

WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY IN THE UNITED STATES

NEWSLETTER

July 2010



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On the cover: May Morris, *Double landscape*. Watercolor, ca. 1911. Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, on loan to the University of Delaware Library.

This newsletter is published by the William Morris Society in the United States, P.O. Box 53263, Washington, DC 20009. *Editorial committee:* Florence S. Boos, Fran Durako, B.J. Robinson, Mark Samuels Lasner. Submit articles and items of interest to us@morrissociety.org.

Website: www.morrissociety.org.

Blog: <http://morrissociety.blogspot.com>.

A LETTER TO MEMBERS

The William Morris Society in the United States has been fairly active this year, with most thoughts turning to our participation in the 7–9 October conference, "Useful and Beautiful: The Transatlantic Arts of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites," which Mark has organized at the University of Delaware, Winterthur Museum & Country Estate, and Delaware Art Museum. The program committee was overwhelmed by the submission of proposals, and in the event, there will be over 50 speakers, as well as other lectures associated with the conference, special exhibitions (one an art installation by David Mabb), a play, social events, and—we hope—many attenders. This is the first Morris/Arts and Crafts conference held in the United States since 1973, continuing a tradition of Morris Society confer-

ences held in Oxford (1990 and 1996), Toronto (2000), and London (2005). We are especially pleased that several members from the Canadian and UK Morris Societies are planning to be present, and grateful for the £1000 of travel grants contributed by the UK Society.

The governing committee and others took advantage of our sessions at the 2009 MLA annual convention in Philadelphia (29–30 December) to meet informally. In addition to a tour of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, founded in 1814, and a convivial meal at the New Delhi Restaurant, we convened in the hotel room of Gary and Pat Aho to discuss the Society's business: future events to be held on the eastern corridor (including a possible October lecture in New York by James Macaulay, the Charles Rennie Mackintosh expert), the need for younger members, the desirability of volunteers to help Mark and Fran, ways to coordinate with other groups and compensate for geographical dispersal, and our need for funds.

We have also been working on a redesign and update of the Morris Society website, which we hope will be in place soon after members receive this *Newsletter*. The UK Society has established their own website, arranged in conjunction with ours to ensure that US residents who wish to join the Society enroll as US members and thus receive our mailings. Please visit www.morrissociety.org this fall, and make suggestions on clarity, content and relevance. And as always, we would be grateful for anyone willing to devote time to improving its contents. Our goal is for the Morris Society website to provide accurate informational and educational materials on all aspects of Morris's life and work.

Florence visited London in March and Mark in June, and both enjoyed attending events at Kelmscott House and talking with members of the UK Society. We also want to thank the many who contributed to the cooperative effort of this *Newsletter*—among others, Andrea Donovan from North Dakota, Gary Aho from Massachusetts, Dallas Piotrowski from New Jersey, Margaretta S. Frederick from Delaware, Anna Matyukhina from St. Petersburg—as well as Mark, who remains our designer and troubleshooter. "The Last Word" for this issue is a commentary sadly relevant to the ecological disaster which now threatens the Gulf Coast (and much else).

A cloud on the horizon is that the recession has brought a worrisome and somewhat sharp drop in membership. If you haven't renewed, and are able to, *please do so*, and urge anyone who shares an interest in Morris, his circle, and the present day relevance of his work, to join us by enrolling in the Morris Society.

With best wishes to all for a good summer and fall—

Fran Durako, Florence Boos, Mark Samuels Lasner

Useful & Beautiful

THE TRANSATLANTIC ARTS OF WILLIAM MORRIS & THE PRE-RAPHAELITES



UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
WINTERTHUR MUSEUM & COUNTRY ESTATE
DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

7–9 October 2010

“Useful & Beautiful: The Transatlantic Arts of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites” will be the subject of a conference and related exhibitions to be held 7–9 October 2010 at the University of Delaware (Newark, DE) and at the Delaware Art Museum and the Winterthur Museum & Country Estate (Wilmington, DE). Organized with the assistance of the William Morris Society in the United States, “Useful & Beautiful” will highlight the strengths of the University of Delaware’s rare books, art, and manuscripts collections; Winterthur’s important holdings in American decorative arts; and the Delaware Art Museum’s superlative Pre-Raphaelite collection (the largest outside Britain). All events will focus on the multitude of transatlantic exchanges that involved Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic movements of the late nineteenth century.

In addition to sessions featuring internationally-known scholars and experts, there will be a keynote lecture by noted biographer, Fred Kaplan; demonstrations by leading practitioners who make and design Arts and Crafts objects; special exhibitions; and a performance of Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* by the University of Delaware’s critically acclaimed Resident Ensemble Players.

More information: (302) 831-3250; www.udel.edu/conferences/uandb

“Useful & Beautiful” is supported by Delaware Art Museum; Winterthur Museum & Country Estate; Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts; William Morris Society in the United States; William Morris Society (UK); University of Delaware Library Associates; Faculty Senate Committee on Cultural Activities and Public Events, University of Delaware; the following University of Delaware units, departments and programs: College of Arts and Sciences, University of Delaware, University of Delaware Library, Art, Art Conservation, Art History, English, History, Institute for Global Studies, Frank and Yetta Chailken Center for Jewish Studies, Center for Material Culture Studies, Office of Equity and Inclusion, Resident Ensemble Players/Professional Theatre Training Program, University Museums, and Women’s Studies; Greater Wilmington Convention and Visitors Bureau. *Illustration:* Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882), *Water Willow*, 1871. Oil on canvas, glued to wood. Delaware Art Museum, Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935.

MORRIS SOCIETY AT THE MODERN
LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

2010-2012

After many years of holding its annual meetings in December, the Modern Language Association will meet next on 6-9 January 2011 in Los Angeles. According to new MLA guidelines, Allied Organizations such as the William Morris Society are granted one guaranteed session and may apply for a second collaborative one. Accordingly, in 2011 the Morris Society is sponsoring one session and co-sponsoring a second with the Arthurian Society of America. We have also arranged to apply for a second 2012 session in association with SHARP, the Society for the History of Authors, Reading and Publishing.

2010 SESSIONS

William Morris and the Arts: Crafts, Design, Architecture

Chair: Elizabeth Miller, University of California-Davis. *Speakers:* Sue Zemka, University of Colorado, "Morris's Hands"; Andrea Donovan, Minot State University, "William Morris and the SPAB: From the Nineteenth Century to the Present"; Stephanie Arnsel, University of Texas-San Antonio, "William Morris and the Art of Book Design."

The Pre-Raphaelites and the Medieval Past

(co-sponsored with the Arthurian Society)

Chair: Florence S. Boos, University of Iowa. *Speakers:* Rachael Zeleny, University of Delaware, "Rossetti's Rose: Elizabeth Siddal and *The Romance of the Rose*"; Kathleen Slaugh-Sanford, University of Delaware, "Among the cursed Jues: Edward Burne-Jones and Chaucer's *Prioress's Tale*"; William Nelles, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, "Translating Medieval Images in Beardsley's *La Morte Darthur*."

2012 SESSIONS

Morris's Artistic Descendants: Women Writers, Artists and Designers

Speakers: Lynn R. Wilkinson, University of Texas-Austin, "Staging Morris: Anne Charlotte Leffler's *How to Do Good* and William Morris's Critique of Philanthropy"; Heidi Pierce, University of Delaware, "Politicizing the Arts and Crafts Movement: Mary De Morgan's 'Bread of Discontent'"; Christine Elaine Ericsson, University of Southampton, "Symmetry and Symbolism in the Embroidery Designs of May Morris."

Call for Proposals: Pre-Raphaelite Audiences: Critics, Readers, Viewers

Session proposed by the William Morris Society and SHARP, the Society for the History of Authorship, Readers, and Publishing.

Please send proposals by 15 March 2011 to Florence S. Boos, florence-boos@uiowa.edu.

A NEW BOOK
THE ARTIST & THE CAPITALIST:
WILLIAM MORRIS & RICHARD
MARSDEN

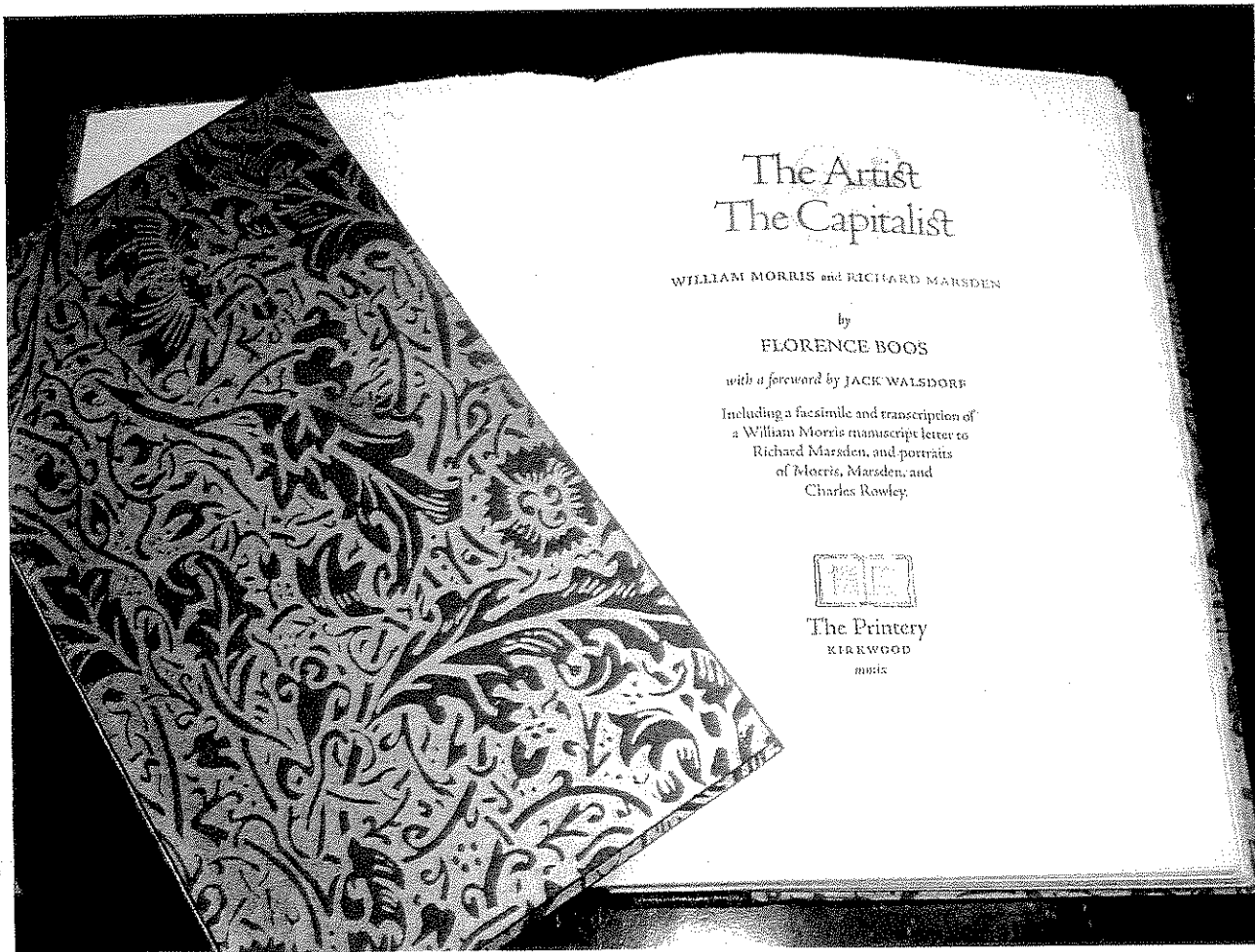
Ginny Kramer

A new William Morris title has recently been published by The Printery, a fine press in Kirkwood, MO. *The Artist & the Capitalist: William Morris & Richard Marsden* presents Florence S. Boos's research into the background of an important, previously unpublished, seven-page William Morris letter. The focus of the book, and the letter, is one of Morris's most acclaimed lectures, "Art Under Plutocracy," a powerful secular sermon about art and its social environment. "Art Under Plutocracy" bluntly evoked the specter of social unrest, demanded commitment to a radical cause, and framed that cause in a critique of aesthetic hypocrisy and social injustice. Richard Marsden, a Manchester industrialist, harshly criticized the lecture in a very unfavorable article published in the *Textile Manufacturer*. This letter is Morris's response to Marsden's review.

In "Morris as I Knew Him" (published in *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist* by May Morris), George Bernard Shaw says of Morris's letter writing: "Morris loathed it [letter writing], and would never write one if he could possibly help it." So one must assume Morris was quite provoked by Marsden, to the point of sending him a lengthy, private communication.

Jack Walsdorf, the owner of the letter who supplies the book's forward, states that upon first reading the letter, "I soon began to realize that the story behind this letter must be at least as interesting as the text of the letter. And that's when the name of Florence Boos came to mind. . . . I am delighted that her book, with the expert and careful design and printing of it by Kay Michael Kramer of The Printery, is a stunning piece of bookmaking combined with scholarship."

The Artist & the Capitalist is set in Jenson and Italian Old Style types. It was printed on a handpress in four flat colors on Somerset Book, a mould-made sheet from St. Cuthberts Mill in England. The edition is quarter bound in leather with Morris-inspired paper sides. Each copy includes a facsimile reproduction of the letter and a transcription as well. Also included are tipped-in reproductions of cartes de visite



Title-page and front cover of *The Artist & The Capitalist*

of Morris and Marsden. The production was limited to 110 copies, of which 100 copies will be offered for sale. A special pre-publication price of \$375 is available through the summer to members of the William Morris Society.

This is a companion volume to *On Collecting William Morris: A Memoir*, authored by Jack Walsdorf and published by The Printery in 2006. You can learn more about both books by visiting www.theprintery-books.com and going to the "Books in Print" tab. Or, send an e-mail to proprietor@theprinterybooks.com. The Printery can also be reached at 1717 Winesap Lane, Kirkwood, MO 63122, (314) 821-1465.

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Three of these exhibitions are associated with "Useful & Beautiful: The Transatlantic Arts of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites" conference organized with the help of the Society, to be held in Delaware, 7–9 October 2010, see page 3 of this *Newsletter*.

A Belief in the Power of Beauty: A Selection of Work by May Morris (1862–1938)

Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE, 28 August 2010–2 January 2011. For much of her life, the artistic output of May Morris, daughter of Arts and Crafts pioneer William Morris, was lost in the shadow of her famous father. This exhibition will examine a collection of watercolor paintings as well as a selection of other media in which her artistic talents flourished. Info: www.delart.org.

David Mabb: The Morris Kitsch Archive

Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Wilmington, DE, 13 August–5 December 2010. Installation of several hundred images by London artist David Mabb of commercial objects decorated with William Morris patterns. Info: www.dcca.org.

Gustav Stickley and the American Arts and Crafts Movement

Newark Museum, Newark, NJ, 15 September 2010–2 January 2011. *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts and Crafts Movement* offers the first comprehensive examination of the life and work of the recognized patriarch

of the American Arts and Crafts movement. The exhibition explores Stickley as a business leader and design proselytizer, whose body of work included furnishings, architectural and interior designs, and the *Craftsman* magazine, which became synonymous with the Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the twentieth century. This exhibition includes more than 100 masterworks produced by Stickley's designers and workshops: furniture, textiles, metalwork and lamps, as well as drawings. From Stickley's earliest progressive furniture of 1900 to designs created around the time of his ill-fated expansion of 1913, the exhibition provides a perspective on the aesthetics, craftsmanship, and identity of the works of Stickley's Craftsman Workshops and their role in creating the ideal home of the era. Info: www.newarkmuseum.org.

