MESSAGE FROM ROBERT MODE, HBA PRESIDENT

The Yale Center for British Art did a splendid job hosting us on Saturday of CAA, and for those who could not attend, it is as wonderful as always – even better now that the roof is fully functional and the galleries are laid out better than ever. Patrick McCaughey expressed an interest in working with HBA during his directorship, to make certain that the Center shares in our efforts to promote research activities related to British art. Along these lines, we need to propose special projects or scholarly enterprises that the YCBA can consider supporting, as part of our mutual endeavors. If you do have suggestions, please e-mail them to me at moder@ctrvax.vanderbilt.edu.

At the HBA session in New York, Alice Beckwith put together a Ruskin panel that was so well-received that she is now moving forward on the publication of an expanded version which is sure to reach still larger audiences. For those of you considering participation in future meetings, such as those sponsored by HBA at the Chicago CAA in 2001 or the Philadelphia CAA in 2002, this is a great model for you to follow. Check the call for HBA panels at these meetings by Anne Helmreich, 1st Vice-President, and remember the deadline is June 15.

Another initiative that we discussed at the Board meeting is the broadening of our HBA membership services. This will be handled by Barbara Apelian Beall, 2nd Vice-President. Just let her know what you want from our society (feel free to do some wishful thinking while you’re at it) – Barbara can be contacted by e-mail at: BABEALL@aol.com.

Next March 3, on the Saturday of CAA, we are arranging to meet off-site at the Newberry Library. It should be a great visit, with a chance to see their many resources of interest to HBA members. There will be more details in the fall newsletter, so now is the time to think about the program we’ll set up there. Contact me or Anne, whose e-mail address is: ahelmreich@tcu.edu. Meantime, have a fruitful summer, and be sure to send any juicy bits of news to HBA Newsletter editor Julia Marciari Alexander at her e-mail address: julia.alexander@yale.edu.

NOTES FROM JULIA MARCIARI ALEXANDER, HBA SECRETARY

Thanks to all of you for your positive feedback about the last newsletter! It was so nice to receive such encouragement my first time out of the gate.

At the annual meeting (held here at the Center) in February we had a spirited discussion about setting up an HBA website. As some of you indicated that you had past experience with website development, I would like to convene a website steering committee (perhaps an on-line committee) to work on this with me over the course of the next few months. Please e-mail me if you would be interested. I look forward to getting this off the ground.

One last thing: remember that – for the moment – all address and name changes (other than electronic address changes which can come to me) should go to Jack Brown, HBA Treasurer, since he generates the mailing labels and maintains the membership list. See you next fall and remember to send your news by September 1, 2000!
HBA BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The annual board meeting was called to order at 7 PM on February 24 at the New York Hilton by Robert Mode, our president (presiding for his first time). He welcomed the new board members and those who had shifted office from years before. We quickly went over the Treasurer’s Report in which the news of our solvency was happily disclosed. The secretary then reported on the successful launch of the first Newsletter to come out of the Yale Center for British Art and her hopes of getting a web-site started up by the end of the year 2000.

The main topic of discussion was the organization of the HBA sessions for the 2001 and 2002 meetings. Anne Helmreich, 1st Vice-President, explained that, as our affiliate’s session next year in Chicago, we will have a 1 ½ hour session, Friday, March 2, 2001; it was decided that the theme of that session would be broad and thematic so as to encourage members of different fields and periods to submit to the panel. Anne also discussed next year’s annual meeting which will be held at the Newberry Library on Saturday, March 3, 2001 [save the date!].

