Reading Victorian Sculpture

Angela Dunstan

One of the most arresting photographs of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert is taken two years after Albert's death (*Fig. 1*). The occasion was the recent wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales, and renowned royal photographer John Jabez Edwin Mayall had been engaged to photograph the wedding party. Pristine in her finery, the bride looks out uncomfortably from the left to meet the viewer's gaze. A void separates her from her new husband, who stands right of centre staring thoughtfully into the distance, his face a copy of his late father's. The actual focus of the photograph, however, is the other royal couple. Queen Victoria sits in profile at the centre of the image, voluminous in her midnight mourning garb, her hands clasped and eyes upturned towards the towering white sculptural bust of the Prince Consort which strangely commands the scene. 'A fine morning —', wrote Queen Victoria in her journal of that day, 26 March 1863, 'was photographed with Bertie & Alix [Edward and Alexandra] & lastly, with the whole family near dearest Albert's bust, as the dear dear protecting head!'[1]

This 'dear dear protecting head' operates in two ways: Albert the man is reduced to a sculptural 'head' just as he is symbolically enlarged to representative 'head' of the royal household, however he be corporeally conjured for the photograph. The doubling persists: the two couples are each comprised of one black and one white figure, the otherworldly white glow of Albert's bust mirrors the bride's purity. As she stands cropped beside the queen, Alexandra's bridal gown and hairstyle hauntingly recall the young Victoria, while Edward's visage doubles that of his father in appearance and parallel gaze. The sculptural bust — an embodied signifier of bodily absence — and its dominance over the scene form an expression of personal and national grief and stasis, simultaneously touching and disturbing. The composition isolates not the statue but the statuesque queen, and suggests it is she and not Albert who is absent from the scene. Albert joins a semicircle of faces looking outwards, but Queen Victoria resolutely turns away from the wedding couple and the photographic capturing of the moment, towards the sculptural embodiment of her late husband. Her

[1] Queen Victoria, journal entry, 26 March 1863, *Queen Victoria's Journals* <http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/> [accessed 7 May 2016].

Fig. 1: John Jabez Edwin Mayall, *Queen Alexandra; Queen Victoria; King Edward VII*, carbon print, 1863. © National Portrait Gallery, Photographs Collection.

retreat from this intimate moment of domestic celebration parallels her imperial absence during reclusive mourning. By contrast, Albert's bodily presence is so palpable that it is jarring to find his name missing from Mayall's list of sitters for the photograph.

Charged with a multitude of meanings, the unexpected prominence of this sculptural bust usefully symbolizes the place of sculpture in Victorian culture: hauntingly present but rarely interrogated, monumental yet mundane, and, above all, disconcertingly difficult to read. The bust prompts us to pose many of the questions that preoccupy this issue of *19* on Victorian sculpture. How should we read Victorian sculpture? How did the Victorians read sculpture? How should we read a single sculptural object? What might that object connote in different contexts: the home, the street, the gallery, the colony? And, controversially, how broadly should we define what we describe as 'Victorian sculpture'? For Victorians themselves, as for modern readers, legibility remains a prime preoccupation of any study of nineteenth-century sculpture and the literature it inspired.

In the early 1880s Vernon Lee powerfully expressed the effect of sculpture's illegibility upon the viewer. For Lee, encounters with sculpture can potentially impart an unsettling imprint, a reverse-Pygmalionism in which the viewer is moulded by sculpture and left deadened rather than vitalized. According to Lee, sculpture has the potential to form in its viewer

> an impression composed of negative things: of silence and absence
> of colour, of lifelessness, of not knowing what it all is or all means;
> a sense of void and of unattractive mystery which chills, numbs
> the little soul into a sort of emotionless, inactive discomfort.[2]

The discomfort that sculpture's illegibility imprints upon the viewer, however, need not be solely a 'negative thing'. Victorian sculpture's resistance to reading renders it fertile ground for repeated revisiting and reinterpreting of individual works, their creators, textual responses to them, and the greater significance of their cumulative cultural imprint. We must remain sensitive to sculpture's productive discomfort, for this discomfort — what Lee terms 'the impression produced in us' (p. 36) — reminds us that despite Victorian studies' masterful readings of painting and photography, three-dimensionality provides a new challenge and alternative models for comprehending nineteenth-century aesthetics and representation.