The Multifaceted Mr. Morris

Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, University of Delaware Library, 1 October–1 November 2010. Books, manuscripts, letters, and drawings by William Morris are featured in this small show drawn from a private collection on loan to, and housed within, the University of Delaware Library. On view during the "Useful & Beautiful" conference, 7–9 October, and also *by appointment only* at other times. Contact: Mark Samuels Lasner, (302) 831-3250, marksl@udel.edu.

The Pre-Raphaelite Lens: British Photography and Painting, 1848–1875

National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 31 October 2010–30 January 2011. In a survey of British art photography in the 1850s and 1860s, 130 photographs, paintings and watercolors chronicle photography's relationship with Pre-Raphaelite art and its consequent role in changing concepts of vision and truth in representation. As the exhibition will show, Lewis Carroll, Julia Margaret Cameron, Roger Fenton, H. P. Robinson, O. G. Rejlander, and other photographers had much in common with such painters as John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and John William Inchbold, as all wrestled with the question of how to observe and represent the natural world and the human face and figure. This dialogue between photography and painting is examined in thematic sections on landscape, portraiture, literary and historical narratives, and modern life subjects. Info: www.nga.gov.

Visit the Society's Blog
NEWS FROM ANYWHERE
<http://morrissociety.blogspot.com>
Send news, comments, thoughts, images
to Mark Samuels Lasner, marksl@udel.edu

The William Morris Society held two well-attended sessions at the Modern Language Association Annual Convention in Philadelphia, PA, held 27–30 December 2009. The first session, "Music and the Pre-Raphaelites" (29 December), was chaired by Hartley S. Spatt, with three panelists: Karen Yuen (independent scholar); Kathleen O'Neill Sims (independent scholar); and Donna S. Parsons (University of Iowa). Abstracts of their talks appear below:

Karen Yuen, "Musical Pre-Raphaelitism: Defining the Area"

Whenever scholars around the world discuss the aesthetic phenomenon known as Pre-Raphaelitism, rarely—if ever—do they mention the medium of music. Ever since members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood unveiled their creations to the Victorian artistic community in 1849 and 1850, Pre-Raphaelitism has been understood as a purely artistic and literary phenomenon. But a close inspection of the lives of the Pre-Raphaelites, their works, and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century responses to these works reveals that this understanding is in need of serious revision; not only were the Pre-Raphaelites acquainted with individuals in the Victorian musical world, but they were also keen to include playable music in their art and literature (aside from colour harmonies, musical instruments, song-like rhythms in poetry, and so forth) and inspired a generation of British and foreign composers to set their poems to "Pre-Raphaelite" music.

Because musical Pre-Raphaelitism or the sonic dimension of Pre-Raphaelitism has never been formally recognized as an area of study—and thus has never been systematically examined—I seek in this paper to identify some of its major research threads and to demonstrate how pursuing such threads can help us better understand Pre-Raphaelitism. Adopting a formal-historical approach to such works as Dante Gabriel Rossetti's music-notated watercolours *La Belle Dame sans Merci* (1855) and *My Lady Greensleeves* (1859) as well as to selected musical settings composed between 1880 and 1920 of William Morris's poem "Rapunzel" from *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems* (1858), my paper argues that musical Pre-Raphaelitism can be understood or approached in at least two different ways: 1) music in Pre-Raphaelite art/literature; and 2) musical responses to, or accompanying, Pre-Raphaelite art/literature. Approaching musical Pre-Raphaelitism from these angles has its benefits; aside from obtaining evidence that some long-held beliefs about Pre-Raphaelite melophobia are simply untrue—especially Rossetti's famed abhorrence of music—we are introduced to the

fact that the popularity and longevity of the idea of Pre-Raphaelitism after 1880 were closely linked to events in the musical world; indeed, every time a poem is set to music, publicity is often generated for the poem (the poet) and its (his/her) ideas when the setting is performed, published, and reviewed.

By showing that music is a critical component of Pre-Raphaelite history, I hope not only to update our understanding of Pre-Raphaelitism, but to also encourage a lively discussion on its intermedial methodologies and procedures, that is, how the phenomenon's visual, literary, and sonic facets interact and complement each other. At a time when research in the field is becoming somewhat repetitive, it would be in our best interest to take advantage of the current need for interdisciplinary research in the academy to address any unanswered questions regarding the multi-modal nature of Pre-Raphaelitism.

Kathleen O'Neill Sims, "Edward Burne-Jones and the Graham Piano: 'Ne oublie'"

William Graham, a wealthy Glasgow merchant and long-time patron of Burne-Jones, commissioned the artist to create a piano as a wedding gift for his daughter, Frances. Undeniably beautiful with its clean lines, simple green glaze, and elaborate murals, the piano must have appeared like one of the fantasy instruments Burne-Jones conjured in his oils, most notably *Le Chant d'Amour*, which was finished that same year. As Pater famously remarked regarding Titian's *Fête champêtre* (then erroneously attributed to Sebastian del Piombo), "All art aspires to the condition of music." Music, designed to pleasure the ear and quicken the pulse, seems the quintessence of abstract form and affective matter blent into a unified harmony. Painting, and every other art form as he saw it, should strive toward an incantatory sublime in which the distinction between form and matter vanishes. This grasping after transmutation, Pater, borrowing from Hegel, termed an *Andersstreben* ("other standing," literally translated).

Employing this effect over and over, Burne-Jones sought to educe a mystical and erotic reverie in his spectators, or, at the very least, have us watch his prosopopoetic signifiers enjoy one. The artist created two incarnations of his imaginary medieval *fête galante*, *Le Chant de Amour* in which a fetching young woman swoons at her pre-dieu *cum* keyboard, accompanied by Eros and a suitor. His peerless *Golden Stair* relies on its hypnotic suggestion of unheard melodies for its lovely but foreboding eroticism. He also designed numerous stained glass windows, illustrations, embroidery, and tapestries executed by Morris & Company, designed to overreach the confines of his pictured worlds to reach musical paradises. Here, instead of painting a piano onto a canvas, the artist reverses the order and paints

pictures on an actual musical instrument, suggesting that music too strives to be something other than itself. His use of the myth of Orpheus as his subject matter emerges as more interesting than a *pro forma* celebration of the immortality of art.

Victorian artists painted and wrote about this myth frequently no doubt because of its themes of doomed love, the triumph of art, and its link with mystery cults. But two of the artists most closely associated with Burne-Jones temperamentally, Leighton and Watts, chose to paint Orpheus's loss, most often figured as a dying embrace. Certainly, he was not like Glück, burdened by opera reform, tempted to give the tragic tale a pedestrian happy ending. Amoret does not descend and join the parted lovers in resurrected bliss, returning them to the realm of the living. For Burne-Jones, the loss of Eurydice back into the world shades would indicate the failure of art to produce lasting effects in the here and now, the conjured romance doomed always to dissolve back into the semiotic hinterlands beyond the land of the living.

Looking at the piano itself, this failure seems to find its instantiation in the ten grisaille roundels, painted on the box of the piano. Here we see that the artist employs ten images to tell the story: *The Garden*, *The Garden Poisoned*, *The Gate of Hell*, *The Doorkeeper*, *Across the Flames*, *The House of Pluto*, *Three Images of Orpheus Leading Eurydice Away*, the last being *The Regained Lost*, *The Death of Orpheus*. (The part of the piano facing the audience bears the three events of the mythic narrative most popular with Victorian artists and audiences: Orpheus playing for Pluto and Persephone, his encounter with Cerberus, and the doomed pair's last embrace. On the side of the piano facing the spectator, the artist draws out this last event in three slightly altered images in successive roundels, ending in Eurydice's death. By miming in this slow visual dance the three lines of the roundel's stanzaic structure—both Orpheus's song and mythic narrative screeching to a halt, the artist suggests music's and poetry's failure to transmute the reality of death because it must unfold in time with a beginning, middle, and end, here figured by Eurydice's dead body.

Moreover, by placing successive images whose temporal order and formal shape invest whatever music the piano produces with narrative, he traps it, much like the Apollonian gaze seizes the spectator, and exposes music, allegedly pure art, as also irretrievably split between form and content, the rift figuring the divide between the living and the dead, also figured by the last roundel on the piano's front side. Burne-Jones also indicates that music, supposedly the most perfect of the arts, also has its aspirations to pass into the condition of another art form to escape mortality, to pass into imagery, which provides a much needed caesura.

The caesura, the tangible stillness for which Burne-Jones was famous, allows time in the here and now to blossom literally in the image on the inside of the piano's lid that features a serenely Technicolor *Terra Omniparens*, or Mother Earth. She basks in the attention of twenty-one pudgy *putti*, themselves encircled by swirling grape-vines bearing, not so innocently, the purple fruit that foreshadows Orpheus's passion below. The deaths of both Orpheus and Eurydice appear to be redeemed. But the glowing image, arguably intended as a melancholic valentine to Frances Graham, whom Burne-Jones loved, is not derived from the myth—in fact it seems to have more to do with Eleusinian mysteries than Dionysian ones. As such, the *fait* of both life and death can never be *accompli*—at least in Burne-Jones's art, which promises to shield us from time's assaults. Redemption always requires death. It too must be vanquished.

The lavishly playful Mantegnesque image clashes purposively with the ghostly roundels that subtend it. A work of this kind must always simultaneously seek to guard and to erase its boundaries as it cautiously limns a transcendent Elsewhere—an other standing; that hope, like Orpheus's dream, can only be figured by the still visible but eternally fading Eurydice as she recedes into the depths of the roundel. The promise of its efflorescence can be kindled anew only when the piano is played and listeners *follow* the story painted on it. Other reaching requires both visual suspense and the never-ending refrain of the myth. The doubled voice of the piano, if not exactly immortal, then at least longer lived than either Burne-Jones or Frances Graham, offers both the spectator and auditor a time-bound secular redemption even if Mother Earth reminds us that Orpheus was ripped to shreds for his pains.

But the subject matter Burne-Jones chose seemingly jars against the purpose of the gift.

Donna S. Parsons, "Warbling Like a Bird': Operatic Acclaim and the Role of the Diva in Christina Rossetti's 'Hero'"

Christina Rossetti was acutely attuned to the bleak opportunities creative women encountered in Victorian England. She herself struggled to maintain artistic control over her verses and to find her place within the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Yet Rossetti found inspiration in an unlikely source: an opera diva. Jenny Lind was admired by the British public as much for her incomparable voice as for her flawless character. Lind's successful musical career and her charity concerts proved that a woman could pursue her artistic dreams without compromising feminine ideals. Rossetti took note of Lind's example when she wrote her short story "Hero." Set within the frame of a fairy tale, the plot charts the trajectory of the teenager Hero's quest to

seek undivided admiration from all who behold her. Transforming herself into a gem, a princess, an opera diva, and a plant, Hero ultimately learns that true love is not materialistic or transitory. While the Victorian code of morality dictates that the heroine is returned to her home and her place as a dutiful daughter and wife, it is Hero's experience on the operatic stage where she realizes the power a modest and gracious woman holds. Hero assumes the identity of the opera diva Melice Rapta at the height of her fame in London. In Rapta the plot boldly displays a diva who does not die or even lose her voice; but rather one who retains control of her professional career and makes the decision herself to retire. In this talk I examine the aspects of Jenny Lind's personal and professional life that Christina Rossetti found inspiring and the ways in which Rossetti's fictional diva navigates Victorian conventions of modesty and morality.

The second session, "William Morris: Later Friends and Associates," a sequel to "William Morris's Early Friends and Associates," held at the 2008 MLA convention, took place on 30 December and was chaired by Florence S. Boos. The four speakers were Eleonora Sasso (Università degli Studi Gabriele d'Annunzio, Pescara, Italy); Paul Acker (St. Louis University); Jude V. Nixon (Salem State University); and Zachary Weir (Miami University). The abstracts of their talks follow.

Eleonora Sasso, "William Morris, Ford Madox Ford and the Celebration of Simplicity"

This paper takes as its starting point Epicurus's doctrine of simplicity to advance a new reading of Ford Madox Ford's indebtedness to William Morris's aesthetic credo, one which sees *The Simple Life Limited* (1911) as a re-writing of *News from Nowhere*.

The Simple Life Limited not only develops its own detailed blueprint of the utopian society, but is also a broad philosophical meditation on the utopian tradition. As part of this overview Ford devotes close attention to Morris's *News from Nowhere* at several points in his work, displaying considerable ambivalence towards it. In this talk I track through these references and look at the issues—laws of simplicity, narrative representations of simple, dignified, almost perfect life, adherence to the simplicity of art, rustic simplicity, etc.—which they raise.

Crucial to Ford's own project in *The Simple Life Limited* is Morris's idea that "simplicity of life, even the barest, is not misery, but the very foundation of refinement," one which pervades the mind of "the last of Pre-Raphaelites" who "love[s] luxury, [. . .] but hate[s] comfort" and connotes a sense of fascination for elegant plainness of expression. I consider to what extent the depicted world of *The Simple Life Limited* lives up to this criterion.

But my central purpose is to re-read *The Simple Life Limited* as a medievalist utopia in Morrisian terms. I reflect on the importance of handicraft that dignifies labour and makes it a spiritual necessity, and interpret the socialist community depicted by Ford as a Morris-like utopian project, one which introduces the extraordinary figure of Ophelia Bransdon who provokes us to profoundly revalue the role of Morris's theories of humanity in Ford's imagination. Through Ophelia, I suggest, Ford attempts to build into his work the kind of modernism that *News from Nowhere* extols, with deep insights into socio-cultural innovations.

Paul Acker, "Charles Fairfax Murray's Collaboration with William Morris"

Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919), dubbed "the unknown Pre-Raphaelite" in a recent biography by his grandson, is fairly well known for his later career as an art agent, collector and authority on Italian art. He helped Samuel Bancroft assemble one of the most important collections of Pre-Raphaelite art in the US (now at the Delaware Art Museum), and helped augment the substantial Pre-Raphaelite collection at the Birmingham Art Gallery. He is also somewhat recognized as a studio assistant for Burne-Jones and for his work with Morris and Co., "the most brilliant [stained] glass-painter in the firm's service" (Sewter) from 1871 on. Finally, he is remembered for collaborating with Morris on the decoration of his calligraphic manuscripts. For *A Book of Verse*, the lavishly decorated volume that Morris presented to Georgiana Burne-Jones in 1870, Murray painted a portrait of Morris in a roundel and four minstrel ladies on its title-page and ten miniatures illustrating Morris's poems.

Recently, I have been researching Murray's work beyond what can be found in published studies. The Morgan Library & Museum owns one of his sketchbooks, where we find, for example, a watercolor sketch of one of the miniatures for *A Book of Verse*; a larger scale version of this same subject recently appeared at auction. Murray also collaborated with Morris in the decoration of the calligraphic manuscripts of Morris's saga translations. For *The Story of the Volsungs* (Bodleian Library), Murray painted a historiated initial of Sigurd seated upon the slain dragon Fafnir. It is quite difficult to make out since it is so tiny, less than an inch square, but I will show a digital detail.

