

WALLPAPER HISTORY SOCIETY

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WHIS Newsletter

Successful A.G.M. and Design Competition Show at The Art Workers Guild.

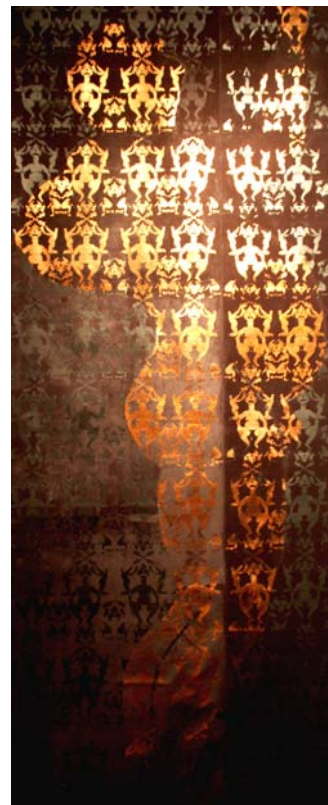


Our 2009 AGM was once again successfully held at The Art Workers Guild, London. Over 60 members and guests joined together for a 'new style' event which included an exhibition of wallpaper featuring the winning students from our very first Wallpaper History Design Competition. This was launched in conjunction with London College of Communication, University of the Arts and was entitled 'Baroque with a Twist'.

We were delighted that the first prize went to Mark Amura (**wallpaper on right**) who was awarded a three week paid work placement by Liz Cann, Design Director with Zoffany and that the following students all received either cash prizes and/or books: Louise Sheeran, Clare Ozkaya, Sally Poore, Claire Campion, Sophia Demetriou, Natasha Lawless. Our thanks also go to Sebastian Edwards, Deputy Chief Curator and Head of Collections at Historic Royal Palaces who spoke on the changing fashions and fortunes of palace decoration from the Tudors to the last Hanoverian.

Caroline McNamara

Images – Tony Roche



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Special points of interest:

- ... Check out updated website design
- ... We welcome Members contributions for future newsletters including any photos.
- ... Send us your suggestions for events, visits or any relevant exhibitions.
- ... email address for society – info@thewallpaperhistorysociety.org.uk

Visit to the Geffrye Museum 5th November 2009

November's visit to the Geffrye Museum provided a busy and interesting morning, thanks to an absorbing lecture and a viewing of rare wallpapers. The Museum, which boasts a series of period rooms, specialises in the domestic interiors of the urban middle class from 1600 to the present day.



The morning began with a talk given by Alex Goddard, the museum's Interpretation and Learning Officer. She initially explained the many sources of primary information with which staff were able to learn and reconstruct the museum's period interiors. Paintings, prints and woodcuts provided the more obvious visual references, but of equal importance were inventories and the Ralph Tresswell surveys of 16th and 17th century London. Whilst the inventories yielded valuable information on the contents of people's houses, the surveys provided aerial views of the layout, demonstrating the order of rooms most often with the shop front and public areas at the front and the private areas enclosed within. It was fascinating to see how, over time, the function and order of these rooms altered.

In the 1600s the public area at the front was usually known as the 'hall'. Woodcuts depict the interiors with solid oak furniture and walls covered in deep, heavy panelling. Wall decoration was limited to the occasional textile wall-hanging. By the late 17th century halls had become 'visiting rooms' and now began to feature sash windows with curtains. While the wood panelling still remained, it had now become far plainer, hinting towards the flat plaster walls that would later accommodate wallpapers. By the mid 18th century plain plaster walls were evident and wallpaper had begun to come into use, but it was not until the following century that it was within the financial reach of the middling class.

When this happened the austerity of former years was replaced by riots of colour, with carpets curtains and wallpapers all competing for attention. After this crescendo the 20th century interiors appeared relatively restrained, with two world wars necessitating a certain degree of asceticism. By the 1990s the simplicity espoused by open-plan loft-style living had become desirable, and as Alex demonstrated with a series of photographs, interiors had returned to the restraint of earlier years.

