

Art, Religion, Identity

A Symposium hosted by the University of Glasgow
Graduate School of Arts and Humanities

Abstract Book

Keynote Lectures

Shulamit Reinharz
Brandeis University

A Century of Jewish Women Artists: Patterns and Products

In honor of the 100th birthday of Jewish female artist, Hannah Frank, this opening presentation will trace the history of prominent Jewish female artists of the past century, decade by decade. Has a canon developed of female Jewish artists? Drawing on the achievements of a single Jewish female artist for each 10 years, the talk will discuss how the artistic styles, subject matter and media have changed. Exemplars will include Jewish women artists from the United States and Israel, with brief references to artists from other areas. The talk will also address the perennial questions – what is Jewish about art made by Jews; and how does the fact that an artist is a woman affect her artistic production. Finally, I will touch on the issue of the extent to which the artist's personal characteristics as a woman and a Jew are featured in critiques of their work.

Laura Levitt
Temple University

Seeing Jewish: An American Jewish Feminist Perspective

In this presentation Professor Levitt will offer an American feminist take on the question of what makes a work of visual culture Jewish. She reconsiders a series of contemporary American Jewish exhibitions—the Jewish Museum's landmark 1996, *Too Jewish: Challenging Traditional Identities* and the Spertus Museum's 2008, *The New Authentics: Artists of the Post Jewish Generation*—to both build on and challenge the allure of many of these works as Jewish. More specifically she will raise questions about what it means to envision contemporary American Jewish life through the lens of ironic distance. She then turns to the photographic works of Cindy Sherman and Larry Sultan to offer an alternative stance. By presenting this argument in Scotland alongside the work of Hannah Frank, Levitt hopes to better appreciate the peculiarly North American preoccupations of many contemporary American Jewish artists. She also hopes to open up a discussion about some of the various contingencies—geographical, generational, and gendered—that shape and inform what it means to see Jewish.

Melissa Raphael-Levine
University of Gloucestershire

Can Seeing a Jewish Woman's Face be Like Seeing the Face of God?: The Impossibility of the Female Jewish Sublime in 20th Century Jewish Art

This lecture uses modern Jewish art and photography to suggest that, under the Second Commandment, the making of images of Jewish women is effectively doubly prohibited to that of men. Female appearance, it is argued, is not only regulated and suppressed by the requirements of modesty (tznius), biblical idol polemics also sexualises the sight of a woman, making looking at her body dangerously

akin to looking at ('lusting after') an idol.

Yet despite the Second Commandment, images of pious Jewish men are repeatedly reproduced in modern Jewish art. Beautiful images of the Orthodox Jewish male at prayer, study or in ecstatic dance have become, both loosely and precisely speaking, iconic, while images of Jewish women as religious subjects have become almost un-paintable. Where the distraction of Jewish women's public religious performance entails its limitation to the point of non-visibility it remains uncertain what it could mean - in sacral rather than ethnic or physiognomic terms – for the female face to disclose its own Jewish identity.

Richard Holloway

Chair of the Scottish Arts Council and Scottish Screen. Former Bishop of Edinburgh and Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church

ART AS CREATIVE DISSONANCE

The novelist Rebecca West said that artistic genius was, 'the abnormal justifying itself...those who know that they are...condemned by the laws of life...make themselves one with life by some magnificent act of creation'. I found her words in the biography of Vita Sackville West, by Victoria Glendinning, who applied them to Vita herself, whose sexuality was condemned by the morality of her day. Glendinning suggests that Vita's magnificent act of creation was neither her poetry nor her fiction, but the astonishing garden she created at Sissinghurst.

The laws of life that condemned Vita were not the laws of nature, but the man-made laws we call custom or morality. Let me take a single example from these so-called 'laws of life', hatred of homosexuals, the very one Vita fell foul of: if you are told by church and state that what you are in your very essence is evil, it will create a dissonance between your own soul and the norms of society. West is suggesting that human creativity has one of its sources in a disconnection between prevailing norms and the reality of the maker's life. That dissonance is the grit in the soul that becomes the pearl of great price: human creativity.

This cheering thought reminds us how it is the art of the persecuted - work fired in the crucible of pain - that endures, long after their sullen oppressors have gone under the hill and been forgotten. Tyrants may kill the poet; they can never kill the poem. They may kill the prophet; they can never kill the memory of his challenge to the powerful. Even as they strut and posture on the stage of history today, someone, somewhere is creating art's revenge against their cruelty and vanity: it's enough to cheer you up in a dark time.

Tuesday, 23 September, 2008

Scottish Art and Identity

Lesley Richmond

University of Glasgow

Hannah Frank, a University Woman of Her Time

This paper will examine the question whether Hannah Frank was a university woman of her time by exploring the experience of women at the University of Glasgow in the 1920s and 1930s. It will in particular illustrate the university career of Hannah Frank using her own writings and with images of University life from the period.

Robyne Calvert Miles

University of Glasgow

Legends of White Roses: Scottish Myth and Identity in Fin de Siècle Glasgow Art

At the end of the 19th century, a circle of artists and friends at the Glasgow School of Art began producing work which was inspired by their perceived Scottish heritage. Much of this perception was based on oral histories, historic architecture, and folk song in combination with works of fiction which popularized Scots Gaelic history and myth, such as the mythology created by James Macpherson and the tales of Sir Walter Scott. The result was a nostalgic identification with a mystical Scotland that, in reality, never actually existed.

This paper will examine works of art produced by artists associated with the Glasgow School of Art to examine the ways in which their work perpetuated a Scottish mystical identity. Specifically, the architecture of Charles Rennie Mackintosh, inspired by a combination of Scottish baronial architecture with natural motifs; the narrative cycles in the work of Margaret Macdonald Mackintosh and Frances Macdonald McNair, and the jewellery and fastenings Jessie King designed for Liberty's "Cymric" line of decorative objects will be analyzed to present the multifarious ways design that was viewed as "Celtic" was appropriated, reinvented, and ultimately disseminated to the public.

The work of Hannah Frank has often been compared to that of Aubrey Beardsley, a comment which has also been said of the work of the Macdonald sisters. The conclusion of this paper will relate her work to the legacy of the aforementioned group who, like Frank, studied at the Glasgow School of Art.

Kenneth Collins

Scottish Jewish Archives Centre

Art and Identity: The Glasgow Jewish Experience

The Glasgow Jewish community was established early in the nineteenth century and grew steadily in the following decades. Though a relatively small immigrant community, mainly derived from the Russian Pale of Settlement, fleeing economic and political privations, it was to make a remarkable contribution to the mercantile, academic and medical life of the city. From the end of the nineteenth century through the twentieth century members of the Glasgow Jewish community excelled in a wide range of cultural and artistic endeavour.

Bailie Michael Simons (1843-1926) was Chairman of the Glasgow Royal Fine Arts Society while early important artists were born into the homes of the Glasgow Jewish religious leadership. Amy Phillips, daughter of the Garnethill Synagogue minister, was amongst the first Jewish students at the Glasgow School of Art. David Hillman, son of the Gorbals rabbi, took up art against his father's wishes. He worked in stained glass and his windows can be found in London synagogues, such as St John's Wood and Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Benno Schotz, (1891-1984) an immigrant from Estonia, was the leading Scottish sculptor of his era, working mainly in bronze and terra cotta, and was eventually appointed Queen's Sculptor-in-Ordinary in Scotland. Saul Yaffie won early recognition for his lithographs and portraiture while Joseph Ancill (1896-1940) was renowned as a portrait painter during the 1930s. Louis Freeman, (1888-1972) known as Scottie Wilson, was a naive artist and Hannah Frank (b.1908), a pupil of Schotz and Zunterstein at the Glasgow School of Art, gained renown for her black and white illustrations and bronze sculptures.