Evidence of Murray's unfinished work for Morris can also be of interest. In a letter to Murray in 1869, Morris writes cryptically, "herewith the space for the picture for the lay of Gudrun." Sure enough, in the *Volsung* manuscript, one finds a space left for what the translation calls "the Lamentation of Gudrun over Sigurd dead," a subject at once central to Old Norse heroic legend and eminently suitable for a (late) Pre-Rapha-

elite treatment by Murray. In Morris's calligraphic manuscript of *Ynglinga Saga* (Society of Antiquaries of London), Murray painted one initial of the god Odin. But portraits of other gods were probably planned for the square spaces left for initials on p. 16 (Niord), p. 17 (Frey) and p. 18 (Freya), where Morris has penciled in the margin the word "puss," perhaps in reference to Freya's cats. Next to a square drawn for an initial on p. 44, Morris has written in pencil "Ship afire" and made a very rudimentary sketch of a Viking ship in flames, for which he no doubt wanted Murray to provide a more finished version.

One of Murray's best known paintings, *The Last Parting of Helga and Gunnlaug*, was highlighted in the recent travelling exhibition of works from the Delaware Art Museum. The painting derives from (and is explicated by) Morris's translation of *The Saga of Gunnlaug the Worm-Tongue*. The miniatures for that manuscript were never painted in, but Murray did sketch in a hitherto unnoticed, first version of *Helga and Gunnlaug*. His sketchbook also preserves versions for a number of other projected illustrations of the saga.

Jude V. Nixon, "Sons of Odin: Carlyle, Morris, Watts-Dunton—Icelandic Mythology and Antiscrape"

While studies such as George Allan Cate's "Ruskin's Discipleship to Carlyle: A Revaluation" (1976), Fiona MacCarthy's exhaustive *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (1995), and J.W. Mackail's *The Life of William Morris* have all acknowledged the shaping influence of Thomas Carlyle on William Morris, none has undertaken a close scrutiny of that relationship, especially the way Ruskin's discipleship of Morris involved Carlyle. "Despite all their differences," writes Jeffrey L. Spear, in *Dreams of an English Eden*, "the contrast between past and present both individually and socially is central to the work of Carlyle and Ruskin as it would later be to Morris."

The now approximately 36 volumes of Carlyle letters reveal how pervasive his influence was on Victorians, for good or ill, and ill as in the case of the Governor Eyre controversy, to which Carlyle recruited Ruskin. Morris's own intemperate remark about West Indian "niggers," despite an early familiarity with black characters in Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus stories, might well have been a Carlyle contagion. Ruskin is key to understanding Carlyle's influence on Morris. The Carlyle trace in Morris is evident in their mutual obsession with Icelandic mythology with its heroic myth, benign feudalism, and the embryonic stages in it of an emergent democracy. They also shared similar concerns about history, evident in *Antiscrape*, ideologically indebted to Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*. Morris read Carlyle extensively. In 1886, when W.T. Stead, editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, asked Morris to draw

up a list of the hundred books that had profoundly influenced him, he listed Carlyle's collected works, and only two other complete works, those by Dickens and Ruskin. In a 9 August 1869 letter, Morris mentions reading "Carlyle's Wilhelm Meister" "and have got through a great deal of it; what a queer book it is, and how knowing and deep sometimes amidst what a sea of muddle and platitude I think Goethe must have been asleep when he wrote it: but 'tis a great work somehow." When Froude published the dyspeptic *Reminiscences*, Morris read it and thought it should have been called "The history of a great author's liver": "I think I have never read anything that dispirited me so much. . . . What is one to say of such outrageous blues as this?" Morris found Carlyle "unfair and narrow and whimsical about his likes and dislikes," which is nothing to "the ferocity of his gloom." Like most Victorians, Morris thought that the book ought not to have been published, but understood, unlike most, the sentiment expressed in it. What he learnt from it was not to "fill the world with my howls, like the sage of Chelsea, whose moans I have just been reading by no means to my comfort; yet I hope to my edification."

But while Morris admitted being a disciple of Carlyle, he did not acknowledge Carlyle's Icelandic influence on him. Carlyle's Icelandic mythology was the earliest of any Victorian. More than a passing fancy, it is connected to his Aryan, Teutonic vision. Morris's interest in the myth, which he advanced well beyond Carlyle, occasioned no less than three volumes: *The Story of the Volsungs and Niblungs*, *Journals of Travels in Iceland 1871-1873*, and *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*. In 1876, Morris, "quite soaked in Odinism," as Watts-Dutton describes him, published his great Norse poem, *Sigurd the Volsung*, which, as Linda Julian observed, marked Morris's "transformation from poet to prose writer" and with it "the growth and intensity of his involvement in politics." It was, says Alfred Noyes, "perhaps the supreme success of all his literary work." Drawing clearly from Carlyle, Morris asserts that "the reflex of the lives and ethics of the northern peoples" was one in which "religion was the worship of Courage." But whereas Carlyle's interest in Norse mythology was religiously driven, Morris's, without slighting the religious ("Icelandic literature . . . has preserved for us the religious mythology . . . common to all the Germanic tribes"), had a more socio-political interest, finding in the myth his model of an emergent socialist system. Morris's history of Iceland, though not lacking in Homeric comparisons, is not an uncritical acceptance of the past, as is Carlyle's, at least not deliberately. "I am not a mere praiser of past times," he writes. "I know that in those days of which I speak life was rough & evil enough, beset by violence, superstition, ignorance, slavery; yet I cannot help thinking that

sorely as poor folks needed a solace, they did not altogether lack one, and that solace was pleasure in their work."

I turn briefly to the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), a wieldy title for which Morris coined the term Antiscrape. Art, to Morris, reflects a certain condition of labor. Simply put, the best art is produced from the best forms of labor. Despite the heavy-handedness of Antiscrape and its very English, paternalistic, even chauvinistic, attitude, the Society did much to preserve the historical sense and the consequent loss of ancient monuments.

Connected to Antiscrape is Carlyle's and Morris's theory of work and the role of workers. Carlyle gave theory to what Morris, Engels, and Marx stubbornly and uncompromisingly advanced. They rejected Carlyle's view of labor, which sympathizes more with capitalists than workers. Morris also assails what he calls worthless labor, "the toil which makes the thousand and one things which nobody wants, which are used merely as the counters for the competitive buying and selling, falsely called commerce," the toil which "cries out to be done away with." Rather, labor ought to be "the expression of man's happiness," and art made "by the people, and for the people, as a happiness to the maker and the user." In such dialectical essays as "Labour and Pleasure versus Labour and Sorrow," "Useful Work versus Useless Toil," "Work, as It Is and as it Might Be," "How we Live and How we Might Live," and "A Factory as it Might Be," Morris presents a series of cogent arguments on the complexities of labor and the abuse of workers often separated, as Marx would later postulate, from the thing they produce. In fact, as Marx would argue, workers themselves become commodity. Morris weds his theory of labor and the improvement in labor practice to a heightened form of art. In "Art under Plutocracy," he insists that "all art, even the highest, is influenced by the conditions of labour of the mass of mankind."

Though influenced profoundly by Carlyle, Morris remained largely independent of him. To use an age-old analogy, while Morris was fed in Carlyle's pasture, he produced his own milk. The model Carlyle provided Engels is the best way, I think, to capture the impress Carlyle had on Morris. Carlyle's writings, including "Chartism," says Steven Marcus, "had a releasing or triggering effect on Engels," who "responded to the example of Carlyle as did other young men of his time; he was stimulated into further thought and legitimated in his bolder speculations. All the same, the influence was not dependency, and Engels made it explicitly clear that he was not prepared to follow Carlyle

beyond a certain critical point" (112). Morris learned from Carlyle, but supplanted the Sage of Chelsea in matters of history, Norse mythology, architectural preservation, and labor economics, taking them to levels well beyond where the politically conservative and Tory apologist Carlyle could never go or have imagined. The son, in this case, remains father to the man.

Zachary Weir, "Thomas Wardle's 'Wild Silks of India': Morris and Imperial Design"

As Morris scholars from Ray Watkinson to Paul Thompson to Linda Parry have noted, Morris's correspondence with Thomas Wardle—the owner and proprietor of the Hencroft Dyeworks at Leek, Staffordshire—provides fascinating insight into the specifics of his control over the production of the firm's printed textiles, not to mention his dynamic understanding of the business side of Morris & Co. In this talk I consider another aspect of Morris's association with Wardle, namely the use of Morris's chintz designs for the display of "the wild silks of India" that Wardle curated first for the Indian Section at the Paris Exhibition of 1878 and its later installment at the South Kensington Museum. This exhibition of the "wild silks of India" provides the explicit institutional context in which Morris's raillery against the garishness and unnatural ugliness of fugitive chemical dyes gains perhaps its first large public expression.

After closely reading a number of his monographs and guidebooks, along with his collected papers held at Duke University, I demonstrate that Wardle, President of the British Silk Association of Great Britain and Ireland, emerges as a complex figure and calculating businessperson in his own right. While Morris had very little to do with silk in the way of a marketable and practical furnishing manufacture (silk, of course, does not wear quite so well as cotton) Wardle did not share the same concerns, as his silks could serve a number of purposes from more ephemeral and impractical furnishing materials to clothing and other fashionable accessories. Wardle's curatorial work provides important insight into his larger manufacturing interests—interests that completely dwarf his work with Morris and the firm in both scale and financial scope.

As the correspondence between Wardle and Morris suggests, the arrangement seemed to be barely if at all profitable for Wardle. Whereas the dyeing work Wardle undertook with Morris constituted more of a sideline and diversion in direct economic terms (perhaps not so in terms of the venture's symbolic value), silk dyeing—and in particular the dyeing of tusser silk—remained a mainstay of Wardle's business. In promoting the "wild silks of India" as economic opportunity, Wardle explicitly draws upon the trope of beneficent imperialism in ways that seem to contradict Morris's staunch

anti-imperialist position. With such a huge geographical expanse and an almost unlimited labor force, India represented a massive opportunity in Wardle's view for the further expansion of the British textile industry, making it competitive with the more established French silk industry based largely in and around Lyon. He makes the case even more directly: not only does India have the natural resources and raw materials necessary for both the establishment and growth of profitable silk goods manufacturing, but Wardle himself has perfected the means of finishing such goods to the highest aesthetic standard.

Having it both ways, Wardle can profess the merits of the "refined" and "artistic" natural dyes—a change in taste "brought about, in painting for instance, by modern pre-Raphael thought and work"—while still noting the opportunities in the marketplace for goods that Morris would no doubt classify as shoddy and makeshift. In this way, not only does Wardle appropriate the financial promise of Morris's more discriminating and wealthy clientele, but also he shows that his main focus remains locked on the greater financial rewards of mass production. This talk, therefore, attends to this aspect of Morris's association with Wardle—whereby the former's designs were used to bolster the imperial rhetoric of the latter—in order to highlight their mutual business relationship within the context of late-nineteenth-century British imperialism.

DUNLAP MEMORIAL FELLOWSHIP: JASON MARTINEK

This year's Joseph Dunlap Memorial Fellowship has been awarded to Jason D. Martinek, for research on "William Morris and American Socialism." Martinek received a Ph.D. in history from Carnegie Mellon University in 2005 and is currently an assistant professor in the Department of History at New Jersey City University. His publications include "The Workingman's Bible: Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England*, Radical Literacy, and the Making of American Socialism, 1895–1900," in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* (July 2003). He describes his research as follows:

William Morris had a profound impact on the late nineteenth century American socialist movement. Yet Morris's contribution to the making of American socialism has been greatly under-appreciated by scholars. Instead, they have emphasized either the significance of Edward Bellamy's nationalism or Karl Marx's communism to the rise of American socialism. Both paled in comparison to Morris's influence in the 1890s. The most popular socialist tract of 1890s America, Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England*, drew its inspiration from

Morris, not Bellamy or Marx. Earlier research of mine published in a special issue of the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* demonstrated that this Morris-inspired forgotten bestseller of American socialism had a wide readership at the turn of the century. Historical evidence even suggests that Blatchford's book outsold Bellamy's by a margin of two to one. That article did not fully flesh out the Morris component of the story, something that I would like to address as I move forward with my research.

Thus, the project outlined here will serve two purposes. On the one hand, it will be used for an article-length manuscript that places Morris's ideas at the center of the turn of the twentieth century socialist movement. On the other, the research will be incorporated into a book manuscript that I am writing that uses a history-of-the-book approach to understand the rise and fall of American socialism. I will use the Joseph Dunlap Memorial Fellowship to conduct research at the University of Connecticut's Homer Babbidge Library, which contains microfilm copies of all of the major socialist periodicals of the 1890s: *The Appeal to Reason*, *The People*, *The Social Democrat*, and *The Social Democratic Herald*.

It is my contention that Morris brought a romantic sensibility to the American socialist movement that stood in stark contrast to the regimented, bureaucratic vision of Bellamy on the one hand and the crass economic determinism of Marx on the other. How could one not be entranced by sentiments like these in Morris and H. M. Hyndman's *Summary of the Principles of Socialism*, that socialists should seek the "complete physical, moral and intellectual development of every human being as the highest form of the social state, as the best and truest happiness for every individual and for every class, where, as none need overwork, so none shall be able to force others to work for their profit?" The concept of happiness lay at the very heart of Morris's socialism, best achievable, he believed, through the democratization of beauty, art, and pride in work. Once workers no longer had to struggle for their daily bread or work in dingy, dehumanizing factories, Morris argued, they would become artist-craftsmen who lived meaningful and fulfilling lives. Underlying his vision for an ideal society was a visceral reaction against modern society, one that looked to the past for inspiration.

Historians have shown how many American workers shared Morris's critique of modern society. They, too, looked backward to a time when the work of craftsmen, artisans, and skilled labor were more fully valued for their economic contributions to American society. Industrialization and the rise of the modern corporation seemed to undercut this producerist ethos. The devaluing of productive work, or at least the impression of its devaluation, led workers to form an ideological response in the form of labor republicanism. Labor republicanism, in its most radical expression, brought forth calls for the Cooperative Commonwealth. In the

Cooperative Commonwealth, not only would workers receive respect for their labor, but they would also receive the full fruits of their toils. It was a vision that strongly resonated with that of Morris, but the links between the two have yet to be examined.

The value of this research is that it provides a new trans-national context for understanding the history of American socialism. Whereas scholars have traditionally emphasized the German influence, my work brings out the British. Furthermore, given Morris's popularity with working-class audiences, it provides tantalizing clues about the trans-Atlantic history of working-class intellectual history. Historian Daniel T. Rodgers's *Atlantic Crossings* remains the best work that teases out the trans-national context of Progressive thought. But its focus on elites leaves out the working-class exchanges of ideas that took place in this era. Even though Morris was not himself working class, his ideas had a bottom-up impact on American history. It was an impact that, though long hidden, was nonetheless significant.

