souza

The ideal black body and the Harlem Renaissance

Between 1919 and the mid-1940s black art critics and historians such as Dr Alain Locke and William E B du Bois, leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, proposed notions of 'blackness' that had implications for the practice of black artists in their depiction of black people. Key texts were du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk, The New Negro*, and Locke's *Art and Propaganda*. A reading of these and other texts reveals conflicts around the definition of 'blackness' and ideals of black beauty which are mirrored in the works of black artists during the Harlem Renaissance. This debate was based on ideas deriving from nineteenth-century ethnography and, in the case of Locke, by classical aesthetics and moral philosophy.

Reina Lewis (University of East London)

'Othered' looks: women's cross-cultured representations of female beauty 1870-1930

This paper attends to a particularly nuanced version of the female Orientalist gaze, namely that of the Orientalised woman who represents herself for an Occidental audience. Starting from the premise that Western women's Orientalist art can tell us something about the gendering of Western vision concerning the Orient, I argue that 'Oriental' women who represent Oriental female life for a curious West enunciate a series of supplementary Orientalist knowledges. Since visual representations from Islamic cultures of this period are few, I draw on written accounts (in English) from Muslim and Christian women in the Middle East. Their accounts demonstrate a familiarity with Orientalist stereotypes against, but also in relation to which they construct their differing versions of the 'truth' about Oriental women and segregated life. The regime of representation inscribed in these written descriptions of Oriental women and female

beauty demonstrates a variety of female gazes that are differently and contingently racialised, as well as gendered. The differences of 'race' and ethnicity that structure these descriptions of bodies and character indicate a series of racialised differences that are often subsumed in the Western vision of a generic Orient, or that are differently mobilised by Occidental or Oriental cultural producers. By reading literary representations against visual images by Western women and men artists, this paper explores the ideological role of female beauty in the construction of an Orientalised female self that is produced for consumption in the East and West.

Colin Rhodes (Loughborough College of Art)

The Hottentot Venus: stereotypes of black physiognomy and expressionist transformations

Nineteenth-century European culture was marked by its self confidence. Its Science purported to utter truths on all manner of subjects, though nowhere was it more self-assured than in its taxonomy of race. Interest in differences between ideas of 'beauty' in racial types was widespread, though information was usually articulated in ways that confirmed a mythical superiority of Europe over the world. Third World bodies as well as dress were typed as 'primitive' and displeasing to 'civilized' sensibility; inferiority was theorised through physiognomy. This paper will show how avant-garde artists in the early twentieth century began to turn this received knowledge on its head. Using the example of the artists of the Brücke, I will demonstrate how, as part of the common avant-garde attack on artistic antecedents (especially academic and realist ones), dominant medico-scientific world views were undermined and subverted. Brücke work includes images of blacks, especially as performers, but what is of most interest is the pictorial transformation of the white body in which the 'primitive' was normalised and presented in the context of ideas of a 'modern' beauty.

Andrew Morrison (Courtauld Institute of Art)

The idealised 'self' and the primitive 'other': images of the body in German First World War propaganda

Most accounts of early twentieth-century German art focus on avant-garde, anti-war responses to the First World War. In contrast, this paper breaks new ground by focusing on images of the body depicted in posters and pro-war periodicals. Consistent with the taste of official culture these more conservative renderings, contained in photographs, drawings, and lithographs, lend themselves to interdiscplinary readings. These involve a consideration of contemporary medical, pseudo-scientific, racial, historical, and religious theory. The paper will address the significance and effectiveness of German propaganda attempts to ridicule the body of the enemy through associations with notions of the 'Other'. The historical significance of the Entente's deployment of colonial forces and the ways on which depictions of the enemy 'Other' contrast with images of the 'Self' are central to the argument. The paper will show how German First World War depictions of the enemy body evoked pre-1914 colonial, racial, social, and scientific discourse, positing the body of the 'Other' as 'primitive', degenerate, feminine and insane. A number of key themes will be addressed: the construction of a male ideal based on classicism and the pseudo-sciences of phrenology, physiognomy and racial biology; the use of historical and religious imagery to establish a mythical German heritage; the role of military training and the concept of body armour; the contrast between the ideal and the realities of war; the role of women, family and the 'Volk'.

Johann Reusch (Bucknell University)

Scarred, studded and branded: new primitives and modern morphologies of the body

Non-mainstream body modification, such as body piercing, branding and scarification, not only involves physical pain, but is also considered repugnant and even psycho-pathological by modern American society. This paper explores the phenomenon of body modification in its reversible and non-reversible forms in the contemporary United States, including coiffures, cosmetics, ornamentation, cosmetic surgery, tattooing, branding, and scarification. Tribal and archaic rites involving bloodletting gained popularity with the non-mainstream body piercing 'rituals' which take place in Western cultures. Western piercing devotees are searching for direct experience of spiritual death that is an integral part of initiation rites in tribal cultures, though lacking in their own. This paper will trace this aesthetic to its literary and pictorial roots, from Lessing and Burke to contemporary aesthetic criticism. It will examine contemporary primitive ritual in performance art, such as work by Ron Athey, Bob Flanagan, Stelarc, Gina Pane and Orlan, in the context of an emerging aesthetic of the performed sublime. The disputed post-modern re-discovery of multiculturalism and non-western aesthetics of pain will be explored, as well as trends towards an anti-aesthetic in performance art. The discussion will thus attempt to liberate modern primitivist body art and ritual from social constructs of perversion, sadomasochism, or insanity. Particular attention will be given to the genre of 'bloodwork'. Psychoanalytic theories related to masochism by Reik, Anzieu, Lacan are surveyed and ultimately interrelated to the material history and theory of body art. Psychoanalytical and cultural theory also will be utilised to demonstrate the necessity of the voyeur/spectator as an integral part of modern primitive ritual.

Hilary Cunliffe-Charlesworth
(Sheffield Hallam University)

Us and them, present and past

This paper will cover the following issues relating to jewellery and dress: in the past, the inclusion of motifs, styles and images from other cultures in Western dress; the representation of the West by other cultures; the contemporary perception of non western 'craft': from primitive to ethnic and the inclusion of Western items and styles as objects of beauty in other cultures.

9

Philistine and Aesthete in Victorian Britain

Liz Prettejohn

This session will explore 'beauty' as a contested sphere of value in Victorian Britain. One focus will be on the emergence of notions of the 'aesthetic' as an independent sphere of value after 1860, but the aim is to place this in the context of wider debates about art's function in bourgeois society. Notions of 'aesthetic value' will therefore be considered, not in isolation, but in opposition and relation to other spheres of value in Victorian middle-class culture, including commercial value as well as moral and social value. Among the issues to be addressed will be: early Victorian notions of 'beauty' and 'ugliness'; changes in art-critical value systems; the controversies around the terms 'art for art's sake' and 'aestheticism'; shifts in characterisations of middle-class taste, including its stigmatisation as 'Philistine'; new social roles for the artist and the 'aesthete'; 'escapism' versus engagement in later Victorian art; and constructions of 'aesthetic value' in opposition to commercial, moral, or other spheres of value.

Alastair Grieve (University of East Anglia)

Rossetti and the scandal of art for art's sake in the early eighteen-sixties

In *c*1860 the style of Rossetti's art and his way of life changed, becoming hedonistic. New friendships, with Swinburne in particular, encouraged a fervent and deliberately shocking espousal of 'art for art's sake'. Earthly beauties were to be enjoyed to the full. Ideas were derived from a wide variety of sources: Gautier's "Mlle de Maupin", Fitzgerald's "Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam", the writings of de Sade and the art of the Venetians and the Japanese. Rossetti showed his new aims in a series of bust length oils of alluringly beautiful women, beginning in 1859 with *Bocca Baciata* painted from Fanny Cornforth for his friend G P Boyce. The sensuality of these works shocked Ruskin and Holman Hunt but they were influential on many artists in Rossetti's circle including Joanne Boyce, Burne-Jones, Madox Brown, Sandys and Whistler.

Liz Prettejohn

Walter Pater and 'art for art's sake' in English painting

Although Walter Pater's references to contemporary art were rare and often oblique, this paper will argue that one crucial context for the essays of *The Renaissance* is the work of artists in the circles around Frederic Leighton and D G Rossetti, associated in the contemporary press with the term 'art for art's sake'. Art historians have usually treated 'art for art's sake' as involving a radical reduction in intellectual content in favour of 'pure form'. However, Pater's essays and contemporary paintings explore a more complex set of potential relationships and non-relationships between the work of art and its content. The paper will concentrate on form-content relationships seen as transgressive according to contemporary critical criteria – relationships seen as 'plagiaristic', 'eclectic', or 'artificial'. It will argue that the 'art for art's sake' assertion of the 'detachability' of the work from its potential intellectual meanings could allow meanings to proliferate as well as evaporate.