Further discussion centered on the topic of our 2 ½ hour session for the CAA 2002 in Philadelphia and activities for the membership there [for more on these panels, see p. 3 of this Newsletter]. A brief report from Barbara Beall, 2nd Vice-President, stated that in her post she plans to reach out to other groups of like minds, such as ASECS and NACBS; such outreach might not only increase the visibility of HBA but also bolster membership rolls. The next big item for discussion was the Book Prize and the need to redefine its categories and to add a prize [for a longer description of the outcome of this discussion, please see p. 3]. Other matters were tabled for next year’s discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

HBA ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY

This year’s annual meeting was held on February 25 at the Yale Center for British Art, which generously provided transportation to and from New York City. After brief and collegial welcomes by our host Patrick McCaughey, Director of the YCBA, and Bob Mode, President of the HBA, the morning was spent listening first to Steve Parisien, Deputy Director of the Paul Mellon Centre, and Robin Simon, Editor of the British Art Journal; they animatedly discuss current publishing opportunities for Historians of British art. We then heard three insightful and stimulating presentations on works in progress by Julie Codell, Beverly Joyce, and Amanda Schedler.

A tasty lunch was followed by a brief meeting in which the President remarked on the successes of Alice Beckwith’s HBA/CAA session on Ruskin [see Notes from the President on p. 1 for more on this]. Kimberly Rhodes announced the winners of the Book Prize [see p. 3], and Anne Helmreich discussed plans for the affiliate sessions at both CAA 2001 in Chicago and CAA 2002 in Philadelphia [see p. 3]. A future website was discussed, and it was suggested we gather our forces and have a steering committee to get this off the ground. Laurel Bradley ended the meeting with a suggestion that someone organize some sort of commemoration of HBA’s 10th anniversary [please contact her with ideas!]. Finally, the day was capped off by wonderful guided tours of the Center and a safe bus-ride back to New York City.
CAA 2001: CHICAGO

This panel will meet at the time designated for CAA affiliate groups and will be allotted 1 ½ hours.

'Cool Britannia': New Directions in British Art History
As Britain is remaking itself, the discipline of British art history is reshaping itself. For this session, we invite papers that present new research/work in progress or that assess the state of research/literature in the field of British art. Papers are welcome from graduate students and recent PhDs. We also invite presentations from senior scholars of research that explore new directions in the field. Due to the time constraints of the session, papers are to be 15 minutes in length. Please submit a one-page abstract and c.v. to Dr. Anne Helmreich, P.O. Box 298000, Department of Art and Art History, TCU, Fort Worth, TX 76129 or ahelmreich@tcu.edu, by 15 June 2000.

CAA 2002: PHILADELPHIA

Call for Panel proposals for CAA 2002, Philadelphia
Members of HBA and scholars of British art are invited to submit proposals for the Panel to be sponsored by HBA at the 2002 CAA meeting. The panel proposal should be a short paragraph in length and include the names and mailing addresses of the sponsors. (For models, see the current listing for CAA 2001). Some possible themes that were identified at the February HBA meeting include: Paradigms of Modernity; Contact/Encounter: Imperialism; Colonial/Post-Colonial; Rethinking the Notion of National Schools (a theme that is particularly opportune given the restructuring of the Tate). Panel Proposals should be sent to Dr. Anne Helmreich, P.O. Box 298000, Department of Art and Art History, TCU, Fort Worth, TX 76129 or ahelmreich@tcu.edu, by 15 June 2000.

NEWS FROM THE BOOK PRIZE COMMITTEE

The HBA Book Prize Committee has awarded 2 winners for the 1998 publishing year. We are happy to announce them here.

* In the category of British art and architectural history pre-1800:
* In the category of British art and architectural history post-1800:

Also, at the HBA Annual meeting in February the board and membership voted to restructure the book prize. We are pleased to announce that this year we will award 3 prizes to books published in 1999 in the following categories: British art and architectural history pre-1800 (single author); British art and architectural history 1800-the present (single author); and British art and architectural history any period (more than one author, including edited volumes and exhibition catalogues).
REVIEWS OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Reviews are sought on recent work that critiques, qualifies, and/or expands the concept of "British Art" or methodologies used to explore such a concept.

Format for submitting reviews
Please submit reviews on disc (Microsoft Word; font size 11; write name of file on the disc) and paper. At the top of the page, include:

TITLE by author's name. City of publication, Publisher, Date. Number of pages. ISBN number. Reviewed by name, department, institutional affiliation (where applicable), and address, phone, and e-mail address.