During the Second World War Glasgow was a haven for refugee Jewish artists from Nazism. Josef Herman (1911-2000) grew up in Warsaw and worked in Glasgow before settling in Wales. His work in the city reflected his first artistic response to the loss of family and community in the Holocaust. In Glasgow he renewed his artistic connection with Yankel Adler (1895-1949) whose contemporary works included *Two Rabbis*, *No Man's Land* and *Destruction* which reflected Jewish life in Europe. Hilda Goldwag (1912-2008), a native of Vienna, came to Scotland in 1939 settling in Glasgow where she worked as a designer and illustrator receiving late acclaim for her urban landscapes. Marianne Grant (1921-2007), a native of Prague, survived the horrors of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz. Her Holocaust art, is exhibited at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery as *I Knew I was Painting for My Life*. Paul Zunterstein (1921-1968) fled Vienna after the Anschluss, taught at the Glasgow School of Art and was a sculptor in wood, terracotta and concrete.

During the last quarter of the twentieth century while Hannah Frank was still producing and exhibiting her sculpture a new generation of artists, led by Alma Wolfson and Lyn Wolfson continued the local Jewish art tradition. The Jewish artists of Glasgow represented a wide spectrum of belief and observance as well as artistic technique and output yet the experience of life in the city enriched their output and tempered the experience of the Holocaust survivors. This paper illustrates these artists, sets their work within the context of contemporary Jewish life and reflects the Glasgow Jewish milieu where they lived and worked.

Mysticism in Art

Youjin Chung

University of Reading

Dhyana Space on the Works of Yves Klein and Wolfgang Laib

Many have found improved health, concentration, awareness, self-discipline and equanimity through Dhyana. The self-disciplining aspect of Dhyana aspect of meditation plays a central role in most types of Zen Buddhism. What most people do know about Dhyana is an ancient practice. However, during the 1960 and 1970's it took the art world by storm. Especially, avant-garde artists of the 1970s stopped making objects in favour of making artwork about life experiences. This part of life experiences becomes a part of artworks. This new approach of artwork process inspired to contemporary artists. Particularly, in twentieth century artists have frequently favoured these kinds of non-traditional approaches. Their deconstructive approaches to space tend to have brought the art of the century full circle. Art can be picked up and sold but basic nature of art is invisible. This invisible nature, integrity of art, and irreducibility of thought could be an interesting point to be discussed in order to find out how to perceive this new space in Art. Void, formless space, non-dualism and the universal ideas inspired on their art works. These give Dhyana or meditative space to the viewers in gallery. There are void, natural open space and timeless as positive nothingness with Dhyana condition. Sometimes, meditation becomes art, and on the other hand, art becomes mediation. They change themselves into one, or two without certain interaction. The paper explores the possibility of presentation the subject with Dhyana and Yves Klein's the concept of space. This paper is aimed to analysis specific perception qualities on space found in art works in different materials and physical realities. Thereafter it attempts to identify how they linked to the mediation space, or formless. Klein represents the space as experience in real space and also in theoretical concern around real life. He created meditation space.

Anton Marczyński

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences

Sculpture as a Way of Expression of the Mystical Experience (Analysis of the Artwork "The Sailer of St. Andrew" by Prof. Yosyp Sadowsky)

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite taught that the best way to present sacrum, which is inexpressible, is by using symbols which are the total negation of this sacrum. This principle became the main one in the East-Christian iconography, where the dissimilitude of the symbol is one of the most effective means of overcoming of transcendence. Thus, the artistic forms can become an instrument of such a transgression. The occasion for these reflections was given by the analysis of the sculptural composition "The Sailer of St. Andrew", where its author, Yosyp Sadowsky (1929-2008), Ukrainian professor of sculpture, tried to present his own mystical experience. This paper analyses the way of expressing sacrum, indescribable transcendent source, by using popular in the Orthodox negative theology symbols, reverse perspective etc. These symbols refer only to so-called trace of God as an image of His essential intangibility and diachrony. In this sense symbols represent the only way of touching Something, which escapes any description. At the same time, this sculpture shows the peculiar theophanies of invisible God, using the tradition of the Orthodox icon, but also the symbols of the so-called Trypillian culture (late Neolithic archaeological culture at the territory of Ukraine, Romania and Moldova). The latter can be seen in the sculpture in trypillian spirals and anthropomorphic steles. Moreover, the very joining of these two cultures gave the author the possibility to present his own position of the adorer of sacrum, finding himself as though on the crossing of the Bible and Ancient Ukrainian sacred traditions. For the artist it was the way of the true expression of his own spiritual and even mystical experience, which had to be his own personal history, since "the history of the mysticism [...] is, first of all, the history of the mystics".

Anthropological Approaches

Clayton Davies

University of the West of England

The Face of God: Iconography and the Shaping of Reality in Nascent Religions

Emerging religious practices are not solely dependent on textual or oral material to define their beliefs or encode their dogma. Visual representation in its multiplicity of forms is critical to developing a catechism for the faithful. Artistic expression as it is practised, encouraged and condoned by a developing religion has a profound effect on the subsequent development of the tenets of faith and how reality is defined and perceived by its members.

The development of digital technology means that in the latter part of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty first emerging religions have unprecedented access to a multiplicity of media conduits for the promulgation of their beliefs. Furthermore the burgeoning variety of the means of expressing belief through art creates a contextually rich environment for believers that acts as reinforcement for their developing perceptions of what constitutes reality.

By using the material used by UFO cultists as a case study of how they use the Internet and modern publishing to disseminate and promote their beliefs, an illustration is given of how iconography is shared and used to underpin the development of articles of faith.

Peter Gow

University of St. Andrews

"Does your painted book know where our enemies are?": The Graphic Origins of Religion Among the Piro of Eastern Peru

Abstract forthcoming.

Marcel Reyes-Cortez

Goldsmiths College, University of London

Material Culture and Memory in the Cemeteries of Álvaro Obregón, México City

My research explores the array of complex levels of sociability found in the urban spaces of the dead like Panteón San Rafael in Álvaro Obregón, México City. The spaces of the dead are at times regarded as non-social spaces due to a believed negligible amount of social interaction and activity between the dead, their living and the space.

My project argues that the spaces of the dead, like Panteón San Rafael is an example of an active ritualised social space in which the dead are daily socialised and memorialised through contemporary secondary mortuary rituals and material culture. My paper looks not only at its yearly social currents, but most importantly its day-to-day maintenance by its workers and visitors.

My research analyses the various visual tools, material culture and social conditions that have been developed in the special spaces of the dead in México City by the use of visual methods, analysis and practice of still photography in collaboration with other more established ethnographic research methods. Including the investigation of life histories of the people who visit and work in the private and public spaces of the dead and the exploration of contemporary Mexican funerary practices in a megalopolis.

