

Transforming Topography

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British Library Conference Centre Auditorium, St Pancras
09.30 – 17.00, Friday 6 May 2016

 **PAUL MELLON CENTRE**
for Studies in British Art

Programme

09.30 – 10.00 **Registration**

10.00 – 10.15 **Welcome** by Kristian Jensen, Head of Collections and Curation, British Library
Introduction to the conference by Mark Hallett, Director of Studies, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Felicity Myrone, Lead Curator, Western Prints and Drawings, British Library

Chair: Finola O’Kane Crimmins, University College Dublin

Paper 1: Daniel Maudlin, University of Plymouth

A Narrow View of Nature: the natural world experienced through early modern itineraries, travel maps and inns

This paper will consider how the road-building boom of Georgian Britain and British America transformed actual and imaginative experiences of travel. Drawing on the Library’s collection of contemporary travel aids, it will address how travel was recast as a distinctly linear experience: how printed itineraries and route maps presented a modern world defined by mobility but which reduced nature to a strip, experienced through a succession of views from a carriage window.

Paper 2: Kelly Presutti, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Louis Garneray and Topographical Painting as Border Control

Ports were one of the earliest sites depicted topographically in fine art; the practice was institutionalized in France in 1817 when Louis Garneray (1783-1857) was named official painter to the navy. His *Vues des côtes de France* in the British Library’s King’s Topographical Collection reveal how topography was deployed as an instrument of state formation and as a means to secure the nation at the site where it is most vulnerable – its borders. Garneray’s work was also widely disseminated in various formats, and in ways which transcended historical divisions between fine and decorative arts, such as a porcelain service produced at the state-sponsored Sèvres manufactory.

10.55 – 11.15 **Questions and discussion**

11.15 – 11.45 **Coffee**

Chair: John Bonehill, University of Glasgow

Paper 3: Matthew Sangster, University of Birmingham

Accumulating London

How did the topographical series produced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries seek to encompass and explain the rapidly-expanding metropolis of London? During this period, advances in print technologies, growing audiences and the interventions of clever entrepreneurs led to an unprecedented burgeoning of city images. As a legacy of past productions piled up, authors, artists and publishers began to cater to different constituencies by offering increasingly specialised versions of London. This talk will consider the contrasting ways in which these works organised, selected from and represented the city by employing digital methods and historical plans to display the geographical and cultural patterns that they trace.

Paper 4: Jenny Gaschke, Fine Art Curator, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery
"Available for useful purposes" The Braikenridge Collection of topographical drawings in Bristol

The antiquarian collector George Weare Braikenridge (1775-1856) brought together vast numbers of objects relating to Bristol's history and keenly collected and commissioned views of Bristol, its harbour and environs. The Braikenridge collection will be evaluated within the wider practice of antiquarianism, and will also be situated within the development of British landscape art during the first half of the nineteenth century. Can the Braikenridge collection also shed light on how 'topography' is defined in the museum and art gallery, via collecting policies, storage, access, display, interpretation and research?

12.25 – 12.45 **Questions and discussion**

12.45 – 13.45 **Lunch**

Chair: Martin Postle, Deputy Director for Collections & Publications, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art

Paper 5: Mikael Ahlund, Museum Gustavianum, Uppsala University Museum, Sweden
Topography, iron-making and national identity. A British–Swedish comparison

This paper addresses the role British topography played in Scandinavia, paying particular attention to the output of two Swedish artists: Elias (1739-1818) and Johan Fredrik Martin (1755-1816). The brothers worked in London producing topographical images of the British countryside, and moved in the same circles as Paul Sandby. When they returned to Sweden in 1780 they emerged as the country's leading topographical artists. With recourse to contemporary travel writing, this paper will attempt to identify themes in the brothers' topographical imagery – themes connected to contemporary debates about national identity, economics, and social order.

Paper 6: Amy Concannon, University of Nottingham, Assistant Curator, British Art
1790–1850, Tate Britain
A Place for the 'full exercise of the intellectual powers of a topographical writer': Lambeth's topographical image, c.1800–50

With important antiquarian sites like Lambeth Palace and places of popular entertainment like Vauxhall Gardens, the London parish of Lambeth was a rich resource for topographical artists and writers at the turn of the nineteenth century. It was also a landscape in flux: a traditional 'rural retreat' on the Surrey side of the Thames undergoing rapid urbanisation. With a particular focus on the work of Lambeth-born topographer Edmund Wedlake Brayley (1773–1854), how did contemporary producers of topographical material – both visual and textual – negotiate the changing landscape of Lambeth?

Paper 7: Lucy Hodgetts, University of York
Topography and graphic caricature in Dagaty's and Rowlandson's 'Six Views of different Entrances to London' (1797–8)

From 1797 Rudolph Ackermann published six views of entrances to London after drawings by Rowlandson and Dagaty. They were sold at his Strand gallery, the *Repository of Arts*. This paper will analyse the social identities of the human figures in the views, their mobility, and how metropolitan topographical settings were employed by artists and writers to comment on contemporary social anxieties. It will also reveal the possible political agendas of a generic cross-over between topography and graphic caricature in visualising politically unstable subjects.

14.45 – 15.15 **Questions and discussion**

15.15 – 15.45 **Tea**

Chair: Mark Hallett

15.45 – 16.35 'Topography Now': Position papers and round table discussion with Adrian Edwards (Head of Printed Heritage Collections, British Library), Jane Roberts (formerly Royal Collection, Windsor Castle), Stephen Daniels (University of Nottingham), John Barrell (Queen Mary, University of London) and Stephen Bann (University of Bristol)

16.35 – 17.00 Discussion and wrap-up