New Perspectives on British Orientalism (Compton, 16–17 Oct 19)

Compton, Surrey and Egham, Surrey, Oct 16–17, 2019
Deadline: Jul 31, 2019

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Eastern Questions: New Perspectives on British Orientalism

A collaborative two-day conference at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village and Royal Holloway, University of London

To coincide with Watts Gallery – Artists' Village (WG-AV) exhibition John Frederick Lewis: Facing Fame (9 July – 3 November 2019) this interdisciplinary event aims to explore new perspectives on the intersection between Orientalism and visual culture across the nineteenth century.

Alongside WG-AV's John Frederick Lewis exhibition, the collection of so-called 'uncomfortable pictures' at Royal Holloway (which includes Edwin Long's Babylonian Marriage Market) will act as a catalyst for wide-ranging debates around Orientalism's place within British scholarship today.

This conference invites contributions that explore the visual material of the Orient in the contexts of transculturation, imaginative geographies, and cultural border crossing in both directions. This event hopes to attract a wide range of perspectives and invites proposals from scholars in all sub-fields of the arts, humanities and social sciences.

We welcome proposals for 20-minute papers and will be particularly interested in the following topics:
- The Orient in British painting, sculpture, photography, print, the decorative and applied arts or other media
- British artist-travellers to the Middle East and North Africa in the long nineteenth century
- Edward Said's Orientalism and its legacy forty years on
- British imperialism, colonial histories and notions of the Orient
- Networks of artistic production and influence among artist-travellers
- Women as agents of empire
- The construction and presentation of gender
- The role and representation of Spain and European-based 'othering' as a precursor to travels to the East
- The interrelationship between British and French Orientalism
- The interrelationship between the Middle and Far East (including Chinoiserie and Japonisme)
- Intersections between Orientalist painting, history painting and genre painting
- The legacies of British Orientalist artworks in public and private collection

In addition to 20-minute papers, we also invite participants for a series of pop-up debates that will take place with the exhibition space. We invite submissions for informal 2-3 minutes responses to the following key works in John Frederick Lewis: Facing Fame at Watts Gallery and the Royal Holloway Art Gallery:
- John Frederick Lewis, 'In the Bezestein: El Khan Khalil' (1860), Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery
- John Frederick Lewis, 'In the Bey's Garden' (1865), Harris Museum & Art Gallery, Preston
- Edwin Long, 'The Babylonian Marriage Market' (1875), Royal Holloway
- David Roberts, 'Pilgrims Approaching Jerusalem' (1841), Royal Holloway

For 20-minute papers, please submit abstracts of 300 words and biographies of no more than 100 words. If you would like to be a respondent in a pop-up discussion, please submit proposals of 150 words and biographies of no more than 100 words.

Please send submissions to Abbie Latham at Watts Gallery – Artists' Village (curatorialtrainee@wattsgallery.org.uk) by 31 July 2019. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions.

This event is kindly supported by the British Art Research School (BARS), University of York and the Association for Studies in Egypt and the Near East (ASTENE).

Reference:

CFP: New Perspectives on British Orientalism (Compton, 16-17 Oct 19). In: ArtHist.net, Jun 25, 2019 (accessed Nov 21, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/21148>.