Spotlight on Individual Artists

Francis Mallett

The Lenkiewicz Foundation

"No Graven Image": The Life, Work and Ideas of Robert Lenkiewicz (1941-2002)

Born during the war, the son of Jewish émigrés fleeing Nazi persecution, Robert Lenkiewicz grew up in north London in his parents' home for the elderly and infirm, the Hotel Shem-Tov. The residents were his first subject matter, despite the religious law which stated "thou shalt make no graven image". Lenkiewicz's drew and painted obsessively from an early age, attending St. Martin's and the Royal Academy colleges. The perennial outsider himself, Lenkiewicz was consciously out of step with contemporary art movements. His fascination with society's dispossessed led him to work on large-scale series of paintings on social themes. The first project on Vagrancy recorded the lives of the down-and-outs, 'invisible people' as

Lenkiewicz called them. Later themes covered Old Age, Suicide and Death.

A thinker steeped in the history European philosophy, particularly Nietzsche, Lenkiewicz questioned the belief that society 'cared' about its own victims. Then he took this a radical step further, analysing his own feelings about personal relationships in projects on Love and Romance, Jealousy, Orgasm and The Painter with Women. His challenging conclusion, that all human behaviour is physiologically and aesthetically driven, rather than psychologically or morally, was termed by Lenkiewicz "aesthetic fascism".

This paper traces the artist's artistic and philosophical development and links this to his early life and background.

Sarah MacDougall

Ben Uri Gallery / London Jewish Museum of Art

Interpreting the Image: From Cultural to Artistic Identity in the Work of Alfred Wolmark

Described as 'The first major British artist to emerge from the migrant Jewish community', Aaron Wolmark (the English 'Alfred' was added later), was born in Warsaw, c. 1877. He moved to England with his family in 1883 and later trained at the Royal Academy, exhibiting there (1901-36), as well as with the Allied Artists Association (1908-16) and the International Society (1911-25).

Wolmark's early work in London's East End – then the heart of the immigrant Jewish community – as well as two lengthy sojourns in his native Poland (1903-6), had a huge visual and spiritual impact on his early work. Over the first 10 - 15 years he produced a remarkably consistent and mature body of genre paintings of Jewish subjects executed in the manner and spirit of Rembrandt. Then, in July 1911, after experiencing an artistic epiphany on honeymoon in Concarneau, Brittany, Wolmark jettisoned his early methods in favour of the 'New Art' and embarked upon the pioneering 'colourist' path that he followed so effectively for the next two decades of his working life.

This paper examines these two crucial aspects of Wolmark's career as he moved from interpretations of cultural to artistic identity, with reference to key images which chart this passage. These range from the Rembrandtesque *The Last days of Rabbi Ben Ezra* (1903) to key transitional works, such as *Succot* (1909) and *Sabbath Afternoon* (c. 1909-11), concluding with emphatically modernist statements, such as *Boats*, *Concarneau* (c. 1911, Leeds) and *Self-Portrait* (c. 1911, National Portrait Gallery), and touching on his later colourist reworkings of religious themes (*The Stiebel*, 1949). The paper further explores some of the personal, political and historical reasons for Wolmark's artistic 'conversion' to modernism and concludes by considering briefly to what extent he can be considered a pioneer who 'fathered' the next generation of Whitechapel Boys.

Rachel Dickson

Ben Uri Gallery / London Jewish Museum of Art

Jacob Kramer and 'The Day of Atonement': Painting Jewish Ritual and the Emergence of British Modernism

Jacob Kramer's painting *The Day of Atonement* 1919 (Leeds City Art Gallery) is a seminal work in the canon of early twentieth century anglo-Jewish modernism.

Created in the aftermath of the Great War, by a Russian-born, Jewish émigré, who served as a non-combatant only in the last weeks of the conflict, it depicts the most solemn day in the Jewish religious calendar using a starkly new modernist vocabulary.

This paper will examine the complex contradictions which led to its creation - whereby a foreign-born Jew from a traditional Orthodox religious background, brought up within the constraints of conventional Leeds 'ghetto' life, could emerge as a fully-engaged 'modern' artist, who sought to resolve how such timeless subject matter could be effectively depicted using contemporary visual language.

The paper will review Kramer's key influences, including Michael Sadler (1861-1943) then Vice Chancellor of Leeds University, and the city's most significant modern art collector, who assumed a pivotal role in a Leeds / London axis of modernism, persuading Kramer to enrol at the Slade, then the 'the finest school for drawing in England'.

Visual precedents by other anglo-Jewish artists, often disseminated in the contemporary press, will be considered, including William Rothenstein's images made during visits to Whitechapel's Machzike Adass synagogue from 1904; Leopold Pilichowski's (1869-1934) *Day of Atonement* (1906), and with the use of

procession imagery in David Bomberg's work from c. 1914. Kramer will be shown to be formally innovative, extending the stylistic course also investigated by Alfred Wolmark (1877-1961) in transitional works depicting synagogue ritual, such as *Succot* (1909).

Finally, the paper will briefly comment on unpublished correspondence from the Leeds City Art Gallery committee during 1919-20, illustrating how problematical was the acceptance of this work into the public domain.

Theories of Art and Identity

Christine Standing

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

Art: Authenticity versus Acceptability?

To what extent does association with a social group influence the production of art? To what extent does an awareness of such associations influence this particular artist's experience of doing art? I am a Ph.D. student in a multicultural Christian setting, where I work as an artist-in-residence.

Three of my paintings are presented that I have interpreted according to my art therapy practise and training. My 'authentic self', which I consider to be my identity, is described in terms of my art. However, in this setting my expressive work may consciously be put into abeyance in deference to the artistic 'norms' of representational art. So, what meaning may we draw from an artist's experience of the dissonance between an authentic manner of painting (expressive) and the production of an acceptable style (representational)? This is, therefore, about authenticity versus acceptability.

In this paper, I present a short example of how my painting style is influenced by the social group within which I work, and I examine the place of the arts within this culture, and acknowledge the difficulties for artists and church institutions alike.

This paper brings together issues of art as autobiography, the religious use of art, and what I call 'sanctifying processes'. It also includes some mythological imagery. The reading of this imagery is again informed by the discipline of art therapy.

Agnieszka Miksza

University of Łódź

Art Defined as Other : Jeanette Winterson's Truths and Lies About Art

What does it mean to "comprehend a work of art"? According to Professor Bradley, you can "possess" the world of a work of art completely only if you "enter that world, conform to its laws and ignore for the time the beliefs, aims and particular conditions which belong to you in the other world of reality." This sentence is quoted by Jeanette Winterson as a motto of her novel entitled *Art & Lies*, which is closely connected with Winterson's theories of art presented in her essays *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*. Each character of *Art & Lies* is associated with a different art-form: music, painting and poetry. These characters appear to be constructs of identity, they are consciousness. Their identities are dissolved and they constitute the reality of imagination which, according to Winterson, is the only reality of art. Each character strives to reconstruct his/her autobiography. One of them imagines/writes his life story on the remaining blank pages of the book he is reading, thus a reader becomes a writer. The other, a painter uses painting in her healing process, which implies that art is the artist's autobiography. The third character, Sappho, tells the story of how her biography and poems were transformed by literary critics. This paper will analyze the triangular relationship between the artist, the work and the audience from Jeanette Winterson's perspective. Her views on these relations are multi-dimensional and it appears that boundaries between these three are not clearly drawn. She considers art to be a superior form of knowledge filled with inconsistencies. According to Winterson, these complexities make a work of art an "Other", "a bringer of realities beyond the commonplace." Thus, the experience of art is a travel through time, space and place.