Caroline Arscott (Courtauld Institute)

Poynter and the Arty

This paper departs from Poynter's comments on the industrial and the aesthetic in his *Ten Lectures* and goes on to consider the industrial and the mechanical as central metaphors in his work. The work of art itself can be seen to have the qualities of the machine, whose function is to convert energy. Art is then something that converts nature and the arty harness the converted energies of the extra-artistic.

Whitney Davis (Northwestern University)

"His dress concealed him not": the homoerotic art criticism of John Addington Symonds

J A Symonds (1840-93) both imagined and enacted a link between hallucinatory fantasies of beautiful masculinity and particular works of art, (the Apoxyomenos, Pisano's "Fortitude", the Antinous type). Works of art were judged in terms of their closeness to the fantasies and the fantasies in terms of their resemblance to the works, themselves understood to have been the product of past homoerotic visualizations. Although this dynamic has been typical of most modern homoerotic criticism, Symonds's version was pivotal. First, he developed a theory of fantasy based on early nineteenth-century concepts of somnambulism, "moral insanity", and nervous irritability, which he tied to later nineteenth-century psychiatric models of "homosexuality". Second, he used photography to investigate the structure of his own erotic (re)cognition. Third, he offered a Hegelian account of the dialectical *Aufhebung* of homoeroticism in modern society – of the way in which it is simultaneously everywhere (or original) and nowhere (or forgotten). These interests had a measurable impact on the next (Wildean) generation as well as on sexological and Freudian theory. The paper interprets key episodes in this development: Symonds's early dreams of sailors (*c*1848); his "vision" of Alfred Brooke (1861); his response to phallic graffiti encountered in London(1865); his criticism of contemporary artists (early 1870s); and his first histories of Greek and Renaissance sculpture (1873, 1877).

Kate Flint (University of Oxford)

'The Mirror of Venus' and 'The Undefinable in Art'

In 1878, the psychologist and philosopher James Sully published his article on 'The Undefinable in Art', in which he discusses the modes of perception that come into play when we view a work of art. He is concerned not just with the physiology of vision, but with the interaction of what we see with our feelings and with buried past associations: the piece investigates, in other words, what came to be seen as the role of the unconscious in perception. Sully exemplifies his argument by close reference to Burne-Jones' *The Mirror of Venus*, shown at the first Grosvenor Gallery exhibition, where it provoked extremely critical as well as sympathetic responses: he explores a mode of relating to the work which allows one to mediate between attention to detail and one's less easily describable sense of the whole. Through examining Sully's response to Burne-Jones, this paper seeks to consider the innovative aspects of his work on perception, the importance of introducing Helmholtz's ideas to British work on vision, and the relationship of new theories concerning the psychology of visual response to the aesthetic movement of the 1870s and 80s.

Colin Cruse (Staffordshire University)

Versions of the Annunciation: aestheticism and the message of beauty

This paper sees some of the roots of the appreciation of beauty in Aesthetic Movement circles in the iconography of the Annunciation and in the reception and understanding of that iconography in mid-nineteenth century art criticism. It sees the Annunciation as providing a basis for discussion for both physical beauty and spiritual perfection. It makes links between the pictorial analyses of Pater and the poetic images of Wilde and it suggests ways in which Wilde continued to incorporate aspects of the Annunciation into his personal appearance, his criticism, and his later dramatic works.

Robin Spencer (University of St Andrews)

Whistler, Balzac, Wilde and the decay of beauty

Wilde said that the nineteenth century was largely an invention of Balzac's, and for once Whistler would have agreed. But Whistler and Wilde disagreed about the respective merits of painting and literature and their relationship to life. Wilde also said that in England the only person who read Balzac was Swinburne, forgetting Whistler, who was an avid reader of 'The Human Comedy'. For Whistler, Swinburne licensed modern beauty as 'Aestheticism'; and with Pater and Whistler did much the same for Wilde. With *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* and *The Critic as Artist*, Wilde began a campaign to subvert Whistler, Aestheticism, and much else besides, by reversing art's relationship to life and claiming that art could only imitate art. One of the consequences was that five years later, Wilde, unlike Whistler and other artists, was unable to live up to his own aphorism, 'To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.' What might Balzac's significance have been for Whistler and Wilde in terms of art's relationship to art, and art's to life? And did Wilde between 1890 and 1895 license artists to reveal themselves more – or conceal themselves less?

Anne Koval (Richmond College)

The 'artists' have come out, and the 'British' remain

This paper will focus on J M Whistler's reign at the Society of British Artists (1886-8), concentrating on the divisions engendered within the society between the Whistler faction and its more conservative members, the 'British Artists'. Representing the aesthetic avant-garde Whistler positions himself in opposition to what he regarded as the philistine sector of the society. Through his own political agenda, he and his supporters sought to reshape the society in an attempt to rival other institutions such as the Royal Academy. His rapid rise in the society and his reforming measures on exhibition and display will be examined within the context of other exhibiting venues.

Robyn Asleson (Huntington Library, California)

Nature and culture in Albert Moore

During the aesthetic ferment of the 1860s, Moore turned his iconoclastic vision to one of art history's oldest themes: the modern emulation of classical art. Although critics often assumed that ancient prototypes served as literal sources for Moore's poses and compositions, fifth-century Greek sculpture merely provided the artist with insights into a practical method for interpolating ideal beauty from natural forms. Ironically, Moore's investment in ideal figurative art resulted in an exclusively anthropomorphic expression of aims that were essentially non-naturalistic and abstract. Moreover, the artist's reliance on the female form as a vehicle for expressing these aims has diminished his importance in the eyes of many critics, both past and present, who have viewed him as "merely" decorative at best, and misogynistic at worst. While tracing the evolving role of nature in Moore's art, this paper outlines the methodology which enabled his transmutation of nature into culture through the agency of classical art. In so doing, the paper explores Moore's reasons for employing the female body as the medium for his message, and offers an explicit definition of Beauty as conceived by Albert Moore.

Alison Smith (Sotheby's Institute)

'British Matron' and the body beautiful

1885 marked the peak of the 'social purity' campaign against the nude in high culture, a controversy orchestrated largely by the academician J C Horsley. Adopting the persona of 'A British Matron' he published a letter in *The Times* in May that year attacking the nude and the role of the female model in art education. The furore which developed within the leading art institutions and the public press saw the nude both condemned as a corrupting influence and defended as 'pure' art. However, the debate was more than a straightforward opposition between 'philistine' prudes and 'progressive' aesthetes. By examining the challenge social purity presented to the status of the nude and the role of the artist's model in art education, this paper will show how the issue of the nude was used in different ways to support a number of conflicting ideological positions.

10

The City Beautiful:

Architectural theory and the formation of British metropolitan and provincial identity from the eighteenth century to the present day

Tom Faulkner (University of Northumbria)
Stephen Hayward (University of Teesside)

This section concentrates on the relationship between 'beauty' and architecture, urbanism and the built environment and examines the extent to which the city can be regarded as an aesthetic artefact. What constitutes the cultural infrastructure of the city? What is the social meaning of buildings and environments such as churches, squares, parks, art galleries and arcades? In attempting to look at these issues the section includes discussion of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century town planning, the idea of 'improvement' and representation of the city in painting and literature, as well as sessions which examine the city in the light of contemporary theoretical perspectives.

Elizabeth McKellar (Birkbeck College, London)

The city and the country: the suburban fringe in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century London

Daniel Defoe in his *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1724-6) wrote of the spas surrounding the capital:

"... the nobility and gentry go to Tunbridge, the merchants and rich citizens to Epsome; so the common people go chiefly to Dullwich and Stretham; and the rather also, because it lies so near London that they can walk to it in the morning and return at night."

Defoe discussed the villages surrounding London at length and most contemporary guides to the capital presented them as an integral part of the attractions of the city. Yet this intermediate zone between town and country has received little attention and Raymond Williams's presentation of the urban and rural as discrete entities still dominates our thinking. Recent eighteenth-century studies have emphasised the role of the city in establishing new environments for the formation of social identities. This paper will argue that the contemporary conception and experience of social space extended beyond the boundaries of the city itself to incorporate semi-rural or suburban zones which constituted an important aspect of metropolitan life at the time.

Dana Arnold (University of Leeds)

Re-presenting the metropolis: the social and cultural significance of George IV's vision for London

George IV's vision for London aimed to transform the capital from 'a huddle of bricks with a steepled skyline' into a world city. This vision was enabled by the collective endeavours of parliament, patrons and builders and the monarch himself. This paper demonstrates that the chief instrument in this change in London's character was the idea of beauty rather than the will of an individual. Two principal themes are explored here. First, the physical beautification of the city. This is seen in the Metropolitan Improvements and the work in the royal parks. The motivation for and execution of these plans is explored alongside the aesthetic aspirations and sociological ideals of the designers and users of the new metropolis. This paper shows that these elements are intrinsically linked. The second area is the subjective response of the individual to the new city-scape. Picturesque planning principles were employed as a means of shaping the reading of the urban map. Strategically placed monuments to national pride and civic virtue elicited an emotional response from the populace. This paper argues that these forms of beauty were an important tool in the creation of the city of the senses and that this concept of the city was part of an evolving urban culture. This way of reading a decisive moment in the history of a city demonstrates how the built environment can be considered as an artefact shaped by social and cultural phenomena – this particular instance the idea of beauty.

