

While the primary goal of the exhibition was to document the physical evolution of Toronto, a secondary and important objective was to introduce visitors to issues surrounding the conservation and preservation of cartographic materials. In preparation for exhibition, several of the maps underwent extensive conservation treatment. Photographs documenting their treatment history were displayed, while accompanying captions carefully analyzed the original condition of the items, assessed treatment options, and discussed the procedures used in the restorations.

The Market Gallery serves a wide audience with many different backgrounds. Patrick Cummins, curator of this exhibition, and Gallery staff are to be congratulated for preparing such a well-focused and coherent exhibition. All who visited, from school children to historians and archives professionals, could find something of interest and leave with an informed appreciation of the development of Toronto throughout the nineteenth century. This exhibition emphasized, yet again, the important role of the Market Gallery in educating the public about both the history of Toronto and archival/conservation issues.

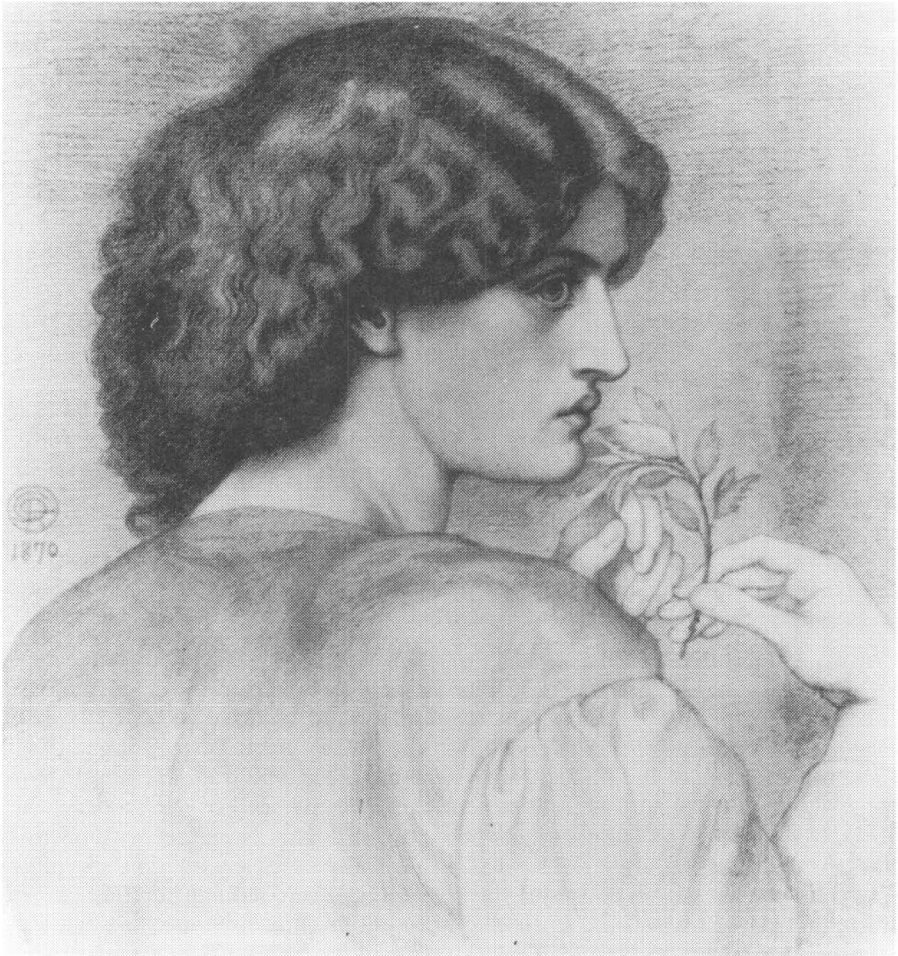
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The Earthly Paradise: Arts and Crafts by William Morris and his Circle from Canadian Collections. ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO. Mounted at the National Gallery of Canada. 22 October 1993 - 16 January 1994. 294 p. catalogue.

Commenting in the catalogue on the paintings in this exhibition, Douglas E. Schoenherr, in the lively voice typical of him, informs us that "Being very likely in love with Janey but about to marry Lizzie, Rossetti resolved his dual loyalties with breath-taking audacity..." and painted both ladies into his *The Salutation of Beatrice on Earth and in Eden*. This explanation points to one of the most entertaining aspects of *The Earthly Paradise*, the very Victorian melodrama at its centre. The plot is easily unravelled. William Morris's wife Jane was Dante Gabriel Rossetti's lover in the 1860s, and was later the mistress of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, whose *Love-Lyrics & Songs of Proteus* was Morris's third Kelmscott Press publication. Rossetti's wife, Elizabeth Siddal, died of an overdose of laudanum two years after their marriage in 1860, and Rossetti himself succumbed to a fatal combination of chloral and whiskey in 1882. Morris consoled himself through these tragedies by being perpetually in love with Georgina Burne-Jones, the wife of his best friend and business partner, who himself had a prolonged affair with one Maria Zambaco. Only John Ruskin, whose marriage failed in 1854, seems to have slept with no one.

This information, which was lovingly presented in both the exhibition and its catalogue, is far from trivial. For this show, indeed, focused on Morris and his immediate circle, warts and all, and, with the exception of the catalogue essay on Canada, not on the Arts and Crafts movement in general. There are strengths and weaknesses in this approach.