The Ethical Artwork

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Emmanuel Levinas and Luce Irigaray each stress in their work the importance of relating to the other- God or man- as a 'who' rather than a 'what'. Bonhoeffer explores this idea in his Christology in terms of Christ the 'scandalon', the anti-logos who, if his challenge is honestly met, overturns the pre-established categories of our understanding of ourselves and others. Levinas speaks of the power of the face- its 'original transcendence'- to resist and disrupt premature categorisation, while Irigaray holds that a positive recognition, rather than assimilation, of difference, is the precondition of any form of understanding of the other person. If the goal of contact with the other, in terms of relation to God or to other human beings, is not 'fusion' or 'assimilation' but encounter, a new emphasis on social existence is made possible. This concept of a necessary and productive difference lessens the temptation to reduce interpersonal relationships to an expression of the individual ego.

Irigaray suggests that without such an acceptance of difference, the other is in danger of becoming merely a 'matter of style'. Her comment provides a bridge between the realms of theology/ philosophy and aesthetics. This paper, then, will consider the nature, and ethical implications of, the encounter between viewer, artwork, and artist (and even between the viewer and her own self) established in the work of various contemporary artists. Whose identity do we encounter in the artwork? Is the viewer treated as a participant or as a resource, open to exploitation? Does overtly biographical content necessarily compromise the potential interplay of identities? These and other questions will be addressed in relation to the work of Louise Bourgeois, Kiki Smith and Juan Muñoz.

Enactments**The Narrated Body: The Art of Identity and Sanctification in Frederick Buechner's Godric**

This paper will explore the way that the embodiment of identity is itself a form of art, as exemplified by Frederick Buechner's *Godric*, the fictionalised autobiography of an Anglo-Saxon hermit who lived in the first century of the Norman era. The novel's title character narrates the story of his life as he remembers it, in response to a monk sent to write a hagiographical account.

At first glance, the novel is composed of the tension between the two competing narratives. However, beside the biographical and the hagiographical stands another narrative strand: *Godric's* body itself, marked by the connections he has made, the friendships and other relationships which have defined his life. While he has lived a long and colourful life, most of it has been as an ascetic, turning to the discipline of the body. Yet this training of the body is also a training by the body—giving *Godric* a certain orientation, a push or pull, toward those around him—and both end up part of the process of sanctification. In all of this, identity is a form of art, in that a person is a constellation of embodied connections, a network of memories and dreams anchored in the body but played out in community, into the world. The art is the negotiation of all the lines, the strands of narrative set beside one another (in this case by the novelist), so that no one strand tells the whole truth, yet together they present the narrated body.

Cees Nooteboom's 'Roads to Santiago': A writer's pilgrimage in search of a European identity through the history of art

This paper wants to examine the contemporary appropriation of canonical European art, and in particular, Christian art and architecture, in the process of a self's search for identity. It will focus upon a reading of the Dutch poet and novelist Cees Nooteboom's *Roads to Santiago* in which the author provides an account of a series of encounters over several decades with works of art in Spain as he attempts to come to terms with a consciousness of his own fragmented identity. Unsettled in the country of his birth, Nooteboom has spent much of his life travelling the world, and in particular Spain where he has come to sense that he may really belong. It is through descriptions of the images and iconography of monasteries,

cathedrals and hermitages and the paintings of artists central to the notion of a European heritage such as Rembrandt, Velázquez, Zurbarán and Dalí, that Nooteboom searches for a coherent and unified cultural landscape within which he could be at home. Nooteboom's text is an exploration of how through visual art the possibility of meaning emerges from an amorphous nature and how this process, which is essentially one of a complex of dialogues of self and other, the temporal and the infinite, the physical and the metaphysical - historically transfigured into the discourse of the human and the divine - effects to institute a community within which the individual retains a sense of its own being in difference."

David Jasper

University of Glasgow

The Work of Art as Religious Enactment

This paper will focus upon Georges de la Tour's work *The Repentant Magdalene*, in the collection of the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. The image will be considered in the theological tradition of the figure of Mary Magdalene, and examined as a work which both enacts and therefore leads the viewer to participate in a liturgical process of repentance, confession and the experience of absolution. It is a work at once deeply personal and also profoundly communal within the life of the Church.

Wednesday, 24 September, 2008

Approaches to Art and Religious Identity

Marilyn Kralik

Ocean County College, Toms River, NJ

Cultures in Conversation: Religion and Identity in Islamic Art

At the present time, when so many of the world's people seem prepared to believe in the so-called clash of civilizations, it is more important than ever to look to all possible means of intercultural communication. The design and functionality of Islamic pattern may well provide the tools for a new kind of meaningful discourse, whereby Western observers can be introduced to fundamental concepts of Islamic religion and identity as integral to the understanding of Islamic Art.

The arts of the Islamic World famously utilize pattern as a means of communication. Whereas Western Art History often relegates the study of pattern to the realm of decoration, Islamic patterns and designs and functions are valued not only for their beauty but also as the physical manifestation of a continuous tradition and as a personal act of devotion. Islamic Art is almost always connected to fundamental religious beliefs, despite an almost total avoidance of any representation. Islamic artists regularly imply the infinite nature of God through repeating complex patterns that blur boundaries, diffuse perception, and encourage contemplation. Traditional patterns frequently adopt designs that use the mathematics of tessellation to evoke a sense of eternity and a manifestation of the divine.

The complex beauties of Islamic pattern, integrated with a conceptual understanding of its underlying mathematics as well as its theological significance, provide a broader context for discussing cultural differences between Islamic and Western cultural identities. By considering an Islamic artist's design and functional intentions, we can engage in a cross-cultural societal comparative methodology, viewing art as an important form of communication without compromising an aesthetic appreciation of the patterns themselves.

Jeffrey Abt

Wayne State University

Form, Content, and the Absence of Jewish Identity in Modernist Painting

"But now I saw art turning abstract, courting material alone. . . . I wanted to find some deeper source of meaning in art." So said American artist Ben Shahn in one of a series of Harvard University lectures he delivered between 1956 and 1957. Published shortly afterwards as *The Shape of Content*, the book enjoyed some popularity among art-world denizens of the era. Now all but forgotten, the lectures were prepared during a tumultuous period in modern art. Abstract expressionism was newly ascendant and

most artists and critics of the time were just coming to grips with the new art and the adulatory criticism surrounding it. Shahn's lecture topics are frequently explored against the background of abstract expressionism and its adherents, all presented from Shahn's decidedly individual viewpoint. Notably, despite Shahn's liberal deployment of personal experiences and memories to illustrate points throughout the book, he never once mentions his Jewish heritage even when referring to the still relatively recent shocks of the Second World War in Europe. Judaism did not provide that "deeper source of meaning."

At the same time Shahn was preparing his lectures, Clement Greenberg, the individual most closely associated with interpreting abstract expressionism's meaning and theoretical import, was writing some of his most significant essays. Today Greenberg is regarded as his generation's most influential critic and a number of his articles, particularly "Modernist Painting" published in 1960, have become fundamental texts of twentieth-century art criticism and theory. While Greenberg openly drew on his Jewish background for essays earlier in his career, it does not figure in his art criticism. This is striking because major abstract expressionist artists like Adolph Gottlieb, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko, who played leading roles in his critical writings, shared Greenberg's Jewish heritage. Recent scholarship has shown that Greenberg and his contemporaries were not oblivious to this commonality. Even so, none explored the potential meaning of this shared and—in the post-Holocaust period—psychologically inescapable identity.