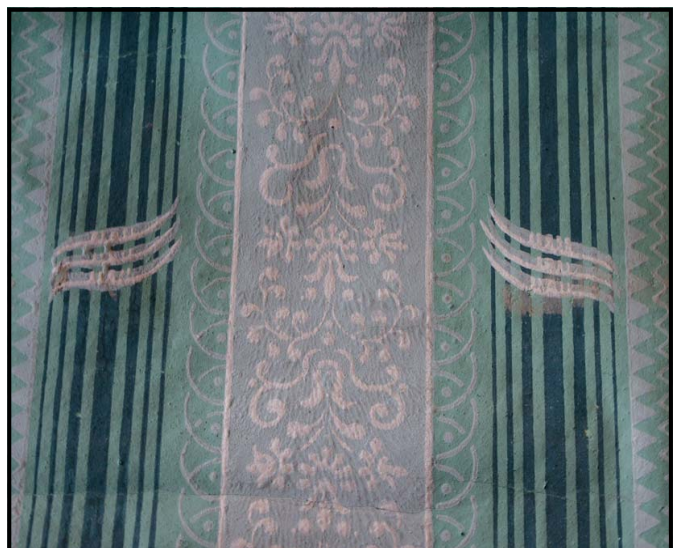
Given the large breadth of Alex's lecture, (covering some 400 years), it was extremely impressive to have the major trends that affected the domestic interior so comprehensively explained, and provided us with a context in which to place the decorative arts.

She was followed by Emma Hardy, Collections Manager, and an opportunity to examine wallpapers from the Geffrye's collections. These began with fragments from a wallpaper of 1780, and included both pre and early rolled wallpapers, block and screen printed, pictorial and sanitary wallpapers. and a Lightbown Aspinall sample book. This study session gave an opportunity for members to examine the wallpapers close at hand with one member pointing out how much information could be gained from studying the paper's reverse in determining its age! The design process, methods and manufacture of the wallpapers were all discussed with several members providing valuable insights and questions for discussion.

Members were then invited to visit the Museum, with its chronological sequence of period rooms, providing an extremely interesting ending to the visit.

Nancy Tanner

Images – Jan McInley



Refurbished Leighton House Museum Now Open

The refurbishment of Leighton House Museum involved my undertaking extensive research into the original wallpapers and textiles. I spent two years plus a further year to implement my findings. The whole house was refurbished and involved many conservators, building contractors and myself working with the Leighton House team to achieve this mammoth task. Now completed, the Museum in all its glory opened to the public on 3rd April 2010. The work involved careful and considered conservation of wallpaper in the drawing room and cleaning the William Morris wallpaper in the bedroom. The flocked wallpaper in the dining room was completely removed and replaced with a flocked paper designed from an image found on one of the original black and white photographs showing the interior of this room. The colour for the new paper was sourced and chosen based on contemporary 1890 flocked papers sourced from either Arthur Sanderson, Liberty and Leicester Paint Stainers Archives or in the Board of Trade logs held in the National Archives. As the house was carefully taken apart, under door and window frames, behind fireplace surrounds and behind radiators, wallpaper discoveries were made. In the Drawing Room 'gritted paper' with a gold and mica printed pattern in a rusty red was found. In the servants' quarters, a late 19th century sanitary paper was revealed and behind the door frame a flocked paper was traced to an early Cole & Son pattern that was applied after 1905. A visit to the house is a must in order to get the complete perspective of the work undertaken. **Sue Kerry**



Wallpaper restored for Dining Room

Image courtesy Leighton House Museum

Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill at the V&A

The exhibition 'Horace Walpole and Strawberry Hill' is currently at the V&A until the 4th July. It has been organised by The Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, the Yale Center for British Art and the V&A.

Members of the WHS, who remember the house as it was before the programme of restoration was started, should post hotfoot to see this exhibition with its drawings, watercolours, oils, furniture, and objects from Walpole's Collection all of which were in the eighteenth century house. Viewing them together for the first time makes Walpole's interior come alive and enables us to appreciate how important the interior decoration was to an understanding of a gothic house. To fully comprehend the significance of Walpole's choice of wallpapers it is necessary to see and hold in mind the objects for which he provided a background of both hand-painted papers and other 18th century papers provided by Thomas Bromwich.

This is a wonderful exhibition for students, designers, historians and those seeking a pleasurable afternoon. As an incentive, the leaflet given to all - visit the exhibition and later in the year revisit Strawberry Hill. Strawberry Hill will reopen to the public on September 24th this year, Walpole's birthday.

Anna Chalcraft



The Walpole Cabinet

Designed by Horace Walpole and William Kent

© V&A images

Book Review



Image of book jacket opened flat to reveal “Les Incas” by Joseph Dufour 1818

Thibaut-Pomerantz, Carolle

Wallpaper – A History of Style and Trends

240 pages, 270 colour illustrations

Published by Flammarion 2009

Hardcover £49.95

It is common for wallpaper historians to preface their accounts by two observations: first, the ‘existing bibliography for the subject is remarkably limited’ and second, that ‘wallpaper is ephemeral’. The first is no longer the case. Up to the mid-nineteen seventies there were only a few basic sources that could be relied on.