It seems that we remain as fascinated and bemused by Victorian sculpture as the Victorians themselves. The exhibition 'Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837–1901' reached audiences in two locales, the Yale Center for British Art (11 September to 30 November 2014), and London's Tate Britain (25 February to 25 May 2015). The first major museum exhibition dedicated to the sculpture produced during the

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[2] Vernon Lee, 'The Child in the Vatican', in *Belcaro, Being Essays on Sundry Aesthetical Questions* (London: Satchell, 1881), pp. 17–48 (p. 19).

reign of Queen Victoria, 'Sculpture Victorious' showcased iconic works such as Sir Frederic Leighton's *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (1877) and Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave* (1844) alongside lesser-known, crafted, and ephemeral pieces, evidencing the incredible variety of sculpture and sculptural objects produced during the nineteenth century. As the inclusion of the American Powers's sculpture indicates, the curators Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, and Michael Hatt drew on an inclusive definition of Victorian sculpture which allowed for geographical and aesthetic breadth, to acknowledge the global impact of the Great Exhibition, for example, and embrace a material-cultural definition of sculpture which includes the proliferation of ephemera which crowded everyday nineteenth-century life. The inclusion of sculptural *objets* as well as 'fine art' demonstrates how eager the curators were to remind us that 'from coins in a purse and stereographs in many a parlour, to public buildings and spaces, sculpture formed an integral part of everyday experience'.[3] Indeed, the exhibition's controversial material-cultural emphasis addressed a more recent turn in nineteenth-century sculptural studies which acknowledges the impact of industry. As Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft point out, 'in part this relative neglect has been an expression of embarrassment with processes that seem too obviously commercial to receive open admittance among writers of art.'[4]

The controversy with which 'Sculpture Victorious' was met echoes many historical responses to Victorian sculpture, and affirms the necessity for expansion in knowledge of the field. The question of Victorian sculpture's legibility clearly remained absolutely central to critics of the exhibition. Reviews which refer to 'entertainingly barmy objects', 'almost surreal dottiness', 'kitsch and bluster', and pieces that are 'almost risibly excessive' are punctuated by what Vernon Lee called 'inactive discomfort'.[5] Reading Victorian sculpture continues to challenge, and prompts us to revisit some of the reasons for its various provocations.

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[3] *Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention, 1837–1901*, ed. by Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, and Michael Hatt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 15.
[4] Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft, 'Introduction', in *Sculpture and its Reproductions*, ed. by Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), pp. 1–6 (p. 4).
[5] Martin Gayford, 'Sculpture Victorious at Tate Britain Reviewed: Entertainingly Barmy', *Spectator*, 28 February 2015 <http://www.spectator.co.uk/2015/02/sculpture-victorious-tate-britain-review-entertainingly-barmy/>; Adrian Searle, 'Sculpture Victorious Review', *Guardian*, 23 February 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/feb/23/sculpture-victorious-review-tate-britain>; Laura Cumming, 'Sculpture Victorious Review', *Observer*, 1 March 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/mar/01/sculpture-victorious-tate-britain-review-observer-best-and-worst-patriotic-era> [all accessed 7 May 2016].