Considerations of form and content were key to both Shahn's and Greenberg's theories, though from virtually opposite perspectives. For Shahn, content—or subject matter—was the wellspring of art, and form just a means of expressing it: Form being "the shape of content." For Greenberg, form—or media and technique—was the irreducible stuff of pure art when all else is stripped away. Greenberg believed the drive toward modernity rendered content ever less important as art became increasingly "self critical," for example using the act of painting to explore the meaning of paint per se: Form is content. This paper investigates notions of content in both Shahn's and Greenberg's writings as a way of understanding an unspoken consensus among these leading Jewish artists and intellectuals about the irrelevance of their heritage to the making and interpretation of art.

Richard Davey

Nottingham Trent University

Breaking the Taboo: Sensibilities of Faith in Contemporary Visual Art

'I have no clear picture of what, if anything, constitutes 'women's art'. Although I am convinced that there is a latent difference in sensibility'

Since Lucy Lippard wrote this in the introduction to her 1971 exhibition of 26 Contemporary Women Artists, the potential for aspects of an artist's identity to contribute to a distinctive sensibility in their work has been largely accepted, except in the area of faith. The personal, spiritual beliefs of an artist remain dangerous territory, a taboo subject that invariably lies unacknowledged behind discussions of diversity or the use of religious iconography.

However, in our secular society, where knowledge is shaped by rational and empirical processes, a sensitivity towards the sacred and a pursuit of the intangible, whether associated with the formal practices of religion or not, offers a non-normative orientation towards the world.

This paper, based on a completed project, will discuss how faith, as a distinctive identity, might manifest itself as a discernible sensibility within an artist's work. Using a close phenomenological discussion of the work of contemporary artists, including Peter Howson and Richard Kenton Webb, whose identity is shaped by their Christian faith; this paper will propose what the author believes to be visual markers of faith codified within a grammar of colour and line. To support his argument the author will briefly discuss two works by Damien Hirst and Chris Ofili, which despite their use of religious iconography do not appear to carry these visual markers of faith.

The author will then propose a number of sensibilities, including liminality and interconnectedness that seem to demonstrate what Wolterstorff would describe as a sense of 'fittingness' with faith. In conclusion, the author will argue that by breaking the taboo of faith we should reconsider other artworld taboos, such as beauty, in a new light.

Freemasonry: Image and Identity

Andreas Önnerfors

University of Sheffield

Image and Identity: Religious Symbols and Symbolic Representation on European Masonic 19th Century Certificates : Certificates of Identity

The use of certificates to prove membership in a masonic lodge dates back to the middle of the 18th century, probably much earlier. These documents are a neglected source for historians of culture, religion and art, however all of these three aspects are represented. With the growth of the masonic movement it became necessary to establish the legitimacy of masonic affiliation and to replace the single occasion letter of introduction that was in use in a one-directed patronage-clientele culture with a standardised document to be used in a basically open and multi-directed network culture. Masonic certificates developed their own imagery that will be treated by art historian Harriet Sandvall. I want to stress the link between the symbolic dimension and the standardised use of certificates as visual representations of collective identity. At least one century before the introduction of standardised pass ports and travel documents, one of the largest fraternal organisations in Europe developed a system of identity documents that on the one hand established facts on its carrier, but also reinforced symbolic attributes of him and his organisation. These attributes are related to the ethical and esoteric components of freemasonry and hence art is used to transport the moral message of a person associated with a certain group.

Harriet Sandvall

Courtauld Institute of Art, London

Image and Identity: Religious Symbols and Symbolic Representation on European Masonic 19th Century Certificates: Iconography

Masonic certificates have a fascinating and unique iconography. Many of the documents possess great artistic value and some are created by well known artists like the architect Sir John Soane. Other certificates, like the one below, probably drawn by a French prisoner of war during the Napoleonic wars, testifies to how readily the language of masonic symbolism was used and understood during this time. The religious, mystical and extremely eclectic character of this closed fraternal society presented a challenge for artists who tried to give the ideas of the craft artistic form. It became their charge to develop a whole new iconographic system in order to construct a social and religious identity for the society, seeking inspiration from as various sources as Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, Greek and Roman mythology, religion and architecture. The secretive quality of Freemasonry led artists to express themselves through codes and metaphors, turning the artist into a scholar and the masonic art into a hermeneutic, learned game of association.

Literary Art, Religion, Identity

Gerard O'Donoghue

St. Hugh's College, Oxford

Philip Roth's Hebrew School

In Operation Shylock Philip Roth's protagonist, the "real Philip Roth" identifies the classroom where he, his brother and his friends were sent after school during their early adolescence to learn to read Hebrew as not only a point of negotiation between the pieties of his grandparents and the realities of his own generation's environment, between "the shtetl-born and the Newark-born," but also as the point of origin of his vocation as a writer. He concludes that every word he has written in English has emerged from the Hebrew characters, inscrutable to him now more than four decades after his lessons have ended.

In my paper I would like to discuss Roth's return to the Hebrew classroom in Operation Shylock for the first time since "The Conversion of the Jews", one of the five short stories which were published with Roth's first novel, Goodbye Columbus. I will discuss why the Hebrew school, bringing together the liturgical sanctity of sacred texts and the mischievous profanity inevitable among a classroom of press-ganged boys, is given such significance within Operation Shylock, and outline how it serves as a crystallizing locale that captures and recalls other moments and narratives within the preceding "Roth Books" (the series of four books published from 1988 to 1993 featuring protagonists named Philip Roth)

where piety and profanity are juxtaposed: from the exposure of his ageing father's frailties in *Patrimony*, to the ethics of representing real people in fiction, and to the impropriety of using historical atrocity as material for art.

Colin Avison

University of Leeds

Sacred and Quotidian: 'The Quality of Sprawl' in the Poetry of Les Murray

Sprawl occurs in art. The fifteenth to twenty-first lines in a sonnet, for example.

The Australian poet, Les Murray, dedicates several of his collections 'To the glory of God'. Although not an overtly religious poet, Murray's exuberance and vitality encapsulates and connects the universal and the particular, the communal and the personal. Murray's art is signified by a poetic pantheism that embraces assertive and meditative artistic identities.

I will suggest that Murray's poetry reflects and refracts an identity that is uniquely Australian. Murray's poetic form and technique is as varied and quixotic as the Australian identity. Gaelic and Celtic temperaments segue into colonial and post-colonial associations; dispossessed and repossessed Aboriginal voices claim and reclaim prelapsarian innocence; a poor white underclass (to which Murray belongs) contends with an historical mythos and an indeterminate future.

From this hybrid identity is metamorphosed a character and art that proclaims yet defers itself; vivid yet oblique, it proposes and withdraws its artistic signature. Similarly, Murray's art projects a provisional identity that, on the one hand, can be seen as stubbornly unglamorous, on the other as exquisitely poignant.

The product of this many-layered paradox of identity is a poetry that contains razor- and lazar-sharp description with a passionate belief in sacredness and art. It is a poetry of wonderful sudden images, slithering between tenderness (for human beings and the natural world) and rage; a poetry of immanence and transcendence.

Above all, I will propose that Murray's art has a 'Quality of Sprawl': an art that transcends identity to proclaim a symbiosis of the sacred and quotidian. It is an art of numinous potential where 'abandoned things are thronged with spirit'.