Most notable are the well established publications by Eric Entwisle in England, Henri Clouzot in France and Nancy McClelland in America. In recent years, however, there has been more interest in wallpaper and new books have been appearing at regular intervals. Today the literature in this field is quite extensive.

Thibaut-Pomerantz dismisses the second observation with admirable élan; “wallpaper is not ephemeral” she says firmly and, as far as the majority of papers considered in this book are concerned, she seems to be right - though perhaps it might be amended to ‘very, very expensive wallpaper is not ephemeral’. Her survey concentrates almost exclusively on the French industry and mainly on the very top end of the market.

The text is a collation of five short essays: The Origins of Wallpaper, The Triumph of Ornamental Designers, The Great Adventure of the Panoramique, Wallpaper in America, Aesthetic Renewal and the Road to Modern Art and The Contemporary Revolution.

It must be acknowledged that the outstanding examples of French scenics demonstrate hand-printing at an almost miraculous level and no English printer has attempted to match them. But the market for scenics and ‘top designer’ papers represents only a small proportion of the industry’s total output. I hope I am not misrepresenting the author but she does seem to be unusually dismissive of the English wallpaper industry.


Any suggestion of pre-eminence or priority of English producers is immediately discounted. For example: *‘In the early 18th century America was still an English colony...A taste for everything English would continue, out of habit...’* (my italics).

The same reaction leads her claim that the fashion for japonisme began with the 1878 Exposition in Paris, when it is generally agreed that the 1862 International Exhibition in London was the seminal moment. The path she describes from Arts & Crafts via Art Nouveau to Art Deco to Modernism is smoothly Pevsnerian and, thank goodness, ‘the special inventiveness of French wallpaper once again enjoyed worldwide recognition...far ahead of other countries.’

Of course, the author can tell her story any way she likes. The objects she describes are superb, and her passion for them is obvious. However, the reader is entitled to feel uneasy when it is clear that for the author the history of material culture is quite unproblematic.

In brief, this is coffee-table history. Its purpose is to attract attention, to impress, ultimately to provoke desire. In other words (bearing in mind that the author is a professional decorative arts dealer) it is a glorified trade catalogue. But why no index? Nonetheless this publication is beautifully illustrated, and a delight to browse. Apparently it comes down to this: there are hierarchies of taste – the best is the best because it’s the best (and usually French).

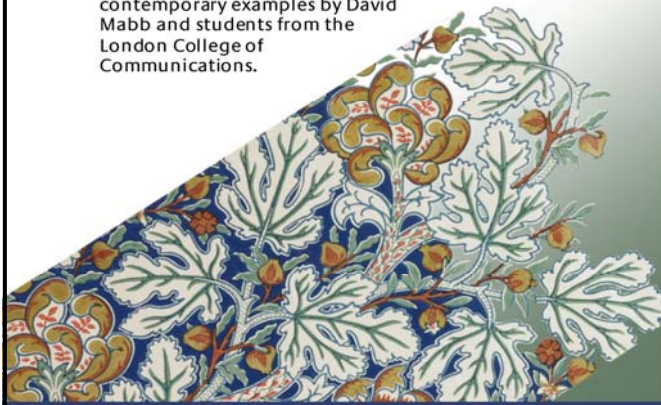
David Greysmith



Wallpaper

The Cuming Museum
1 July to 28 August 2010

Arts and Crafts wallpapers together with contemporary examples by David Mabb and students from the London College of Communications.



www.southwark.gov.uk/cumingmuseum

Wallpaper

A chance to see some fine examples of Arts and Crafts wallpaper of the late 19th and early 20th centuries including pieces by Walter Crane and Peckham-born Lewis Foreman Day. The exhibition also includes works by local artist David Mabb and contemporary designs in response to Southwark's collection by prize-winning students from a competition organised by the Wallpaper History Society and the London College of Communications.

Events programme
For information and details of more events see our events page at:
www.southwark.gov.uk/cumingmuseum

Thursdays 15, 22, 29 July Evening talks by the exhibition curators and artists, 6pm to 7.30pm.
Saturday 24 July Wonderful wallpaper family art day 1pm to 4pm.

