Mid-Victorian Illustration

www.dmvic.f.ac.uk/
The Database of Mid-Victorian Illustration, which was funded in 2004 to digitize and index a sampling from the 1860s heyday of wood-engraved illustration, is now online.

A team at Cardiff University has overseen the reproduction, transcription, and subject tagging of almost 900 such illustrations from a selection of major illustrated publications, taking 1862 as the sample year.

The aim of the project was to digitize and mount on a publicly accessible website a cross-section of illustrations from different literary texts and by a range of artists and engravers. The year 1862 was chosen because it saw the emergence and growth of major illustrated periodicals, including, and Cornhill Magazine and Good Words, and allowed for the inclusion of familiar illustrated works like Christina Rossetti’s Goblin Market, illustrated by her brother, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, alongside those that are less well known.

Of course, these pictures only represent a fraction of the range of images that appeared in books and periodicals in the period, but the database gives a sense of the richness of the material and the place of illustration in Victorian visual culture.

Paul Goldmann, familiar to the Pre-Raphaelite Society as an expert on 19th century book illustration, served as project advisor.

“...To see him has always been a pleasure; his voice has always been a sweet sound in my ears. Behind his back I have never heard him praised without joining the eulogist; I have never heard a word spoken against him without opposing the censurer. These words, should he ever see them, will come to him from the grave, and will tell him of my regard—as one living man never tells another.”

— Anthony Trollope on John Everett Millais

Exhibitions

In the Studios of Paris: William Bouguereau and his American Students

Frick Art and Historical Center • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania • July 7, 2007 - October 14, 2007

This exhibition, the first to examine Bouguereau’s role as an influential teacher, features paintings, drawings, and prints by Bouguereau and some of his most prominent American students, including: Cecilia Beaux, Minerva Chapman, Eanger Irving Couse, Elizabeth Gardner, Robert Henri, Anna Klumpke, and others. A fully illustrated color catalogue will accompany the exhibition.

Great British Watercolors from the Paul Mellon Collection at the Yale Center for British Art

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts • Richmond, Virginia • July 11 - September 30, 2007

This major exhibition, spanning approximately 100 years from the emergence of watercolor painting in the mid-18th century to its high point in the late-19th century, investigates a historically important technique—a medium that was for a time greatly underappreciated. Through his patronage, Paul Mellon helped initiate a reassessment of this demanding technique.

The Illuminated Books Project

www.illuminated-books.com

The Illuminated Books Project is a private non-profit, collaborative effort of three individuals, Alfredo Machiacci, Anita Macchioli and Carlos Alonso Cabezas. They share a vision to make available, in high-resolution, many illuminated and illustrated books from their private collections.

These books are mainly from the Victorian period and include works from the Arts and Crafts Movement and private presses, extending from 1800s to the 1920s. In the selection of books exhibited, particular emphasis is given to the illustration, illumination and book design over the literary content.

English Heritage’s Viewfinder Picture Archive

http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/

Viewfinder presents a selection of historic and more recent photographs from the National Monuments Record’s important collections, dating from the 1840s to the present day. All the photographs are presented seamlessly on Viewfinder, allowing users to search across the whole archive at once.

The Helen Allingham Society

www.helenallingham.com/

Devoted to the appreciation of the life and works of one of the finest watercolour artists of Victorian times.

Poemhunter

www.poemhunter.com

This database, which originates from France, contains 168,207 poems from 16,474 poets.

Rediscovering Vinland

Adrienne Leigh Sharpe and Sarah Kuchta

In the 1880s, Newport, Rhode Island was a bustling port city, marked by droves of seasonal visitors and the Gilded Age elite who decided to build summer “cottages” on the water. In 1882, Catharine Lorillard Wolfe — at that time, the single richest woman in America — commissioned Peabody and Stearns to build her dream cottage there. Peabody and Stearns, an architectural firm from Boston, Massachusetts, had recently designed the Broxers (1877-79) for her cousin, Pierre Lorillard. A close neighbor to the Broxers, Vinland would also be located along the Cliff Walk.

Vinland is an excellent example of Peabody and Stearns’ 1880s design work. The mansion was initially built as a long, low structure in the Romanesque Revival style, complete with turrets, bay windows, and porticoes on the south and east sides (fig. 1). Carved capitals and decorative scrollwork accentuate the façade. The iconography on the exterior ranges from Celtic, Nordic, and Runic symbols to other, more abstract geometric patterns, and vegetal and animal forms. Leaves, vines, flowers, and grape clusters appear at intervals, and cover a portion of each façade. In addition, a figurehead of a Viking ship appears at the northeast corner of the roof.