Amanullah De Sondy

University of Glasgow

Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib: A 19th Century Mughal Poet Performing Spiritual Hedonisms Through Art

Mirza Ghalib is understood to be the greatest Muslim Urdu poet from the Indian subcontinent. His poetry, as art form, is often dismissed from the spiritual and religious. Mirza Ghalib's love for alcohol and not the Mosque was the very reason why he found himself in this predicament. However, a deeper insight into his poetry and life elaborate greatly on these very tensions. At a time in Mughal India where sexuality and gender are said to be more 'fluid' the way in which the poets challenged the status quo of the legalists and exclusivists is a major concern of this paper. Mirza Ghalib's life is perfectly set in the rigid and heteronormative traditions of Mughal times but this was not restrictive in his case but a liberatory force, in the same way one expects art to perform. In a society with the many tensions between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus his poetry and letters are artistic endeavours to produce deep theological discourse through the very essence of love. Mirza Ghalib had an arranged marriage at a very early age and had children but he also frequented the infamous courtesans of the day. These courtesans played an interesting role in shaping the masculinity of the men who frequented them and so the case of Mirza Ghalib further enlightens one not just on theological matters but also ones related to gender. This paper will examine Mirza Ghalib's poems, letters and life to claim that hedonism and spirituality using the method of art is just as powerful to challenge legalist and exclusivist approaches to Islamic theology.

Art, Religion and Identity in the Ancient World

Paul Hedges

University of Winchester

The Iconography of Guanyin: Male, Female or Queer?

The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is best known to many for his role as an assistant to Amida Buddha in the Western Pure Land and as a potent source of aid in the Lotus Sutra. However, he is most widely venerated in the form assumed in China, of the white robed female Guanyin (pinyin, aka Kuanyin, Jap: Kwannon). Issues are raised through this about the gender identity of the Bodhisattva, who is, at the same time, and at different levels, male, female and beyond all gender. Making reference to the notion of queer theory/identity, as seen through the lens of the Queer Theology of Professor Elizabeth Stuart, that subverts conventional stereotypes, undermines our usual expectations of gender and power relations, and breaks down meta-narratives, it will be suggested that the Chinese Guanyin is a paradigmatically 'queer' figure. Looking at various aspects of the iconography of this figure, the way she can represent a subversive presence will be analyzed. Whether this figure is best seen as male, female or 'queer', or acting in different ways at different times and places, in the imagery that represents him/her will be discussed in relation to the varied ways we can read the image. The relationship of the female image to texts and traditions will also be considered in terms of how the two interact and create a new dynamic.

Gemma Tully

University of Southampton

Museological Dialogues between Ancient and Modern Egyptian Art and Identity

The power of contemporary art to enhance communication about the past is slowly gaining recognition. This acknowledgement goes hand in hand with an acceptance of community based collaborative strategies as facilitators for mutual education between museologists, archaeologists and the population whose heritage they aim to understand. Actively seeking out new approaches for the presentation of research to the public, professionals within the field are beginning to appreciate the potential of collaboration and creative media to cater for the current reflexive mission statement of the heritage industry.

In this paper I focus on the potential of collaboration between Western museums and contemporary artists to relocate our understanding of other times, cultures and identities away from notions of 'universal truth' towards the questioning of stereotypes and the procreation of new strains of thought. Using ancient Egyptian displays of 'daily life' as my vehicle, I focus on the potential of collaboration between contemporary Egyptian artists and Western Egyptology curators to challenge static views of Egyptian culture and to create museum displays that not only inform audiences about the past but contribute to current global debate. I demonstrate the reciprocal benefit of such an approach in regenerating collections and attracting new audiences, thus laying the theoretical and methodological framework through which art/archaeology partnerships may enable the revivification of Egyptian daily life, past and present, to be achieved.

Alison Fisch Katz

University of Leeds

The Laocoon, Lessing and Hardy: A Metaphysical Appeal

The Hellenistic sculpture Laocoon has been one of the most important pieces of art to inspire aesthetic theorists since its rediscovery in Rome in 1506. The most notable of these is German idealist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing whose critique of the three-piece statuary of the same title (1766) challenged Horace's analogy of the discrete arts, *ut pictura poesis*. Through his analysis of the 'pregnant moment' in terms of a conflict between expressive (verbal) and iconic (visual) representations, his unique achievement is to codify the autonomy of the individual arts, each subject to its own laws. Not without bias, however, Lessing attaches a greater degree of epistemological authenticity to the verbal arts over and above the plastic arts through his claim that the descriptive art of poetry has the capability of expressing any idea, while the arrested art of painting is limited in its power of signification.

In this paper I demonstrate the important contribution of the Laocoon statuary in both its visual and textual reflexions to the fiction of Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). It will be shown that the verbal/visual motif

is not only a recurring figure of aesthetic tension, but is also a marker of a conflicted religious sensibility: the metaphysical appeal of verbal representation being constantly undermined by the pull of the sensory world captured in alluring tableaux of the atemporal. In varying guises the opposing domains of the Laocoonian motif meet in an effort to find places of accord and dialogue in ekphrastic gestures of synthetic unity. However, the impossibility of sustaining such a synthesis reveals the same bias that Lessing displays – that, ultimately, vision is delimited and the suspicion that the ultimate source of knowledge may not therefore be available to us through the senses, but through figurative experience.

Jewish Art, Religion, and Identity

Kathrin Pieren *Institute of Historical Research (School of Advanced Study, University of London)*

The negotiation of art as Jewish: museum narratives and identity discourse in London exhibitions (1887-1906-1927)

Around the turn of the 20th century, debates about the existence and nature of a specific Jewish art were going on in various European contexts. As much as they were about art, encompassing questions about the impact of group identity on creativity and ideas about the constitutive elements of any art production, they were part of a discourse on Jewish identity. Exhibitions were important places where these identities were negotiated in the interplay of the exhibition space, the curators' intentions, the artwork itself and the visitors.

London is an interesting case to study the function of the display context in the discourse of Jewish art at that particular time because it hosted three exhibitions with similar scope and content, but changing narratives and interpretations over a period of fifty years: the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition held at the Royal Albert Hall (1887) and two Art and Antiquities exhibitions shown at the Whitechapel Art Gallery (1906, 1927).

The suggested paper will focus on the art sections of these exhibitions and show how the choice of artwork, the way it was displayed and textually interpreted as well as the choice of venues contributed to shape ideas of 'Jewishness' and how these ideas were perceived by Jewish and Gentile critics. On this basis, it will be attempted to draw some conclusions about the shifts in the British discourse on Jewish art over the time period in question.

Yvonne Sherwood

University of Glasgow

Iconoclasm and Akedah: Holocaust and Sacrifice in the Art of Samuel Bak

In this paper I look at the work of Boston artist and Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak in relation to questions of identity (Jewish, Christian, 'religious' and 'secular'). I focus on his responses to the akedah (the sacrifice of Isaac), in relation to Bruno Latour's concept of 'iconoclasm'. Iconoclasm (as distinct from 'iconoclasm') as an action that is undecideably destructive and constructive. Bak's breaking/transformation of scenes from Genesis/Bereshit and scenes from the Old (Christian) Masters does not represent an imposition of breaking, as it were, from the outside. Rather, it extrapolates the tension between making and breaking in the original images and texts.

Women and Islamic Art

Niloofar Niknam

Stockholm University

Religious Identity of Iranian Women in State-run TV Series

Television series, as a genre which deal with people every day life, may be functioned as entertainment and representing a special form of visual art. In the societies with religious or official restriction, this cultural representation, especially in more popular TV series may encourage and reinforce stereotypical believes; in case of Iranian society, these popular TV series are used as a mean to oppress women in the name of religion.