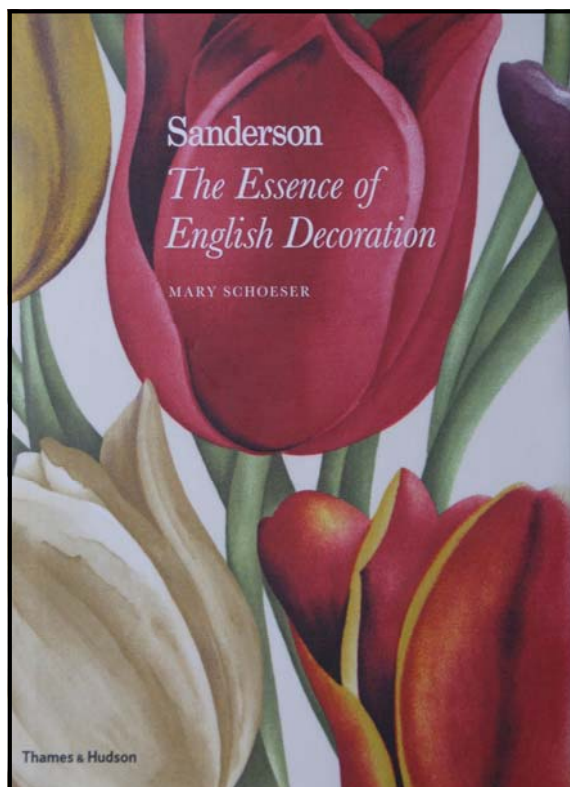
Cuming Museum
Old Town Hall
151 Walworth Road
London SE17 1RY
Tel 020 7525 2332
cuming.museum@southwark.gov.uk
www.southwark.gov.uk/cumingmuseum

Transport Train and Tube:
Elephant & Castle
Bus: 12, 35, 40, 45, 68, 171, 176, 468, P5

Opening hours
Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm
Admission free
The museum is fully wheelchair accessible.

Publication • Exhibition • Event



The Textile Society is delighted to invite WHS members to their June event:

Sanderson: 150 Years of English Decoration

2:00-4:30pm, Saturday, 12th June 2010

Fashion & Textile Museum, 83 Bermondsey Street, London SW1 3XF

Sanderson are celebrating their long and influential history with an exhibition highlighting a remarkable range of wallpapers and textiles, unique not only for their range of styles, but also for the company's technical advances and marketing policy. Join Mary Schoeser (Textile Society Hon. Pres. and curator of this exhibition) and special guest, Christine Woods (Curator of Wallpapers, Whitworth Art Gallery, and founder-committee member of the Textile Society) for an afternoon exploring the story of Sanderson.

Mary will give a short presentation giving an overview of the company, its archive, and the consistent themes threaded through its history, while Christine, also formerly a Sanderson Archivist, will join Mary afterwards in the gallery to take questions. Tea will be provided. Ticket price also includes entrance and the exhibition brochure.

Booking deadline: 1 June 2010.

For those who wish to explore the Bermondsey area and have lunch prior to the event, there is Hays Galleria (nearly opposite London Bridge station) and several interesting pubs and cafes along Bermondsey Street itself. The Museum also has a cafe.

Textile Society Members £13.00

Textile Society Member concessions £11.50

WHS Members £13.00 (no concessions)

Non-members £20.00

For information visit: www.ftmlondon.org

Another Successful Visit to Trevor Howsam's Prop House

On Saturday 13th of February, a second group had the pleasure of visiting Trevor Howsam's Prop House.

We were all excited by Trevor's passion for wallpaper and to see his extensive collection of rolls of paper and pattern books.

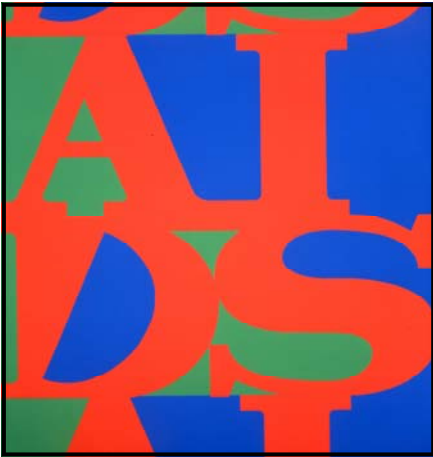
Trevor and his staff provided us with a lovely lunch for which we were very grateful and would also like to thank him for giving up his time.

Below are some photos of the day by Caroline Mcnamara.

Tony Roche



The Walls Are Talking at Whitworth extended to end of August



General Idea
AIDS Wallpaper
1989 Hand screen-print on paper,
Courtesy of A.A. Bronson

Open until 30 August and curated by Christine Woods and Gill Saunders, *The Walls Are Talking* exhibition at The Whitworth Art Gallery based at The University of Manchester is showcasing rare wallpapers by 30 international artists including Damien Hirst, Sarah Lucas, Andy Warhol, Thomas Demand, David Shrigley, Michael Craig-Martin, Robert Gober, Francesco Simeti, Niki de St. Phalle and Abigail Lane.