Victorian sculpture then

Searching for sculpture in the nineteenth century, we find it everywhere, reminding us how richly we are repaid by its consideration and how much Victorian studies has missed by a belated recognition of its import. The 1980s saw some flourishing of scholarship on Victorian sculpture, with Benedict Read and Susan Beattie, in their respective studies *Victorian Sculpture* (1982) and *The New Sculpture* (1983), beginning to cast off the mantle of disdain which had obscured Victorian sculpture for much of the twentieth century. Benedict Read and Joanna Barnes's exhibition and catalogue *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture* (1991) drew together a small community of sculpture scholars globally and started to tease out the complex relationship between sculpture and empire. More recently, David Getsy's groundbreaking *Body Doubles: Sculpture in Britain, 1877–1905* (2004), offered dramatically original readings of iconic works by Alfred Gilbert, Frederic Leighton, Edward Onslow Ford, and Hamo Thornycroft, and suggested a continuum between elements of Victorian sculpture and modernism, 'fundamentally revolutionis[ing] how we must now look at these sculptures', as Read expressed it.[6] Significant studies have followed, including those which placed their subject within broader movements and cultural contexts such as Jason Edwards's *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism: Gilbert Amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater and Burne-Jones* (2006), Getsy's collection *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain*, *c. 1880–1930* (2004), and more recent publications by early career scholars such as Kate Nichols's *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace: Classical Sculpture and Modern Britain, 1854–1936* (2015).[7]

Select exhibitions, many of which took place away from the imperial centre, also made important interventions in the field. Deborah Edwards's spectacular 'Bertram Mackennal' — exhibited at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2007) and the National Gallery of Victoria (2008) in Australia — drew particular attention to the global and colonial reach and network

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[6] Benedict Read, quoted in press release for *Body Doubles*, <http://yalebooks.com/book/9780300105124/body-doubles> [accessed 7 May 2016].
[7] For a strong representation of constitutive texts in the field see Benedict Read, *Victorian Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Susan Beattie, *The New Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983); Benedict Read and Joanna Barnes, *Pre-Raphaelite Sculpture: Nature and Imagination in British Sculpture, 1848–1914* (London: Lund Humphries, 1991); David J. Getsy, *Body Doubles: Sculpture in Britain, 1877–1905* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, c. 1880–1930*, ed. by David J. Getsy (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Jason Edwards, *Alfred Gilbert's Aestheticism: Gilbert Amongst Whistler, Wilde, Leighton, Pater and Burne-Jones* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); *Bertram Mackennal*, ed. by Deborah Edwards (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2007); Kate Nichols, *Greece and Rome at the Crystal Palace: Classical Sculpture and Modern Britain, 1854–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

of Victorian sculpture, and suggested sculpture's role as an important imperial vehicle. Recent exhibitions at Kent ('Alfred Drury and the New Sculpture' curated by Ben Thomas, 2013), Leeds (Pavel Pyś and Elizabeth McCormick's 'The Age of Innocence: Replicating the Ideal Portrait in the New Sculpture Movement', 2013) and Reading (Elaine Blake and Nicola Capon's 'John Tweed: Empire Sculptor, Rodin's Friend', 2013), similarly demonstrated the reach of collections away from London, and offered new perspectives on established sculptors.[8] Large research projects such as the open access database *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, 1851–1951* have also made important inroads in scholarship on sculptors practising in the second half of the nineteenth century.[9]

So, while we must not underestimate the strong body of work existing on Victorian sculpture — and, indeed, many brilliant scholars central to developing Victorian sculpture studies over the past few decades have contributed to this issue of *19* — the field is certainly still evolving. 'In spite of the sustained reinvestigation of Victorian culture in recent decades', wrote Jason Edwards in 2009, 'nineteenth-century British sculpture continues to be neglected.'[10] In 2014, Martina Droth similarly noted 'how little exposure Victorian sculpture has had'.[11] In a century framed by the acquisition of the Elgin Marbles and the incessant memorializing of Britain's longest reigning monarch to that date, this is somewhat surprising. Yet to Victorian society, sculpture could be a dangerous art. Victorian sculpture has always refused to be corralled into categorization, and forces us to ask some challenging questions. What is an original work of art? What is a copy? How do we know this? How do we preserve the past while moulding modernity? What separates art from industry? What is an artist versus a craftsman, and why are their productions differently valued? Must a work of art always be produced by a human hand, or can a machine replace an artist? What is the difference between fine art and ephemera? What does sculpture make us feel, and why?