Mireille Galinou (Museum of London)

London – portrait of the contemporary city: palimpsest and modernism

The development of romantic ideals at the turn of the eighteenth century, had clearly established that *beautiful* images of cities could no longer be solely those of an ideal city. London, variously painted as the fallen city (seventeenth century), the New Rome (eighteenth century) and the modern Babylon (nineteenth century), offers a rich pictorial tradition. But it is the beautiful images of the here and now which I wish to investigate. How far can artists detach themselves from the great pictures of the past to depict the present? How much of the city do they actually *see*? And what, in the late twentieth-century capital, with so much corruption and so many desperate citizens, qualifies as beautiful? How do tradition and the new blend? Or do they?

Christopher Webster (Staffordshire University)

The concept of improvement in the late Georgian provincial town: beauty or utility?

Using examples drawn from the expanding towns of the north of England such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle, this paper discusses what was meant by the much used term 'improvement'. For example, did this term imply a municipal involvement, or at least a public function for a building, and did it imply a certain aesthetic standard of design? Towns grew rapidly in this period but to what extent was their growth planned or informed by any notion of an ideal? How far were developments in provincial towns influenced by current theory and practice in the capital cities of London and Edinburgh?

Peter Quinn (University of Sunderland)

"Visits to remarkable places": William Howitt and the streets of Newcastle

During the rebuilding of the centre of Newcastle in the 1830s and 1840s, visitors and local artists alike produced texts and images which focused upon the experience of the new streets. Visitors to the town were confounded by the qualities of modernity and order with which they were confronted. William Howitt (*"Visits to Remarkable Places: Old Halls, Battle Fields, and Scenes Illustrative of Striking Passages in History and Poetry: Chiefly in the Counties of Durham and Northumberland,"* London, 1842) deployed a number of strategies in expressing his discomfort with the "country town". In particular he was careful to situate in the new streets an encounter with William Martin, brother of John Martin and self-proclaimed *National Anti-Newtonian Philosopher, the Philosophical Conqueror of all Nations*. The town, despite its apparently incontrovertible claims to modernity and rational order, was made to appear parodic of the true centre and peripheral to the British state.

Julian Holder (University of Sheffield)

Building the fourth city: early town planning in Sheffield

The topography of Sheffield has lead it to be viewed as a large village and certainly its suburbs have been viewed with greater enthusiasm by commentators than its centre. Its industrialisation relied upon this topography for the supply of water necessary for the metal trades. However, it quickly outgrew its physical character and the lack of a significant commercial sector resulted in an urban elite incapable of carrying through the civic improvements found in other northern manufacturing towns. This paper looks at the historiography of Sheffield's reputation in the nineteenth century and later attempts to re-plan the centre along "City Beautiful" lines.

Hentie Louw (University of Newcastle)

The progressive generation: a gothic future revisited

In 1863 Alexander James Beresford Hope MP, a founder member of the Architectural Museum and one of the leading champions of the "progressive Gothic" movement of the mid-Victorian era, reflected on the essential characteristics of an architectural style capable of withstanding the test of time. He reached the following conclusion:

"...it is not for me to conjecture whether the architecture of 1963 will be the architecture of either the Gothicists or the Claccicists of 1863. But I say that in 1963 whatever architecture then prevails will have drawn much more of its lifeblood from our teaching and from the principles on which that teaching is based, than from the antagonistic school (ie Classical). Why? Because the antagonistic school is one which dwells upon scholastic conditions and limitations. It is unprogressive: it is unelastic."

My paper will trace the history of the above notion that a "free creation", based on organic principles, is by definition the most progressive statement that an architect can make at any given point in time. It will seek to determine whether, after a century dominated by the unstoppable march of industrialisation, during which every aspect of productive life in the Western world was transformed beyond recognition, it is possible that close links – even kinship – might still be found between the work and ideas of the progressive generation of the mid-nineteenth century and that of the mid-twentieth century.

Elizabeth Norman (Sheffield Hallam University)

'City beautiful': a woman's touch

Where are the comforting feminine/womanly touches – those that make a house a home – to be found in the city? Are there no public spaces in a city which offer the comfort, the sense of being at ease, comparable to that which we expect in a room at home? The urban spaces which are offered for public use in cities, the parks and squares in particular, have traditionally reflected the attitudes of largely male planners. They seem to project an authoritative and confident view of life. Often, the furniture of these city rooms are statues of men of power, made in material of permanence. Seats are fixed and uncomfortable and spaces are regulated. Even today, the city is often viewed as an abstract ground plan, with changes made primarily for economic reasons, with little concern for those who use it or live in it. (see Harvey's 'From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of postmodernity' in *Mapping the Future*, ed J Bird et al.)

Where are the women who might change this perception and rearrange the furniture? There are few women who have been given the chance to do so. This paper examines the work of two such women, currently working in the public sphere, one restoring city space (a forgotten Victorian urban park), the other renewing city space (a new city pathway created by linking existing squares). One project requires the practice of caring and mending, the other of listening and responding. In each case, the image of family needs comes to mind. The 'cities beautiful' are Sheffield and Caerphilly.

Malcolm Miles (University of Portsmouth)

From the Agora to the Plaza: city, fragmentation and gender

This paper seeks to address the contemporary cultural problems of cities in the developed world, through historical analysis and allusion. Its focus is development of concepts of the city reflected in the increasingly abstract disciplines of art and architecture (for both of which the city is the prime but unacknowledged site); these rest on a gendering of city space and a use of monuments as devices for control. The paper challenges the notion that artists have a different ('avant garde') ideological stance from architects and urban planners, and sees most art produced/encountered in/for cities as affirmative of the dominant cultural model. This model is expressed in progressive division, and alludes to an underlying construct of masculinity. The city is a heroic catastrophe. Examples such as Birmingham demonstrate this, despite massive investment in a supposed/longed for culturally-led regeneration.

Andrew Ballantyne (University of Newcastle)

Practising urbanism: the volatile commonplace

If we turn our attention away from the designers of cities to people who have tried to make sense of them in use, then we find that the category of the surreal or the uncanny comes to play an important role throughout the twentieth century. The idea of relishing the dislocating effects of urban life is to be found in literature before it is advocated as an aim for urban designers. Looking back at the twentieth century we can now see that in making sense of the city the surreal is as important an aesthetic category as the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque have been. In circumstances where the everyday is recontextualized and given fresh meaning, a fleeting quality of transcendance is to be found.

11

Concepts of beauty in Renaissance Art

Francis Ames-Lewis (Birkbeck College)
Mary Rogers (University of Bristol)

Central to our notions of 'Renaissance' aesthetic and cultural ideals is the pursuit of beauty, in art and in life. Yet ways of perceiving, conceiving or creating beauty were as diverse as the cultural influences at work in the period, from antique and more modern literature and philosophy, to late medieval ideals, and to contemporary notions of courtly conduct. The session will look at aspects of beauty in relation to the arts of the European Renaissance defined broadly as between 1350 and 1600, north and south of the Alps.

Contributions will range from discussions of theoretical questions (such as the changing values of terms like bellezza and others associated with it), to analyses of critical appreciations of works of art in their material and formal aspects; from discussion of grazia in colour and lighting, in contrapposto, in movement and in behaviour, to analysis of the vaghezza or leggiadria of female figures, of the amenità of landscape, or of changing styles of beauty in life, in manners, in dress and accessories, in architecture and interior design, indeed in all aspects of the natural or man-made world.

John Onians (University of East Anglia)

The biological basis of Renaissance aesthetics

This paper will consider the way major new features of Renaissance approaches to perception, and especially to beauty, can be related to the recognition of new natural capacities in the human being's mind and eye. A key point here is the role of Leon Battista Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci who, as 'natural' sons, had a particular investment in the natural as opposed to the traditional. There are, however, broader questions to be considered that relate to the Renaissance reassessment of man's relation to the environment. This paper will discuss these in relation to painting, to sculpture and to architecture of the period.

Georgia Clarke (Courtauld Institute of Art)

"La più bella e meglio lavorata opera": beauty and good design in Italian Renaissance architecture

The study of Vitruvius's Roman treatise on architecture and the exploration of remains of ancient buildings provided Renaissance scholars and architects with much material for formulating their own views on architecture and design. This paper seeks to explore some of the attitudes to beauty and good design in architecture in texts and comments by architects and others in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It considers some of the ways that ancient architecture was seen as a model for contemporary architecture and aspects of ancient buildings that were admired in the Renaissance, such as comments on drawings about details of the architectural orders and examples of good and bad design.

