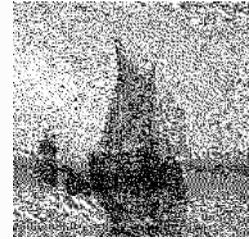


## Editorial

Article by \*British Art Studies\* Editorial Group

WORD COUNT:1,951



*British Art Studies* is the joint publication of two research centres dedicated to British art: the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (PMC), London, and the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA), New Haven. The journal has grown out of many conversations and collaborations between the two centres, working with scholars and institutions worldwide. The foremost aim of *British Art Studies* (BAS) is to provide a platform for innovative thinking, debate, and dialogue about British art, an area of research that, as our first issue makes clear, is constantly changing, expanding, and being re-defined. Through *BAS* we want to encourage and share a multitude of approaches, voices, and objects.

### Born digital

*British Art Studies* is a “digital first” publication, meaning that it has no printed counterpart and is designed primarily to be read on screen (although all content can be downloaded or read offline). Many people now read on the move, using various devices. The “pages” of *BAS* responsively adapt to the size and orientation of the device, whether a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

From the very beginning, the guiding principle for developing *BAS* has been to ask what could be done with a digital journal that could not be done in print. This starts with our cover where we have moved away from the convention of using a single image. Of course, a digital publication does not need a cover in the traditional sense; but we wanted to develop a feature that offers content, as well as a compelling visual threshold at which to pause before delving into the journal. For our first issue we have worked with the artists and curators of *British Art Show 8* to create a dynamic set of covers, featuring eight works and a "Cover Collaboration" commentary. Each time the journal is reloaded or refreshed, a new image will be displayed.

Although emerging out of the research cultures of our two centres, *BAS* uses the digital to reach beyond the physical walls of our buildings in London and New Haven. Articles are chosen through an open call for submissions and, as our first issue shows, address a diverse range of topics, periods, and approaches. The second issue of *British Art Studies* will appear in spring 2016, and will be followed by a special issue in summer 2016 on “British Sculpture Abroad, 1945–2000”. This will also be our future publication pattern—two open and one special issue each year—allowing us to remain responsive and engaged with the very best and most exciting scholarship in the field.

*BAS* offers new models for digital publishing. As well as single-author articles, it includes interactive features that foster dialogue, discussion, and the participation of many voices—including those of readers. Our first Conversation Piece, led by Richard Johns, solicits responses

from academics, curators, and artists to the provocation “There’s no such thing as British art.” Through text, film, and visual work, this conversation opens up arguments with and approaches to the field we call “British art”. The Conversation Piece will build cumulatively over the coming weeks. The first wave of the launch presents four responses; more will be added in the coming weeks. Readers can contribute too, using the discussion board. Interactivity is offered throughout *British Art Studies*. We actively encourage users to share content using the “Share” button which appears on the right-hand side of every article. We hope this will open the conversation about British art and architecture even more widely.

Free and open access

*British Art Studies* is free and open access: there are no subscriptions, no passwords, and no fees to pay. All content will be preserved as a free-to-use resource. The ethos of open access is one that YCBA and PMC have adopted for all their digital efforts, in the recognition that conventional proprietary models represent a major obstacle to scholarship. It is published under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC licence, meaning that you are free to share and re-use its contents for non-commercial purposes, provided that appropriate credit is given to the author/s. No permissions are needed. Currently, only a handful of digital-only journals within the field of art history are fully open access. *Tate Papers*, *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*, *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art*, and the *RIHA Journal* are among those that have led the way, navigating through complex issues such as online copyrights and digital preservation. We have benefited enormously from their pioneering efforts, and acknowledge the model with which they have provided us.

We hope that, in turn, *BAS* will provide a further model for innovative solutions to the challenges presented by online publishing: for example, that of how to capture accurate citations from online content, given there are no page numbers. *BAS* offers a more precise method than copying and pasting a URL (more precise even than the paper convention of page numbers). Every paragraph and figure is attributed with a DOI—a digital object identifier—allowing users to cite exact locations simply by clicking and copying the links provided by the “DOI” buttons.

In 2014, the Zurich Declaration on Digital Art History stated: “Digital change requires critical reflection about the methods and practices of art history, such as the way pictures are analysed and canons are formed. There should be a productive two-way relationship between research questions and digital applications.” Our goal is that *BAS* becomes an incubator for such critical reflection, providing a space for a digital art history which makes use of computational technology and data, as well as a digitized art history that makes scholarship widely—and freely—available online.<sup>1</sup> The Zurich Declaration also calls for use to be made of recent fair dealing (UK)/ fair use (US) exemptions to copyright law, a discussion that has become even more prominent with the publication of the College Art Association’s Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for the Visual Arts (2015). The image-sourcing policies we have established for *BAS* are intended to support and contribute to these developments.

