

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*

MARION H. BARCLAY

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

genuine or how much it has been altered." Of the three essays, I think this essay could have been expanded more fully, given what has been written elsewhere on this specific subject. With the technical resources available today, we can examine and interpret works of art much more accurately than we could just ten years ago.

The catalogue continues with the focus on diverse examples of how works of art have altered. Each contribution is approximately three to four pages long, including illustrations and short essays on the technical and historical aspects of subjects such as the painting by Michael Sweert, *Self-Portrait with Skull*, where the skull had been painted out by a later hand; the forged *Girl with Blue Bow*, in the style of the seventeenth century, the enlargement of Théodore Géricault's *Trumpeter of the Hussars*, and also includes the changes made by the artists themselves, as with Renoir.

Other alterations, such as how works on paper were made to look like oil paintings on canvas, as was G. B. Castiglione's *Christ on the Cross Adored by Angels*, and how analysis can now identify paper, ink, pigments and binders, are discussed. Reversing some of the affects of age, which are obvious in Camille Pissarro's *Sous-bois*, and how pigments have faded and completely changed the appearance of works such as William M. Chase's *The End of the Season* are also considered and put into context. When parts from different works that have been joined in an attempt to make one object, with results such as the Greek amphora attributed to The Kleophrades Painter and the Roman bust of *Antonia Minor*, interpretation becomes vital in their deconstruction.

Upon reintegration, the reversibility of the reassembled pieces becomes of equal concern to stability and how the work is presented. The decorative 1865-70 American cabinet by Alexander Roux, which had been repainted to suit a later taste and was subsequently returned to its original condition, illustrates the fickle nature of changing mores concerning the presentation of objects and the connection between art and fashion. The conservation field is subject to whim, just like any other in western society. The approaches alternate between conservative minimalism and a more dynamic "roll up the sleeves" practicality. We are emerging from a minimalist phase and moving toward a "hands on" approach again. As Carrier has written, it will always change.

Even genuine attempts to preserve works of art can lead to problems in the future. Modern sculptures can be cleaned with certain materials

that over the years can age in specific ways, and if no documentation is maintained, residues of the aged cleaning materials can be assumed at a later date to be part of the work. In previous centuries, when paintings were cleaned, varnished and "fed" mixtures of different oils, they became yellowed over time to produce a "golden glow," which was much admired and emulated by later artists. Since the late 1950s and the introduction and subsequent aging of synthetic varnishes, such coatings can age, not in a golden glow but in a grey, cloudy manner. The aged natural resin varnishes were generally more complimentary to most paintings. Later additions, such as modesty leaves, applied on sculptures and paintings become almost a part of the work if left there long enough. Does one keep them or remove them, depending on how long they have been there, or how stable they are? One example of an artist's intervention was Claes Oldenburg's *Giant Hamburger*, included in the 1967 exhibit *Painting/Sculpture*, held at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. The most controversial work in the exhibit, the piece arrived at the AGO without its pickle. The artist then replaced it with a differently shaped sailcloth pickle that was stained rather than painted. However, the stain reduced the amount of cracked paint on the pickle and it has indeed deteriorated much less than the hamburger itself.

There have been several exhibits, both general and focussed, on conservation over the years. The earliest that I remember is the 1972 travelling exhibit *Progress in Conservation*, organized by Dr N. Stolow at the National Gallery of Canada. A small catalogue accompanied this popular exhibit and it was seen in five venues across Canada. More recently, the National Gallery in London has presented several single-venue exhibits on the technical examination of works of art in their collection. These small, highly focussed exhibits are accompanied by expansive, thoroughly researched, well-written and illustrated catalogues that offer information concerning the chosen work(s) at the same level of detail demanded by the curator, conservator and other museum professionals.

The catalogue *Altered States: Conservation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Works of Art* compares quite favourably with other catalogues of its kind. In my opinion, the technical advances in the field need to be balanced and tempered by reflection. For that reason, the organizers of the exhibit have been particularly far-sighted in including the essay

by the philosopher David Carrier; we need more of this disciplined reflection on and within our profession. The practical examples cited by the conservators lend credence to Watson's, Carrier's

and Martin's remarks. Unfortunately, I did not learn of the event until after its closure: I would have made every effort to have viewed what I suspect was a marvellous exhibit.

Richard Teleky, *Hungarian Rhapsodies: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Culture*

BOZENA BILINSKA-KORNAS

Teleky, Richard. *Hungarian Rhapsodies: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Culture*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997. 238 pp., illus., cloth \$49.95, ISBN 0-7748-0623-0.

Over the past fifteen years, students of material culture have shown an increasing interest in the function and use of objects. The resulting research has provided a more thorough understanding of how and why people consume and value the things around them.¹ In this context Richard Teleky's *Hungarian Rhapsodies: Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Culture* makes a notable, albeit indirect, contribution to the field that should be of interest from a variety of perspectives. The book is a powerful account of Teleky's personal exploration of ethnicity in an effort to reconcile his contemporary identity with an ancestral one. The book touches on several disciplines: Hungarian and central European studies, ethnography, as well as comparative literature, popular culture, and film studies. *Hungarian Rhapsodies* consists of twelve essays, varied in style from the scholarly to the very personal. Though interdisciplinary, the book is unified by the author's determined search for answers to two important questions: how is identity shaped, and what part does ethnicity play?

Teleky writes with clarity spiced with witty irony and humor. The author is the administrator of the creative writing program at York University. He is the editor of *The Oxford Book of French-Canadian Short Stories* and the author of *Goodnight, Sweetheart and Other Stories*. A third-generation Hungarian American, Teleky learned Hungarian as an adult. Unfolding step by step the search for the meaning of ethnic identity, the author guides the reader into a better understanding of what constitutes one's own identity.

The way the book is designed and arranged deserves high praise. Essay by essay, the author builds a structure that helps the reader to

understand so called "Hungarianness" and Teleky's own complex relationship with his ethnic Hungarian background. From his struggle with the Hungarian language, through an examination of Andre Kerdesz's photographs, a visit to a Hungarian church in Cleveland, an analysis of the stereotypical treatment of Hungarians in fiction and film, to a final account of the author's trip to Hungary, Teleky unveils for the reader the whole process of his personal exploration of ethnicity.

The first essay of the book describes his efforts in learning the Hungarian language. Teleky starts with the language as the key to the culture. Unrelated to the Teutonic, Latin and Slav languages, Hungarian has remained totally intact. Everything about the language is different, not only the words themselves, but the way they are formed, the syntax and grammar. The inspiration behind the author's decision to learn Hungarian is "a box of Hungarian letters" written by Teleky's great-grandfather to his daughters, who emigrated to America in 1909. Official translation is not enough for the curious writer. He is searching for untold memories and the truth hidden within the words of the letters.

But it is not his curiosity alone that makes the author struggle with the Hungarian language. Learning Hungarian is for the author a significant part of going back to the past to reclaim identity. Being a writer, he knows very well the power of language to shape one's thinking. By learning the language of his origin, Teleky wants to reclaim a lost sense of the landscape and the life of the place his grandmother left ninety years earlier. The author admits that, although nostalgic for people and places left behind, his grandmother never returned to see her parents and her native village. Nine years after her death, Teleky wonders why he had never insisted that his grandmother visit Hungary again and why he had not gone with her. Learning Hungarian is for the author a