However, ancient architecture was not the only source for contemporary design or solutions to design problems. Therefore to reach a fuller view of concepts of beauty in Renaissance architecture this paper also touches on responses to non-antique or non-classical architecture, such as comments on gothic architecture both north and south of the Alps.

Paul Hills (University of Warwick)

Venetian glass and Renaissance self-fashioning

The development of table-glass in Renaissance Venice played a subtle part in the reconfiguration of ideals of beauty. In the fifteenth century the glass-makers of Murano perfected the manufacture of clear glass known as *cristallo*, extended their range of translucent colours, and achieved a porcelain-like opaque white. In the sixteenth century the glass-blowers pointed up the difference between the bearable lightness of glass and the heaviness of traditional metal goblets and tankards. The evolution of the wine-glass towards ever longer stems and wider bowls can be read as both a response to, and an intensification of, an aristocratic fashion for *leggerezza*. As is evident in the paintings of Veronese, the wine glass became an accessory to self-fashioning, engendering a conscious poise that differentiated its bearer from those who knocked about taverns. A shift in esteem from the weight and density of gold or silver to the lightness and transparency of glass accords with the secularization of grace.

Jane Bridgeman (London)

"Condecenti e netti ...": dress, beauty and gender in Italian Renaissance art

This paper will explore some fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian sources helpful in determining 'Renaissance' concepts of beauty in dress. Questions arising from culturally-defined expectations of dress, status and gender will also be discussed.

David Hensoll
(Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham)

Botticelli's aesthetics

Botticelli (c1445-1510) is widely regarded as an artist painting highly innovative subject matter but working in a distinctly retrogressive style. It is certainly the case that Botticelli's mature style is very different from Leonardo da Vinci's, which is founded upon aesthetic principles that Leonardo himself codified in his writings. It may also be the case, however, that Botticelli's style, is also founded upon specific aesthetic principles, principles different from Leonardo's although no less 'progressive'.

These principles, in fact, seem to be embraced by the same body of literature (Ficino, Politian etc) which provides much of the background and inspiration for Botticelli's subject matter. They presuppose, among other things, a respect for the recent past and a renewed emphasis of Beauty over Nature. In fact, the writings of Leonardo, which value innovation and which persistently emphasise Nature over Beauty, should perhaps be regarded as a calculated rebuttal of the theories associated with Botticelli.

Rupert Shepherd (Courtauld Institute)

Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti and a practical definition of Magnificence

Renaissance notions of beauty included many concepts which may, to us, seem rather distant from the area of visual aesthetics. One such concept, of great importance for renaissance discussions of architecture, was Magnificence. This is a concept which is often invoked today, yet so far discussions of the subject have focused only on its theoretical aspects. In an attempt to correct this imbalance, this paper examines the extensive descriptions of fifteenth-century Ferrarese buildings and their decorations, contained in a section of Giovanni Sabadino degli Arienti's treatise *De triumphis religionis* (1497) which is devoted to Magnificence as displayed by Ercole I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. Arienti's account reveals the importance of rich ornament (architectural and painted), large scale, expensive materials, extensive amenities and an *all'antica* style for the renaissance notion of Magnificence. An examination of remarks by Arienti's contemporaries suggests that his concept of Magnificence was fairly typical of those held by others in the late-fifteenth century. This enables us to go some way towards resurrecting the practical criteria used in the Renaissance to assess the Magnificence of a project, and therefore allows us to use the term more precisely in our own discussions of renaissance architecture and patronage.

Andrew Morrall (Christie's Education)

Defining the "beautiful" in early sixteenth-century Germany

This paper will address German concepts of beauty in the early modern period. Though there was no coherent theory of art, there existed certain criteria by which works of art were judged. These lay in the craft-based values of the workshop: skill, individuality and a sense of the appropriate with regard to materials and subject matter; or in religious notions of decorum, which equated beauty with the expression of moral truth. Such qualities are thrown into relief in the early sixteenth century when a new vocabulary of italianate form was grafted onto the old. Distinct aesthetic attitudes are revealed, for example, in the particular way humanists assimilated classical, rhetorical categories of criticism, or in Dürer's struggles in reaching a definition of 'Beauty', as well as in the character of the handbooks and italianate productions of other, less intellectual artists.

Mary Rogers (University of Bristol)

The artist as beauty

Around 1500, due largely to the influence of Neoplatonic aesthetics, a new phenomenon appears in art literature and in painting: the Artist as Beauty. Not only does this genius create figures of god-like grace, but also his own person is claimed to possess a beauty suggestive of divine favour. Vasari's *Lives* expound such notions most fully, linking them with his ideas on how artists should develop their talents and conduct their careers. Physical beauty is accompanied, in Leonardo da Vinci, by graceful bearing and courtly accomplishments, enabling him to shine in society; in Raphael, by a moral radiance which renders his presence beneficial and his studio productive. Parmigianino, however, neglects his person as he does his talent, turning from an angel to a savage. In exploring these and other literary sources, this paper will relate them to artists' self-presentations, which sometimes seem to challenge, sometimes to endorse, this notion of the Artist as Beauty.

Mary Vaccaro (University of Texas at Arlington)

Regarding the neck in Parmigianino's 'Madonnna dal collo lungo'

The important studies of Ute Davitt Asmus (1968, 1977) and Elizabeth Cropper (1976) respectively offer religious and social contexts within which to understand female beauty in Parmigianino's art. Davitt Asmus related the *Madonna dal collo lungo* to Canticles, while Cropper emphasised a connection with *petrarchismo* in the sixteenth century. The poetic traditions of Canticles and of Petrarch represent beauty in remarkably similar ways, however, both invoking a catalogue of canonical body parts that constitute female perfection. This paper will attempt to explore further Parmigianino's eloquent visual analogue to such descriptive practice. Details of the commission for the *Madonna dal collo lungo* open and confirm interpretative possibility. Especially germane are the Petrarchan poems by the patron's father, as well as Marian devotional practices and writings of the Servite order (*salutatio membrorum*). The lovely body of the Virgin thus serves as a site where sacred content and visual pleasure, and where aristocratic elegance and divine *grazia* converge, and her elongated neck – the feature that gives the painting its popular title – typifies this correspondent meaning.

Thomas Frangenberg (University of Leicester)
Robert Williams
(University of California at Santa Barbara)

The concept of beauty in Bocchi's 'Bellezze della città di Fiorenza' (1591)

Francesco Bocchi's *Bellezze della città di Fiorenza*, published in 1591, is both the first guide book in the modern sense to an individual city, and the first guide to be informed by a coherent theory of art. Bocchi's text is a eulogy, and it follows many of the conventions of this literary genre. Unlike other contemporary writings in praise of Florence (such as Mini's), however, Bocchi's does not focus on the concept of the nobility of Florence, but on beauty (prominently appearing in the title of the work) and a number of related concepts that define the importance of this city in terms of its visual appearance and artistic merit.

This paper will study the departures from earlier eulogies of Florence resulting from Bocchi's terminology, the sources of his notion of the beautiful, and the place of Bocchi's term 'bellezza' in his rich and subtle art theoretical vocabulary.

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Victorian culture and the idea of the grotesque

Colin Trodd (University of Sunderland)

The grotesque digs deep into Victorian culture, announcing its amorphous identity across a range of social and discursive spaces. Travelling across disciplinary boundaries, it generates readings of the body, beauty, labour, health, nature and religion; and it is used to measure the character of creative life and to record variations in the natural order of things. As a perpetual oscillation between fact and symbol, the grotesque is at the same time a picture of nature and cultural frame: its inscriptions are found in natural phenomena, its transcriptions mark the aesthetic organisation of things.

At once life, energy and creativity, the grotesque is also corruption, disease and inertia; at once deep form and sheer decoration, as something purely organic and totally synthetic, it hovers between absolute identity and fantastic fragmentation. Where Bagehot recoils from the intense materiality of a vision which is self-perpetuating, futile and dangerous, Pater finds the grotesque something delicious, autotelic and gratifying. Between the physicality of labour and the pure vision of lassitude, the grotesque is generated around the ideas of engagement and absorption.

This session maps out the way in which the subject of the grotesque was articulated in Victorian cultural life by examining a range of visual and textual material in such areas as cultural criticism, aesthetic theory, social commentary, art criticism, historical studies and biographical writing. Papers will address appropriate images and engage with a variety of figures, including Ruskin, Dickens, Bagehot, Browning, Pater, Chesterton, Dadd, Darwin, Bellocq, Whistler, Watts, Ford Madox Brown and Arnold.