The Earthly Paradise concentrated on a handful of figures, the graphic artists named above, as well as potter William De Morgan—Morris did everything—and omitted a substantial discussion of the men who propagated Arts and Crafts ideals



"The Roseleaf," 1870, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, National Gallery of Canada.

in England: A.H. Mackmurdo, C.R. Ashbee, W.R. Lethaby, and C.F. Voysey, for example. The result was one of the weaknesses of the show. The essay on Canada, which does discuss the Arts and Crafts movement here, cannot be read with a knowledge of the British and American context unless one looks elsewhere.

The exhibition space in Ottawa was divided into several galleries. The central players in this history were introduced near the beginning of the show with photographs and textual documents as well as works by the artists involved. A replica of Morris and Company's Oxford Street storefront from the 1870s captured the exciting flavour of their approach to interior decorating. Several specialized rooms, such as a chapel displaying ecclesiastical material, gave us specific information about the numerous aspects of Morris's work. A fabric and wallpaper room containing original print blocks, photographs, and a video explaining how these were

hand-produced, a drawing room, and a changing room illustrated both the socialism behind Morris's methods of production and the sentiment at the centre of his aesthetic, "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be beautiful or believe to be beautiful." A room devoted to De Morgan ceramics was another highlight. Two final rooms discussed the Kelmscott Press, the focus of Morris's work at the end of his life. The entire exhibition was well captioned with information about the historical situation that prompted Morris and others to pursue design reform, the inspiration for particular works, biographical notes, technical information, and comments about the chronology of Morris's various enterprises.

Equally thorough is the catalogue, which is divided into two introductory essays and thirteen sections of illustrations and notes organized by media. The level of scholarship is extremely high; technical information, provenance, and immediate significance is carefully noted. The bibliographical notes at the beginning suggest that a massive literature on Morris exists. One wishes that some of the themes central to the more provocative of these works and those on the Arts and Crafts movements could have been examined in the catalogue. The relationship between Morris and modernism is a case in point. Neatly tucked away in the catalogue notes are references to the Arts and Crafts movement and the attempts of some of its adherents to wrestle with the question of the impact of mechanized industry on design. While this enticing evidence is not woven into a full-fledged analysis here, its presence invites us to make the inquiry ourselves.

In his 1971 study, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, Gillian Naylor cites some seven books published since 1935 that address the issue of the impact of the Industrial Revolution on design. One of the foremost of these was Sir Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (1936). In it, Pevsner argued that "The true pioneers of the Modern Movement are those who from the outset stood for machine art." When we realize that even that nursery of the modern, the Bauhaus, set out in 1919 to marry art and craft, and did not place primary emphasis on the machine until after 1925, we see that we must be cautious in accepting Pevsner's view and his dating of the beginning of modernism in 1914. If we reflect, rather, that it was the *tension* between art, craft, and the machine that was the dynamic force propelling the slow evolution of the modern, then we must allow that Morris did more than "lay the foundations for the modern style"—Morris embraced modernism in the 1860s.

Gillian Naylor agrees, and even pushes modernism back to Blake. His *The Arts and Crafts Movement* sets out some of modernism's early genealogy. His discussions point to Morris's predecessors and the various forms of organizations that followed his initiatives until around the turn of the century in England and the United States. Perhaps the most startling evidence of Morris's place as the first practitioner of a modern aesthetic, which encompasses arts, craft, and machine, is Jerome McGann's *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism* (1993). Here the author argues that the typographical revolution initiated by Morris's Kelmscott Press "put us on the brink of a new world of poetry." The square typeface of the Kelmscott Chaucer, for example, made possible "imagism, vorticism, and objectivism" as well as "visual and concrete poetry."

Examining Morris's work in this light necessitates not only redating the birth of the modern, but rethinking what it was. A kind of vortex of theories and practical experiments, its inability to resolve its tripartate emphasis—art/craft/machine—into one single norm was perhaps at the root of its demise in the late 1960s, one hundred years after Morris defined it. What does this suggest about the rise and fall of modernism in Canada?

The 1990s have seen the publication of several works on Canadian modernism. Three prominent examples have been Ann Davis's *The Logic of Ecstasy*, Denise Leclerc's *The Crisis of Abstraction in Canada: the 1950s*, and *Achieving the Modern: Canadian Abstract Painting and Design in the 1950s*, published by a team of authors under the auspices of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Each book touches on the history of the art being discussed, Ann Davis's book being completely devoted to the mystical aspects of abstract painting from the 1920s to the 1940s. Leclerc and the Winnipeg team focus on post-World War II abstract art and design.

Countering Leclerc's hypothesis (p. 35) of a modernism without authority or tradition, it may be possible, by continuing Rosalind Pelall's inquiry in *The Earthly Paradise*, to trace a stream of early Canadian modernism from the Arts and Crafts movement here through Art Nouveau and on into the multitude of modernisms from "Deco" to abstract expressionism. If, as the Winnipeg team suggests, the links between fine art and design were well developed from at least 1945, then one could assert that for most of the twentieth century an "authority" and "tradition" for the final phases of modernism in the fifties and sixties did exist. These artists did look backwards, as Leclerc herself points out.

It could be said that two historical processes were at work here in Canada defining the modern: the mystical and the arts/craft/machine inquiry. John Kyles's 1921 lecture, "The Design of Crafts for Industry," and Donald Buchanan's 1946 exhibition "Design for Industry" are two signposts in the latter aspect of Canadian modernism's history. By examining the introduction of the Arts and Crafts movement into Canada at the end of the nineteenth century, this exhibition made an important contribution to our knowledge of this broader aspect of modernism here, while at the same time dazzling us with the wonderful creations of Morris and his circle.

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