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[8] Elaine Blake and Nicola Capon's 'John Tweed: Empire Sculptor, Rodin's Friend' was held at Reading Museum (23 March to 8 September 2013). Pavel Pyś and Elizabeth McCormick's 'The Age of Innocence: Replicating the Ideal Portrait in the New Sculpture Movement' was held at Leeds Art Gallery (25 July to 20 October 2013). Ben Thomas's 'Alfred Drury and the New Sculpture' showed at Studio 3 Gallery, University of Kent (30 September to 20 December 2013) and the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds (15 January to 13 April 2014).

[9] See *Mapping the Practice and Profession of Sculpture in Britain and Ireland, 1851–1951 Database* <http://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/> [accessed 7 May 2016].

[10] Jason Edwards, 'Review Article and Exhibit Review', *Visual Culture in Britain*, 10 (2009), 201–07 (p. 201).

[11] Martina Droth, 'First Look: "Sculpture Victorious: Art in an Age of Invention" at the Yale Center for British Art', *Apollo*, 6 September 2014 <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/first-look-sculpture-victorious-art-age-invention-yale-center-british-art/> [accessed 7 May 2016].

Economics remains front and centre of most nineteenth-century writings on sculpture. Even the first sentence of Edmund Gosse's 1895 series 'The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life' is strikingly preoccupied with economics rather than aesthetics. 'When we turn to consider the use of sculpture in the private house', Gosse writes,

> we are confronted by an economical condition which is absent in the case of monuments in our streets, or in public buildings. A man tells me that he has no room for life-sized statues in his house, and that a 'Diana Surprised by Actæon' would render his front staircase impracticable. Very likely; but is that a reason why he should deny himself the pleasure of the art altogether? There is a practical business aspect to this matter […]. In indulging the poetry of life we must be sure not to disregard its prose.[12]

Sculptural economies invaded everyday life in an unprecedented manner, the statuette functioning as intermediary between 'fine art' and the mass-produced material objects which became integral to the fabric of the modern home.[13]

Processes of sculptural rescaling and replication circulated sculpture across traditional class and geographical boundaries and areas. Replicas were not merely popular among the middle classes, for instance. Even Prince Albert covered the ground floor of Osborne House with reproductions of French antiques produced by electroforming from Elkington, Mason, & Co., a firm that 'wedded high art with mechanical skill'.[14] Mechanical skill had always been important for sculptors and their assistants — the act of pointing a block of marble alone required significant mechanical expertise — but the role of machines proved increasingly central to the nineteenth-century rise in sculptural replication. The development of the pantograph by James Watt facilitated the replication of an original sculpture in wax or alabaster. Subsequent inventions adopted and adapted Watt's mechanisms, most notably Benjamin Cheverton's three-dimensional pantograph which not only copied but could rescale an original sculpture.[15] This invention,

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[12] Edmund Gosse, 'The Place of Sculpture in Daily Life', *Magazine of Art*, January 1895, pp. 368–72 (p. 368).
[13] For further exploration of Gosse's writings on sculpture and modernity, see Jason Edwards, 'Generations of Modernism, or, A Queer Variety of Natural History: Edmund Gosse and Sculptural Modernity', *Nineteenth Century Art Worldwide*, 14.2 (2015) <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/summer15/edwards-on-edmund-gosse-and-sculptural-modernity> [accessed 7 May 2016].
[14] Kathryn Jones, *Victoria and Albert: Art and Love, Prince Albert and the Industry of Art* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2012), p. 7.
[15] See René Schils, *How James Watt Invented the Copier: Forgotten Inventions of our Great Scientists* (New York: Springer, 2011), p. 41.

coupled with the development of parian (a porcelain imitation of marble), facilitated an explosion in parian ware replicas.[16] Later in the century, the New Sculpture's reinvigoration of bronze casting similarly enabled the mass production of statuettes.[17] Other eccentric mechanical innovations have been long forgotten, although they are strikingly prescient of three-dimensional printing. Italian engineer and sculptor Augusto Bontempi's 'sculpturing machine', for example, imported to Britain by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1903, could produce multiple replications at speed with no need for the intervention of a human hand. And the short-lived practice of 'sculptography', combining metal bas-relief sculpture with photography and pastel portraiture, is similarly suggestive of modern three-dimensional printing and nanotechnologies which create solid forms by an accretion of layers.[18] These technologies of replication account for some of sculpture's sudden and striking ubiquity.