Colin Trodd (University of Sunderland)

The physicality of the grotesque

This paper examines the framing of the grotesque in Victorian culture by attending to that range of sources in which it is read as a sign of fecundity, mutilation, vitality and violence. Moving between the registers of history and biology, aesthetics and psychology, the grotesque is figured as a polymorphous force encompassing animation and infection in the writings of such figures as Ruskin, Bagehot and Chesterton. If this paper engages with such material, it does so in order to attend in detail to the relationship between the grotesque and the historical imagination which obtains in Victorian cultural life.

There are two areas of culture discourse which are germane to this line of investigation. Firstly, articulations of the grotesque by social commentators, antiquarians and journalists, for whom encounters with the social fabric of the modern environment involves the location or projection of the historical sign as waste. Secondly, those readings of the grotesque that characterize it as the condition of a pure physical force which seems to work against and block the authority of coherence.

Lucy Hartley (University of Southampton)

Monuments, museums and marbles: John Ruskin and the making of the grotesque

This paper will examine public and private attempts to formulate and promote a national language for British art in the nineteenth century. Speaking for the existing art establishment, Sir Martin Archer Shee, President of the Royal Academy 1830-1850, claimed that the greatest obstacle to the making of a national language for British art lay with the collecting habits of British patrons and their preference for foreign painters and paintings. The enthusiastic reception of British art at the Great Exhibition of 1851, exhibitions in Paris (1855) and Manchester (1857), and the International Exhibition of 1862, made Shee's comments seem absurd. And yet, the logic of Shee's position demanded that private patronage, rather than the Academy, must be held responsible for obscuring a national language for the arts. For, it was only in this way, that the separation of private sponsorship from public regulation of the arts could be upheld; a separation, ironically, that many nineteenth-century artists and architects, most notably Benjamin Robert Haydon, attempted to break down.

I argue that the work of John Ruskin, specifically *Modern Painters* and *The Stones of Venice*, not only enlarges on Haydon's idea of the need for an institutional framework for the organisation of social space; but also provides a persuasive formulation of the moral function and social realism of art and architecture. For Ruskin's notion of the grotesque figures two distinct concerns: first, the legitimacy of the political connection between public symbols and social space; and second, the problematic relation between the private, almost religious, experience of art and its public display. The challenge Ruskin faces is, therefore, not only to secure government sponsorship to build new spaces to display British art, but also to encourage and enlarge the public audience for a type of art and architecture that symbolically represented national history, industry, and invention.

Nicola Bown (University of North London)

'Tangled banks': Browning, Dadd and the Darwinian grotesque

This paper takes its starting point from Bagehot's discussion of the grotesque. He suggests that "it deals, to use the language of science, not with normal types but with abnormal specimens; to use the language of old philosophy, not with what nature is striving to be, but what by some lapse she has become." The grotesque is equally a lapse from the ideal into the individual and accidental, and an abnormal specimen which deviates from the true species, because in both cases a departure from the type constitutes a departure from the truth.

Darwinian biology, however, replaces the notion of the fixity of species with a conception in which species are fluid and can be described, distinguished and categorized only by analogy, and for a particular moment. It also introduces the ideas of chance and waste as central to the operation of the natural world: species develop, individuals live and die, adaptation and contingency – rather than design and order – rule. This conception is famously summarized in the final paragraph of *On the Origin of Species*, which contemplates a 'tangled bank' in which, by the operation of laws of Natural Selection, and through the 'war of Nature, famine and death', 'endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.'

In this paper I discuss two representations of 'tangled banks', Robert Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos* (1864), and Richard Dadd's *The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke* (1855-64), and contrast the energetic grotesque of Browning's multitudinous natural world with the stasis and miniaturization of Dadd's (strangely uninterpreted) painting.

E Chambers (University of Manchester)

The grotesque as picturesque: picturing urban poverty in Whistler's 'Thames Set'

One of the best known literary evocations of the grotesque is that of Rabelais as interpreted by Bakhtin, whose reading of Rabelais' work emphasized the importance of openings, ruptures and inversions in defining the grotesque body. This notion of the grotesque also relied on the disruption of established categories and hierarchies and the subversion of order. I propose to use this model to examine the mapping and depiction of urban working-class London in Whistler's *Thames Set* by exploring the rupture of boundaries, both social and physical, implied in the act of 'slumming' by which the information for these images was gathered; and unpicking the representational strategies by which both the river landscape and its inhabitants were depicted for middle-class consumers. The Thames etchings of 1859 are concerned with the establishment of boundaries by which working-class life can be both represented and contained, transformed by conventions of representation which attempt to counteract the permeability of geographical boundaries and social categories, although objects continually overspill their limits in an aesthetic which owes much to Bakhtin's grotesque. I do not intend, however, to construct the grotesque merely as an aesthetic category, but to examine how visual strategies, artistic conventions and social practices interweave to create meaning in Whistler's work.

Galina Mikhailova (University of East Anglia)

Enacting the grotesque: fin-de-siècle female monsters in the trappings of ancient myth

The paper will focus on the images of female grotesques – referential unities with a mythical prototype, eg medusas, sirens, sphinxes, chimeras, mermaids, harpies, in late nineteenth-century painting. The central concept will be a Ruskinian 'play' and its various orders, particularly a theatrical performance, a powerful topos in reverberations of the grotesque.

I shall deal with the issues of performing/staging of the grotesque and interpreting the feminine *qua* monstrous across a variety of artistic discourses and practices. My argument is informed by a significant difference of the modus and modality of modern grotesques from the classical exemplars after which they claim to be modelled. The formal beauty of the female-animal hybrids, while satisfying Victorian aesthetic requirements, provides a cover for more subversive concerns, accommodated by a transformed ancient myth.

Being essentially stylisations of contemporary experience through an archetypal medium, the monsters enact (pre)-existing forms, as well as the reality of otherness that breaks upon a Victorian artist and spectator; but, above all, a 'misfit' between what one believes and what one displays. This gap generates and nourishes the grotesque into becoming inherent to Victorian culture. The fin-de-siècle aesthetic reflects on it by recoursing to approximation and estrangement of theatricality, shuffling the notions of beauty and ugliness in the act.

Paul Barlow (University of Northumbria)

Bellocq's grotesque beauties

Storyville Portraits, a collection of 33 photographs of women, was published in 1970. Subtitled 'photographs from the New Orleans red-light district, circa 1912', it was credited to E J Bellocq, whose negatives had been discovered and printed by Lee Friedlander.

The photographs, all of prostitutes, are described in the introduction as beautiful: 'innocently, or tenderly, or wickedly, or joyfully, or obscenely, but all beautiful'. Dressed and undressed, women adopt poses against backgrounds which hover uncertainly between the imagery of the studio and the home. But the images also bear signs of violence. As the book progresses, they become more grotesque. Masked faces and naked bodies are violently scratched, the negatives smashed and degenerated. The bodily excess and violence of these prints has resurfaced in the many recent images of death and decay in the work of Joel Peter Witkin and others.

How do beauty, convention, trauma, and the grotesque operate in these images? Bellocq's negatives consistently draw on familiar late Victorian pictorial conventions, addressing problems encountered by nineteenth-century art photography. Locked into an irresolvable tension between pictorial conventions and the conditions from which they emerge, the photographs generate a space in which beauty is given a peculiarly photographic form: one which incorporates the fact of the grotesque.

Heather McPherson
(University of Alabama at Birmingham)

Reconsidering Romanticism: the grotesque, the sublime, and the modern

This paper will reconsider the theoretical and critical significance of the *modern grotesque*. Drawing upon Hugo's formulation of the *grotesque*, the critical writings of Baudelaire, and the art of Goya and Géricault, I shall argue that the grotesque is a quintessential component of the Romantic aesthetic which has profoundly shaped the modern world view. The modern idea of the *grotesque*, which emerged during the nineteenth century, differs fundamentally from earlier manifestations of the grotesque. For Romantic artists and writers, the *grotesque* came to encapsulate a subjective, individualistic world outlook that privileged the bizarre, the terrifying, and the alien and eschewed academic norms. Painted in sombre hues, the *modern grotesque* is associated with the horrific as well as the desire to expose repressed truths and shock the viewer. Moreover, its reliance upon exaggeration and extremes links the *grotesque* to the sublime which likewise subverts traditional hierarchies.

The centrality of the *modern grotesque* as an aesthetic strategy in the nineteenth century suggests that is catered to particular desires or obsessions. Beginning with the Romantics, the *grotesque* has become a means of exposing and thematizing the incongruities between spirit and matter thus underscoring the precariousness of human existence. Arguably, the *grotesque* also embodied alienation and a form of hyperreality in a post-revolutionary universe in which it was difficult to surpass the horror of recent events. Forged from disparate elements and functioning as a counter-aesthetic, the *modern grotesque* is a transgressive force that resists precise conceptualization.