Vinland originally featured an interior decorative scheme by the British design firm of Morris & Company. Lavish details such as Morris & Company’s recognizable stained glass windows, portières, embroideries, and carpets combined to create a Nordic theme.

Catharine Lorillard Wolfe became interested in Icelandic history after viewing the legendary Old Stone Mill in Newport, supposedly built by Vikings during their
Rediscoving Vinland Continued

New England settlement. It was this Viking heritage that inspired the name of Lorillard Wolfe’s estate, “Vinland.” Also fascinated with Icelandic stories, William Morris traveled to Iceland, learned the Icelandic language, and translated many sagas. For Morris, Iceland represented both escape and isolation and romance and happiness. Utilizing such contrasting themes added an air of mystique to the Vinland home, showcasing the imaginative nature of both Lorillard Wolfe and William Morris. Above all, the highlight of this interior was the stained glass window provided by Morris & Company for the first-floor landing at Vinland. Designed by James J. McKillop in conjunction with Morris, the window was originally composed of nine lights or panes; three rows of three lights each (fig. 2). In the top portion, the Sun and the Moon flank the middle window, the design of which is based on a Viking ship complete with rowing figurehead “a toss” on the sea (fig. 3). The central portal and the two panels above it were designed in 1882, and are currently housed in a private collection. Further study of these windows will undoubtedly contribute to our understanding of Morris & Company’s legacy in the United States.

Adrienne Leigh Sharpe recently completed her MA at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture in NYC, focusing on Victorian art and architecture. She is a member of the Victorian Society in America and a governing board member of the William Morris Society in America. Sarah Kuchta is a second-year MA student at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, CT, studying art therapy.

The American Collections

Among the many amazing collections at Princeton University Library is the Henry Virtue Tebbs collection of Pre-Raphaelite photographs. Henry Virtue Tebbs (1846–77) was a close friend and admirer of Rossetti, and many letters to him and his wife Emily are recorded among Rossetti’s correspondences. He bought works by Rossetti, promoted his work, and after his death wrote the preface to the 1883 exhibition of Rossetti at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. His intimacy with the artist was such that he was among a very few to be present at the disinterment of Rossetti’s wife, Elizabeth Siddal, in 1869 when he wished to rescue the manuscript volume of poems which he had buried with her. The collection consists of mounted photographs of drawings and paintings by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, his wife Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal, and a few other members of the Pre-Raphaelite circle, put together for or by Henry Virtue Tebbs. Many of the mounts have been inscribed by Rossetti himself—often personally. The photographs include a range of his late wife’s drawings, but also a good number of the “detached” photographs. One is inscribed by Rossetti to Tebbs’ wife Emily, and the letter which accompanied the gift is printed by Dr. William Freeman. In addition, many of the mounts include an inscription with Tebbs’ name, sometimes with reference to other collectors of the time such as Charles Fairfax Murray. It is perhaps no coincidence that a number of the originals of these photographs were owned at one point by Fairfax Murray himself. A photograph of a well-bearded man also in this collection (item 76) may be of Tebbs. The present collection was purchased by Princeton in 2005.

Rediscovering Vinland Continued

Fig. 2

The Last Ruskinians
Harvard University Art Museum 2007

The catalogue accompanying the Last Ruskinians exhibition examines Ruskin’s significant influence on taste, collecting, and art instruction, with special emphasis on the role of his close friend and fellow artist William Michael Rossetti. The 104-page catalogue contains 57 color and 24 black-and-white illustrations.

Performing the Victorian
Sharon Aronofsky Weltman

In works as celebrated as Modern Painters and as obscure as Love’s Minstrel, Ruskin uses his vocation as an author to illustrate points about social justice, aesthetic practice, and epistemology.

In addition to Ruskin on theater, Performing the Victorian interprets recent theater portraying Ruskin. (The Invention of Love, The Countess, the opera Modern Painters) as merely a Victorian prank or pedophile against which contemporary culture defines itself. These theatrical depictions may be compared to concurrent plays about Ruskin’s friend and student Oscar Wilde (Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde, The Judas Kiss).

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