In response to such developments in industry and fashion, the taxonomies of sculpture shifted. As Patrizia Di Bello has pointed out, international exhibitions placed sculptures in the Fine Art section and statuettes in a separate category titled Industrial Art.[19] Towards the *fin de siècle*, New Sculpture redefined the distinction, mediating between *sculpture* as fine art and the *statuette*, a mass-produced adornment available at an appealing scale and price point for the middle-class home, but still imprinted with the original sculptor's authenticating mark thanks to the reinvigoration of bronze casting. Victorian sculpture therefore possessed a powerful democratizing potential. Developments in sculptural practice had important social implications beyond the bounds of the aesthetic world and prompted important questions about art and social class. Photographs of lone sculptors posing with a chisel in hand suddenly seemed disingenuous, belying the many hands in the quarry, studio, and forge that collaborated to produce a single statue. Accordingly, Thomas Brock, Harriet Hosmer, and Thomas Woolner began to invite their assistants and workmen to appear in studio photographs. Patrons might also wonder about the value of an original sculpture if it could now be rescaled and reproduced by the pantograph, carved in

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[16] For more on parian ware, see Dennis Barker, *Parian Ware* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 1998).

[17] For more on the New Sculpture statuette, see Martina Droth and others, *The Cult of the Statuette in Late Victorian Britain*, Essays on Sculpture, 31 (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 2000).

[18] For more on Victorian sculptural replication and 'sculpturing machines' see Angela Dunstan, 'Nineteenth-Century Sculpture and the Imprint of Authenticity', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 19 (2014) <http://doi.org/10.16995/ntn.704>. For more on sculptural replication more generally, see the essays in *Sculpture and its Reproductions*, ed. by Hughes and Ranfft.

[19] Patrizia Di Bello, '"Multiplying Statues by Machinery": Stereoscopic Photographs of Sculptures at the 1862 International Exhibition', *History of Photography*, 37 (2013), 412–20 (p. 417).

parian ware, and sold on the mass market. If replicas appear in the homes of others, how does this affect an owner's encounters with the original? For Edmund Gosse,

> I should feel it a matter of exquisite and trembling delight to choose the figure which is to welcome me every time that I enter my house, and by which every stranger will try to guess my character before he sees me. (p. 369)

But what if that sculptural figure, a signifier of its owner's originality, appears also on the thresholds of others in the form of a copy?

Or, indeed, what if it appeared on distant shores? British nationalism was increasingly asserted through the display of imperial sculpture in the colonies, as well as through associated performances, such as unveiling ceremonies and press reports. Context is crucial when reading Victorian sculpture, and nowhere more so than in the colonies. Colonial sculpture was especially charged: a sculpture that in London might be envisaged to represent imperial power could, in India, Singapore, Australia, or New Zealand, be taken to convey the increasing cultivation of the emergent colony. While the expansion of the global market for British sculpture broadened the pool of patrons for sculptors, it was not without challenges. A delay in the mail could mean the loss of an important commission; a dishonest colonial agent could make off with the settlement of a commission; a change in colonial government could mean a half-executed commission would be dishonoured; and transportation of sculpture was extremely expensive and put the finished sculpture at risk of damage or complete loss at sea. Often sculptors would never see the sculpture *in situ*, and would face challenges such as creating sculpture for pre-existing plinths, while the need speedily to send sculptures overseas prohibited showing the completed work to other prospective patrons visiting the studio.