David Gray (University of Northumbria)

Some French perspectives on the grotesque

It is well known that the concept of the grotesque played a key part in the development of Romantic aesthetics in the first half of the nineteenth century in France, and it is worth emphasising to readers in the late twentieth century that the Romantic and the Grotesque were both characterised quite explicitly as the specifically 'modern'. The relationship of this evolution to the emergence of realist ideology in the mid century deserves further explication, especially in the light of the substantial re-evaluation of mid-nineteenth century French cultural concerns – and particularly Baudelaire's interest in caricature – bequeathed to us by Walter Benjamin. This paper will offer a résumé of these developments and explore the implications of these French perspectives for our understanding of contemporary cultural production in Britain.

13

Beauty ?: medieval perceptions of beauty

Claire Donovan (Southampton Institute)

Did beauty matter? The papers in this session approach the various ways in which beauty and matters of the beautiful and the ugly were perceived and formulated in the middle ages. How were the materials valued – whether gold, silver and jewels, or gold leaf and ultramarine? Was there meaning in beauty, or just beauty in meaning? Where does the question of 'style' break in? Influences of far away or long ago may introduce a new fashion, but how far was a perception of beauty a factor in its development? In whose eye did the perception of beauty lie – the artist, the patron, or the viewer from outside? And how might those perceptions change? This session concludes with a visit to Durham Cathedral, and an on-the-spot perception of medieval beauty from Eric Fernie.

Sandy Heslop (University of East Anglia)

Sensual beauty and intellectual beauty; two poles in twelfth-century aesthetics

It is in practice difficult to disentangle the relative effects on a spectator of the sensual elements of art (colour, line, etc) and the subject matter. And indeed, within a Christian context, art was deemed to be both for instruction on religious history and dogma but also 'for the beauty of the walls' as Honorius Augustodunensis put it. This bipolar approach may be regarded as the orthodox view, but there are plenty of twelfth-century commentators who prefer to espouse one to the virtual exclusion of the other. Sensual delight was espoused by such writers as William of Malmesbury, Gerald of Wales and Reginald of Durham who consistently comment on things that delight the eye but almost never on the imagery which might delight or even just improve the mind. But there was a whole category of people who despised sensual pleasure – most obviously the reformed religious orders. For them, if there was a justification for art is was entirely that it told an improving story. To what extent were these extreme stances 'political', and to what extent did they register the realisable and realised ambitions of contemporary artists and patrons? This paper sets out to relate written opinion to the evidence of the art itself and to see if the patterns of patronage and production march in step with the polemics.

Lindy Grant (Courtauld Institute)

Baubles, bangles and beads: Abbot Suger and medieval aesthetics

In 1946, Erwin Panofsky published an edition of Abbot Suger's writings describing the rebuilding and refitting of the abbey church of St Denis, prefaced by a brief but highly influential sketch of the abbot. Panofsky saw Suger's writings, particularly *De Administratione*, as very unusual texts. He was struck by Suger's apparently obsessive listing of the gold and gems which encrusted his liturgical toys, in contrast to the paucity of Suger's descriptions of the building itself. The patrician Princeton professor saw this as the unsophisticated passion of the parvenu for all that glitters, and based his reading of Suger's character very largely on that assumption. He noticed that Suger's approach to the beauty of gold and gems reflected ideas culled from the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who was believed by Suger and his contemporaries to be the house saint. Panofsky interpreted Suger's writings as a neo-platonic justification for an aesthetic forged by Suger to counter the attacks of Bernard of Clairvaux on the glimmering gilded interiors of Benedictine abbey churches. Many more recent art historians have taken Panofsky's views further.

This paper will show that far too many untenable conclusions have been drawn, by Panofsky and others, based on assumptions about the completeness of the *De Administratione*, and, above all, on quite unwarranted assumptions about the originality of what Suger says.

Claire Donovan (Southampton Institute)

Two-hander initials in the Winchester Bible: a changing aesthetic?

From leaping sinewy verve, to placid balanced calm, the figures in the initials of the great twelfth-century Winchester Bible span the stylistic divide between Romanesque and Gothic. Written and illuminated in Winchester, then dominated by Henry of Blois, whose pan-European travels had brought him into contact both with the best of contemporary art and the antiquities of Rome, and who was much concerned with building, sculpture and decorative arts, the design of this Bible was not left to chance. Yet the problem of style remains. Contrasting figures and decoration, different use of pigments and gold, and a contradictory sense of iconographic expression are all polarised here in the 480 or so folios of this manuscript. And among the leaping Romanesque and contemplative Gothic are initials designed in one style, painted in another – the two-hander initials.

This paper examines the stylistic melting-pot of the Bible, in particular the various stages of the two-handers, and relates it to evidence of Bishop Henry's own changing aesthetic sense, best recorded in the sculpture and architecture of the changing Romanesque to Gothic aesthetic of the Chapel of his St Cross Hospital.

Paul Binski (University of Cambridge)

The Angel Choir at Lincoln and theologies of the body

Angels represent a particularly challenging area of medieval representation, and this paper will explore aspects of the thirteenth-century angelic body which may or may not accord with the notions of beauty. Paying special attention to the Angel Choir at Lincoln, it will argue that corporeal representation, and hence what is unsatisfactorily classed as naturalism, should be addressed to the theologies of the body which stand to one side of the Aristotelian-nominalist position.

Lynda Harris (London)

Beauty and its flip-side: misericords, drolleries and the art of Hieronymous Bosch

New evidence reveals that Bosch was a heretic, who hid his real religious views behind the traditional drolleries of the Middle Ages. His contemporaries classified him as a painter of amusing 'grillos', as well as nightmarish monsters. Bosch is aware of the traditional symbolism of these 'babewyns', but in his works, the beautiful, ugly, or caricatural figures on the margins of Medieval art move into centre stage. By introducing subtle differences from the norm, he uses the drolleries to express his negative attitudes towards the Church, as well as his heretical ideas about the world and its beauty.

Mark Evans
(National Museum of Wales, Cardiff)

Fouquet and Italy: a question of taste

The Duke of Burgundy's famous letter of 1435 to the ducal exchequer at Lille indicates his high esteem for Jan van Eyck's 'excellence in art and science', but one must turn to the Italian humanist Bartolomeo Fazio for a contemporary analysis of the distinctive character of Eyckian art. At the middle of the Quattrocento, the Florentine sculptors Ghiberti and Filarete pondered on the differences between northern Gothic and the style *all'antica* and lavishly praised the Cologne goldsmith Master Gusmin and the French painter and illuminator Jean Fouquet.

However, half a century elapsed before Albrecht Durer became the earliest northern artist to commit comparable opinions on art to posterity. We must infer his northern predecessors' perception of the stylistic revolution which transformed fifteenth-century art from their surviving works. Fouquet visited Florence and Rome during the 1440s and the paintings and miniatures which he produced after his return to France include numerous Italianate motifs. These reveal his itinerary and draw attention to the Italian models which he considered appropriate for imitation. The context in which these foreign elements were put to work elucidates their significance for Fouquet, between traditional medieval views on beauty and the outlook of the Florence *avant garde*.

Eric Fernie (Courtauld Institute)

Eric Furnie's contribution will be given on site at Durham Cathedral on Saturday afternoon (see Visits).

14

Beauty and its shadow:

the negative aesthetics of the beautiful

David Peters Corbett (University of York)

Definitions create their opposites as shadows and doubles which haunt them thereafter. Each attempt to circumscribe a binding account of the constitution of the beautiful brings into existence a shadowy other, implicit rather than explicit, which is defined as ugliness, or as a more intriguing and slippery category, the not-beautiful. Works and artefacts which fall into these categories are not only the objects of critical distaste or dismissal but also the locales of repression, of failure, and of resistance.

The aim of this session is to examine the 'fall-out' from definitions of beauty attempted in aesthetic and critical writings. What are the consequences, textual, cultural, or political, of ideas of beauty and the shadowy doubles they carry with them? How do these counter-arguments manifest themselves within the texts whose discourses they challenge? Is there an impact on the author him- or herself? Where and how do the ugly or the non-beautiful emerge into the world, and to what effect?

The session's papers engage with these ideas from a number of different perspectives, both critical and historical. The first group of speakers considers the interpretation of the aesthetic in philosophical writing, with a particular emphasis on Kant; the second looks at the historical impact of notions of beauty on specific practice from antiquity to the twentieth-century. Overall, the session engages with the categories of the ugly and not-beautiful as sites of resistant and variant readings within texts and in the creation and interpretation of works of art. It aims to examine not the definition of the beautiful, but the power of beauty's shadow in aiding our understanding of its consequences.