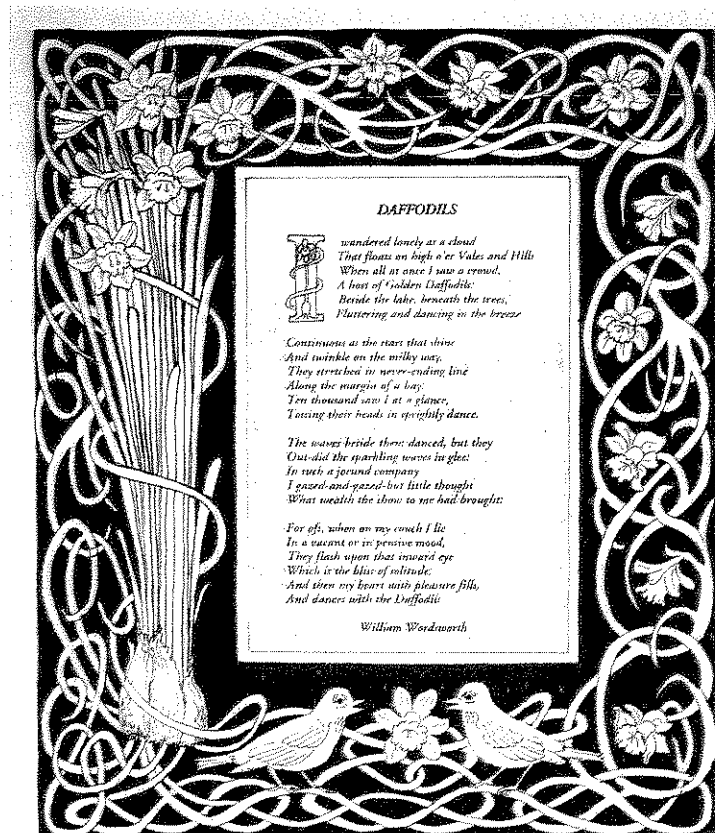
MORRIS-INSPIRED ART

Dallas Piotrowski

William Morris's art and designs are almost as popular today as they were more than a century ago. Although Morris believed his work would never influence the future, he was definitely wrong. His influence is still felt by artists and designers today, myself included. Like Morris, I have derived most of my inspiration from nature and its infinite offerings. I also have a particular love for pattern, of which Morris was a master. Morris also found inspiration in the past and was attracted as I was to medieval and Renaissance art, particularly to the illuminated manuscripts and borders in books of hours. To learn and understand how the borders were achieved, I copied and painted numerous borders from a book of hours, until I felt I comprehended the patterns and could design them myself. I then painted a series of illuminated borders incorporating bird paintings in the center opening. These paintings turned out to be some of my favorites and are truly beautiful.

I applied the same idea to copying other designs when I decided to paint a series of wildlife portraits which incorporated backgrounds of decorative patterns. This was the start of my understanding of how to make a successful all-over design and not just a border. I studied and copied numerous masters from the nineteenth century, but Morris was always my favorite and was the one from whom I learned the most.

My painting entitled *The Victorious Ram* paired surprisingly well with Morris's *Chrysanthemum* wallpaper pattern of 1876. Who would have thought the combination of a powerfully built and stately bull ram would



Two works by Dallas Piotrowski:
The Victorian Ram (above)
Daffodils (right)

work with a field of pink chrysanthemum and delicate fronds? From this exquisite design, which has prominent flower heads, leaves and stems forming a serpentine line in the foreground and small complex network of fronds in the background, I learned one of his commonly used patterns, the serpentine line.

Morris's overall designs were very complex and color played an important part in them (a separate topic which I can't discuss here). He had many formulas for his designs. The diamond pattern was probably one of his more basic forms of composition and used often. The serpentine line mentioned above, along with the undulating or branch diagonal lines, form the bases of most of his designs.

For my first painting incorporating Morris's design, I modified his small leaf pattern for the background in my painting *The Gift*. I superimposed my own design of whorled oak leaf clusters diagonally in a symmetrical and formal pattern on the less formal small leaf pattern. The diamond pattern is used in the bottom center of the painting with three simple oak leaves. The oak leaves are outlined in a soft pink which gives them an appearance of movement and coming forward. The leaves also have the feeling they are suspended and about to flutter down. Morris disliked static and flat qualities in design. The small leaf pattern gives additional movement and energy but stays in the background. To make the overall design look more Morris-like I used a uniform shade in various tonal values.

My border entitled *Daffodils* has a story behind it. I was invited to be in an exhibit called *Dangerous Women II*. We were given a list of historic artist and activists born before 1912 and were challenged to "adopt" one whose life was especially inspiring and create a new work to honor her. Although I had never heard of her before, I chose Helen Marguerite O'Kane, who was an illustrator, designer and, with her husband Clarke Conwell, proprietor of the Elston Press. They worked in the decade following the birth of the Kelmscott Press which was a catalyst for an explosion of small presses in America. The Elston Press was one of the most successful interpreters of the Kelmscott Press style, but was in business for only four years due to a fire which destroyed their company. During those four years, Helen Marguerite O'Kane, who was only twenty at the time, was considered one of the most talented illustrators of her day and the most notable woman designer of the Arts and Crafts book. She contributed illustrations, borders, and initial- designs for 17 of the 26 books published by the Elston Press. Almost all her designs were influenced by Morris, Beardsley and Burne-Jones, and therefore the attraction for me. I decided to do a border in her honor with the same influences from the Arts and Crafts movement.

When I started to work on the borders I studied the design patterns of Morris's and Beardsley's borders. Again I found one particular design formula prevalent: a scrolling serpentine line in a circular pattern. This pattern may not always be obvious to the naïve eye, because of all the intricate and extensive interweaving of naturalistic design elements within and around the circles.

My design was fairly simple, but nevertheless difficult to achieve. I did several designs and reworked them many times before I finally settled on a simple scrolling method with the serpentine line encircling daffodils. In the center opening of the border is William Wordsworth's famous poem, "Daffodils." William Morris, who believed his art would never influence the future, was definitely wrong!

Dallas Piotrowski is a professional artist and curator at The Gallery at Chapin, Chapin School, Princeton, NJ. Her paintings are in numerous corporations, museums, universities and distinguished private collections.

THE SPAB AND STANSTED AIRPORT

Andrea Donovan

In the currently evolving situation in the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Building's fight to prevent airport expansion, the SPAB is following the lead of Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE), an organization developed specifically to fight the expansion of Stansted Airport. This current SPAB campaign deals with a huge business, the British Airports Authority (BAA), and concerns the issue of airport expansion, at this point specifically at Stansted Airport, but eventually other airports could be affected. This debate has been an important issue with the SPAB since August of 2002 and it is unlikely to be resolved in the immediate future. The concerns and protests of local city councils around Stansted and throughout the United Kingdom, as well as the voice of the SPAB, are too great to envision a quick resolution to this debate.

Why does Stansted need more runway space? This is the question that fuels much of the debate. There are five airports servicing London: the London City Airport, east of central London but still in London proper; Heathrow, the United Kingdom's largest airport just west of London; Gatwick, about forty miles south of central London; Luton, about forty miles north of central London; and Stansted, about forty miles northeast of central London. Those in favor of the Stansted expansion say it will bring jobs into the area, help cope with increased demand for air service, build up new towns in the area, and keep flight costs down. Those against the expansion say another runway will destroy listed historic sites, numerous villages

and ancient monuments, compromise the forested area near the airport, increase the amount of urbanization and traffic in a primarily rural area, build up a region's economy dependent upon a single source, and increase the noise and air pollution in the area.

The land at and around Stansted Airport had been farmland and woodlands for thousands of years. It is home to Hatfield Forest, encompassing over 1,000 acres of "ancient grazed wood pasture and coppiced woodland . . . managed in much the same way for 1,000 years Mentioned in the Domesday Book, it is the only place in the country where you can step into a landscape that has changed little since medieval times." Hatfield Forest is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve.²

The area near the Forest was established in 1942 as a base for the US Air Force during World War II. The base was handed over to the United Kingdom as a passenger airport in 1947. In 1963, it was proposed that it become London's third airport but area protestors argued against it. An independent investigation, the Chelmsford Enquiry, stated that it was unnecessary, disruptive, and destructive to enlarge the airport. Despite this and the protestors, a published UK government White Paper announced that Stansted would indeed become London's third airport in 1970.³ The UK government permitted airport construction providing that passenger traffic was restricted to twenty-five million per year and that no new runways be built. In 2002, a drastic increase in passengers and new discussions of airport expansion launched a protest committee, entitled Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE). The attendance at the SSE's first meeting was over eight hundred. In November 2002, the Uttlesford elections (Stansted Airport lies in the Uttlesford District) showed that 89% of voters were against additional runways. Despite the results of this election, repeated marches and rallies from SSE, and various examples of public outcry, in December 2003 the UK government published another White Paper announcing plans for airport expansion.⁴

The SSE continued to protest and, by early 2004, there were four thousand individual members plus the organization memberships of most local authorities in the upper southeast portion of England. According to the SSE, it has "campaign[ed] unceasingly, and its voice is respected by the Government, civil servants and the media."⁵ Despite this and widespread opposition, the potential cultural loss seems to be disregarded:

The White Paper was issued after a period of national consultation in which almost 500,000 responses were submitted to the Department for Transport. The great majority of respondents opposed the building of any more runways. The Government appears to have disregarded those views and also the many environmental, economic and social arguments offered by numer-

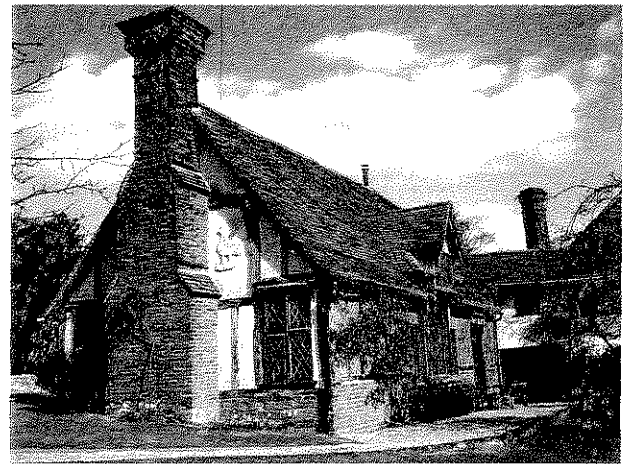
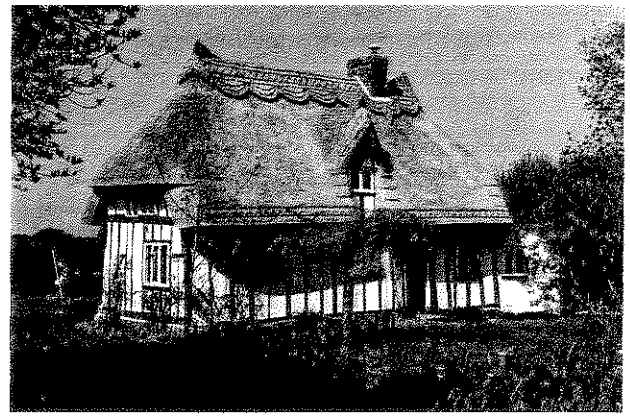
ous independent bodies, choosing instead to set out a policy that will satisfy all the demands and projections of the aviation industry without constraint. Locally, every Member of Parliament and elected council is opposed to a second runway at Stansted Airport. Uttlesford District Council, in whose district the airport lies, conducted a referendum in which 89% voted against any further runways. (Ibid.)

The SSE report points out that while the Government sets the policy, it is the BAA, the owner and operator of Stansted Airport, who ultimately plans the integration of the expansion. Accordingly, the BAA has become a major focus for the SSE:

Until the publication of the White Paper, SSE's focus was on convincing the Government not to carry out its threat to expand Stansted Airport. Sadly, the Government has increased the threat rather than removing it, by giving an amber light to the expansion of Stansted. The Government has now cleverly retreated and pushed BAA into the firing line. Consequently, we must turn our attention to the battle with BAA. . . . SSE has both reflected the strength of local opinion and helped to mobilize it. The strength of local opposition was demonstrated by the number of individual responses to the consultation – more than Heathrow and Gatwick together. BAA will be well aware that they have many tough battles ahead against a professional campaign and against a community that is fighting for its very existence. SSE has already raised the profile of BAA's undeclared parking perks for Members of Parliament, has been instrumental in increasing the level of public debate on the issue of BAA's monopoly and its cross-subsidisation of Stansted's losses from Heathrow profits; and has highlighted the high risk that BAA's shareholders will take if they pour more money into building facilities that nobody wishes to use. (Ibid.)

The SSE continues to fight for the revision of the Stansted Airport expansion plans by working to make the public knowledgeable, to fight the BAA and the Government in court, and to solicit the help of organizations such as the SPAB in their endeavor. The SPAB is supporting the SSE by co-organizing protests and informational events, by helping to solicit political support, and by assisting in fundraising.

The White Paper airport expansion proposal, published in December 2003, suggests changes to take place over the next thirty years in the United Kingdom, including additional airports and runways at existing airports. According to Transport Secretary Alistair Darling, these expansions are necessary because nearly a third of British exports go by air, at least half of the British population fly once a year, and the number of air passengers is estimated to more than double over the next twenty years.⁶ The opponents of the expansion



Some of the Grade I and II listed properties which would be destroyed or where life would be intolerable should Stansted Airport be expanded by another runway. The photographs were specially taken for Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE).

question these estimates and are not certain that adding more airports and runways is the best solution.