Over several years, both centres have led efforts to support digital scholarship, by channelling resources into new outputs and activities, while providing support and guidance to other institutions. The PMC has transformed some of its standard publication formats into digital-only platforms: the first, *Richard Wilson Online*, appeared in 2014, and in early 2016, the Francis Towne catalogue raisonné will appear online. The YCBA was a major supporter of a Yale-wide effort to implement an open-access policy. In 2011, all of the YCBA’s digital images of works in the public domain were released and made freely and easily available online, including for commercial purposes: there are no forms to fill out, and no permissions to request or restrictions

on use. YCBA and PMC are also collaborating with international consortia to develop online spaces for scholarship. YCBA's images are now also available as IIIF assets, meaning they meet an agreed international standard to enable interoperability. The web-based open-source image viewer Mirador is being developed into an online space for collaborative work, where scholars can effortlessly collect, compare, manipulate, and share images from multiple institutions. Similarly, YCBA has made its collections available as Linked Open Data, which allows its information to harmonize with that of other institutions, making it easier for users to find, link, and build relationships between works of art.

All of the articles in *BAS* make use of the phenomenal work carried out by public and private collections to make their holdings available online. Seemingly instantaneous in some cases, but in reality the product of Herculean efforts by curatorial, imaging, technical, and conservation staff, images of art works are becoming publicly available in ever-increasing quantities.

### **An interactive experience**

We want this journal to offer a powerfully visual and interactive experience. The abundance of large-scale images, the clean design and the distinctive fonts (Tiempos Headline and Aperçu), together with the inbuilt connectivity to other websites and online resources, will, we hope, give *British Art Studies* a unique look and create an absorbing, stimulating, and exciting environment for our users. The digital realm offers new ways of looking at and engaging with images, the possibilities and pitfalls of which are being extensively debated.

Film, photography, and audio are used throughout this issue. Our Look First feature is offered as an experiment in using the medium of film to explore images in new ways. The filmmaker Jonathan Law, collaborating with James Boaden and Paul Rousseau, has created an extraordinary series of films about the double-exposure photographs by John Deakin. In our One Object feature, Cyra Levenson, Chi-ming Yang, and the artist Ken Gonzales-Day, take a single work—a black limestone bust by the eighteenth-century sculptor Francis Harwood—as a starting point to think about materiality, portraiture, and race. As Gonzales-Day's photographic essay exemplifies, the digital undoubtedly creates a new visuality—what might be described as an aesthetics of the digital—which we will continue to explore in future issues.

### **Acknowledgements**

Making a digital journal from scratch involves a huge amount of creative, intellectual, and physical work, as well as financial investment. Like all of our activities, it has only been possible to pursue this project thanks to the extraordinary legacy of Paul Mellon himself. The creation of *British Art Studies* has also depended upon the support, expertise, and advice of our colleagues, beginning with those at the PMC and the YCBA. Mark Hallett, Director of Studies at the PMC, initiated the idea of the journal in 2012, and together with Amy Meyers, Director of the YCBA, formed an editorial team. Headed by Sarah Victoria Turner, the PMC's Deputy Director for Research and the Managing Editor of *BAS*, this team consists of staff from both centres: Martina Droth (Deputy Director of Research and Curator of Sculpture, YCBA); Martin Postle (Deputy Director for Collections and Publications, PMC). Until recently, it also included Eleanor Hughes (formerly YCBA and now Deputy Director for Art and Program at the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore).

Meanwhile, our international Advisory Board has supported this venture from the outset with generous amounts of time and advice. We would also like to acknowledge the help of Maisoon

Rehani (PMC), Emmanuelle Delmas-Glass (YCBA), and Matthew Hargraves (YCBA). Beyond the PMC and YCBA, we have been fortunate to work with some wonderful people in creating this journal. Adrian Cooper of Intelligent Heritage has guided us through the many pathways of the digital realm and open-access publishing. Bernard Horrocks's advice and inspiration in all matters associated with copyright, image permissions, and fair dealing has been invaluable. Tessa Kilgarriff came on board to assist with the huge task of sourcing all the images. Rose Bell, our copy editor, refined and polished the texts throughout. And our peer reviewers offered constructive feedback, greatly helping to shape the contents. We are indebted to the generosity and support of the many institutions, organizations, and individuals, who provided images for us to use.

Furthermore, the journal would not exist without the phenomenal creativity and talents of our designers and developers at Keepthinking, led by Cristiano Bianchi. We have developed this journal in tandem with this extraordinary team and our thanks go in particular to Tom Heather, Lelia Mak, Parahat Melayev, Luca Rosean, Evgenia Spinaki, and Katy Swainston.

The day-to-day work and many hours of correspondence, technical development, image sourcing, and uploading of content has been borne by a small and very dedicated team at the PMC. Hana Leaper, Editorial Assistant Postdoctoral Fellow, and Tom Scutt, Digital Manager, who both joined the PMC in the autumn of 2014 and have made an enormous contribution to the development and delivery of *BAS*; we offer them our deepest thanks.

Finally, we thank our authors, for providing us with excellent scholarship and endless enthusiasm. They were prepared to take a risk on a journal that did not yet exist; we hope that they—and you—are pleased and captivated by the results!

## **About the author**

### **Footnotes**

1. Pamela Fletcher's and Joanne Drucker's observations about the difference between "digital art history" and a "digitized" art history are particularly useful. See Pamela Fletcher, "Reflections on Digital Art History", *caa.reviews* (18 June 2015) and Johanna Drucker, "Is There a 'Digital' Art History?", *Visual Resources* 29, nos. 1–2 (2013): 5–13.

## Imprint

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