2019 awards for books published in 2017

The Historians of British Artist Book Prize Committee is pleased to announce Book Award winners for publications from 2017. The winners were chosen from a nominating list of over one hundred books from more than thirty different presses. Awards are granted in four different categories.

The award for a single-authored book with a subject before 1600 goes to Eleri Lynn, Tudor Fashion: Dress at Court.


The award for a single-authored book with a subject after 1800 goes to Lucy Peltz, Facing the Text: Extra-Illustration, Print Culture, and Society in Britain, 1769-1840.


HBA would like to offer congratulations to the winning authors and the publishing teams at Brepols, Huntington Library Press, and Yale University Press.

This year’s committee of readers consisted of Morna O’Neill, Matthew Reeve, Stacey Sloboda, and Eric Stryker.

How, where, and why did the Tudors wear a farthingale? Fascinating and accessible, Eleri Lynn’s *Tudor Fashion: Dress at Court* uses historical recreation as a vital tool for scholarly research and presentation, examining not only what the Tudors wore, but how they wore it. *Tudor Fashion* contains a wealth of historical information as well as new insight into fashion, portraiture, and self-presentation. It breaks new ground as a model for innovative fashion history, usefully situating dress as an important part of visual culture. Using surviving garments, textiles, and archives, as well as insights gleaned from art and archaeology, this beautifully illustrated book situates dress at the nexus of power and display in the Tudor court.

Temi Odumosu’s *Africans in English Caricature 1769–1819: Black Jokes White Humour* is a carefully researched and brilliantly written analysis of racial caricature at a key moment in the history of the development of British (and European and American) representational ideas about race. She identifies key visual themes of excess and licentiousness in relation to the representation of Africans in British visual culture that are familiar to scholars, but interprets them through a complex genealogy of images and cultural referents culled from extensive archival work to produce a novel critical analysis. The result is a fresh interpretation of a series of historical images that continue to haunt us today.

Kate Retford’s *The Conversation Piece: Making Modern Art in 18th-Century Britain* is a methodologically sophisticated, comprehensively considered study of a genre that is central to the history of 18th-century British art. It situates the conversation piece as an innovation in portraiture, one attentive to composition and narrative as well as social customs. By paying close attention to setting and the rich material culture on display in these paintings, Retford argues that the conversation piece played a key role in articulating familiar networks and social norms in Georgian Britain. Notions of politeness and performance take on renewed resonance, and Retford’s book will undoubtedly become the now-standard reference on the topic.

This book represents a significant scholarly contribution to the field, examining and explicating the important practice of extra-illustration. *Facing the Text* is the first full-length, critical analysis of extra-illustrated books during their hundred-year heyday from the mid-18th to mid-19th centuries. Peltz demonstrates how the practice of assembling and re-assembling bound books from multiple pictorial and textual sources constituted a new literary and bibliographic form that has important implications for histories of illustration and graphic design, print culture, and histories of the book, particularly reception studies. Though extra-illustrated books have received critical censure for their perceived destructive and eccentric qualities, Peltz’s erudite study, and the Huntington’s sumptuous design and printing of the book, makes a strong case for the visual and material interest of extra-illustrated books as their importance as historical and artistic documents.

*Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery* accompanied an exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art and Fitzwilliam Museum of the same title. This beautiful book features a series of engaging essays that make a meaningful critical intervention in the study of studio art pottery. By taking a global perspective and exploring typologies, the book demonstrates how British potters of the last century have expanded our understanding of what constitutes ceramics through techniques, materials, and display.