Although colonial sculpture has been largely associated with monumental public statuary, smaller pieces also circulated between imperial and colonial shores. The sculptor Thomas Woolner, for example, was astonished to discover a Copeland parian ware copy of his popular sculpture *Red Riding Hood* in a colonial home when he visited Melbourne in 1852.[20] Twenty-seven years later, Woolner would send a cameo copy of his *Captain Cook* to Sydney to be worn by the wife of the governor, Sir Henry Parkes, contributing in that act to a complex global web of sculptural circulation.[21] In such ways, even ephemeral sculpture carved an important circuit of empire. In this context, as Walter Benjamin emphasizes, 'the work of

[20] For more on this, see Angela Dunstan, 'Thomas Woolner's "Bad Times for Sculpture": Framing Victorian Sculpture in Vocabularies of Neglect', *Australasian Journal of Victorian Studies*, 19 (2014), 32–44 <http://openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au/index.php/AJVS/article/view/9396> [accessed 7 May 2016].
[21] Thomas Woolner, letter to Henry Parkes, 1 June 1879, Sydney, State Library of New South Wales, MSS A722.

art becomes a creation with entirely new functions, among which the one we are conscious of, the artistic function, later may be recognized as incidental.'[22]

Just as the definition and circulation of sculpture was shifting in radical new ways during the Victorian era, the profile of sculptors themselves was changing. Princess Louise's iconic marble sculpture of her mother outside Kensington Palace reminds us, for example, just how significant a century it was for female sculptors. Women's relationship with sculpture in the nineteenth century was particularly contentious, as viewers, subjects, and creators of sculpture. In *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century*, Hilary Fraser draws our attention to the female art historian Mary Merrifield who lamented the fact that 'there are still some persons whose minds are so contracted as to think that [...] even the contemplation of undraped statuary, are contrary to the delicacy and purity of the female mind'.[23] Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave*, the infamous sculpture of a naked Greek woman in a slave market, caused such controversy when it first toured the United States that certain exhibition venues admitted women and men separately to view it.[24] If the appreciation of sculpture posed affective and moral problems for the female viewer, the female sculptor faced another set of challenges entirely. In her study of professional women sculptors in Victorian Britain, Shannon Hunter Hutardo outlines them, arguing that

> sculpting was particularly antithetical to middle-class standards of female gentility because of the physicality involved in the materials used, the subject matters treated (the human body) and the exertion demanded. The exposure to public scrutiny and engagement in the marketplace, which were essential to an artistic career, further contravened social boundaries.[25]

By virtue of these issues, and particularly the perception of women's insufficient physical strength, female sculptors were especially vulnerable to accusations of others having created their works, usually their male studio assistants and occasionally their own teachers.

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[22] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 225.

[23] Mary Merrifield, *Dress as a Fine Art* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, 1854), pp. 22–23, quoted in Hilary Fraser, *Women Writing Art History in the Nineteenth Century: Looking Like a Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 159.

[24] The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC, for example, invited male and female patrons to view the sculpture separately. See Jeanne Fogle and Elan Penn, *Washington D.C.: A Pictorial Celebration* (New York: Sterling, 2005), p. 112. See also, Carl J. Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), pp. 167–69.

[25] Shannon Hunter Hurtado, *Genteel Mavericks: Professional Women Sculptors in Victorian Britain* (Berne: Lang, 2012), p. 2.

One of the most famous sculptural controversies erupted over the showing of Harriet Hosmer's *Zenobia* (1859) at the 1862 International Exhibition, which resulted in press accusations that Hosmer's work was not her own.[26] Hosmer took legal action and wrote a defence forcing public apologies: *Zenobia*'s authenticity was acknowledged, for instance, in the *Art Journal* and the *Queen* in 1863 and 1864. Her action was accompanied by an explosion of press support from figures such as Frances Power Cobbe who proclaimed sculpture 'the sharpest test to which the question of a woman's genius can be put'.[27] The press generated by Hosmer's case had broader implications for sculpture than visibility. Other sculptors, including Hosmer's mentor John Gibson, wrote articles in support of Hosmer and in doing so shed light on hitherto unknown collaborative practices involving studio assistants, pointers, carvers, finishers, and workmen in the foundry. Hosmer's case had indeed corrected what she called 'the false but very general impression, that the artist beginning with the crude block, and guided by his imagination only, hews out his statue with his own hands'.[28] Yet while sculptors' descriptions of studio practice expanded public understanding of the collaborative aspects of the atelier, they simultaneously raised uncomfortable questions about authenticity and artistic originality. Victorian sculpture forced a new approach to reading authenticity, prompting new ways to conceive the relationships between artistic production, industry, and collaboration that remain pertinent today.

