

a specific account of any individual artists or artistic practices. Lichtenstein is interested in tracking the various fortunes of the three-dimensional object, in particular the way in which it suffered at the hands of painting as a second-rate or marginal art form. Her account offers an important reassessment of the sculptural object, with the focus on French theorists rather than Italian writers. This offers more than a simple geographic shift of viewpoint, for in moving away from the Italian emphasis on the status of the artist, Lichtenstein demonstrates that attention was focused instead upon the reception of works of art, with writers displaying a particularly acute sense of the changes to how we think about sight and touch.

The introduction opens with the claim that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries 'the philosophers' view of the senses of sight and touch changed dramatically'. Lichtenstein begins with a consideration of an engraving after Goltzius' drawing entitled *Sight*, in which a man observes a woman staring at herself in a mirror, which, Lichtenstein suggests, serves also, through its demonstration of the interplay of hand and gaze, as an illustration of the sense of touch. Chapter 1 traces the various debates that occurred within the Academy, including a discussion of how the modern artist must negotiate a relationship to the ancients, while Chapter 2 considers issues of touch, and the development of the 'Artist-Painter' and the 'Philosopher-Sculptor', with a discussion of Diderot's *Letter on the Blind*, and his analysis of how blindness, touch and painting may come together. The philosophical writings of Locke and Leibniz are also drawn upon, and Lichtenstein suggests that *Letter on the Blind* be read as an essay about sculpture, which Herder characterized as the most 'truthful' of mediums. Nonetheless, the privileging of sculpture over painting did not take hold and Lichtenstein demonstrates how the organisation of the Académie lectures during the second half of the seventeenth century 'bears witness' to the dominance of painting, with references to sculpture being few and far between. Sculpture was regarded as an art of the replica (analysis of classical sculpture was conducted not in front of the original, but usually from casts or copies), unlike the auratic status of painting.

In the second part of the book the issue of colour is foregrounded, with a close

discussion of François Guizot's art criticism of the early nineteenth century, in particular the distinctions he drew between the importance of colour to painting versus his 'anti-colourist' stance in relation to sculpture, an attitude Lichtenstein argues derives entirely from Winckelmann. In this section, she introduces the concept of the 'limit', specifically how artists and critics imagined and figured the boundary between inside and out, and how sculptors negotiated 'the idea of the frontier'. Her argument that within aesthetic discourse sculpture developed as a 'philosophical art' is explored further with an examination of the distinction between German and French theory, particularly the short shrift French theorists gave to their German counterparts. A key moment for Lichtenstein is Charles Baudelaire's changed position in relation to sculpture from his review of the salon of 1846, where he claimed that sculpture is a 'boring' art, to his review of the salon of 1859, and his description of its 'divine role'. Lichtenstein's argument really begins to develop here as we start to see what is at stake in her earlier careful unpacking of the aesthetic debates in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Fundamentally, this is a book about the development of modernity – indeed, Lichtenstein opens the book with a quote from Lucy Lippard's famous 1969 reference to the so-called 'dematerialisation' of the object, while in the conclusion modernist painter Ad Reinhardt's wry description of sculpture as the thing you back into when looking at a painting is instead inverted, with Lichtenstein's claim that in fact painting is too often the 'obstacle' preventing critics and theorists from 'seeing sculpture'. While the first half of this book is a scrupulous presentation of the field of aesthetics prior to the birth of modernity, it is in the final part that the argument begins to really take shape. It is in Lichtenstein's compelling description of sculpture as a 'theoretical object' that continues to 'struggle' against the 'hegemony of the pictorial paradigm' that the importance of this book is made clear. In conclusion, Lichtenstein suggests that those struggles remain even today unresolved, and for this reason this translation of her book is a timely and welcome publication.

JO APPLIN  
University of York

## WILLIAM MORRIS AND EDWARD BURNE-JONES: INTERLACINGS

CAROLINE ARSCOTT

Yale University Press 2008 £40.00 \$75.00  
260 pp. 110 col/28 mono illus  
ISBN 0-3001-40932

What is the value in thinking about two artists together? For the most part, art history is premised on the single subject. As Thomas Crow noted in the afterword to the 2006 edition of *Emulation: David, Drouais, and Girodet in the Art of Revolutionary France* (Yale), 'there can be little doubt that biographies remain the preferred form in which almost every significant audience prefers to receive its knowledge about art'. Crow suggests that one way out of such a tunnel is not to abandon the biographical model, but rather to illuminate 'interlocked artistic biographies'. Caroline Arscott's *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings* embraces this concept. She elucidates the life and work of both artists, examining for the first time the 'overlap' in the artistic projects of these long-time friends and collaborators. In Arscott's study, affection and allusion make up the complicated network that binds these two artists.