Please limit your essay to about 750 words single-spaced. Do not include footnotes or endnotes. Italicize quoted material and cite references within your essay as follows: TITLE (author's name, date of publication).

For further information, please contact: Jennifer Way
Division of Art History, School of Visual Arts
University of North Texas
P.O. Box 305100
Denton, TX 76203-5100
940-565-4029 (Central Time)
jway@unt.edu

Next deadline to submit reviews is Thursday, October 15, 2000.

Gwen John by Alicia Foster.

This is a slender, portable, easily read paperback that offers substantial information to the general reader while providing fresh insights for the scholar. It will not supplant the publications of Cecily Langdale, Susan Chitty, or Mary Taubman, but it does dispute theses presented in earlier books, including the idea that John was habitually solitary.

Foster argues that John, rather than being a recluse, was in fact a visible and respected member of the artistic community in Paris from 1904-1939. As evidence she cites her exhibition records, letters to other artists, and her popularity with American John Quinn, sponsor of the Armory Show of 1913.

Drawing on newer interpretive strategies, including feminist art criticism, Foster suggests that John, a prolific correspondent, used writing and self-presentation in portraiture to construct her artistic and personal identities. These identities ran the gamut from the "New Woman," an autonomous type seeking validation through work, to "Marie" the model, stalker and obsessed lover of Rodin. Perhaps the most interesting part of Foster's book is chapter five entitled "Religion." Foster convincingly argues that several paintings showing a woman in an interior are in fact modern versions of the Annunciation theme. John was influenced by Maurice Denis's published Theories detailing ideas for the renewal of religious painting through modern compositional formats, the manipulation of color, space, and line for emotive effect, and radical simplification of form. According to Denis, this method fostered spiritual sentiments more authentic than those traditionally conveyed by realistic detail, outmoded poses, and precise draughtsmanship.
In the chapter devoted to John’s other interior views, Foster argues, “The significance of the mundane and everyday was also part of the Symbolist aesthetic of the late nineteenth century. Domestic events, surroundings and objects were represented as sources of poetry and mystery in Symbolist art and literature (p. 47).” Foster then links John’s work to Scandinavian art and the paintings of Vuillard. In chapter six the author suggests John’s preoccupation with portraits of young women was inspired by Denis’s call for a new classic order, and partly due to the later French “call to order,” a reactionary trend that rejected the modernity and machine age values associated with war during 1914-1918.

_Gwen John_ is one of four books in *The British Artist Series* published jointly by the Tate Gallery and Princeton University Press. Books on Blake, Epstein, and Wright have already been released; volumes on Hogarth, Turner, Bacon, and Sickert will be forthcoming in the fall of 2000 and spring of 2001. Tate Gallery staff, who commission the manuscripts, have not decided how many books will be published in all. Since scholarly monographs on these artists abound, one has to assume that this series is aimed at the general public. No doubt the Tate hopes to create greater interest in its collections through a group of colorful, readable, and moderately priced books highlighting the nation’s artistic heritage.

The fact that _Gwen John_ has no chapter notes to satisfy scholarly curiosity, and that no page numbers are provided for works cited, leads the reviewer to believe this publication is geared to those who will be content with art history in dilute doses. This volume does however contain a chronology, selected bibliography, and index; it offers forty better than average color photographs, and twenty black and white illustrations. Possibly due to a lack of source materials, Gwen John still remains an enigma. One wonders why she distanced herself from the woman’s suffrage movement, why Cubism failed to appeal to her, and how her work remained unaffected by the barbarities of World War I. Considering the intellectual and moral dilemmas facing someone of her era, she seems emotionally detached in both her activities and art. Unfortunately this book does not address these issues.