Keeping this supposition in mind, to what extent does the mainstream television in Iran encourage, affect or reflect these believes? What are the historical backgrounds of women's suppression back to the

Islamic revolution on 1979 and before? And by what factors do the realization of gender inequalities schemas occur in the represented image?

To find a proper answer, the notion of an ideal woman is needed to go through the certain qualities that an Iranian woman is known by. Following binary opposition in Barthes term and the notion of imagology (in Taylor's theory), I did some content analysis on five different TV series from three state-run television channels, and extracted some significant traits shown by Iranian women. In such a categorization, one should take into account that for example, the very meaning of subordinate should be considered as the opposite of superior, and the privileged half of these binary pairs are culturally marked. At the end there is a need to combine the discovered qualities of this ideal woman with some historical and religious beliefs. Striving to reveal the deeply hidden stereotypical beliefs behind the apparent image is the starting point to make any change.

Omid Tofighian

Leiden University

Dena – Modern Shifts in Iranian Art

It is rare to find a group of artists that represent a wide spectrum of different styles and convey a diverse range of messages. The existence of this form of art group in Iran – one that consists of all women – is not just exceptional; it is a social phenomenon worthy of specialized research. In this sense, the Dena Art Group is promoting the reevaluation and reinterpretation of some of the standard trends in contemporary Iranian art and society.¹ Through their art and their choice of lifestyle, this group of women artists simultaneously represents two unacknowledged features of modern Iranian urban culture. Firstly, they are projecting the unprecedented shifts occurring in Iranian art and delivering these developments first hand to the international art scene.² Secondly, as a group of women artists, Dena is an unsettling exception to any attempt to characterize modern Iranian women under any monolithic and static description.

In terms of both their art and personalities they are a product of several distinguishing factors: cultural and social change; the positive and negative vacillation of these changes; multifaceted critiques from within and from without; and response through self-reflection and expression. Over the last nine years the group has embraced the oscillating circumstances surrounding them, addressed the different aspects of society as artists living among it, and attempted to radically interpret their situation in order to reveal the multi-layered networks of meaning it contains. The women who make up Dena are examples of a salient class of modern Iranians who are educated; have sophisticated views of culture and society; and are moderate and progressive in many aspects of life and thought. The identity of this face of modern Iran is fluid and complex and can not be reduced to class categories or social status. It is more of a perspective and a mode of being – a unique way of engaging with a unique social context. By reacting to the changes around them through art the Dena Art Group represents the aesthetic dimension of a new mode of engagement.

My aim in this paper is to explore the different aesthetic and philosophical elements that pervade each artist in the Dena Art Group. I want to establish a horizon for philosophical analysis of their work which means that I will avoid stylistic issues and debates regarding the production of a work, i.e. arguments concerning technique, method, medium and style. Instead, my intention is to present the reader with a heuristic study that will stimulate further criticism regarding the aesthetic theory and social place of this conglomerate of contemporary Iranian women artists. Therefore, in analyzing the work of each member I will make reference to particular art, literary and philosophical theories.

It is important to mention here that my discussion of the group is limited to an analysis of the individual members and that focus on the group as a whole is deserving of a study of its own. I hope that the results of my study of the particular artists will be a contribution to the future study of the group – the beginning of a hermeneutic circle of interpretation resulting in a continuous discussion of the members, the group and the relationship between them.

Political Implications

Jim Harold

University of Glasgow

"...moving through empty areas and fractured zones": An Attempt to Visualise the Cyprus Buffer Zone

The demilitarised Buffer Zone, which cuts Cyprus into two distinct national entities was brokered by the UN just over 30 years ago in 1974. It follows an east-west axis and is superficially suggestive of the broader divergences that exist between Occidental and Oriental cultures. This paper, an account of researches undertaken for a photo-based art project, is also a reflection on the manifestations of 'otherness' as they have been formed: 1) by the differing cultures found on the Island and: 2) by the broader cultural dichotomy that exists between constructions of nature as a site of either Idyll or Fall.

Both the Buffer Zone landscape and its photographic depictions have a disquieting silence, an edgy and resistant muteness caused by the fracturing of time and cultural narratives (both Greek and Turkish). This paper will touch on the nature of this muteness; on the disruption to social/cultural narratives as a result of human dislocation; and, with the absence of people, the curious appearance of a returning, if misshapen, Idyll to the landscape.

Woven into this paper will be an exploration of the relation between the Buffer Zone landscape and the photograph, as it moves through various ruptures from 'real' physical space towards a place circumscribed by ideologies that stretch beyond its actual limits to end in the photographic depiction. This is a process that might superficially lend the image the appearance of a readable and explicable document, whilst actually evidencing the rupture as something unreadable and unknowable.

Chris Barlow

Birkbeck College, University of London

Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourse XIII: Religious Aesthetics and their Implication for Interpreting Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Century British Cultural Politics

Since John Barrell's *The Political Theory of Painting from Reynolds to Hazlitt: 'The Body of the Public'* (1986) scholars have suggested that Sir Joshua Reynolds's influential Discourses, delivered at the Royal Academy between 1769-1790, reinforced a secular, civic humanist identity. I argue that a religious discourse exists in the text and that one of Reynolds's purposes was to fortify the identity of the Anglican Establishment. This has significant implications for our understanding of cultural politics in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Focusing on Reynolds's use of "right reason", "imagination" and his epistemological description of art creation in Discourse XIII (1786), I argue that these ideas were rooted in soteriological teaching of the Church of England. Far from the work of an atheist, as implied by Barrell, Reynolds's text demonstrates evidence of a conscious Anglican identity and an abhorrence of heterodox and traditional dissenting theologies. Similar examples by other writers of the period attacking dissenting groups and the Jewish community, further demonstrate the importance of religious identity in treatises and the extent of factionalism on theological grounds within the artistic body.

Joyce Taylor Dawson

University of Southampton

Art and the Maintenance of Religious and Cultural Identity: The Ursuline Monastery and School for Girls in British Colonial Québec City

When the British conquered the French at Québec City in 1759, the Ursuline nuns of the city were left in a difficult position. Should they return to France with the majority of the French aristocracy and government officials, abandoning their Monastery and school for girls founded in 1639? Or should they stay? They stayed.

Their Monastery was soon appropriated by General Murray, commander of British forces, as his headquarters. Murray prevailed upon the Sisters to serve as hospitalieres to the injured of both sides in return for provisions and repairs to the buildings. The nuns readily agreed. Thus began an exceptionally liberal, respectful, and enduring relationship between the Ursulines and the British Governors which served both sides to advantage for the next 108 years of English rule.

When the Ursulines re-opened their school, they made the decision to admit English (Protestant) girls along with the daughters of the French Catholic elite who had remained. Classes were taught in French. By the turn of the 19th century however, the numbers of English girls attending the school had increased substantially and classes were provided in both languages. In the course of this development; as the two groups came together, a social, cultural and religious convergence occurred.

Key to this convergence of religious and cultural identities was the coming together of both groups through the teaching of gracious skills such as needlework and art (drawing and painting). Using a combination of fact and theory, this paper will discuss the pupils, their art and needlework classes, the school within the milieu of a bi-cultural Society, and describe how, remarkably, both nuns and pupils converged and yet maintained their own religious and cultural identity while accommodating that of the other.

