

SHORTLAND-JONES ROME AWARD

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Terrain and antiquities through the lens of the South Etruria Survey, 1955–75

Some 7,000 photographs were taken over the course of the South Etruria Survey, a BSR archaeological survey that covered 1,000 square kilometres of land and recorded over 2,000 sites between 1955 and 1975. It was these photographs that brought me to Rome.

The photographs are an invaluable archaeological tool. They contribute to viewing monuments now lost, tracing the differences between landscapes of the twentieth century and today, and understanding the methods of investigation used by survey participants. The South Etruria Survey photographs are, however, also part of an archaeological survey that my PhD project probes as an artistic and social practice. While this is but a partial view of the material, it sets the foundations for examining the ways of seeing terrain and antiquity in these photographs and allows for an exploration of their entanglement with the intellectual ideas around which their visual knowledge is constructed.

While in Rome I was able to look through all the photographs and compile a selection that would form the primary case studies for my PhD. I also engaged with the BSR library's vast resources on the artistic and topographical landscape around Rome. This research has contributed to a major section of my PhD that locates the South Etruria Survey photographs in the landscape tradition. Taking the photographs as interpretive 'frames' that were used to engage with the ancient past, I suggest that the visibility of the South Etruria Survey is built upon an anxiety about loss and preservation of archaeological and cultural heritage, and its repositioning in the post-war period. These sentiments of anxiety and preservation can be located in various contexts: from the Monuments Men and the Unione, in which John Bryan Ward-Perkins was instrumental, to the changing face of the Italian landscape as a result of the Land Reform Scheme, and the rethinking of antiquity in Italy that occurred in the post-war period in response to its treatment by the Fascist regime.

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Henry Fuseli in Rome: defining a new, heroic style for British art

This Visiting Fellowship at the BSR provided the ideal opportunity to deepen an understanding of Henry Fuseli's (1741–1825) seminal period of work in Rome in the 1770s, which acted as a laboratory for his development as an artist. In Rome he studied classical and mannerist art and explored wide-ranging literary subject matter. He also led a remarkably diverse and cosmopolitan group of northern European painters and sculptors resident in the city and formulated a new language of heroic,

muscular, highly dramatic draughtsmanship which informed his subsequent career in London and its sensational trajectory.

The project built on research undertaken as a guest curator of the exhibition on the artist at the Musée Jacquemart André, Paris (2022–3), and formed the basis of a book on Fuseli, which will survey his career, that is to be published by Reaktion (2024).

Fuseli was born in Zurich and initially trained for a career in the Church. Influential mentors including the academic Johann Jakob Bodmer introduced him to the writings of Homer, Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, which were to prove fundamental as sources for future drawings and paintings. He travelled with the diplomat Sir Andrew Mitchell to London, where he initially supported himself by writing. His efforts to become an Enlightenment man of letters, however, withered, but other opportunities proved more conducive to his talents, including a seminal encounter with Sir Joshua Reynolds who inspired his move to Italy.

In 1770 Fuseli undertook his journey to Rome, receiving financial support from the banker Sir Thomas Coutts. Fuseli remained in the city for eight years and the highly talented community of artists that he led included the Scottish painter Alexander Runciman, the Swedish sculptor Johan Tobias Sergel and the Danish painter Nicolai Abildgaard. This international cohort were attracted by Fuseli's passionate nature, eloquence and innovative range of subject matter, as well as the highly expressive forms of draughtsmanship he developed. Always seeking to push boundaries, he conceived a new version of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel populated with characters from Shakespeare (a project which remained unrealized).

The last substantive exploration of these themes was undertaken through the 'Fuseli Circle in Rome' exhibition (New Haven, 1979); subsequent key contributions include E. Bowron and J. Rishel, eds, *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia and Houston, 2000) and M. Myrone, *Bodybuilding: Reforming Masculinities in British Art 1750–1810* (2005).

The British School at Rome proved to be an entirely appropriate and very supportive environment in which to undertake this research. The School's library and archive was not only a pleasant place to study, but also held a number of sources relevant to my work. In addition, it was especially helpful to visit collections and monuments that Fuseli would have had access to during his stay in the city. Using his digitized sketchbook in the British Museum in this context proved very valuable. I was also able to establish where the artist lodged during the majority of his time in Rome. I gave a brief presentation on my research to fellow award-holders at the BSR and am using it for future lectures and papers.

The social context for this research provided by the British School was very pleasant. I'm most grateful both to the BSR and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art for this productive and hugely enjoyable period of writing.

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