A series devoted to British art should also enlighten readers to salient features of the genre. Certainly readers of this review could enumerate qualities that make Turner, Blake, Wright, and Hogarth proponents of a native style. Yet even after finishing this book is unable to define the British element in John’s work. Although she studied at the Slade from 1895-1898, she spent nearly all her creative life in Paris. According to Foster, the principal influences in her art include Whistler’s Parisian _academie_ and _intimiste_ aesthetic, the writings of Denis, and Andre Lhote, and the stylistic innovations of Cézanne. Gwen John, a Catholic convert, was strongly Francophile in her artistic practice. Are we to believe she is a British artist solely because she was born in Wales, exhibited with the New English Art Club, and purchased a cottage in England?

Foster’s book offers new information on issues broached by previous authors, while it skirts some long ignored questions. Nonetheless, it would be a useful resource for students enrolled in a course on feminist art criticism, or twentieth-century British art. Recommended for public libraries as well.

 Reviewed by Lynne N. Reno, independent art critic, Art Department, Doucette Hall, Edinboro University, Edinboro, PA 16444, 814-732-2538, LRENO@edinboro.edu.

_William Blake_ by William Vaughan.

If the Internet is any indication, William Blake is alive and well in the consciousness of the English-speaking world. The major search engines bring up about 25,000 matches to “William Blake” and scores of web sites ranging from the University of Virginia’s Blake Archive, to an obsolete 1997 site created by a college student who thought Blake was “one of the weirdest poets I read my senior year.” Many of these sites
take advantage of the ability of a computer to render images along with the worlds, and Blake’s artistic output is given his due. Odd then, that typing in “Blake, William” on amazon.com provided a multitude of books almost exclusively about Blake’s poetry (and a few audio tapes), but precious little specifically devoted to his art. The popular attraction of Blake would suggest that there was a need for an elementary book on the artist, as there are several for Blake the poet. Rectifying this lacuna is William Vaughan’s William Blake, part of the admirable new series, British Artists, a group of small monographs of fewer than 100 pages each, published by the Tate Gallery and Princeton University Press.

William Vaughan is well known to scholars on both sides of the Atlantic. His many publications on European Romantic art, specifically German Romanticism, cause a book by him examining a popular figure such as Blake to be much anticipated. The fact that the book is for a general public is even more appealing since Vaughan is an engaging and captivating speaker who could bring Blake into the Romantic context of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In 68 pages Vaughan outlines Blake’s life in a roughly chronological fashion, illustrated by excellent reproductions, and captures the personality and controversy of this idiosyncratic and eccentric artist. Vaughan explores the connection between Blake’s poetry and visual art with great sensitivity, and the reader is easily able to grasp the inseparable union between the two.

We are given a primer in Blake’s sometimes eccentric print technique and also on Blake’s influences, some of which, such as Michelangelo, he shared with the establishment (“Sir Sloshua,” as he called the PRA, in particular), and some of which, such as the Gothic, he shared only with a few. Blake’s life-long love-hate relationship with that British art establishment is addressed, appropriately, throughout the book. But a question comes to mind when reading Vaughan’s account of Blake’s failure to gain acceptance as an history painter. Vaughan suggests that the most likely answer was that Blake’s “handling of human anatomy appeared (to put it politely) deviant.” There is considerable truth to that statement, but if the culmination of Blake’s attempt to be a history painter was merely three watercolor illustrations to the book of Job, then he would have suffered at least as much in the eyes of Academicians from inferior ambition. Where was Blake’s major oil historical subject to demonstrate his potential? Where was his “common half-length [40 x 50 inch]” entry for the RA’s Gold Medal in Historical Painting? Likewise, Blake’s style, for all its similarity to the Classical line of his friend Flaxman (Vaughan pays fruitful attention to his friendship), is too childlike (I use the term in a favorable way) and individualistic. Studying the illustrations Vaughan presents, it is inconceivable that Blake would have worked even as an engraver for a project as large as Boydell’s Shakespeare Gallery. In fact it appears to be something of a testimony to the devotion of the artist’s friends and admirers that he received as much work as he did. His engravings are too stylistically recognizable; he was unable to subjugate himself to the artist whose work he was engraving.