Visitors are encouraged to re-evaluate the role of wallpaper in contemporary art. The exhibition traces the development of the artists' interest in wallpaper and how they have played on wallpaper's domestic and decorative associations to throw into sharp relief their shocking or subversive messages, appropriation of historic motifs, and political or cultural observations. Often seen as kitsch, and with its connotations of home and personal identity, wallpaper has, over the last two decades, given artists a useful vehicle through which to explore themes of warfare, racism, conflicts in contemporary culture, gender, sexuality and design. *The Walls Are Talking* looks at the powerful effect of using new or existing patterns and the printed medium, and also examines the interface between wallpapers as artists' works and commercial products.

Sonia Boyce's work *Clapping*, 1994, evokes a feeling of claustrophobia and predatory menace, with a repetitive black and white hand print. Zineb Sedira uses wallpaper design techniques to illustrate social inequalities and gender difference from her French-Algerian Islamic perspective. In stark contrast, are the popular commercial papers that reinforce cultural and gender stereotypes,

from Barbie and the Spice girls, to the use of male symbols such as beer cans. Thomas Demand, one of the foremost conceptual artists working today, covers an area of the Gallery with his lifelike *Ivy* wallpaper featuring intricate paper cut-outs and photographic imagery.

The Whitworth Art Gallery has several thousand examples of wallpaper and is permanently open to the public. For more information on gallery and events visit: www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk



Thomas Demand
Ivy/Efeu, 2006
Copyright: Thomas Demand/DACS

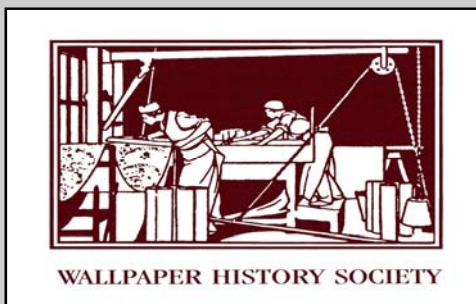
Wallpaper Hangers

From bespoke to mass market wallpapers, Yair Meshoulam is an expert wallpaper hanger. First he specialised in mural and faux paint finishes before moving on to hanging wallpaper. No job is too small and all stages of work are undertaken. Seen here is an image of a finished project: a stunning hand-painted panoramic wallpaper for a study in Reigate. His company, Wallpaper Hangers, is based in London and has many prestigious clients. Yair is a long-standing member of the Wallpaper History Society.

For a more comprehensive overview of his work, have a look at his website

www.wallpaperhangers.org.uk





Registered Charity No. 1113163

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The Wallpaper History Society was founded in 1986 to promote awareness, understanding and appreciation of historic and contemporary wallcoverings. Its aims are threefold:

1. To encourage research and disseminate information about all aspects of the design, production and consumption of wallpapers and wallcoverings.
2. To foster an awareness of the importance of preserving historic decoration.
3. To provide a forum for discussion and point of contact for the different groups interested in these issues.

The Society organises a range of events, including conferences, lectures, seminars, visits to historic houses and tours of exhibitions and archives

New Members Welcome

Annual Membership Fees

<u>United Kingdom</u>	<u>Overseas</u>
Individual: £12.50	£17.50
Concessions: £6.50 (full-time students)	£11.50
Institutions: £20.00	£25.00
Corporate: £30.00	£35.00

Membership forms can be downloaded from our website or from:

Membership Secretary
 The Wallpaper History Society
 Old Moat Barn
 Ardenrow, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6LN.

Future Events

8th July – Cuming Museum:

Private view of Wallpaper Exhibition and Design Competition with guest speaker Dr Christopher Jordon.

14th July - Kenwood Reference Library:

Study visit – English Heritage Wallpaper Collection, led by Treve Rosoman, Curator, Architectural Study Collection, English Heritage.
PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE ONLY A FEW REMAINING PLACES FOR THIS EVENT.

21ST October - Strawberry Hill House:

A private guided tour with tea to celebrate the re-opening of the newly refurbished House – more details to follow.

November - Fashion & Textile Museum:

Forthcoming event in conjunction with Sue Timney and the art of Timney-Fowler - more details to follow.

2nd December - WHS AGM:

Including second Design Competition Exhibition, with guest speaker Karen Beauchamp former Design Director of Cole & Sons.

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