
shows ‘the convergence of human agency and happenstance’ (p. 189). Guest must return to the present, having learnt that the desired commonweal is not so much a destination to be entered at some point as it is a state being created in efforts at human betterment in the present. (I was reminded here of the ideas of the anarchist Colin Ward, although no reference to him occurs in the book). For Weinroth, *News from Nowhere* is a bold work, persuasive to those who are prepared to read it with care. It offers an alternative to the rigidity of Bellamy, in the ‘waywardness of the dream vision with its implicit prohibition against literalist readings’ (p. 193). It is a form that enables Morris to ‘broadcast his news in ways more subtle and far-reaching than any “fact”-laden article from the contemporary press’ (p. 194). The argument is fresh and cogent. Weinroth also offers an account of the art of David Mabb, which she sees as offering an opportunity to participate in a Gramscian education through dialogue, and so fulfil Morris’s ambition ‘to enlighten contemporary social consciousness artistically’ (p. 270). In view of this, it seemed a pity that one of Mabb’s challenging works was not chosen for the cover rather than the beautiful ‘Tulip and Primrose’ fabric design, which consorts with the romantic words of the title to create a perhaps too comfortable effect.

The editors’ last words are modest:

[t]hough we will not have changed the world in this modest redemptist gesture, we may nonetheless have begun to open a space for debating and rethinking the contested meanings of ‘the political’, ‘the aesthetic’, and ‘the radical’ – categories of discussion that will inexorably haunt the question of social change.

(p. 288)

Writing in March 2012, Pinkney remarked that ‘we have the current dispersal of the Occupy movement to show us just how difficult it is to sustain and generalize [...] non-conventional radical practices’ (p. 238). Weinroth and the other contributors to this thought-provoking book are to be congratulated on their energetic work in keeping such necessary ideas alive.

Peter Faulkner

Peter Cormack, *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 354 pp., 200 colour & 50 b&w illustrations, £50.00 hbk, ISBN 0300209703.

Peter Cormack’s *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass* is a landmark study that opens up enquiry into a neglected subject. The author notes the persistent absence of stained glass in

the historiography of the Arts and Crafts Movement, observing that many historians of the subject ‘scarcely mention stained glass and, even less, its transformation at the hands of Arts and Crafts practitioners’ (p. 5). This comment identifies the author’s aim, to reinstate stained glass as a medium central to the Arts and Crafts Movement and to promote understanding of stained glass as a valid form of artistic practice. Cormack suggests that histories of the Arts and Crafts Movement have tended to focus on ‘what is collectible, moveable and exhibitable’ (p. 5), features not normally compatible with stained-glass windows.

The book adopts a broadly chronological approach, detecting the earliest signs of Arts and Crafts practice in the late 1870s and tracing the movement through to the dramatic windows of Douglas Strachan in the 1930s. The central character in this narrative is Christopher Whall, whom Cormack credits with influencing almost every glass-painter mentioned in the book. Whall’s influence was achieved in a variety of ways, through his windows, his stained glass classes at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, the less formal instruction to his pupils in his studio and his notable book *Stained Glass Work* (1905). The author stresses the camaraderie or ‘collegiate’ atmosphere of Whall’s *atelier*, thus linking it to other Arts and Crafts collectives, and his approach is represented as personal and vocational, the antithesis of the commercial logic that Cormack sees as dominating the large stained-glass studios formed in the 1860s.

The wonderful sequence of windows installed in the Lady Chapel of Gloucester Cathedral (surely one of the most enthralling post-medieval stained-glass experiences anywhere) is described in some detail. Cormack illustrates Whall’s commitment to his art by showing how he accepted the stingy fee of 30s per square foot for the glass (about half the commercial rate) in return for the opportunity of glazing one of the great architectural spaces in England. Assistants and pupils unanimously agreed to work for reduced wages and Whall himself worked gratis; in fact it was only when Cathedral authorities agreed to raise the price to 33s per foot that he managed to cover his expenses. This kind of commitment places Whall firmly within the type of ethically engaged maker that we associate with the Arts and Crafts Movement. Whall’s attention to materials and making processes (the other key Arts and Crafts trait) is described in some detail. In a paper of 1891 Whall posed the question: ‘[w]hich is more important, that flesh should look soft and smooth, etc., or that the window should sparkle? Of course it ought to sparkle!’ (p. 40). Whall relegated illusionistic effects in favour of demonstrating the luminous qualities of the material. He was aided in his quest for sparkling windows by the development of new types of pot-metal glass, notably ‘Prior’s Early English’. This was a mould-blown glass that was cut up into slightly convex ‘slabs’, the shape, texture and irregularity all adding

to the visual interest of the material. Whall used this glass to great effect, celebrating the inherent properties of the material and using prominent lead-lines in an expressive manner that balanced glass, colour and linear design in a highly effective way.