The insights of William Vaughan are as rewarding as looking at Blake’s eccentric art or reading his prescient verse. While aimed at the educated general art lover, even scholars will find the book a thoughtful well-rounded introduction to the artist. However, scholars might also take issue with some choices of housekeeping, such as the not-infrequent citing of secondary sources for quotations, without reference to the original source. Typographical errors appear now and again. No doubt, these will irritate the legions of literature specialists who will pick up Vaughan’s book to learn something about Blake’s art (although perhaps the spelling of “Newhaven” as the location of Yale University Press is Ivy League humor at Princeton). If the Blake volume of the Tate’s British Artists series is any indication, the general public and specialists alike will have much to ponder with this book in particular and the series as a whole. Collect them all.

Reviewed by John Wilson, 3626 Eastern Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45226, jhwilson@aol.com.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

...CONFERENCES...

A NOBLE ART: Amateur Artists and Drawing Masters in Stuart and Georgian Britain, May 25 2000

A one day conference will be held in conjunction with the exhibition of the same title in the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. The main purpose of the exhibition is to demonstrate that the history of British art and culture is made up not just of the great names of British art but of the thousands of less well-known artists, professional and amateur, whose works reveal a more truthful picture of the varied and fascinating artistic production of the nation. The conference will provide an opportunity to examine wider issues of education, leisure and ‘polite’ recreation, commerce, consumption and culture in Britain in the long 18th century. The program will include:

* Ann Beringham, (University of California, Santa Barbara), “Women Amateurs and the Language of Flowers”
* David Alexander, “Amateur Etchers”
* Dongho Chun, “Framing Cultural Hegemony: Sir John Fleming Leicester’s Amateur Paintings 1784-1827”
* Katie Coombes, “The Portrait Miniature and the Amateur”
* Lucy Peltz, “Amateurs, Authors and Artists: A Socioeconomic look at Extra-illustration in the late 18th Century”

There will be a private view of the exhibition in the evening with the curator, Kim Sloan, and her catalogue will be available at a reduced price.

At the Paul Mellon Centre, 16 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JA; tel. 01144. 20.7580.0311, fax 011.44.20.7636.6730; email: events@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk.


MWASECS, the Midwest American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, announces the presentation of papers and panels for its 31st Annual conference, to be held at the Kellogg Center, Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, on November 3, 4, 5, 2000. The theme of this year’s conference is Formation of Identity and Taste in the Eighteenth-Century World.

Plenary speakers include:
Professor Daniel Richter, History Department, University of Pennsylvania,
Professor Daniel Landry, English Department, Wayne State University, and
Professor Richard Stockton Rand, Theatre Division, Purdue University.

Address questions to the conference coordinator: Agnes Haigh Widder
Michigan State University
100 Library WG 1 F
East Lansing, MI 48824-1048
phone: 517-432-2217, fax: 517-432-3532
widder@mail.lib.msu.edu

Also, find ASECS online: at http://www.press.jhu.edu/associations/asecs. 
...SOCIETIES...

The North American Conference on British Studies (NACBS)
The North American Conference on British Studies (NACBS) is on-line! The NACBS is a scholarly society dedicated to the study of British civilization in all its aspects. The NACBS sponsors scholarly publications and an annual conference, as well as several academic prizes and graduate fellowships. While the largest single group of its members teach British history in colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, the NACBS has significant representation among specialists in literature, art history, politics, law, sociology, and economics. Its membership also includes teachers at universities in countries outside North America, secondary school teachers, and independent scholars.

The NACBS is closely associated with seven regional conferences: The Northeast (NECBS), the Middle Atlantic (MACBS), the Midwest (MWCBS), the Southern (SCBS), the Western (WCBS), the Pacific Coast (PCBS), and the Northwest (NWCBS). These regional conferences, which have their own membership rolls, administrative officers, scholarly meetings, and newsletters, enjoy a combined membership of over 3,000 persons. Founded in 1950, the NACBS was known in its early years simply as the Conference on British Studies. The conference became affiliated with the American Historical Review in 1952.