Katy Deepwell (Oxford Brookes University)

A feminist critique of disinterestedness

This paper looks at the shadow presented by 'interest' in Kant's presentation of 'disinterestedness' as integral to the judgement of beauty and explores several different feminist critiques of Kant as part of the broader interdisciplinary questioning of masculinist bias in claims of 'objectivity' and 'universality'. Greenberg's use of Kant in his theory of Modernism is then considered in relationship to feminism's critique of modernism in the light of both postmodern practice and debates surrounding post-structuralist readings of Kant. Different positions within feminist theory have provided many productive avenues for critiquing aspects of Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, including the production of 'tradition', the 'immanent' processes of the art object (ie its internal mode of organisation and/or disjunctures across different registers of representation) and the 'interests' of gendered spectators. Examples of feminist art practice made in the last ten years (eg Adrian Piper, Sophie Calle) are then discussed in relationship to the above readings of Kant to demonstrate the particular shift in subject/object relations their works propose and in order to highlight feminism's stake in a politics of engagement with an identification from one's position in the world.

Ludmilla Jordanova (University of York)

Kant's shadows

The paper will focus on *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* by Immanuel Kant, first published in 1764. It will explore two specific aspects of this short text. First it will examine the polarities Kant deploys and consider the shadows they cast. Sometimes the shadowy side is held in one of the dualistic terms, while at others it lies outside the binary pair. The examples Kant turns to in order to illustrate his main thesis – temperament, gender and national identity – will be discussed. Second it will ask what role the text assigns to visual experience and to art, and reflect upon the numerous literary examples that Kant provides.

Hilary Robinson (University of Ulster at Belfast)

Lighting the shadows: an Irigarayan view

In her essay 'How can we create our beauty?' (1988), Lucy Irigaray expresses sadness at the anguish she often encounters in art by women. She discusses this "to help women exteriorize in their works of art the beauty, and the forms of beauty, of which they are capable". But it is not easy to comprehend Irigaray's understanding of 'beauty', women's relation to visual pleasure, what the processes involved are – in short, what an Irigarayan practice might be. I have argued elsewhere (CAA conference, San Antonio 1995) that Irigaray's writing on art is not her most productive work for feminist art writers, nor for the development of feminist studio practices. Taking 'How can we create our beauty?' as a starting point, this paper will indicate an Irigarayan model of beauty in work by women. This will include discussion of her antipathy to 'shadows' in patriarchal constructs of 'beauty'. In arguing against the view that the Irigarayan model implies that women can only produce their beauty through figuration, I will demonstrate how Irigaray calls attention to practices – rather than objects – of beauty, in a manner that offers space for radical development within feminism, and renames the 'shadows' in mainstream art theory.

Paul Crowther (Corpus Christi College, Oxford)

The depths of the aesthetic surface: a revisionary defence of Kant

Kant argues that the enjoyment of beauty is a disinterested form of pleasure. Its negative 'other' is the world of our ordinary practical evaluations of things. This thesis and its ramifications have been little understood by philosophers or art theorists and historians.

My paper will first seek to rectify some common errors concerning the status of disinterestedness. Having done so, it will then address that which makes disinterested pleasure possible. This consists in the aesthetic judgement's origins in an interplay of those cognitive capacities which are the basis of any possible experience. More specifically it will be argued that aesthetic pleasure is, in effect, a repetition of the origins of self-consciousness itself. This is beauty's depth dimension.

David Bellingham
(Institute of Classical Studies, London)

Polykleitos and poly-culture: the ideal and the other in classical art

The Classical Athenian sculptor Polykleitos wrote a famous treatise on male beauty known as the Canon. He illustrated his written text with a sculptured representation called the 'Spearbearer'. The written text only survives in fragmentary allusions to it by later authors who were interested in the mathematical principles of proportion used to create the ideal body in art. This Platonic formal definition of beauty was engaged by other classical artists and writers, but it also generated oppositional representations of 'other' types, considered not-beautiful by the dominant culture.

Taking the Canon of Polykleitos as its canonical starting point, this paper will discuss the oppositional definition of beauty and non-beauty during the Hellenistic period, when sculptors and painters were actively exploring both positive and negative images of gender and race. Arguably for the first time in the history of art, the ugly and the non-beautiful are brought out of the shadows thrown by earlier canonical definitions of ideal beauty, and into the public and private arenas of 'high' art. Contemporary critics reacted to this challenge to the aesthetic principles of 'high' art by relocating the fall-out within the newly defined categories of 'low' art. The non-beautiful was brought out of the shadows, but remained at the bottom of the artistic hierarchy in binary opposition to the beautiful.

Margaret Iversen (University of Essex)

Hopper and the uncanny

This paper explores the possibility of an aesthetics 'beyond the pleasure principle'. In it I read Edward Hopper's painting through the lens of Freud's closely related papers, 'The Uncanny' and 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle'. The modalities of the uncanny elaborated by Freud – the theme of death, the double, the life-like automaton, haunted houses – are shown to be recurrent motifs in Hopper's *oeuvre*. Some of the paintings are juxtaposed to stills from Hitchcock's *Psycho* in order to draw out their quietly menacing quality. This helps to advance an argument about the formal properties of the painting – their film-still quality with an implicit 'blind field' – and how these contribute to an effect of 'traumatic realism'.

Lara Perry (University of York)

History's beauties, or, virtue and vice in the nineteenth century National Portrait Gallery

Portraits of 'Beauties' – women who made their careers in the decadent courts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – have been collected by the National Portrait Gallery from its foundation in the mid-nineteenth century. Although 'beauty' was not an occupation ascribed to nineteenth century women by their contemporaries, it was used to express certain kinds of historical understanding. This paper will explore the use of beauty as a signifier in the National Portrait Gallery's collection of the nineteenth century.

John P Lambertson
(University of New Hampshire)

Romanticism and ugliness: the history paintings of Sigalon, Delacroix, Champmartin at the Salon

Referring to the *Death of Sardanapalus* and the *Massacre of the Janissaries* at the Salon of 1827, an anonymous critic judged that "the massacres of Delacroix and Champmartin are extremely ugly pictures". Public discourse on Romantic painting identified works by Delacroix, Champmartin, and Sigalon as the moral and physical antithesis of beauty, and contemporaries in fact interpreted the apparent Romantic celebration of the ugly as the death of history painting and the onslaught of cultural degeneracy. Critics claimed that in place of a unified struggle against brutality, these artists exploited violence in disjointed compositions that stressed individual horrific acts perpetrated by base types. In contrast, I argue that their paintings used ugliness as an attempt to foster tradition. The novelty of Romantic art issued from a desire to convey the moral lessons of history painting to a modern audience preoccupied with horror novels and public executions. In such pictures as Champmartin's *Massacre of the Janissaries*, the Romantics actually advanced tradition by presenting a lesson to the French public on the nature of civilization through the techniques of melodrama and the concept of ugliness.

David Peters Corbett (University of York)

The contest of modernism: English art after the First World War

This paper considers the competing definitions of modernism in circulation within English criticism and art practice in the years after the First World War. I argue that in the early 1920s avant-garde or radical modernism was displaced as a public discourse about modernity by an adaptive modernism in which form replaces engagement. This displacement was effected largely through the textual agency of criticism. For artists who had been committed to radical practice in 1914 this situation presented a challenge. I trace the shifts and strategies of radical modernism in its attempts to assert itself against the new standard definitions of modernism. The role of radicalism as shadow and negative is explored in both critical writing and works of art.

David A Wragg (Nene College)

Wyndham Lewis: other than aesthetic

In this paper I propose to raise questions about the role of 'the aesthetic' in Wyndham Lewis's critique of modernity. Concentrating on Vorticism, there is an obvious sense in which Lewis's paintings and graphic work depict 'ugly' subjects (Wild Bodies, the city as machine), and I will be arguing that these can be read as 'sites' of resistance to modernism as both aesthetic formalism (eg Clive Bell's notion of 'significant form'), and as aesthetic modernity (Futurism/ Bergson). Lewis's argument in *Time and Western Man* (1927) appears to hold out for Art as the bearer of cognitive values, and it is tempting to see Vorticism as anticipatory of this idea: Art is, perhaps, a form of radical empiricism which establishes a bulwark against the merely sensual kinds of aestheticism referred to above. But does this in turn generate a 'shadowy other' whose implicit being is, in fact, some form of aestheticism? With the idea of 'beauty' in mind, how are we to theorize the possible existence of such a 'shadow' based on Lewis's notorious structural opposition between Art and Life?

15

African Arts

Joe Darracott

The exhibitions, events and conferences in England about African arts in 1995 made clear the interest and importance of their study. Problems of the scope and definition of African art are not easily resolved, and may be approached in different ways. This session takes for its focus questions of aesthetics seen from an African perspective, partly in African traditions but perhaps more significantly in recent and current practice.

Joe Darracott

As beautiful as a statuette

The title of this paper is a proverbial saying of the Baule, whose sculpture is well represented in the collection of African carvings presented to the University of Newcastle by Fred and Diana Uhlman. Uhlman became a collector of African art in Paris in the 1930s, and his collection remained a lifelong interest.