Cormack argues in *Arts & Crafts Stained Glass* that the windows produced by William Morris and his firm occupy an intermediate status, not so much Arts and Crafts, as a transition between Victorian stained glass and later developments. Cormack identifies three phases in the Firm's glass: the early windows of the 1860s, the 'aesthetic' windows of the 1870s and the more stridently leaded and intensely coloured windows of the early 1880s. He argues that this latter phase was initiated by Burne-Jones's mosaic commission for the American Episcopal Church in Rome, commissioned by George Edmund Street in 1881: 'designing for the medium of mosaic brought a renewed confidence to his stylisation of figures and pictorial space. It can indeed be seen as a kind of liberation from his long enthrallment to Renaissance art' (p. 23). Burne-Jones discussed this commission with Morris at some length and Cormack sees it as a direct influence on the wonderful windows designed for what is now St. Philip's Cathedral in Birmingham during the mid-1880s. As none of the glass painting was actually done by the partners, Morris's firm can be clearly distinguished from Whall and other Arts and Crafts practitioners. Although Morris cared passionately about the glass itself, the later windows often did not use the best 'antique' glass made by James Powell and Sons, instead often opting for a cheaper variety made by Chance and Co. of Birmingham. Cormack demonstrates that Burne-Jones urged Morris to start making his own glass, and, according to William De Morgan 'very nearly set up the making of pot glass' (p. 25), but this was to be one project too many for Morris. It is clear that many later glass painters saw the Morris firm's glass as the pinnacle of Victorian achievements and many Arts and Crafts designers continued to be influenced by its windows.

Cormack analyses the work of a fascinating range of designers: some like Selwyn Image will be familiar to those interested in the period while others like Heywood Sumner are less well known. Sumner was particularly radical in pursuing the Arts and Crafts concept, often using very little painting at all in his windows. Pushed to this extreme, stained glass became a very different form of creative practice, the artistry located as much in the choice of material and the way it was configured as in the more traditionally 'artistic' act of painting.

Cormack highlights a particularly interesting relationship between stained glass and gender: 'stained glass became the one major Arts & Crafts activity where there was real gender parity in both status and achievement' (p. 253). A key figure in this development was Mary Lowndes, partner in Lowndes and Drury, established in 1897 'to meet the needs of independent artists seeking the technical facilities to carry out

their own stained glass commissions' (pp. 95-6). Artists could hire out studio space to draw cartoons and then benefit from advice on how the glass might be painted and fired from the skilled workers in the firm. By 1906 'The Glasshouse', Lowndes and Drury's purpose-built premises, was a key centre for progressive stained glass in London. Lowndes was an active suffragist, founding the Artists' Suffrage League in 1907, and co-founding the Society of Women Welders (a female trade union) during World War One.

The American boom in Gothic Revival buildings during the early twentieth century provided a fertile context for transatlantic glass painters. Ralph Adams Cram was a progressive architect who reacted against the prevailing taste for the opalescent windows of Lafarge and Tiffany, which were sophisticated in pictorial terms but did not transmit enough light to fulfil an architectural function. By 1909 Cram had met Charles Connick, who opened his own studio in 1913. Both Cram and Connick had completed research trips to Europe, both meeting Whall and the English manufactures of 'slab' glass, which Connick subsequently had imported to the USA in large quantities. Cormack suggests that the high light-levels prevalent in cities such as Boston allowed Connick to use more intense colouring than Whall, resulting in a series of spectacular windows. Connick had also toured some of the major medieval stained-glass sites in Europe but was in no way rigidly historicist, producing instead 'something authentically new and yet full of meaningful reference to the past' (p. 216).

The only negative aspect of this book is the somewhat simplistic way in which it represents Victorian stained glass. In advocating the radicalism of the Arts and Crafts makers, Cormack is too eager to criticise earlier glass. To dismiss Victorian stained glass as a 'pseudo-antiquarian industry', or as merely 'trade glass', is a caricature of a complex area of cultural activity. I would have been interested to hear more about the business side of Arts and Crafts stained glass: pricing is only mentioned once in the context of Whall's generosity during the Gloucester Cathedral commission but the reader is not told if the smaller-scale production of Arts and Crafts windows resulted in higher prices than the more commercial firms.

The production values of the book are high, photography is of consistently high quality, and reproduced photographs of studios and key personalities are fascinating. This book has clearly been informed by a large amount of new primary research and is full of information that will be fundamental to future students of this subject. The book is not cheap but given its originality, erudition and scope, this is surely a key purchase for anyone seriously interested in stained glass or the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Jim Cheshire