Another organization to campaign against the Stansted Airport expansion is the Uttlesford District Council. The fate of Uttlesford, the district in which Stansted is located, is dependent upon the outcome of this debate. Uttlesford is enlisting the help of citizens, adjacent districts, and organizations such as the SPAB and the SSE. In a speech addressed to the district of Uttlesford depicting the problems of the Stansted expansion, Baroness Shirley Williams, leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords, explained that the "UK economy is out of balance ... [there are] major economic issues that face residents and businesses," and that the expansion is not the answer because "of the difficulties in recruiting essential workers, such as teachers and nurses due to wages, high housing costs and the threat of expansion at nearby Stansted Airport."⁷ The leader of Uttlesford District Council, councillor Alan Dean, declared that it was "reassuring that more and more national politicians appreciate the global and local environmental problems that will be realised if unfettered expansion continues in the aviation industry."⁸

Due to the dedication of the SSE and the Uttlesford District Council, the SPAB initially provided assistance through those bodies. However, as it became more obvious that they were facing formidable odds, the SPAB stepped up its efforts by officially protesting the destruction of historic sites and ancient monuments. In June of 2003, the SPAB announced its objection in the *SPAB News*, the quarterly magazine of the SPAB. It argued that the airport expansion is the "biggest single threat to historic buildings and sites, almost all in good order, since the war" and that the "SPAB and the Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies, of which it is a member, argues that this is much too high a price to pay."⁹

The SPAB increased the magnitude of its involvement in December 2003. The SPAB released a report, with the cooperation of the SPAB Essex Regional Group, entitled "Stansted Airport and the Implications of a Possible Extra Runway on our Architectural Heritage."¹⁰ In addition, the SPAB released a bulletin objecting to Stansted expansion:

In choosing Stansted for the first phase of expansion Ministers have selected without compromise, and as a sacrifice for unsustainable cheap holiday flights, the one new runway that would cause the maximum damage to our heritage; no fewer than 29 listed buildings, and two scheduled ancient monuments (Waltham Manor and The Grange) would be demolished. Though the precise setting of the runway will be up to the airport operator, the Government recognises that it will severely damage the historic environment. Simply asking the airport to

see if any of the listed buildings affected could be moved is no answer ... The Government also admits that the area round Stansted is rich in architectural heritage, including small historic villages. Merely stating that these characteristics should be preserved as much as possible is meaningless in the light of the widespread development that will follow the airport's expansion. The SPAB is also most alarmed to see that the big airlines have got their way and persuaded the Government to include a new northern runway at Heathrow as part of a second phase of development. Though slightly resited since the original consultation it will nevertheless have drastic effects on the ancient village of Harmondsworth. Even if its Norman church, one of the most important tithe barns in the country, and many other fine buildings, are not demolished outright - and this is unknown - they become unusable, sitting at the west end of the new runway.¹¹

According to SPAB secretary Philip Venning, the proposals at Stansted "would involve the destruction of historic buildings and sites on an unprecedented scale," and "even the Channel Tunnel rail link involved fewer losses."¹² Venning also told BBC News that the expansion would "be very bad news for Britain's built heritage," and that he could not "recall a case of equivalent damage to our built heritage from any private or public scheme."¹³

Likely the most influential work that the SPAB has done on this case to date is the SPAB report, "Stansted Airport and the Implications of a Possible Extra Runway on our Architectural Heritage."¹⁴ This report is filled with statements regarding the areas that would be compromised should the expansion take place. John Betjeman, the poet laureate, commented on the disintegration of prime English lands: "a visit to Bedford, Feltham, Stanwell or Heston in the once glorious county of Middlesex will show you what these villages of the Essex and Hertfordshire borders could become."¹⁵ Jamie Oliver, television celebrity, said "to go to one place and dramatically make it the biggest airport in England ... is ridiculous. It's out of scale with the geography and architecture of the area and a lot of people are very, very upset."¹⁶ And, according to Professor Sir Colin Buchanan, one of the UK's foremost authorities on land use planning:

Can there be another part of England richer in vernacular architecture than this? Here you will find a wealth of country houses of moderate size of great architectural and historic interest, sparkling villages each one looking as though it had just won the best kept village competition, and a marvelous collection of smaller houses and cottages, mostly spick and span, some with great brick Tudor chimneys, some with black-boarded dormers with red tiled roofs and white painted windows, and half-timbered houses in stripey black and white. Here

are trim grass verges, ponds and ducks, close-shaved village greens with walnut trees and pubs, cricket fields, moated houses, mottes-and-baileys. As for churches, where would you find so many in such variety in such a compass, and all tended so lovingly? There are churches of flint, or chequer of chalk and flint, there are churches of brick, and some even of pebbles, there are churches with spires, and churches with squat towers and spiky leaden fleches so typical of Hertfordshire ... (Ibid.)

The SPAB report outlines the problems with Stansted Airport expansion by illustrating the potential damage:

The area around Stansted is defined by the remarkable quality of its historic buildings. As evidence of this, there are 35 conservation areas in the Uttlesford district and about 3,500 listed buildings or groups of buildings identified on the statutory list. Though only one of 14 districts in Essex, Uttlesford contains about 30% of its listed buildings. The number of listed buildings in the district per square mile is, in fact, 67% above the average in Essex as a whole, yet the district is amongst the least densely developed. Essex itself is one of the most richly endowed of all English counties... Over 40% of listed buildings in our environs date from the 17th century but every period of architecture is represented from Saxon times onwards, spanning 1,000 years of human endeavour Whilst fine churches and moated farmhouses exemplify Uttlesford's grade I and II buildings, many of our Grade II buildings have been listed as relatively unaltered examples of more humbler types, such as cottages, modest barns and other agricultural structures that so characterize this part of rural Essex. (Ibid.)

The SPAB report then points out, "airports are now the greatest single threat to historic buildings since the Second World War and the proposals for further development at Stansted are potentially the most destructive of all." The next section shows that the value of the Essex landscape is not just in isolated buildings and sites but also, in the recognizable whole, the historic atmosphere, and the "ancient and intricate web of villages, hamlets, and isolated buildings that characterize the countryside." The report also reveals that the destruction of historic sites is illegal under the present law and that the historic environment is a finite resource yet a resource that the Government apparently values as "England's greatest asset." (Ibid.)

The last section focuses on the British Government's integrity, stating that the Government should show more foresight in its decisions, that it should stand up for what is right and for what many governmental officials believe in instead of "pandering to the interests of the aviation lobby," and that it should listen to the wishes of the local and national community. In short, the Government "should be thinking more radically about proper long-term solutions that do not depend

on destroying our precious heritage." In the words of Inspector Graham Eyre, QC, the last planning inspector to consider the expansion of Stansted:

Stansted would become by far the largest airport in the UK and one of the largest airports in the world. There would be a butchery of 1,000 hectares (2,500 acres) of attractive unspoiled, rolling, rural countryside of Essex located in an area of Special Landscape Value with its streams and valleys, woodlands, ancient hedgerows, magnificent farms and listed and other important buildings. The provision of an airport with a capacity of 25mppa would be burden enough, but to double the area to be taken as well as the capacity, would be to impose upon the inhabitants of Stansted an unprecedented visual, environmental and ecological disaster with the most grave consequences for agriculture. (Ibid.)

Finally, printed at the end of the SPAB report are the words of William Morris: "these old buildings do not belong to us only ... they have belonged to our forefathers, and they will belong to our descendents unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our property to do as we like with. We are only trustees for those that come after us." (Ibid.)

On 13 February 2004, the Uttlesford District Council began a legal process against the official Government White Paper. The four councils of Essex, Uttlesford, Hertfordshire, and East Hertfordshire are challenging the principal conclusions of the White Paper:

- The additional runway capacity needed in the south east of the country should be initially provided at Stansted (the White Paper says this could be operational in 2011/2012).
- The proposals for an extension of the runway at Luton will also provide additional capacity.¹⁷

Further, the principle points of this challenge are:

1. The wide spaced runway at Stansted, and the alignment of the extension at London Luton airport set out in the plans in the White Paper are too specific. The White Paper is trying to get around the statutory planning processes. The councils say these are decisions which should properly go to a public inquiry where the local impacts can be studied in full.
2. Breach of European Law: before taking any decisions on specific locations for airport development the Secretary of State should have carried out an environmental impact assessment.
3. Funding and viability: at present neither the Government nor BAA know how the development and associated infrastructure is to be funded. This is fundamental to the viability of the development and cannot be seen as a later exercise. The development will cause unnecessary blight even if it is subsequently proven to be un-fundable.

4. At Luton the runway proposal in the White Paper is not one in the previous Consultation Paper and has therefore been put forward without any public consultation.¹⁸

However challenging this dispute with the BAA and the UK government may be, the four councils claim that they “will not be railroaded by central government in this issue because we have compelling arguments that a second runway at Stansted would be a disaster on so many levels.”¹⁹ The Essex County Council, with the support of other councils and organizations, the London Borough of Wandsworth, and Persimmon Homes of the Southeast with Laing Homes filed an injunction against the Secretary of State for Transport on 9 July 2004 through the Supreme Court of England and Wales at the Administrative Court Office.²⁰

The most recent developments regarding Stansted expansion are hopeful for the SSE and the SPAB. In February, 2009, Stansted’s second runway plans were anticipating a six year delay. This means that building another runway would not take place until the year 2017.²¹ Then, in April 2009, the British Department for Transport projected that only 42.7 million airline passengers would be utilizing Stansted airport until 2030. This figure is based on fluctuating data from the British economy and BAA management, but is accurate for the most part.²² This also means that the current runway would be satisfactory for meeting this number of passengers, making it unnecessary to build additional runway space. Finally, according to the latest press release in June 2009, passenger numbers decreased in record volumes and the number of flights dropped by 12.3 percent in only a 12 month period. There are even discussions about selling Stansted properties.²³

There is no conclusion to this case as of yet, but it is apparent that there are a substantial number of groups and individuals who object to the expansion at Stansted. Further, the most recent figures obviously do not warrant the development of additional runway space. The uncompromising level of objection is seemingly unprecedented. A huge national outcry has halted, at least temporarily, any further processes towards the expansion. The SSE and the SPAB are currently asking for the BAA to end the Stansted expansion talks. While this is still a daunting fight for the SSE, it appears likely that a second runway is not going to be built in the near future.

Regardless of the airport expansion outcome, the SPAB realizes that even in cases that have not gone in its favor, it is still influencing general opinion. While it is devastating to see the demise of relevant historic sites, it is important to realize that, without the SPAB’s intervention over the past century, that there would have been far more casualties to ignorance, industry,

population growth, restoration, and the general faith in “progress.”

It is easier to analyze the results of a specific case from the nineteenth century than from recent times because we know the results and success ratio of a case that has long been resolved. At Edinburgh Castle, the outcome was successful by SPAB standards while the work at St. Albans was not. In the case of the Iraq War and airport expansion in England, we know that the SPAB is instigating action with the support of other dynamic organizations, but we don’t know the result. It seems likely that the efforts of the SPAB to protect Iraqi monuments are somewhat ineffectual, because a single organization cannot control the results and outcome of a major war. In the airport expansion issue, it seems apparent that the SPAB, along with the SSE, is making a major dent in the ability of supporters of expansion to persevere. The SPAB provides strong arguments against airport expansion and it has a huge support base. If the BAA wins in this case, then it will be an example of a powerful organization succeeding over the wishes of the majority. Should the SPAB, the SSE, and the four councils lose in this case, then it will likely arouse a greater majority into action to fight for what many citizens of the United Kingdom think is right.

The SPAB has adapted over the years to accommodate progress and it has added programs that might help it succeed in its ideals. The SPAB library, publications, and advice are frequently sought in an effort by historic home and site owners to preserve the integrity of these sites. In this regard, the SPAB has needed to keep current and adapt to technological advances, knowledge, and situations. Its ability to evolve with contemporary situations throughout the years has made it an influential group, worthy of consultation and prestigious enough to attract the interest of architects, community leaders, and the UK Government.

While the SPAB has continued to win many cases and battles concerning England’s architectural history, there remains continuing confusion about the definition of preservation. A reporter enthusiastically related the restoration project going on at Barley Hall of the city of York in *The Times*. He claimed that restoration was completely accurate because the same construction techniques were being used as had been in the past, and 47 of the 520 sections of oak were original.²⁴ The 1992 chairman of the SPAB, James Boutwood, responded in much the same manner as Morris:

Now that the work has been carried out only 9 per cent of the original frame survives and virtually none of the later (and listed) alterations. By taking it down to ground level prior to reconstructing it, the entire history of the building has been destroyed, leaving what is left as a lifeless museum object and not part of a living building. It is now virtually worthless as an object

of serious study because of the destruction wrought to recreate yet another contribution to our Disneyland heritage.²⁵

He added that Barley Hall had been listed as an ancient monument and therefore given statutory protection.²⁶ "Disneyland heritage" refers to England's trend of turning some historic sites into tourist attractions. An example of this is a proposed Cadfael Centre on the grounds of Shrewsbury Abbey, named after Brother Cadfael and based on Ellis Peter's character in the popular novels set in medieval times.²⁷

Tourism is a bigger threat to England's cultural heritage than it has been in the past. Many tourists come to England to view places that they have heard about in books and movies or to visit the homes of literary or historic figures. This "Disneyfication" often inspires a site owner to make the area more marketable by adding gift shops or fixtures to make a site seem more authentic. Another problem occurs when buildings are not properly cared for in the face of tourism. Building owners need to allow for the wear of floors and walls, the effects of increased humidity, and the effects of lights from cameras. They need to take the necessary measures to protect buildings and artifacts within them. Tourists should also show respect for these historic sites. One of the most famous monuments in England, Stonehenge, was blocked off from tourists because of vandalism. Now, instead of walking through the stones, tourists file by at a distance. The SPAB is doing what it can to insure that historic buildings and monuments are cared for in the face of tourism.

The SPAB evolved from campaigns that centered around protest and disagreement in the nineteenth century to being a more established and influential group as the twentieth century moved into the twenty-first century. Currently, architects and politicians consult the SPAB regularly and its membership is currently over 9,500. It has developed methods to educate the public and students of conservation and architecture. Several times each month, the SPAB hosts lectures and holds classes. Its publications and access to advice has increased. As it has in the past, the SPAB will continue to evolve with the changing needs and issues of England's and the world's historic sites. In doing so, it continues to respect the goals of the founders. Through all these changes, Morris's original *Manifesto* remains the guiding force for the SPAB as the SPAB continues to inspire the public and other organizations, such as the SSE, to do their part to preserve their nation's and the world's heritage.

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1. The National Trust: Save Hatfield Forest (n.d.), retrieved May 2004 from www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places/hatfieldforest/save. The National Trust opposes the Stansted expansion because it would add to noise and air pollution which would compromise the integrity of the area and expose rare habitats to damaging situations. Further, the threat of the additional runway carries with it the threat of a new rail line to support the airport, which would likely need to go through or under the Forest.

2. Ibid.

3. The term "white paper" is used to describe an official government publication that typically argues a specific position. A famous example of a white paper is the *Winston Churchill White Paper of 1922*, which addressed political conflict in Palestine.

4. These facts, corroborated by the BBC and the SSE, are widely available through general news sources, on the Internet, and through information given attendees of protests.

5. Stop Stansted Expansion (n.d.), retrieved May 2004 from the website www.stopstanstedexpansion.com. SSE cooperates with individuals and corporations wanting additional information about their campaign. The organization has regular meetings, propaganda tents at public events, advertisements through the media, and a large support base.

6. BBC News, "Airport Expansion Plans Unveiled" (22 July 2002), retrieved May 2004 from news.bbc.co.uk.

7. Welcome to Uttlesford, "National and Local Opposition to 2nd Runway" (n.d.), retrieved May 2004 from www.uttlesford.gov.uk/news/transport/national.

8. Welcome to Uttlesford, "Runway Opposition" (n.d.), retrieved May 2004 from www.uttlesford.gov.uk/news/transport/national.

9. SPAB file on Stansted Airport expansion, bulletin circulated by Katherine Hill of SPAB as an advertisement supplied to subscribers to *SPAB News*.

10. Ibid. This document was prepared by Douglas Kent on behalf of the Essex Regional Group of SPAB. It adamantly argues against the Stansted Airport expansion and lists the numerous reasons why this issue affects the architectural and cultural heritage of southeast England.

11. Ibid. Philip Venning and Katherine Hill released this bulletin on 16 December 2003.

12. Ibid.

13. Nic Rigby for BBC News, "Stansted Runway Battle to Continue" (16 December 2003), retrieved May 2004.

14. SPAB file on Stansted Airport expansion, report prepared by Douglas Kent on behalf of the Essex Regional Group of SPAB.

15. Ibid. From the December 2003 Report on Airport Expansion prepared by Douglas Kent.

16. Ibid.

17. Uttlesford District Council, "Four Councils in Legal Challenge" (n.d.), retrieved from www.uttlesford.gov.uk.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. SPAB file on Stansted Airport expansion, court papers listed "In the High Court of Justice Queen's Bench Division Administrative Court." These papers are the official summons to the Secretary of State for Transport to appear in court for a hearing to determine the legitimacy of the White Paper in the case of the Stansted Airport expansion. This court order was determined by the court to be valid thus making the defense in the case of the Secretary of State for Transport accountable for its decisions in the White Paper. This court hearing will be before Mr. George Bartlett QC (sitting as a Deputy High Court Judge).