Victorian sculpture now

In the wake of 'Sculpture Victorious', this issue of *19* seeks to read Victorian sculpture through a cross section of innovative scholarship. The issue is comprised of seven articles on nineteenth-century sculpture and the literature it inspired, two reflections on curating Victorian sculpture, two reviews of the American and British incarnations of the 'Sculpture Victorious' exhibition, and an afterword considering Victorian sculpture in the twenty-first century. Read together, the articles move through a varied gallery showcasing

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[26] For a concise analysis of the *Zenobia* controversy, see Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850–1900* (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 101–41.

[27] Frances Power Cobbe, 'What Shall We Do With Our Old Maids', *Fraser's Magazine*, November 1862, pp. 592–610, repr. in Frances Power Cobbe, *Essays on the Pursuits of Women* (London: Faithfull, 1863; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 58–101 (p. 86). Cobbe was a friend of Hosmer but, as Deborah Cherry reminds us, friendship was 'a guiding principle of much nineteenth-century art reviewing and literary criticism' (Cherry, p. 116).

[28] Harriet Hosmer, 'The Process of Sculpture', *Atlantic Monthly*, December 1864, pp. 734–38 (p. 734).

interpretation from art historians and scholars of literary studies, museum studies, photography, and film studies.

The first section of the issue, 'Reading Victorian Sculpture', opens with Patricia Pulham's analysis of the influence of classical statuary in nineteenth-century women's poetry. Examining a selection of poetry by Frances Sargent Osgood, Emily Henrietta Hickey, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Eliza C. Hall, Henrietta Cordelia Ray, and Emma Lazarus, Pulham's article demonstrates how the Pygmalion myth could be productively appropriated by nineteenth-century female poets. Its carefully contextualized reading argues that 'the sculptural ideal offered ways to interrogate and counter gender constraints and racial inequalities'. Claire Jones investigates the church sculpture of Nathaniel Hitch. Introducing this little-known but productive sculptor, she shows Hitch's career paralleling the rise of church sculpture in the nineteenth century. In tracing its impact, Jones rightly reminds us that

> recovering the important and neglected ecclesiastical dimension of nineteenth-century [. . .] British sculpture complicates and extends our current understanding of sculpture in the period by presenting alternative models of education, style, subject matter, and practices of making in addition to the current emphasis on ideal classical sculpture and the New Sculpture.

Mark Stocker examines colonial memorializing in his article '"A token of their love": Queen Victoria Memorials in New Zealand'. His analysis of Queen Victoria memorials in four major New Zealand metropolitan centres exemplifies the complexity of reading colonial sculpture, demonstrating how 'a keen sense of local politics coexisted, often symbiotically, with the global, in a kind of imperial "cementing" evident in [the memorials'] iconographic content, as well as what was said at the time of their erection'. Jason Edwards, one of the curators of 'Sculpture Victorious', offers insight into another colonial sculpture in his article 'The Relief of Lucknow: Henry Hugh Armstead's *Outram Shield* (*c*. 1858–62)'. Edwards's examination of the shield's detail is undertaken in conjunction with sixty-five photographs of the work itself, 'bringing viewers unprecedentedly close to it'. This virtual proximity offers the reader an immersive textual and visual encounter with the shield, facilitated by *19*'s online digital journal platform. Edwards's analysis of this remarkable sculptural object evidences 'not just of Armstead's breathtaking draughtsmanship, clay modelling, and craftsmanship as a silversmith, but a remarkable insight into the precise cultural, political, imperial, and theological contours of mid-Victorian realism, eclecticism, cosmopolitanism, orientalism, and historicism'.

