

The diversity of individual artistic expressions presented in *Masters of Polish Poster Art* demonstrates the distinctive nature of poster art in Poland. As the artists presented are often also painters, illustrators, exhibit designers or cinematographers, their posters are greatly influenced by a variety of artistic styles and techniques. The evocative, emotional, painterly approach to poster design is employed by artists such as Jerzy Czerniawski, Franciszek Starowieyski, Wiktor Sadowski or Wieslaw Walkuski, whereas an intellectual, coherent language of visual metaphors is typical of Henryk Tomaszewski, Tadeusz Piechura or Mieczyslaw Wasilewski. The range of styles and idioms used in contemporary Polish posters is clearly visible in the works of such diverse artists as Jan Mlodozieniec and Stasys Eidrigevicius. The art of both is deeply rooted in folklore, but Mlodozieniec's painterly compositions are filled with joyful, bright colours and simple objects, while Eidrigevicius applies dark, grotesque or surrealistic images to comment on the loneliness of the artist in society.

Nevertheless, there are common trends in Polish graphic arts that, taken together,

contribute to a unique current in poster design. The functional typography intensifies the original illustration; intellectual metaphors and imagery hide the essence of the message and invite a dialogue with a viewer; dark humour, irony or cynical criticism provide a comment on everyday life and popular culture.

Masters of Polish Poster Art is the first work in a series of publications intended to present modern Polish posters; a second volume, published by Krzysztof Dydo, is entirely devoted to film posters and contains high-quality reproductions of more than 900 impressions. Among the many publications dedicated to Polish graphic arts, *Masters of Polish Poster Art* is notable from several points of view: in addition to presenting aesthetic comment and artistic interpretation of cultural events, this album provides an excellent introduction to the history of Polish poster design, exposes modern metaphors and iconography, and fully documents the innovation and extravagance of the contemporary language of visual communication. Although it may be difficult to find in bookstores, this book is a valuable reference for anyone interested in the graphic arts.

Annette Carruthers, ed., *The Scottish Home*

ANNMARIE ADAMS

Carruthers, Annette, ed., *The Scottish Home*. Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1996. 232 pp., 211 illus., paper, ISBN 0-948636-85-8; cloth \$59.95, ISBN 0-948636-72-6.

From here in the "distinct society," I applauded Scotland's hearty endorsement of a separate parliament a few months ago. Having visited Scotland as a child (and later as a student of architecture), it seemed evident to me that Scots are quite different than their neighbors to the south. Even by the age of thirteen, when I was fortunate enough to travel to Edinburgh with my parents, I had worn kilts and taken Scottish dancing lessons. A few years later I read Sir Walter Scott novels in high school and learned about (ugh!) haggis. More than two decades later, as an architectural historian, I have little doubt that the work of the great Scottish architects, such as Robert Lorimer and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, is particularly interesting *because* of its Scottishness.

It was from this position of the predisposed convert that I approached *The Scottish Home*. Why write a book on the Scottish home? How did its evolution differ from houses in England? And perhaps most selfishly, I wondered what such a book might teach us about interpreting Canadian houses, whose history, after all, is similarly overshadowed by *our* neighbors to the south.

The Scottish Home is an extremely ambitious undertaking. Seven authors (academics and museum professionals) have uncovered the history of the Scottish home from 1600 to 1950 in nine chapters. It may, however, have been more accurately entitled "Stuff in the Scottish Home," since its emphasis is on objects and artifacts (particularly furniture), rather than buildings. An introduction to the book is followed by two chapters on small rural and urban houses. The subsequent six sections are organized like the house itself, in rooms: kitchen, hall/lobby, dining room, drawing room, bedroom, and bathroom.

This "tour" of the Scottish house is lavishly illustrated with more than two hundred images in a large-format volume of fewer than 250 pages, which means it can be read in a single sitting. This has as much to do with the accessible style of its writing as with the density of its delightful illustrations.

Indeed, *The Scottish Home* is another tome about the minutiae of domestic life aimed at general readers, connoisseurs, and scholars. A virtual industry has developed in this genre since the 1970s, particularly in Britain, since the publication of Mark Girouard's popular *Life in the English Country House* of 1978. That book, Girouard's subsequent house books, and a host of volumes inspired by his work may be classified as a "social history of domestic architecture." These authors mostly use inventories, etiquette books, fiction, paintings, and photographs to interpret private spaces of the past. Because of the subject matter, the material is extremely accessible to general readers. Witold Rybczynski's *Home* of 1986, for example, has sold more than 100 000 copies in North America alone.

For readers familiar with this literature, *The Scottish Home* may be disappointing. The evolution of domestic spaces in Scotland, according to its authors, is very similar to the story in England and the United States, although this is seldom stated explicitly. In fact, several of the contributors go to great lengths to uncover artifacts or spaces unique to Scotland. Miles Oglethorpe, in his chapter on the bathroom and water closet, for example, goes so far as to apologize that Scottish bathrooms are so similar to English ones, but points to municipal water and sewerage infrastructure and the design of bathroom fixtures to tell "a distinctly Scottish story." Most architectural historians will be shocked to learn, as well, that Robert Lorimer designed a toilet in 1930 that he called "The Remirol" (his name backwards). On the whole, however, the development of the Scottish home roughly parallels its counterparts in the English-speaking world, according to these authors.