21. Stop Stansted Expansion (n.d.), retrieved February 2009 from www.stopstanstedexpansion.com.

22. Stop Stansted Expansion (n.d.), retrieved April 2009 from www.stopstanstedexpansion.com.

23. Stop Stansted Expansion (n.d.), retrieved June 2009 from www.stopstanstedexpansion.com.

24. Peter Davenport, "Medieval Hall Given New Lease of Life," *The Times*, 8 February 1992, 8.

25. James Boutwood, "York Reconstruction," *The Times*, 22 February 1992,

13. Letter to the editor.

26. Ibid.

27. Ann Hills, "Stranger than Fiction," *History Today* 43 (April 1993): 3.



ST. PETERSBURG WORKSHOP FOR THE REVIVAL OF TAPESTRY

Anna Matyukhina

An interest in replicas of tapestries as a mean of interior decoration of apartments and villas has recently emerged in Russia. As a rule, the interested party resorts to specialty shops where high-quality Jacquard or handmade copies of the genuine tapestries can be bought. The latter no doubt are costly, but even so the price is much more reasonable than that of the original. For instance, *The Failure of Sir Gawain* from the *Holy Grail* series—the most famous of Morris's tapestries created at Merton Abbey—was sold at Christie's in 2004 for £386,050, and the Jacquard copy in a St. Petersburg shop would cost, depending on the quality, from several hundred to several thousand euros (a square metre of a hand-made version is €3,000–5,000). One can choose any of the tapestries from the catalogues, including Merton Abbey tapestries, and order the copy of the size and kind that is the most fitting for a particular interior. It may be of interest that tapestries originally woven at Merton could be found in several parts of the catalogues—they appear as Morris and Burne-Jones tapestries, as Victorian tapestries, or as nineteenth century tapestries, and they can be also found in the medieval tapestries section and among

the “chivalric tapestries” (e.g., the *Holy Grail* series). It should be noted that it is often possible to order not only the proper tapestry for the wall but also woven folding screens, curtains, and seat upholstery based on the chosen original. Decorative compositions and heraldic tapestries are the most popular, but according to the manager of the oldest of such shops in St. Petersburg, A-Elite, the *Adoration of the Magi* was ordered three times during recent years, the last time being copied manually, which is much more expensive than the catalogue item. The shop collaborates with Belgian and French manufacturers, and the hand-woven copies are executed at the St. Petersburg workshop set up in the late 1990s by Svetlana Dmitrievna Korovina.

Korovina is a graduate of the St. Petersburg State Academy of Art and Design. As a student, like most artists-weavers of her generation, she was under the profound influence of works by the famous French artist-weaver Jean Lurçat (1892–1966). But at the same time, she understood that medieval tapestries and those created at Merton Abbey met her inner aesthetic requirements most fully. At the end of the 1990s she founded a tapestry workshop in St. Petersburg named The Revival of Tapestry, and the first works created there were based on medieval millefleurs.

The very name of the workshop is significant, since both William Morris and Jean Lurçat, whose works ex-



erted influence on Korovina's artistic development, are the key figures for understanding the tapestry revival process that was initiated by the former and accomplished by the latter. According to the *French Tapestries from the Middle Ages till Nowadays* exhibition catalogue of 1946, modern tapestries put on display were similar to the medieval not only in technique and composition, but first of all because of their "spirit."¹ Lurçat, influenced by the fourteenth century *Angers Apocalypse Tapestry*,² was proclaimed the main hero of the tapestry revival. However, it was William Morris, fascinated by the tapestries of the "Golden Age,"³ who had been the first to devote a great deal of his time and energy to reviving the medieval spirit and traditions of tapestry weaving. From the late 1870s making such tapestries turned into his "bright dream" that came true in the famous Merton Abbey works, due to which it became possible for G. L. Hunter to write as early as 1913 that "the renaissance of tapestry is an accomplished fact."⁴

It is interesting indeed that William Morris and Jean Lurçat, who lived in different countries and at different time periods, have much in common. Both of them were many-sided persons: there is no need to list Morris's activities; as for Lurçat, his name is associated with the tapestry revival to such an extent that other aspects of his work are often neglected. However he made important contributions to painting, literature and art criticism, and moreover, like Morris, he

was a political activist. Both men are often compared with the great humanists of the Renaissance and love of nature is typical for both; furthermore, both regarded tapestry weaving as "the noblest of the weaving arts."⁵ Taking a profound interest in tapestry from the very outset, they started from embroidery in which they tried to reproduce the qualities and texture of tapestry. Moreover the four main principles of tapestry weaving formulated by Lurçat on the base of *Apocalypse Tapestry*⁶ coincide with William Morris's theoretical inferences and practice.

It should be stressed, however, that the revival of tapestry for both William Morris and Jean Lurçat meant the creation of highly original individual works based on an understanding of the principles and spirit of medieval tapestries without being a copy of a medieval source. In the case of Svetlana Korovina, some of her tapestries created in the 1970s–1980s, for instance *Autumn Suite*, also show a remarkable grasp of the subject and motifs from the past interpreted in a modern idiom, but the main aim of her Revival of Tapestry workshop is to produce made-to-order tapestries, so the will of the customer determines the product. That is why most of the items created there are copies of famous tapestries or pictures dating back to past epochs, often slightly transformed. In one case, a work by the painter and poster designer Alphonse Mucha was copied in a tapestry, with the face of Mucha's figure

replaced with that of the customer's wife—the tapestry was meant to be an anniversary present to her. As far as medieval sources are concerned, as mentioned earlier, The Revival of Tapestry workshop began its activity with producing two tapestries based on medieval millefleurs. The first turned out to be the altered version of *Smell* combined with *Taste* from *The Lady with the Unicorn* set (Musée National du Moyen Age Thermes de Cluny), to which the motto and the border were added at the customer's request. The second, *Figures near a Fountain*, was composed from the “stock figures” according to the medieval millefleurs traditions and as a result it reproduced the spirit of this kind of tapestry without being a copy of a specific sample. Among subsequent orders produced for Moscow and St. Petersburg customers were *Sight* and *Mon Seul Desir*—two more pieces from *The Lady with the Unicorn* set and a modified fragment from *The Unicorn Dips his Horn into the Stream* and *The Unicorn in Captivity* (both from *The Hunt of the Unicorn* series in the Metropolitan Museum). To conform to the client's apartment requirements *The Unicorn in Captivity* tapestry became square, the flowers of its background were “thinned out” and the tree was turned into a bush, but nevertheless this version is rather natural and harmonious.

It is worth mentioning that Svetlana Korovina in a sense follows William Morris in her attitude towards the tapestry weaving process. The weavers of her workshop use high warp looms, the texture approximates that of the medieval, and in Morris's words, “the considerable latitude in the choice and arrangement of tints in shading is allowed to the executants themselves who are in fact, both by nature and training artists, not merely animated machines,”⁷ There is no special moment when a professional weaver or anyone who is eager to take the first step in weaving enters the workshop. For instance, the chief master-weaver, Lyudmila Mikheeva, one of Korovina's first apprentices, used to be a journalist. She is at present the head of the weaving courses attached to the workshop. According to Mikheeva it is rather easy to understand the main principles of weaving technique, but only one or two out of ten apprentices who graduate from the courses are able to keep on weaving as members of the workshop staff. She prefers working with apprentices who have never mastered this craft before to those who are professionals, as it is often necessary to teach such specialists again so that they meet the workshop's stringent requirements, developed from many years' copying experience in the practice of The Revival of Tapestry.

In November 2005, the copy of the Merton *Adoration of the Magi* tapestry, mentioned above, was completed by the weavers of Korovina's workshop—Olga Lanina, Elena Gromova, and Elena Matveeva. It took four years to realize this huge and very labori-

ous project. The Hermitage version woven in 1902 for the famous Russian collector and patron of art, S. I. Schyukhin, was used as the model, but at the customer's request the border was executed according to the version made in 1906 for the Colman Family of Carrow Abbey (Castle Museum, Norwich) since this is much more impressive. A tapestry version of the embroidered hanging by J. H. Dearle was also woven to accompany it. Fruit were added to the original blossoming tree and thus the resulting tapestry based on this hanging is slightly reminiscent of the famous *Woodpecker* or *Orchard* tapestries.

It is thus a very gratifying development that in Russia people have emerged who are interested in Merton Abbey tapestries and weavers who to some degree continue Morris's traditions.

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1. Olga Kiseleva, *Vozrozhdenie iskusstva shpalery vo Fransii v pervoi polovine XX veka i tvorchestvo Zhana Lyursa* (St. Petersburg: Avtoref: dis . . . kand. iskusstvovedeniya, 1995), 12.

2. *The Apocalypse Tapestry*, now kept in the Château de Angers, former residence of the Dukes of Anjou, is the largest and most famous masterpiece of medieval tapestry weaving. The work was commissioned by Louis I of Anjou between 1373 and 1377 and manufactured at the Nicolas Bataille workshop. It was originally composed of six sections each 23.5 metres long and 6 meters high (that is, a total length of over 140 metres of which 103 metres have survived, averaging 4.5 metres high). Each of the six sections contained fourteen scenes arranged in two rows illustrating the visions of the Revelation to St. John; out of the original eighty-four scenes, sixty-seven scenes together with a few fragments have been preserved.

3. The second half of the fifteenth to the first half of the sixteenth century, the time of the transition from Gothic to Renaissance, is regarded as the “Golden Age” of tapestry weaving.

4. George Leland Hunter, *Tapestries: Their Origin, History and Renaissance* (New York: John Lane, 1913), 15.

5. William Morris, “Textiles,” in *Arts and Crafts Essays by Members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society* (London: Longmans, Green, 1899), 23.

6. “Tapestry could not be a copy of painting. It should be designed according to its own rules; tapestry is meant for the wall and thus should be designed taking into account the specific character and purposes of the peculiar room which it is to decorate; the design for the tapestry should be in the full-life size; the texture of the tapestry should be approximate to the medieval” (Varvara Savitskaya, *Prevrashcheniya shpalery* [Moscow: Galart, 1995], 25–27).

7. Aymer Vallance, *The Revival of Tapestry-Weaving: An Interview with Mr. William Morris*, *Studio* 3 (1894): 101.

MORRIS AND VOLCANOS IN ICELAND

Gary L. Aho

Two articles that I wrote for the *Newsletter* on ‘Morris, Alcoa and Iceland’ appeared in the Spring 2006 and Winter 2009 issues. I opened the first with some lines from the 1871 Icelandic *Journals*, when—from the pitching deck of a small Danish steamer—Morris



Eruptions at Eyjafjallajökull

caught his first glimpse of Iceland: “a terrible shore indeed . . . dark grey mountains worked into pyramids and shelves . . . and the great glaciers . . . Vatnajökull, an ice tract as big as Yorkshire.” And then a few lines from Morris’s fine poem, “Iceland First Seen”: ‘mountain waste voiceless as death . . . dreadful with grinding of ice and record of scarce hidden fire,’ these lines serving as my introduction to what Alcoa was doing up in those grey mountains and on the very edge of Vatnajökull, Europe’s largest glacier.

What they were “doing”—a pallid verb, indeed—was the Karahnjúkar Project; I had had a chance to visit the site in 2003, when the project—hundreds of men, dozens of giant machines, working round the clock to divert glacial rivers, build dams, dig tunnels, and so forth—was well under way, and I described it in some detail. Alcoa spokesmen were then confident that the culmination of all this work, the smelter out on the north coast, would be producing aluminum by 2007. And when I wrote that first article in 2006, all those massive works had indeed been completed, and on schedule. Objections from geologists, protests from environmentalists and the like, all had been ignored, and a majority of Icelanders were sanguine about what Alcoa had wrought up there in the highlands. Jobs had been created, the wilderness was still there, altered a bit—you know what they say about omelettes. What’s

more important—this was the prevailing opinion—is that Iceland was now a player, involved in the European and world economy in ways never imagined a few decades earlier, when all Iceland had was eddas and sagas, codfish and tourism.

In the second article, I pointed out that Icelanders had become less sanguine about Alcoa and its project. An Icelandic novelist, Andri Snær Magnason, had gotten their attention with his polemic, *Draumalandid: Sjalfshjalparbók Handa Hraeddrir Thjod* [*Dreamland: A Self-help Manual for a Frightened Nation*]. One reviewer, this in 2007, said that “Magnason is not only raging against Icelandic politicians, but also taking on the aluminum giant Alcoa. He’s mad as hell. And he’s not going to take it any more.” The book was widely read and acclaimed. When the the melt-down of the entire Icelandic economy occurred in November 2008, *Dreamland* found more readers. Magnason’s earlier denunciation of the ways Icelandic politicians and bankers had colluded with Alcoa was seen as a foreshadowing of the ways some of the same folks were implicated in the big economic collapse.

Now Magnason’s critiques have reached a much larger audience, for his book has been turned into a wonderful 89-minute documentary. Here are a few typical responses: “This is one of the best environmental films ever made. An incredibly moving, inspiring

and fantastically political film that will make you want to be a better steward of this planet. . . . *Dreamland* is a film about a nation standing at a cross-roads. Leading up to the country's greatest economic crisis, the government started the largest mega project in the history of Iceland, to build the biggest dam in Europe to provide Alcoa cheap electricity for an aluminum smelter in the rugged east fjords of Iceland. Today Iceland is left holding a huge debt and an uncertain future."

In May 2010, at the Toronto HotDocs Film Festival, a jovial Magnason gave away vials of volcanic ash, ash from what had become the best known volcano in the world, the one with the difficult name, Eyjafjallajökull. Comments about its consonants, lessons in how to pronounce it, appeared all over the internet, and even on the Op-Ed page of the *New York Times*. This volcano at East Mountain (Eyja Fjalla) had erupted beneath its major glacier (Jökull) on 16 April. Thick clouds of ash and steam had quickly risen into the stratosphere; prevailing easterlies carried the clouds toward the British Isles and northern Europe, and since ash particles play havoc with jet engines, all transatlantic flights were cancelled, some for several days, and all because of a volcano erupting under a glacier up there in the far north. Iceland was in the news, big time: "Air Travel Chaos Deepens as Iceland's Volcanic Plume Spreads," "Ash Cloud Chokes Air Travel Across Europe," "Iceland's Volcano Continues to Erupt and Disrupt." A few headlines linked the volcano and its spreading ash to Iceland's financial dilemma: "Volcano in Iceland: Brits add it to their Grievances toward Viking Republic," "The Britishers said SEND CASH and the Icelanders chose to hear SEND ASH."

This Eyjafjallajökull eruption, with the help of Magnason's documentary, has caused many to recall the warnings of geologists who said Alcoa should not be allowed to build dams and create a huge lake up in those high-lands and on the shoulders of the biggest glacier in Europe. Had such an eruption occurred under Vatnajökull, the resulting flood of water and ice would have wiped out three or four villages on the north coast.