This book also provides an important model for an integrated consideration of artistic media. What does it mean to think of fine art and decorative art together? This is not necessarily to privilege one area of production over the other, or to make the standards of one conform to the ideals of the other. Certainly, Morris and Burne-Jones recognised the fundamental differences between fine art and decorative art. By uniting Morris and Burne-Jones in a single volume, Arscott displays the extent to which Burne-Jones considered medium and material. As this book demonstrates, Morris and Burne-Jones shared themes, allusions, and formal strategies.

The middle ground, as it were, between the two artists is the human subject: the way both artists explore senses, emotion and imagination through 'story.' This is not merely narrative or subject matter; rather, it is the thread that connects history painting and ornament in the second half of the nineteenth century. Morris approached ornament with the ambition of history painting; Burne-Jones approached history painting with the structure of ornament. Both artists acknowledged that history, mythology, and the Bible are marked by violent struggle. This fighting

body – this body in history and of history – and its subjectivity provide Arscott with another analogy for the difference between the two artists: if their art suggests the skin, then we find in that of Morris the ‘dermal,’ the living thickness, while the art of Burne-Jones suggests the ‘epidermal,’ the flaky, shedding surface. The ‘skin’ of each artist’s work addresses the mingling of ornament and history painting.

The book addresses a ‘linked series of questions: concerning the category of the historical, the issue of manliness and the understanding and role of sensation’ in the work of both artists. Although she initially locates these questions in art institutions and artistic practice, Arscott also draws upon numerous parallel fields to elucidate the work of these artists, from horticulture to medicine, from angling to theology. These fields of inquiry structure the book, as each chapter takes one of these fields as the lens through which to examine the work of both Morris and Burne-Jones while maintaining a focus on either one or the other.

Arscott also evokes the interpersonal dynamic and physical contrast between the two artists. As Burne-Jones once recalled, he needed a Morris ‘big letter’ under his illustrations to the *Kelmscott Chaucer*, otherwise, he felt ‘tottery and weak’. As she discusses in Chapter 3, this dynamic encapsulates their working relationship, in which Morris designed ornamental borders for Burne-Jones’ paintings and tapestry designs. For Arscott, however, the contrast between the robust, stout Morris and the willowy, wan Burne-Jones reveals something more about how each engaged with the world. For Morris, ornament moves from an interface with the world (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 4) to the world itself, as seen, for example, in the indigo-discharge printed cotton *Tulip and Willow* (1883) described in Chapter 6. Burne-Jones did not use ornament as an interface with painting, rather as a means of understanding the world. In the context of his *Briar Rose* series (1870–90), he links the integrity of the physical body to the viability of picture making.

Arscott’s project displays the virtues that Crow finds in ‘interlocked’ artistic biographies: while still acknowledging the individual artist, the charting of these ‘interlaced’ lives ‘reveal[s] the background artistic system that guides and constrains the work of any individual talent. From



either perspective, creative agency manifests itself as a distributed rather than individual phenomenon’. The network of ties between the two artists emerges fully, and poignantly, towards the end of the book. In the end, stained glass emerges as the perfect medium for Burne-Jones, allowing him to depict a human body with both solidity and transparency. The solidity of the glass in *St Philip’s Church* (now Cathedral) in Birmingham (designed by Burne-Jones for Morris & Co., 1885–97) is a memorial to Morris’ own life force.

William Morris, *Woodpecker* (1885) tapestry. William Morris Gallery, London. From *William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones: Interlacings* by Caroline Arscott.

This book will appeal to anyone interested in nineteenth-century art, the history of design, and the decorative arts. Arscott’s prose is engaging and the ideas are intellectually adventurous. The beautiful colour illustrations are a fitting pendant to her skilful and stimulating discussions of method, craft and technique.

MORNA O’NEILL  
Vanderbilt University