The paper concentrates on African aesthetics, drawing particularly on the study of Baule ideas by Susan Vogel. It will be argued that the work in the Uhlman collection can be usefully considered within its African context and on its own terms. There will additionally be some outline discussion of Bamana, Senufo and Akan material in the collection.

George Shiré

What happens after the party's over: critical reflections on Africa '95

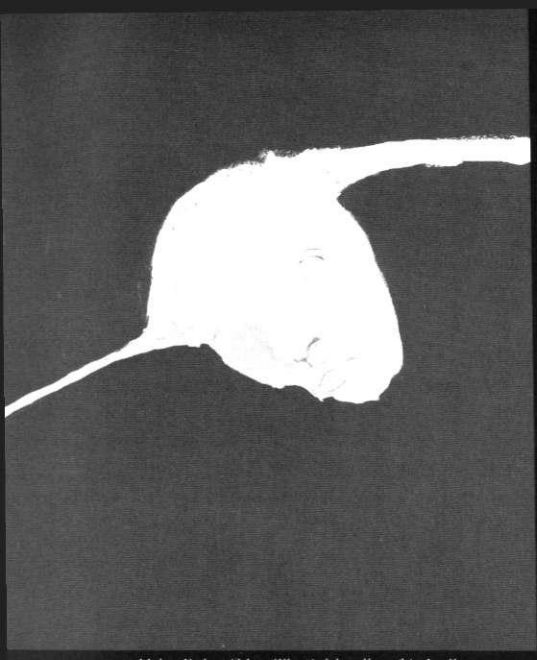
This paper aims to raise questions of an aesthetic order in relation to displacing modernism and hopes to make a contribution to the debate over how art histories in the West might be conceptualised in the light of that season.

Sultan Somjee (National Museums of Kenya)

Indigenous aesthetics and the sense of order

This paper explores how beauty is sensed on patterns, lines and colours that appear on personal ornamentation and artefacts of function and ceremony among pastoralist communities of East Africa. It is argued that sensitivity to colours and patterns is a significant aspect of indigenous aesthetics and that the decorative is consciously designed to bring together what is felt to be visually pleasing as well as that which is orally expressed as something of value affirming the society's sense of order and well being.

Beauty in the decorative extends further to good feelings which result from viewing the environment, animals, both domestic and wild, and artefacts of social meaning that carry stories of a tradition of stability and community welfare.



Helen Baker Alder, 'The Spirituality of Art', oil on canvas.

Exhibition by staff of Visual and Performing Arts

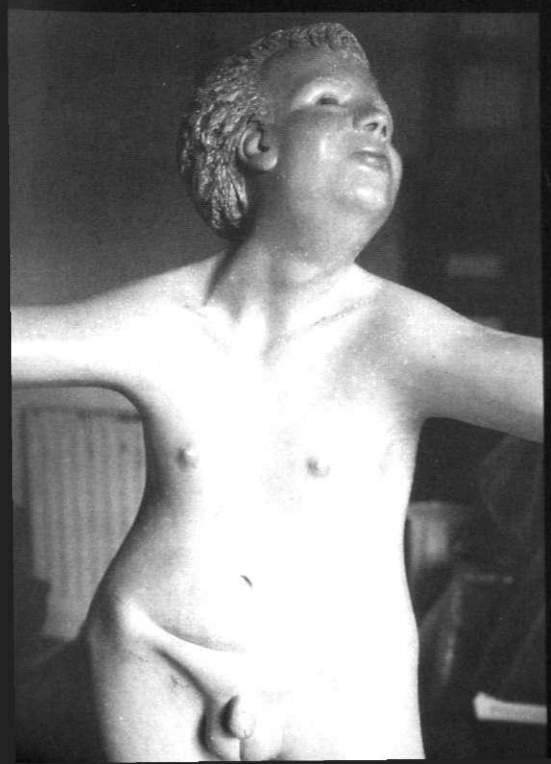
The work on display in the foyer of Ellison Building and the Foyer Gallery Squires Building has been contributed by artists teaching in the departr of Visual and Performing Arts in response to the issues and ideas raise the conference. It is hoped that the work will contribute towards the dia generated by the conference and some of the artists will be available tc their work during the midmorning break on the Saturday.

The work demonstrates a wide variety of working methods and all take differen approaches to the premise of 'Beauty'. There may be controversial and uncomforta implications held within some of the work.

Exhibitors include Lloyd Gibson, Head of Sculpture, who is currently showing v at Manchester Museum in the Primate room. The piece on show is part of a series installations; a publication entitled *Crash Subjectivity* will be available to contextuali the work. Nicky West, tutor in photography, offers a work that was made for the Hir Peace Park Exhibition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the dropping of the This work demonstrates the continual reminder of this event held in the body of a v Another work by Nicky West is a series of polaroids which critiques the use of won in advertising. Louise Short is currently Fellow in Sculpture. Her recent work involv collecting of spiders' webs and explores our fears and desires of entrapment; her v proposes simultaneous beauty and repulsion. H Baker Alder, Head of Fine Art, offers a work that explores the notion of spirituality as a material concept in traditional painting. All works on sho will be contextualised by artists' statements.

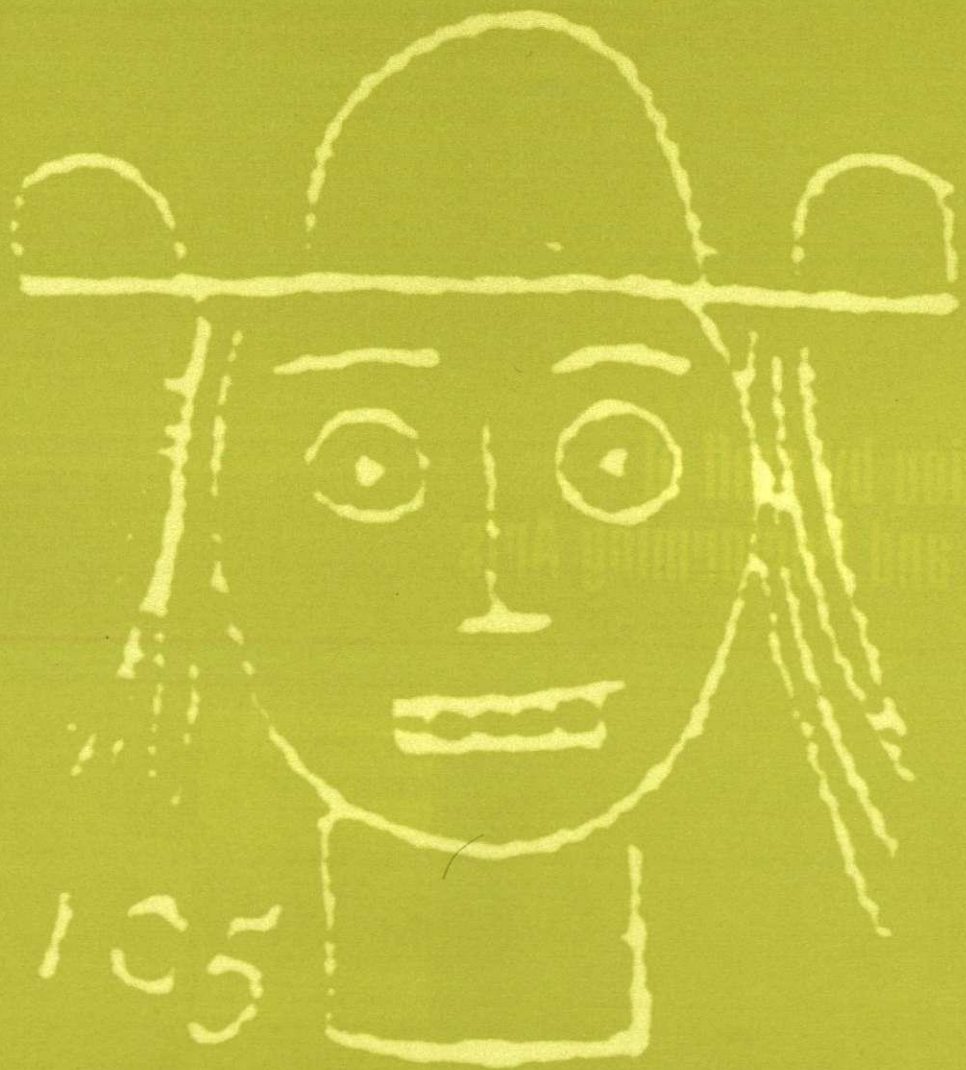
Louise Short, Collection of Spiders' Webs.

Lloyd Gibson, 'Crash Subjectivity', detail.



BEAUTY?

Conveners: **Malcolm Gee and Paul Usherwood**
Administrator: **Sarah Kane**



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