Eyjafjallajökull is mentioned several times in Morris's Icelandic *Journals*, for he spent several days on the 1871 trek in Njala country, stopping at both Bergthorsknoll, site of the notorious burning-in of Njal and his family, and also at Hlitharendi, where Njal's great friend, Gunnar Hamundarson, lived and died, and where he was entombed. (Many readers of this *Newsletter* will be familiar with Morris's excellent poem, "Gunnar's Howe Above the House at Lithend.") In that tribute to heroism, incidentally, the phrase "Eyjafell's snow" appears.) While at Hlitharendi, Morris and Magnusson went off on a one-day excursion into Thorsmark, a great wilderness, a tangle of mountains, precipitous

valleys, and glaciers. One such is Eyjafjallajökull, dominating the horizon at Thorsmark, a spooky place in *Njals Saga*, where bad people, outlaws, and evil spirits dwell, a savage spot in saga times and also for the Morris party in 1871. They had problems crossing its swift glacial rivers, full of ice and gravel, and they would have been in real danger without their Icelandic guide, Jon Jonsson, a young scholar and saddle-maker, as well as an admirer of Morris and his poetry. He was also Morris's guide on the 1873 journey and corresponded with him until Morris's death, and with Janey after that. And Jon evidently had something to do with a heath inside Thorsmark being named "Morrishethi," this according to an Icelandic blogger, and something I haven't had a chance to verify yet. But I'm sure Morris would be pleased to be so memorialized in the country he visited twice, whose ancient literature he loved with a kind of fierce sincerity that is indeed wonderful. So are Morris's descriptions in the Icelandic *Journals* of this northern island where Eyjafjallajökull, just this past April, has given us a new sense of what Morris meant by "scarce hidden fire."

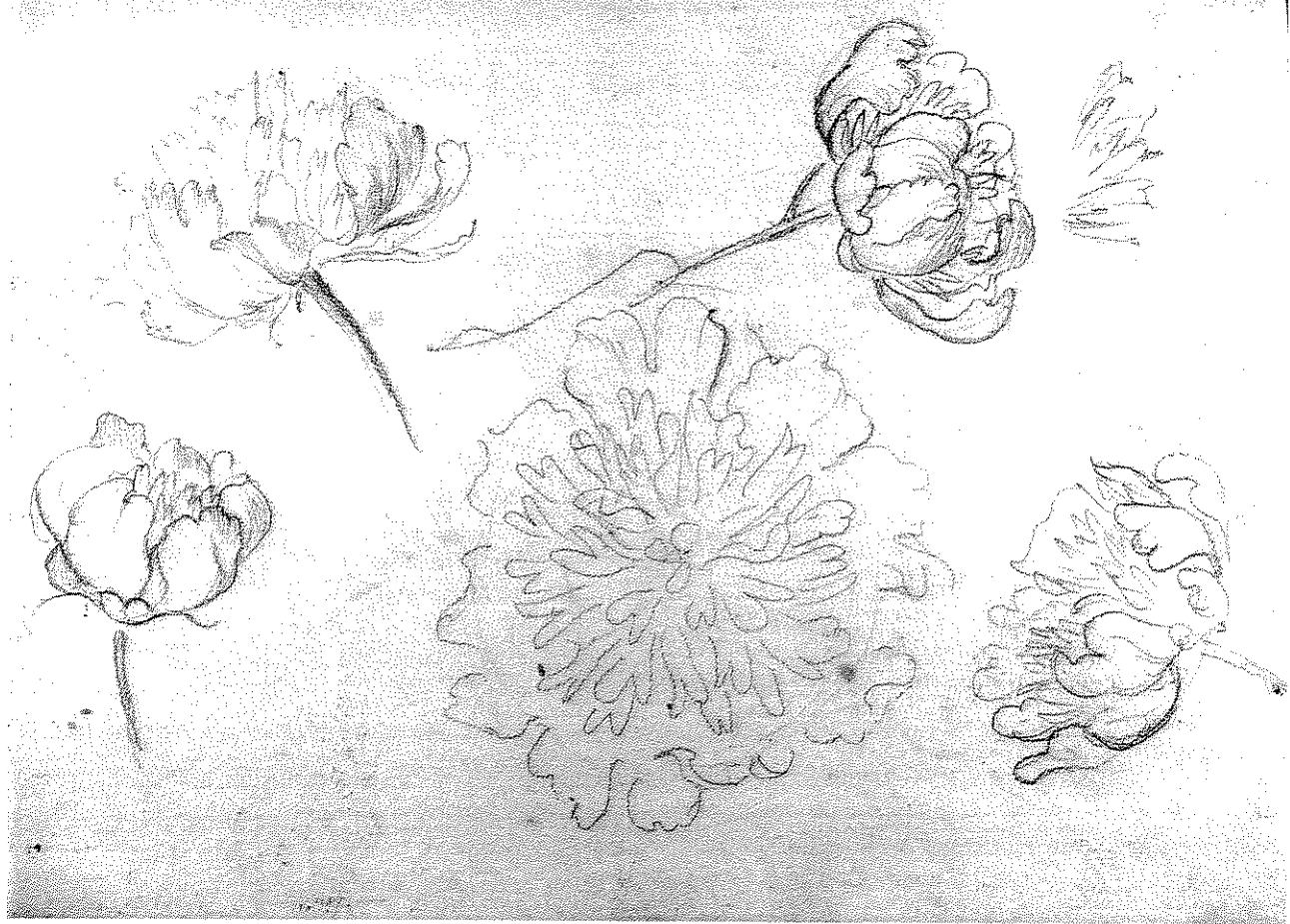
Gary L. Abo, professor emeritus of English literature, University of Massachusetts-Amherst, is working on Morris's Icelandic diaries for the Morris Online Edition.

MAY MORRIS AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Margaretta S. Frederick

The genesis for this brief essay was research carried out in preparation for a modest exhibition of the work of May Morris to be held at the Delaware Art Museum in tandem with the William Morris conference and symposium, "Useful & Beautiful" (7–9 October 2010). The exhibition, entitled *A Belief in the Power of Beauty: A Selection of Work by May Morris*, will be on view from 28 August 2010 through 2 January 2011.

It is universally acknowledged that May Morris's accomplishments suffer from being so closely aligned with those of her father, William. And there is no doubt that the path she chose in life and her views on the social importance of the Arts and Crafts were indeed formed by her close association with him. It was, in fact, May's deep allegiance to her father that has, over time, come just shy of erasing her life work from the history of the Arts and Crafts movement. My research has led me to believe—and this is, admittedly, not an entirely original thought—that at a certain point May Morris's work matured in a direction that was very much her own and markedly different from that of her father.



May Morris, *Herbaceous Peonies*. Pencil and ink, ca. 1911.
 Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, on loan to the University of Delaware Library

My thoughts in this direction began with the discovery of a group of eleven landscape watercolor sketches in the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, on loan to the University of Delaware Library. The watercolors were acquired in a single lot along with several drawings, photographs, and a manuscript notebook from a book sale in the early 1990s. The watercolors are of two sizes, approximately 10 × 14 in. and 7 × 10 in. Only one image is identified as *The Granary*. The exact location of the other views depicted remains somewhat of a mystery.

However, a clue is provided by one of the accompanying pencil sketches, inscribed "White Horse," almost surely a reference to the ancient monument in Uffington that was a favorite haunt of William Morris and the site of numerous childhood pilgrimages for May. It would not be entirely unsubstantiated to surmise that the remaining landscapes depict similar views in the Gloucester and Oxfordshire countryside surrounding Kelmscott Manor.

May's penchant for sketching her surroundings is well documented. There are, for instance, two sketchbooks with watercolor and pencil drawings recording

separate excursions in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The first book documents a holiday in Lyme Regis (ca. 1883) with her mother, Jane, and possibly other members of Morris's family.¹ The second (ca. 1885) was the result of another journey, also in the company of her mother, across the continent to Italy. The views depicted, although only occasionally identified, suggest a reverence for the pastoral and an appreciation for the landscape, fortified through a painter's scrutiny of her surroundings.

While May shared her father's love of the landscape, her artistic response took the form of sketches such as these. William Morris admitted to having difficulty drawing from a subject before him, writing to Louisa Macdonald Baldwin (22 October, 1873), "I never . . . had the *painters memory* which makes it easy to put down on paper what you think you see; nor indeed can I see any scene with a frame as if it were round it, though in my own way I can realize things vividly enough to myself."²

Beginning in 1909, May was at work on her magnum opus, the compilation of the *Collected Works* of her father, including her own introductions to each

volume. The “Introductions” provided biographical background for the period in which each text was produced, much of which took place during her youth and early adulthood. May’s appreciation of the landscape (and her understanding of its importance as inspiration for her father’s writing) is re-emphasized in numerous narrative reminiscences throughout the “Introductions”:

It is the passion for the soil and loving observation of familiar country mingled with marvels beyond sea that make *The Well at the World’s End* such delightful reading. No doubt the charm is rather a special one for the members of the writer’s family, as the King’s sons start on their adventures from the very door of Kelmscott Manor transformed into the palace of a simple-living kinglet, and the second page describes closely the placing of our home between river and upland, with the ford at the corner where the harvesters in *News from Nowhere* landed at their journey’s end . . . Ralph met the Champion of the Dry Tree for ‘the first time’ outside Uffington Church, where on our journey to the White Horse Hill we always stop to leave our unspoken thanks to the makers of the gem-like little building sweetly placed at the meeting of the green plains and the downland. . . Custom could not stale the charm of that journey up the white road and along the Greenway with its low bank set with straggling thorns; my father spared no pains to help us share his delight over these traces of the ancient people, and we were entranced by the legends and surmises of our skald; pictures of life in war-time within the Encampment, of sacrifice to the tribal god from the Dragon Hill, on to whose flat top we climbed to view the Horse galloping up the turf below us, and by our side a group of priests at their rites. This surmise about the Dragon Hill was one that pleased him in these earlier holiday-wanderings.³

In addition to beginning her work on the “Introductions,” May spent most of 1909–10 on a lecture tour of the United States where she made the acquaintance of the lawyer and bibliophile, John Quinn. A tantalizing key to the identification and genesis for the Samuels Lasner landscapes is found in a letter written to Quinn in October, 1912:

I had a magnificent holiday, a few days back that was also work – a fine combination isn’t it? I had to go to the Vale White Horse some fourteen miles south of us, to make some notes and sketches for my books [italics added]. It was one of our favourite expeditions, and Father loved the place and visited it every year, as I have done ever since – highly interesting and beautiful, too, to people who haven’t the personal feeling about the place. I’ve been there in storm and in sunshine, but never on such a flawless radiant day as the other day. I started early, and stayed on the sunny lonely hillside till near on sun-down, when I had to hurry away to do

my fourteen miles before night closed in. The day was as near perfection as anything could be . . . I was working hard the whole time, too, and tramping the rough ground over the hills to the ancient encampment, and the ‘green road’ – the ancient way Roman or British – so solitary, so remote, planned heaven knows when, and set with the howls of dead warriors on the edge of the billowy low hills that stretch to the horizon. This is the White Horse and the Dragon Hill opposite a strange flat-topped hill opposite – all like beaten gold the other day, and the Vale and the blue hills away so fairy-like – unpaintable, as poor me found. Father used to say the Horse was a Dragon really; but he loved him dearly, and I’m bringing it all in the [W]ell at the World’s End, where the young men start from Kelmscott and go southward into the land of Adventure.⁴

It is quite possible that the Samuels Lasner landscape watercolors and drawings are the result of the sketching trip described in the letter to Quinn. If so, they could be interpreted as preliminary musings in the process of composing the text of the “Introductions”—visual aids to the literary process.

May employed this method of creation—in which a drawing or painting made directly from the subject was then transformed into an entirely different medium or genre—in her embroidery designs as well. As Linda Parry has noted, “Nature provided May with her greatest source of inspiration, and this shows in both designs and finished embroideries.”⁵ A pencil drawing of herbaceous peonies (Samuels Lasner Collection) is the kind of preliminary work that resulted in a finished embroidery such as the *Table Cover* in the Collection of Crabtree Farm. May emphasized the importance of the study of natural forms as well as an understanding of their three-dimensionality prior to their transformation into the planar embroidery surface. She wrote in *Decorative Needlework*: “. . . studies [from nature] should be constantly and faithfully made . . .”⁶ However, she cautioned against transference of these sketched observations directly to the embroidered design. “No attempt should be made to faithfully copy on paper a branch of roses, for instance; such a drawing is a *study* and not a design. The student or artist may fill up a certain space with roses of which the branch is the inspiration, but it is seen through his medium, with his individuality stamped on it, a *translation*, not a *photograph*, of nature.”⁷ For May Morris, observations of the natural world were to be synthesized into the final format— either embroidery or, in the case of the reminiscences of her father’s life in the “Introductions,” literary text.

Jan Marsh describes May’s embroidery designs as reflecting her “generational position . . . the impression created by her flowing, exaggerated natural forms has something in common with those of near-contempo-

rary Art Nouveau designs from Glasgow, Brussels or Barcelona. The style is, however, distinctly looser and less constrained, as if an English garden were being left to run wild.”⁸ May Morris’s abstraction of reality from sketch to finished work can be seen as reflective of the aesthetic of the period in which she lived. The artistic sensibility of Post-Impressionism, Symbolism and Art Nouveau was vastly different from the Arts and Crafts taste of the period in which her father lived and worked. In writing of the Post-Impressionist exhibition in London (December 1910) which had been lambasted in *The Times* by her childhood friend, Philip Burne-Jones, May wrote, “It seems to me, who am no critic and not learned in modern pictures (or old ones!) that though they are brutal sometimes, violent – mad, or absurd – anything – yet they are not negligible; and the mad of Gauguin rather touched me. He seems to have been struggling towards some expression outside the ordinary routine, without having reached. Yet some of his extraordinary experiments have wild snatches of poetry, even of sentiment.”⁹ May’s appreciation of the *expression outside of the ordinary* in the work of Gauguin parallels the translation of the observed to the abstract in her own work.

While May Morris’s creative debt to her father goes without question, her life work was, in many ways, more a continuation of his rather than an imitation. The work in the Delaware exhibition—a small offering within a much broader oeuvre—reveals an individuality which might be better understood as May Morris’s carrying forward and modernization of many of William Morris’s principles, resulting in a style that is very much her own.

A member of the governing committee of the William Morris Society in the US, Margaretta S. Frederick is curator of the Bancroft Pre-Raphaelite Collection at the Delaware Art Museum.

1. Jan Marsh, *Jane and May Morris: A Biographical Story, 1839–1938* (London: Pandora Press, 1986), 187.
2. *The Collected Letters of William Morris*, ed. Norman Kelvin (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 1203.
3. May Morris, *The Introductions to the Collected Works of William Morris*, with a preface by Joseph Riggs Dunlap (New York: Oriole Editions, 1973), 513–514 (vol. 18 of the *Collected Works*).
4. Janis Londraville, ed., *On Poetry, Painting, and Politics: The Letters of May Morris and John Quinn* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1997), 121.
5. Linda Parry, “May Morris, Embroidery and Kelmscott,” in *William Morris: Art and Kelmscott*, ed. Linda Parry. Occasional Papers of the Society of Antiquaries of London 8 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1996), 59.
6. May Morris, *Decorative Needlework* (London: Joseph Hughes, 1893), 84.
7. May Morris, “Embroidery,” in Arthur Mackmurdo, ed., *Plain Handicrafts: Being Essays by Artists Setting Forth the Principles of Design and Established Methods of Workmanship* (London: Percival, 1892), 47.
8. Jan Marsh, “May Morris: Ubiquitous, Invisible Arts and Crafts-woman,” in Bridget Elliott and Janice Helland, eds., *Women Artists and the Decorative Arts, 1880–1935* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2002), 39–40.
9. Londraville, *On Poetry, Painting, and Politics*, 70.