In the future, the NACBS will meet at the Sutton Place Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, from November 2nd to 4th, 2001. The NACBS is planning to meet with the Southern Conference on British Studies and the Southern Historical Society at Baltimore in 2002.

New features on their website, http://www.nacbs.org/meet.html include:
* NACBS Report on the State and Future of British Studies
* updated guidelines for NACBS prizes
* a new list of funding opportunities for research and study
* new links to regional conferences and related organizations.

Association of Art Historians!
CAA/HBA members are encouraged to become members of Association of Art Historians, CAA’s equivalent in Britain. CAA members receive a substantial discount to join.

Membership with The Art Book CAA discount: £49.30 ($78.20), Full price: £58.00 ($92.00)
Membership with Art History CAA discount: £55.25 ($87.55), Full price: £65.00 ($103.00)
For further details, contact Andrew Falconer, admin@ah.org.uk, Administrator, Association of Art Historians, 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ.

...PUBLICATIONS & CALLS FOR MATERIALS...

The British Art Journal
In a presentation to HBA members at the YCBA, Robin Simon encouraged the subscription to his new journal for libraries and individuals; he also encouraged submissions - the journal’s scope is medieval to modern, with special features and book reviews. It will appear twice yearly. Major articles (over 3000 words), shorter articles (up to 3000 words) should be sent to:

Editor: The British Art Journal, 46 Grove Lane, London SE5 8ST, UK
Email: info@BritishArtJournal.co.uk    Website: www.britishartjournal.co.uk
Announcing a New Series from Ashgate

WOMEN AND GENDER IN THE EARLY MODERN WORLD
Series Editors: Allyson M. Poska, Mary Washington College, and Abby Zanger, Harvard University

In the past decade, the study of women and gender has offered some of the most vital and innovative challenges to scholarship on the early modern period. Ashgate’s new series of interdisciplinary and comparative studies, “Women and Gender in the Early Modern World,” takes up this challenge, reaching beyond geographical limitations to explore the experiences of early modern women and the nature of gender in Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Submissions of single-author studies and edited collections will be considered.

Proposals should take the form of either
* a preliminary letter of inquiry, briefly describing the project; or
* a formal prospectus including: abstract, table of contents, sample of chapter (other than the introduction), estimate of length, estimate of the number and type of illustrations to be included, and a c.v.

Please send 3 copies of either type of proposal (one to each of the series editors and one to the publisher) to the addresses below:

Allyson Poska          Abby Zanger          Erika Gaffney
Dept. of History      Dept. of Romance Language & Lit.  Editor
Mary Washington College  Harvard University  Ashgate Publishing Co.
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From the editor of Scotia

William S. Rodner, editor of *Scotia, Interdisciplinary Journal of Scottish Studies*, announces the publication of the latest issue, volume XXII. Included are articles on the writer Iain Crichton Smith and the philosopher David Hume as well as a survey of recent writing on Medieval Scottish history. A wide range of books are reviewed and there is a comprehensive list of new publications on all areas of Scottish studies.

Contributions to Scotia are welcomed, especially from HBA members. Manuscripts and all correspondence (including information about joining our list of reviewers) should be addressed to the editor, Department of History, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23529. E-mail: wroder@dodu.edu.

Victorian Studies Joins MUSE

The following journal from the Indiana University Press, previously announced as joining Project MUSE in 2000, is now online.

*Victorian Studies*, which began publication on 1956, is devoted to the study of English culture of the Victorian period. It includes interdisciplinary articles on comparative literature, social and political history, and the histories of education, philosophy, fine arts, economics, law, and science.

For more information on the journal, please go to: [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/victorian_studies](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/victorian_studies). For the table of contents, please go to: [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/victorian_studies/toc/vic42.2.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/victorian_studies/toc/vic42.2.html)