

The Elusive Gothic in the Long 18th Century (Austin, 9 – 13 Apr 14)

Austin, Texas, Apr 9–13, 2014

Deadline: Jun 1, 2013

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Austin, Texas

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THE ELUSIVE GOTHIC IN THE LONG 18TH CENTURY

By the later 18th century, Gothic architecture had already called attention to its own alterity. Western opinions as to its possible Eastern origins were mixed: British academician Thomas Sandby's lectures disputed Sir Christopher Wren's earlier genealogy of the Gothic, whilst the painter William Hodges embraced and furthered the position in his *Dissertation on the Prototypes of Architecture, Hindoo, Moorish, and Gothic* (1786). Meanwhile, antiquarians were busy reconfiguring the Gothic canon with localised studies, new designs and restoration. Later, in the mid-19th century, John Ruskin and his followers would champion a nostalgic and value-laden way of thinking about a past which privileged things made locally and by hand, resulting in the separation between pre-modern and modern, architecture and vernacular building, design and workmanship: false dichotomies that would become cemented in a Modernist historiography of architecture. There were no such artificial distinctions in the manifold awareness of the late 18th-century Gothic.

As a way of registering alternative histories at this transitional stage to industrial making, this session will explore the heterogeneity of the Gothic in Britain and Europe, in their expanding imperial territories, and in contemporary non-Western empires during the long 18th century. While we invite papers that use the Gothic to widen the current discourse on the handmade, topics might also address, but are not limited to, shifts in the antiquarian imagination; revolutionary aesthetics; notions of decay and decline; the peripatetic Gothic; nascent architectural preservation in Europe and its empires; and the material relationships between neoclassicism and Gothic. We especially welcome submissions that address non-European interlocutors of Gothic styles, and that incorporate the use of painting and other visual media in furthering understanding of the topic.

Session Chairs: Sylvia Shorto, American University of Beirut (ss56@aub.edu.lb) and Zirwat Chowdhury, Clark Memorial Library, UCLA (zirwat@u.northwestern.edu)

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