AN APPEAL FOR 7 HAMMERSMITH TERRACE THE EMERY WALKER TRUST

Sophie Slade

One of the least-known, but most remarkable places in London is the perfectly preserved Arts and Crafts interior at 7 Hammersmith Terrace. This internationally important historic house filled with William Morris treasures was the home of Sir Emery Walker. A great printer and antiquary who helped his friend and neighbor Morris set up the Kelmscott Press, Walker lived at the house, one of a Georgian terrace not far from Upper Mall and Kelmscott House, from 1903 until his death in 1933.

After Walker’s death, his daughter Dorothy kept the house just as it had been in her father’s lifetime, making few changes. The manner of decoration is very much that found in the homes of his friends, William Morris and Phillip Webb. Full of original Morris wallpapers, textiles and furniture, it is the best-preserved Arts and Crafts interior in Britain. On display, too, are Burne-Jones drawings, Walker’s personal effects (including his bookplate printed at the Kelmscott Press), and such unusual items as Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s teapot. Privately owned until 1999 and now managed by the Emery Walker Trust, the house was opened to the public for the first time in 2005. Due to its small size and the fragile nature of the structure and contents, only a few thousand visitors a year can be admitted; many people have yet to see Hammersmith’s “hidden gem.”

Tours in 2010 began on 8 April and run until 15 September. The Emery Walker Trust is planning one of its busiest years ever, so it is important to book early. For a place on a tour, reserve online (see website address below) or for group bookings call 020 8741 4104 or email the manager at admin@emerywalker.org.uk. Guided tours—strictly limited to eight people at a time—take place on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays only. The cost £10 per person, full-time students £5, and children (5–16 years) £5. Children are welcome on a discretionary basis but the tour is not generally recommended for those under 7. Please contact the manager for further details or any special access requirements.

The economic situation over 2008–2009 has had a marked impact on the Trust’s endowment and a major fundraising campaign was launched in August 2009. Funds are urgently needed to preserve the house and collection. Donations of any amount are welcome and may be made through the William Morris Society in the US, ensuring that US taxpayers may obtain a charitable deduction for gifts to the Emery Walker House Appeal. Checks may be sent (please mark the memo



Dining room at 7 Hammersmith Terrace, with Morris *Bird Hangings*

line “Emery Walker Appeal”) to the Society at P.O. Box 53263, Washington, DC 20009. Funds can also be accepted through PayPal, allowing the use of all major credit cards; note that the Society’s e-mail address for PayPal transactions is webmaster@morrissociety.org. An acknowledgment will be sent for all contributions.

To find out more about 7 Hammersmith Terrace please visit www.emerywalker.org.uk.

Sophie Slade is the house and trust manager for the Emery Walker Trust.

WILLIAM MORRIS’S “GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE”

Florence S. Boos

Morris singled out his 1889 essay “Gothic Architecture” for publication at the Kelmscott Press¹ as an homage and companion piece to his 1892 edition of Ruskin’s “On the Nature of Gothic,” a chapter from *The Stones of Venice*. In 1877, he had remarked in “The Lesser Arts” that

if you read “On the Nature of Gothic”, and the “Office of the Workman” . . . you will read at once the truest and the most eloquent words that can possibly be said on the subject. What I have to say upon it can scarcely

be more than an echo of his words, yet I repeat there is some use in reiterating a truth, lest it be forgotten. . . .²

In his preface to the Kelmscott edition of *The Nature of Gothic*, he added that “in future days [it] will be considered as one of the very few necessary and inevitable utterances of the century.”³

In his own praise of “the Gothic,” Morris employed plain speech and historical insights to argue the cause of a more broadly conceived ideal of organic art, which extended the essential features of Ruskin’s definitions of “the Gothic,” but elided or modified the latter’s prescriptive categories (“savageness,” “changefulness,” “naturalness,” “grotesqueness,” “rigidity” and “redundance”). Ruskin’s “changefulness,” for example, had evolved into “flexibility,” which Morris interpreted as a willingness to accommodate free ornamentation (“redundance”) as well as rough decoration (“savageness”). He also set aside “rigidity” and “grotesqueness” altogether, perhaps in part because grotesquerie was absent in many Gothic churches, or because Morris found straightforwardly beautiful a number of carvings Ruskin might have considered grotesque.

In his preface to *The Nature of Gothic*, Morris had observed that “ethical and political considerations [were never] absent from [Ruskin’s] criticism of art; and, in my opinion, it is just this part of his work . . .

which has had the most enduring and beneficent effect on his contemporaries, and will have through them on succeeding generations.”⁴ Here, he refers, of course, to Ruskin’s magisterial assault on the effects of industrial capitalism:

[i]t is not, truly speaking, the labor that is divided; but the men: . . . so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin, or the head of a nail.⁵

as well as his spiritual denunciation of market-driven materialism:

And the great cry that rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blast, is all in very deed for this,—that we manufacture everything there except men; we blanch cotton, and strengthen steel, and refine sugar, and shape pottery; but to brighten, to strengthen, to refine, or to form a single living spirit, never enters into our estimate of advantages.⁶

More plainly and directly, Morris argued in *Gothic Architecture* that “works of . . . art are man’s expression of the value of life, and also the production of them makes his life of value,”⁷ and characterized “Gothic” ideals in intensional terms: as a humane practice and artistic tradition which “must needs have had laws to be a style . . . [but] followed them of free will, and . . . unconsciously.”⁸ Such a practice, he argued, would embrace “abundance” and natural “organic” form quite naturally, and would not be “ashamed of . . . superabundance of ornament, any more than nature is.”⁹ For such “abundance” was “[its] share of a great epic, a story appealing to the hearts and minds of men.”¹⁰

Historically and geographically, Morris’s personal preferences were unabashedly Anglo- and Francophilic, as well as firmly Eurocentric:

. . . during [the twelfth and thirteenth centuries] as far as the art of beautiful building is concerned, France and England were the architectural countries par excellence.¹¹

. . . it is not to be thought that there was any direct borrowing of forms from the East in the gradual change from the round-arched to the pointed Gothic: there was nothing more obvious at work than the influence of a kindred style, whose superior lightness and elegance gave a hint of the road which development might take.¹²

Such artistic traditions would also grace the “new society” he so ardently sought:

[i]f the new society when it comes (itself the result of the ceaseless evolution of countless years of tradition) should find the world cut off from all tradition of art . . . much time will be lost in running hither and thither after the new thread. . . if we are . . . to have ar-

chitecture at all, we must take up the thread of tradition there and nowhere else.”¹³

In his account of *News from Nowhere’s* “great change,” he characterized such desires to “take up the thread of tradition” as an innate “craving for beauty [which] seemed to awaken in men’s minds, and they began rudely and awkwardly to ornament the wares which they made” (chapter 18).¹⁴ But he did not pretend to anticipate, much less define, the directions such natural desires might take:

I looked, and wondered indeed at the deftness and abundance of beauty of the work of men who had at last learned to accept life itself as a pleasure, and the satisfaction of the common needs of mankind and the preparation for them, as work fit for the best of the race. I mused silently; but at last I said, “What is to come after this?” The old man laughed. “I don’t know,” said he; “we will meet it when it comes.”¹⁵

Indeed, Morris suggested at one point in *Gothic Architecture* that *all* artistic traditions may be subject to periods of quasi-cyclical decline and renewal:

For when anything human has arrived at quasi-completion there remains for it decay and death, in order that the new thing may be born from it; and this wonderful joyous art of the Middle Ages could by no means escape its fate.¹⁶

Such cyclical and developmental arguments are not without the faults of their qualities: if the evolution from Greek to Roman to Gothic artistic traditions was “progressive,” for example, why not the emergence of Renaissance arts and crafts from their medieval antecedents as well?

Fortunately, Morris’s wryly practical sense redeemed a slight tendency to beg historical questions. Morris’s gentle mockery of “pedantic retrospection,”¹⁷ for example, calls to mind the pillars and caryatides which incongruously line the grime-encrusted façade of St. Pancras Church in Euston Road:

A Greek columnar temple when it was a real thing, was a kind of holy railing built round a shrine: these things the people of that day wanted, and they naturally took the form of a Greek Temple under the climate of Greece and given the mood of its people. But do we want those things? If so, I should like to know what for. And if we pretend we do and so force a Greek Temple on a modern city, we produce such a gross piece of ugly absurdity as you may see spanning the Lochs at Edinburgh.¹⁸

And “cycles” or no “cycles,” Morris understood that “whatever the form of [the architecture of the future] may be, the spirit of it will be sympathy with the needs and aspirations of its own time, not simulation of needs and aspirations passed away.”¹⁹

Morris often seemed to think in clauses and paragraphs, rather than individual sentences, and in passages such as these he managed to compress deeply held convictions in a kind of prose-poetic undertow of reflective emotion. So preoccupied was Morris with the flow and ebb of these currents that he buoyed them, so to speak, in the visual presentation of his Kelmscott texts. *Six* such shadings and divisions, for example, appeared on pages 52–53 of *Gothic Architecture* alone.

Bright red headers, first, proclaimed that “Beauty [is] lost” on the right, and “The past slays the present” on the left. Separate leaves next introduced three sentences: “There are many artists at present who do not sufficiently estimate the enormity, the portentousness of this change . . .”; “How on earth could people’s ideas of beauty change so? You may say. . .”; and “Well, was it their ideas of beauty that changed?” An emboldened first word of a paragraph, finally, appeared as “This used once to puzzle me. . .”

One way to illustrate the wave-fronts of Morris’s cadential language in *Gothic Architecture* is to rewrite its billows as free verse. Consider the following pair of “sentences” (the first of them twenty lines long):

Once for all, then, when the modern world
finds that the eclecticism of the present
is barren and fruitless,
and that it
needs and will have
a style of architecture

which, I must tell you once more,
can only be as part of a change
as wide and deep
as that which destroyed Feudalism;
when it has come to that conclusion,
the style of architecture will have to be
historic in the true sense;
it will not be able to dispense with tradition;
it cannot begin at least with doing something quite
different
from anything that has been done before;
yet whatever the form of it may be,
the spirit of it will be sympathy
with the needs and aspirations of its own time,
not simulation of needs and aspirations passed away.
Thus it will remember the history of the past,
make history in the present,
and teach history in the future.²⁰

(Notice the natural undulation in the length of lines.) Thus “graphed” (or heard), the graceful dance of Morris’s repetitions, assonance, and clarity create a sense of personal involvement (“I must tell you once more . . .”) as well as “spirit of . . . sympathy.”

Discerning a hoped-for “revolt on foot against the utilitarianism which threatens to destroy the Arts,” Morris was convinced “that great changes which will bring about a new state of society are rapidly advancing,” and believed passionately that “these two revolts should join hands, or at least . . . learn to understand one another.”²⁰

The past slays the present forward to some change or other, were it good or bad: on the side of art, with the sternest pedagogic utterance, it bade men look backward across the days of the “Fathers and famous men that begat them,” and in scorn of them, to an art that had been dead a thousand years before. Hitherto from the very beginning the past was past, all of it that was not alive in the present, unconsciously to the men of the present. Henceforth the past was to be our present, and the blankness of its dead wall was to shut out the future from us. There are many artists at present who do not sufficiently estimate the enormity, the portentousness of this change, and

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how closely it is connected with the Victorian Architecture of the brick box and the slate lid, which helps to make us the dullards that we are. How on earth could people’s ideas of beauty change so? you may say. Well, was it their ideas of beauty that changed? Was it not rather that beauty, however unconsciously, was no longer an object of attainment with the men of that epoch?

THIS used once to puzzle me in the presence of one of the so-called masterpiece of the New Birth, the revived classical style, such a building as St. Paul’s in London, for example. I have found it diffi-

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This has not yet happened, though the legacy of the Arts and Crafts movement has offered valuable anticipations. Morris hoped that art would liberate people from their servitude as “machines . . . who [are] not asked to think, paid to think, or allowed to think.”²¹ He loathed, for example, the early instances of “advertising” he encountered, and he and “Guest” would have been stunned to learn that they anticipated the “creative side” of the propaganda ministry of corporate capitalism. But Morris’s and “Guest”’s ideals—of harmony, cooperation and personal fulfillment, in art as well as life—remain. They are elusive and remote. But they are “alive as you and me,” and it is our turn to try to make them “a vision not a dream.”

1. Morris had published *Signs of Change*, his final essay collection, in 1888. He delivered “Gothic Architecture” seven times in 1889 and 1890, and it is the only one of his essays printed at the Kelmscott Press.

2. William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, in *The Collected Works of William Morris*, ed. May Morris (London: Longmans, Green, 1914), 22:5. See also the Marxist International Archive, www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/index.htm.

3. William Morris, “Preface” to John Ruskin, *The Nature of Gothic*, in *William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*, ed. May Morris (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), 1:274.

4. *Ibid.*

5. John Rosenberg, *The Genius of John Ruskin* (London: George Allen, 1963), 180.

6. *Ibid.*

7. William Morris, *Gothic Architecture* (Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1892), 2–3.

8. *Ibid.*, 31.

9. *Ibid.*, 31–32.

10. *Ibid.*, 43.

11. *Ibid.*, 42.

12. *Ibid.*, 37.

13. *Ibid.*, 5–7.

14. William Morris, *News from Nowhere*, ed. Clive Wilmer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), 160.

15. *Ibid.*, 201.

16. Morris, *Gothic Architecture*, 46.

17. *Ibid.*, 59.

18. *Ibid.*, 59–60.

19. *Ibid.*, 55–56.

20. *Ibid.*, 55–56.

21. *Ibid.*, 4–5.

22. *Ibid.*, 57.

Illustration credit: William Morris, *Gothic Architecture* (Kelmscott Press, 1893), pages 52–53. University of Iowa Library.

THE LAST WORD

DO not be deceived by the outside appearance of order in our plutocratic society. It fares with it as it does with the older forms of war, that there is an outside look of quiet wonderful order about it; how neat and comforting the steady march of the regiment; how quiet and respectable the sergeants look; how clean the polished cannon; neat as a new pin are the storehouses of murder; the books of adjutant and sergeant as innocent-looking as may be; nay, the very orders for destruction and plunder are given with a quiet precision which seems the very token of a good conscience; this is the mask that lies before the ruined cornfield and the burning cottage, the mangled bodies, the untimely death of worthy men, the desolated home. . . .

Yet I say even such a mask is worn by competitive commerce, with its respectable prim order, its talk of peace and the blessings of intercommunication of countries and the like; and all the while its whole energy, its whole organized precision is employed in one thing, the wrenching the means of living from others; while outside that everything must do as it may, whoever is the worse or the better for it; as in the war of fire and steel, all other aims must be crushed out before that one object. It is worse than the older war in one respect at least, that whereas that was intermittent, this is continuous and unrelenting, and its leaders and captains are never tired of declaring that it must last as long as the world, and is the end-all and be-all of the creation of man and of his home. . . .

Art is long and life is short; let us at least do something before we die. . . .

One man with an idea in his head is in danger of being considered a madman; two men with the same idea in common may be foolish, but can hardly be mad; ten men sharing an idea begin to act, a hundred draw attention as fanatics, a thousand and society begins to tremble, a hundred thousand and there is war abroad, and the cause has victories tangible and real; and why only a hundred thousand? You and I who agree together, it is we who have to answer that question.

— WILLIAM MORRIS, “Art Under Plutocracy” (1883)