Art, Religion, and Trauma

Jayne Svenungsson

Stockholm School of Theology

Representing Pain: A Phenomenological Approach

What does pain look like? Pain is felt, as every human being knows. But what about its visibility? Is it possible to depict pain? 'I wanted to paint the scream more than the horror', Francis Bacon explained, and thus expressed the predicament of every attempt to represent pain: We can, indeed, represent its visible expressions—the tormented face, a wound torn open or flowing blood. We can also, to a certain extent, capture that which causes pain—violence, deliberately or not deliberately directed towards the body and/or the soul. But what about pain itself?

My paper addresses the question from a phenomenological perspective. Adopting the phenomenological analyses of Emmanuel Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion, its purpose is to explore a very specific form of phenomenality, what I shall term a phenomenality of compassion. In spite of the difficulties or even impossibility of representing pain as such, there are nonetheless representations which evoke a specific kind of pain in the viewing/listening subject. What is at stake here, I argue, is a phenomenality which not only evokes the subject's compassion (*compassio*) for the pain and suffering (*passio*) of the other, but which also calls the subject to responsibility for the other, urging it never to remain indifferent to the pain of the other.

Alana Vincent

University of Glasgow

When I'm Close Enough: Searching for God at the Edges of Memory

In the early 1930's, Hannah Frank produced a series of images based on the book of Job. Most of these contain, in the background, a single wing, unobserved by the figures within the scene, unrelated to and unexplained by anything within the picture itself. The wing directs the viewer's attention away from the frame of the picture to the hidden forces hovering just beyond the edge. It is a pointer to, if not an image of, the divine.

Viewing these works several decades after their creation, it is tempting to follow the thought of popular post-Holocaust theologians, such as Emil Fackenheim and Richard Rubenstein, and interpret the wing as a marker of God's absence from the frame of human activity. This interpretive temptation also exists within the pages of *Fugitive Pieces*, a recent novel by Anne Michaels. The novel tells the story of Jacob Beer, presumably the only member of his family to survive the Holocaust, and his quest for closure. Jacob is haunted by the memory of his sister, Bella, whose unknown fate becomes the defining influence on the rest of his life. Jacob's various attempts at response to Bella's absence and silence parallel various theological attempts at response to the perceived absence and silence of God—and the narrative provides a subtle, yet effective, critique of each of them.

This paper will take the novel and the Job images as points of entry for a discussion of the quest for God in recent human history.

Anne Ronayne

Croyden College, London Metropolitan University

Between the Salpêtrière and Lourdes: Hysteria, Ecstasy and the Image

In his essay on photography Walter Benjamin implicated ocularcentrism in the loss of the elusive aura, a quality which appears to effect the idealisation of what would otherwise be prosaically material. For Benjamin the last vestiges of aura are to be found in early photographic portraits before technological advances enabled the human countenance to be fully illuminated. Obscurity and aura are therefore closely aligned

In attempting to define aura Benjamin related it to breath which, in the context of his interest in Jewish mysticism, may be understood to relate to the concept of spirit as it does in Hebrew. A body without aura is a wholly secularised, objectified and death-bearing body and for Benjamin this is ultimately the deidealized and commodified body of the prostitute.

In 19th century Paris prostitutes were regularly rounded up at the Salpêtrière to become the objects of a medical gaze that sought to demystify female sexuality by rendering it (photographically) spectacular. Here visibility became the index of the absence of aura as all of female sexuality was forced into the realm of the image

Against the backdrop of the production of Jean-Martin Charcot's nosology of hysteria at the Salpêtrière, the Marian apparitions at Lourdes became the focus of the conflict between naturalism and mysticism, a struggle which pivots on access to the spectacle of the ecstatic female body. This paper will consider the differences between the hysterics of the Salpêtrière and the visionary of Lourdes (phenomena which Charcot sought to conflate) in terms of their availability to the photographic image.

Female Images of the Holy

Michelangelo Paganopoulos

Goldsmiths College, University of London

Two Contrasting Interpretations of the Miracles of The Holy Icon of the 'Slaughtered' Virgin Mary (14th Century, Monastery of Vatopaidi, Mount Athos)

The Christian Orthodox monastery of Vatopaidi is situated on the Holy Mount Athos, northern Greece, and is dedicated to the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary. In honouring the Virgin for letting them stay in her 'virgin garden' as the monks say, the Vatopaidians proudly keep eight miraculous icons and her girdle in the monastery. However although these miraculous items belong to Vatopaidi, they are also associated to the tradition of Athos as a whole. For the monks of all the twenty Athonite monasteries such holy items represent the virginity of Mary in relation to both the 'virgin' (unchanged) Athonite landscape, and their own monastic virginity (celibacy). Through the narration of miracles, such miraculous icons become markers of identity and belonging.

However, during my fieldwork at the monasteries of Vatopaidi and Esfigmenou (2002-2003) I noticed that the monks of the two rival neighbouring monasteries use contrasting styles and language in describing the same tradition. By comparing two narrations of the same miracle regarding the icon of the Virgin Mary of Esfagmeni ('Slaughtered', 14th Century) I focus on the contrasting interpretations of the same Athonian tradition, in relation to each monastery's current political and economic situation. My aim is to highlight the opposite understandings of monastic life and uses of the same tradition by the monks of the two monasteries, in order to show how through religious art, tradition is contested, re-invented, and sold to the new market of faithful.

Rasa Luzyte

University of Stirling

The Art of a Female's Prayer at the End of the Male God

In the engagement with Naomi R. Goldenberg's "The end of God", where she discusses important directions for a feminist critique of religion in the works of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, I consider the connections between the feminine identity, prayers to the feminine divine and the female iconography. Using mainly the psychoanalytical and literary approaches, I offer interpretations of several images of the Virgin Mary, trying to answer if, and when, such prayers and images can help to ease a woman's search for the religious identity. I note that such the interpretations of the divine female images, especially those of

the Virgin Mary, start a creative process of imagination that cannot be turned back, and a woman exercising it finds a strange divine female world at the heart of the male God's church, seemingly without any hope to validate whatever she feels different from the standard Christian teaching in this church. However, I argue that the lonely and individual paths, which women walk when searching for the religious identity, are very important because that way women learn to trust themselves, and this may be more important than anyone can imagine.

Melanie Landman

Roehampton University

Our Lady of Willesden: Constructing Black Madonna Narratives

It is estimated that in Europe alone there are over 400 images of the Virgin Mary which have been described as Black or dark Madonnas. Their colours range from black to dark brown to light brown and even gray. Some of the most famous Marian shrines in the world are home to a Black Madonna. The legends surrounding these images often include re-occurring themes, in particular their association with natural phenomena such as mountains, forests and caves and the miraculous events that take place there. It has been suggested that these establish a link between the Black Madonna and their pre-Christian predecessors. These suggestions have, in more recent times, have led to Black Madonnas becoming popular subjects for 'New Age' and feminist spirituality writers. However, not all Black Madonnas fit so easily into this template. This paper aims to provide such an example by examining the narratives that surround the Black Madonna at St Mary's, an Anglican church in Willesden, North London. The Black Madonna image in the church dates from the 1970s and rather than a famous site of worldwide pilgrimage, St Mary's is a local parish church. I attempt to show that a particular Black Madonna can be the subject of several different, often competing narratives. I do this by examining the alleged origins of the shrine and the critiques of these theories as well as considering the significance of the Black Madonna that resides in the shrine today.