Unlike most of the books on English houses, however, especially those by Girouard, *The Scottish Home* includes considerable material on the domestic surroundings of the poor. Working-class houses are the subjects of two chapters, and material on room use in humbler houses is included in most of the sections on individual rooms, with the exception of the chapter on the dining room, for obvious reasons.

Like all collections, *The Scottish Home* suffers from a certain unevenness. The chapters I found most interesting were those with a purposeful

argumentative edge. From this perspective, Helen Clark's essay "Living in One or Two Rooms in the City" is superb; rather than simply laying out a this-happened-then-that-happened chronology of Scotland's small city houses, she focusses on actual living conditions and the various solutions poor Scots found to problems caused by lack of space. This emphasis on "use" allows Clark to grant the working-class inhabitants of tenements, for example, a considerable degree of agency, rather than portraying them as mute victims of environments designed by others.

Another particularly rich chapter in *The Scottish Home* is Juliet Kinchin's piece on "The Drawing Room." Here she unfolds the story of this room for show-and-tell by exploring how it was perceived as the antithesis of working space. In addition to presenting the now familiar material on the drawing room and parlour as women's space, Kinchin suggests that similar rooms in public and commercial buildings shaped the domestic interior. This chapter is excellent and will be extremely useful as reading material in any general history of housing course, as well as courses in material culture and women's studies.

In the end, I think the book's room-by-room organization (and the decision to use multiple authors) lead to several missed opportunities, as well as some annoying repetitions. These may have been avoided by a more aggressive edit in the final hour. Given the geographic limitations of Scotland and the fact that some houses are always better documented than others, the authors understandably employ the same examples, re-introducing them each time. Two authors note the Scottish tradition of washing at the kitchen sink and two others remark on the working-class culture of families sharing toilets located on the stairs, seemingly unaware of the other.

This is also true of domestic advice books, like those written by Scotsmen Robert Kerr and John Claudius Loudon, whom we re-meet in nearly every chapter with general introductory information included. These repetitions are particularly troublesome since the book is clearly intended to be read cover to cover, rather than used as a reference volume.

Along these same lines, several methodological issues and interesting sub-themes that run throughout the chapters remain unexplored. The first of these is the assumption adopted by all the authors, without exception, that "form follows fashion." This is implied throughout the chapters: change in form (artifacts, furniture, architecture) follows a

change in customs or behaviour. In his essay on "The Hall and Lobby," for example, furniture historian David Jones attributes the twentieth-century disappearance of the umbrella and hall stands from the entrances of Scottish houses to the decline in the use of umbrellas and hats. Is it possible that modern entrance lobbies are too small to house such things? That twentieth-century people find rain less offensive? Or even that we may use fewer umbrellas and hats because such stands have disappeared?

I also have some problems with the fact that English prescriptive sources are used as evidence by many of the authors, without any

proof that these books were widely read in Scotland (Canadian scholars often are tempted by American sources in this same way). But then again, Kerr and Loudon appear in nearly all the books on English houses! And perhaps not surprisingly, many of the contributors to *The Scottish Home* seem completely unaware of scholarship on North American domestic space.

Despite these criticisms, however, the multiple viewpoints of the authors, the beautiful illustrations, and the sheer "distinctness" of the subject matter make this book an interesting addition to the vast literature on the material culture of home.

Wendy M. Watson, *Altered States: Conservation, Analysis and Interpretation of Works of Art*

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Watson, Wendy M. *Altered States: Conservation, Analysis and Interpretation of Works of Art*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994. 180 pp., 102 illus., glossary, bibliography; paper US\$29.95, ISBN 0-295-97615-2.

This publication complements the exhibit *Altered States: Conservation, Analysis and Interpretation of Works of Art* on restoration and conservation issues. The exhibit was organized by the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts, with the assistance of the Williamstown Regional Art Conservation Laboratory, Williamstown, Massachusetts. The exhibit travelled to three locations in the United States in 1994.

As a reflection of the general approach taken by the exhibit, three introductory essays give a broad overview of the subject: Wendy Watson's "Conservation and Historical Consciousness," David Carrier's "Restoration as Interpretation: A Philosopher's Viewpoint" and James Martin's "Applications of Science in the Analysis, Conservation, and Interpretation of Works of Art." Watson gives an historical overview that is "...useful in assessing where we are today," describing the different attitudes that have prevailed when treating or presenting works of art. Carrier's essay touches on the fascinating subject of the differing styles of interpretation used to elucidate works of art. He argues that they will continue to change and tabulates these

three goals in his essay: 1. why reasonable people can disagree about conservation practices, 2. why the debates become political and often bitter, and 3. a suggestion of how to resolve the resulting disputes.

Carrier goes on to discuss the provocative subject, the "intent" of the artist. "Since we do not know much about [the artist's] intentions, apart from what we may learn from viewing his paintings themselves, to refer to his intentions is really ... a way of validating our own practice." And "... suppose Titian recorded his thoughts ...," do we need to accept Titian's ideas? Did Titian know how his or other artists' works would age? Does it matter?

In the third essay, Martin writes about the importance of the technical analysis of works of art in the context of interpretation. "There is little question of the impact of science on the modern conservation profession," citing that the first museum laboratory was established in Berlin in 1888, with England and the United States of America following between the First and Second World Wars (the National Gallery of Canada hired a scientist for its conservation department prior to the Second World War). Martin writes that the most intriguing and controversial application of scientific analysis lies in the authentication of works of art and antiquities "... in which stylistic analysis, art historical research and technical analysis are used in combination to determine if a work is