

## Frenemies. Friendship, Enmity and Rivalry in British Art (London, 19–20 Jul 18)

Benjamin West Lecture Theatre, Royal Academy of Arts, Jul 19–20, 2018

Ella Fleming

Frenemies: Friendship, Enmity and Rivalry in British Art, 1769-2018

From the earliest histories of art, the friendships and rivalries of artists have been the subject of anecdote and gossip. For that reason they have been associated with the popular storylines of art, rather than with the scholarly discourse of art history. However, the wide-ranging re-evaluation of affect and emotion that is taking place in the humanities, and the increasing recognition of a synchronic, network model of understanding rather than a diachronic, emulative one in art history, have served to suggest that artistic friendships and rivalries are key agents in the production and reception of works of art. This methodological shift has helped art historians perceive the significance of interpersonal relationships to art-making. It has drawn attention to the sociability of artists, and to the entwining of their personal and professional networks. Meanwhile, across other disciplines, the impact of friendship, personal networks and communities of rivalry upon cultural production have been the subject of important studies. Furthermore, the idea of productive or inhibiting enmities (a more awkward but still profoundly important category of affective relationship) is also becoming a fruitful avenue of exploration.

The long history of British art furnishes many examples of complex and productive friendships and bitter, crushing rivalries. The Royal Academy, from its foundation to today, is one major locus of such complex affective networks, as has been its annual summer exhibition. In conjunction with the exhibition *The Great Spectacle: 250 years of the Summer Exhibition*, to be held at the Royal Academy between June and August of 2018, and curated by the Paul Mellon Centre's Mark Hallett and Sarah Victoria Turner, this conference seeks to explore the impact of friendships and enmities on subject matter and artistic method, as well as on the formation of artistic careers and on the reception of works of art. We aim to re-evaluate elevate these relationships, shifting them from the peripheral status of cultural gossip to central aspects of making and meaning.

Programme:

Day 1: Thursday 19th July 2018

11.00 – 11.30: Registration and coffee (please use vouchers provided at RA café)

11.30-11.45: Welcome & Introduction to the conference

11.45-12.45: Session 1: Antagonism in the Academy, Part I  
2 x 20 minute paper + 20 minute discussion

Chair: Georgina Cole (The National Art School, Sydney)

Martin Postle 'Alas, poor Sir Joshua!' : James Barry and the Gentle Art of Making Frenemies

Esther Chadwick, Mortimer's Reynolds: imitation and independence in the Fifteen Etchings (1778)

12.45-14.15: Lunch (not provided)

14.15-15.15: Session 2: Antagonism in the Academy, Part II

2 x 20 minute paper + 20 minute discussion

Chair: Mark Ledbury (The Power Institute, University of Sydney)

Wendy Bellion, Formal Old Fools? Joseph Wilton Sculpts William Pitt

Zoë Dostal, Alliances, Grievances, and Failed Ambitions in Henry Singleton's Royal Academicians

15.15-15.30: Comfort break

15.30-16.30: Session 3: Victorian networkers

2 x 20 minute paper + 20 minute discussion

Chair: Sarah Victoria Turner (Paul Mellon Centre)

Pamela Fletcher, A Victorian Networker: The Case of Augustus Egg

Robert Wilkes, 'My quondam friend': Frederic George Stephens, William Holman Hunt and the Pre-Raphaelitism controversy

16.30-17.00: Tea break (please use vouchers provided at RA café)

17.00-18.00: Final Panel - Mark Hallett (Paul Mellon Centre) and Georgina Cole

DAY 2: Friday 20 July 2018

8.30-10.00: Private view of The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition

10.00-10.30: Coffee break (please use vouchers provided RA at café)

10.30-11.30: Session 5: Friendship and difference

2 x 20 minute paper + 30 minute discussion

Chair: Sarah Victoria Turner

David Cottington, Affective relations and professionalism: friendship and the artistic avant-garde in London and Paris c. 1888-1915

Eleanor Jones, Barbara Ker-Seymer and Edward Burra: Staging and Framing Friendship in Interwar British Art

11.30-11.45: Comfort break

11.45-12.45: Session 6: Formal relations

2 x 20 minute paper + 30 minute discussion

Chair: Mark Ledbury

Benjamin Harvey, The Society of Frenemies: Roger Fry, Walter Sickert, and the art of Paul Cézanne

Helen Ritchie, 'Upholding the dignity of pots' vs. 'flash and bombastic': Bernard Leach and William Staite Murray

12.45-14.00: Lunch (not provided)

14.00-15.30: Session 7: Family & Friends

3 x 20 minute paper + 30 minute discussion

Chair: Mark Hallett

Hester Westley, The Family We Choose: Informing Friendships in the Art School Studio from the 'Artist's' Lives' Archive

Hammad Nasar, Cumbrian Cosmopolitanisms: Li Yuan-chia & Friends

Amy Tobin, Sibling Rivalry in the Women's Art Movement

15.30-16.00: Tea break (please use vouchers provided at RA café)

16.00-17.00: Wrap-up discussion with Georgina Cole, Mark Ledbury, Sarah Victoria Turner and Mark Hallett

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<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/frenemies-friendship-enmity-and-rivalry-in-british-art-1769-2018-tickets-46357355097>

Reference:

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