Vicky Greenaway reintroduces us to a familiar figure in 'Robert Browning, "SCULPTOR & poet"'. Reading Browning's sculptural involvement alongside his poetic innovation, Greenaway argues that 'just as with the plaster copies of sculpted marble originals, Browning's oeuvre displays the poet's conception that art's meaning lies with its process'. Her reconstruction of Browning's work as a sculptor during a challenging phase in his poetic career shows how his adoption and adaptation of sculptural techniques to poetry enabled him to develop a new 'process-based system of verse-making'.

Moving from poetry to photography, Patrizia Di Bello prompts us to re-view Hiram Powers's iconic sculpture. In 'Photographs of Sculpture: *Greek Slave*'s "complex polyphony", 1847–77', Di Bello analyses multiple representations of Powers's *Greek Slave* — a 'nineteenth-century sculptural celebrity' — in the decades following its first exhibition in 1845. In so doing, she teases out a complex relationship between sculpture and photography, original and copy. From photography Rebecca Anne Sheehan moves to the proto-cinematic, drawing on chronophotography and motion studies to offer new readings of the New Sculpture, from Leighton's *Athlete Wrestling with a Python* (1877) to Sir Alfred Gilbert's Winchester *Monument to Queen Victoria* (1887). Sheehan demonstrates 'that cinema is an essential yet overlooked influence in the transformation from neoclassical to modernist sculpture in late nineteenth-century Britain'.

The second section of the issue, 'Curating Victorian Sculpture', offers articles from the curators of two recent small but significant exhibitions. Ben Thomas's 'Alfred Drury: The Artist as Curator', explains how a single photograph of Drury's studio display influenced his curatorial decisions in preparing the exhibition 'Alfred Drury and the New Sculpture' (Kent and Leeds, 2013 and 2014). The photograph 'seemed to offer the solution to certain practical problems of effectively arranging the display of smaller works in a large, "white cube"-style gallery, and, furthermore, to point the way to a particular curatorial approach towards Drury's works in the exhibition'. Nicola Capon's reflections on her curatorial choices in preparing 'John Tweed: Empire Sculptor, Rodin's Friend' (Reading, 2013) are the subject of 'Exhibiting Victorian Sculpture in Context: Display, Narrative, and Conversation'. Investigating three different aspects of exhibition production, Capon's article interrogates how narrative is created between sculptural objects and the role of context in crafting these conversations.

'Reviewing "Sculpture Victorious"', the third section of the issue, has Jonathan Shirland and Clare Walker Gore each offer reviews of an incarnation of the 'Sculpture Victorious' exhibition held firstly at the Yale Center for British Art and subsequently at Tate Britain. Moving from past exhibitions to the future of Victorian sculpture, the issue concludes with an

afterword from one of the leading figures in the field. The impact of David Getsy's scholarship may be traced throughout this issue, and indeed most scholarship on Victorian sculpture from the last decade, so it is particularly fitting that he provides this issue's afterword. In 'Victorian Sculpture for the Twenty-First Century', Getsy reflects upon the field and the importance of this issue in 'help[ing] to advance the ways in which Victorian sculpture studies seeks to redefine itself in the twenty-first century'.

Where an entire painting can usually be viewed from a single vantage point, sculpture requires the imaginative assimilation of multiple perspectives to appreciate its three-dimensionality. As Johann Gottfried Herder noted in his influential book *Plastik* (1778), 'as soon as a single rooted viewpoint takes precedence, the living work becomes a mere canvas and the beautiful rounded form is dismembered into a pitiful *polygon*.'[29] This issue of *19* aims to show the usefulness of approaching Victorian sculpture studies in this way, eschewing 'a single rooted viewpoint' and instead attending to multiple scholarly perspectives from multiple disciplines. In 'The Child in the Vatican', Vernon Lee writes that

> the child, who will one day become ourselves, rarely cares to return to these sculpture galleries; or, if it care to return to any, it is to mixed galleries like those of Florence, where, instead of the statues, it looks at the pictures. (p. 22)

This collection of articles illustrates the reward of returning our gaze to the Victorian statues, and the impression they produce in us.

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[29] J. G. Herder, *Sculpture: Some Observations on Shape and Form from Pygmalion's Creative Dream*, ed. and trans. by Jason Gaiger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 41.