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0521612128 - The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions: Change and Continuity in the Victorian Art World

Christopher Newall

Frontmatter

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The Grosvenor Gallery was the most progressive exhibition space of the Victorian age. The paintings and works of art shown there – by Burne-Jones, Watts, Whistler and a host of other figures associated with the aesthetic movement – challenged artistic convention and were the cause of virulent debate about the means and purpose of modern art, while the very existence of a gallery which attracted so much fashionable attention and which lent such great prestige to the artists who exhibited there, served to overthrow the stultifying influence of the contemporary Royal Academy. Christopher Newall's book tells the story of the rise and fall of the Grosvenor Gallery, and his invaluable index of exhibitors, compiled from the now very rare original catalogues, allows the reader to discover which artists showed works, and what they were, during the fourteen years of the Grosvenor's summer exhibitions.

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Preface

This book on the Grosvenor began as an index of works exhibited at the gallery by artists in whom I was particularly interested – Leighton, Burne-Jones, Costa, the Corbets, George Howard, etc. Later on I saw the possibility and potential of a Graves-type listing of all the 1,027 artists who accepted Sir Coutts Lindsay's invitation to send works to the Grosvenor (as well as Lindsay himself). Then I set myself the task of writing an introductory essay to attempt to explain the historical importance of the gallery. Finally, I compiled an index of the artists represented at each of the fourteen Grosvenor summer exhibitions, so that one can see at a glance who was involved when.

The High Victorian art world was divided into a number of factions, of which the Royal Academy and the artists associated with that powerful institution were one and the painters connected with the aesthetic movement (led by Edward Burne-Jones) another. This second group were for a while identified in the public mind with the Grosvenor Gallery, and thus Lindsay's lavish palace of the arts came to seem like a bridge-head of the avant-garde. During this period the Grosvenor allowed many artists who were pioneering new styles or exploring new aesthetic principles – and among these were some who became figures of controversy – to see their works exhibited before a wide public. I have attempted to approach the subject of the Grosvenor Gallery in terms of the practical opportunity it represented to artists – whether professionally estab-

lished or not – in the business of gaining recognition for their works.

I am very grateful to the following for sharing their thoughts on the Grosvenor Gallery with me: Dr Deborah Cherry, Robin Hamlyn, Professor Kenneth McConkey, Sir Oliver and Lady Millar, Dr Liz Prettejohn, and Bill Waters. The staff in the library at the National Gallery of Scotland allowed me to spend long hours poring over the bound set of Grosvenor catalogues that they possess, and were always encouraging. The Earl of Crawford and Balcarres has been most generous in allowing me to study letters and other papers relating to Sir Coutts and Lady Lindsay and the Grosvenor Gallery among the Lindsay family papers, and by giving me his permission to quote from previously unpublished material. Kenneth Dunn, of the National Library of Scotland, and Ian Gow, of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, have also been very kind. Caroline Davidson has given wise advice about the way in which I have approached the subject; her belief in the value of the project, more than that of any other person, has led to its eventual completion. Rose Shawe-Taylor, Hilary Gaskin and Leigh Mueller of Cambridge University Press have been patient and enthusiastic, in equal measure, and it has been a great pleasure to work with them. In the hope that this book will have a long and useful life, and prove a resource to the many people who are interested in the artistic riches of the Victorian age, I dedicate it to my sons Alfred and George.

Bibliographic abbreviations

AJ	<i>Art Journal</i>	James	Henry James, <i>The Painter's Eye – Notes and Essays on the Pictorial Arts</i> , selected and edited by John L. Sweeney, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1956
Barker	Nicolas Barker, <i>Bibliotheca Lindesiana</i> , issued by the Roxburghe Club, Bernard Quaritch, London, 1977	Jopling	Louise Jopling, <i>Twenty Years of my Life</i> , John Lane, London, 1925
Burne-Jones	G.B.-J., <i>Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones</i> , 2 volumes, Macmillan & Co., London, 1904	LFP	Lindsay family papers
Crane	Walter Crane, <i>An Artist's Reminiscences</i> , Methuen & Co., London, 1907	Merrill	Linda Merrill, <i>A Pot of Paint</i> , Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, 1992
DUM	<i>Dublin University Magazine</i>	Pennell	E. R. and J. Pennell, <i>The Life of James McNeill Whistler</i> , 2 volumes, William Heinemann, London, 1908
Fors	<i>Fors Clavigera</i> , vol. XXIX of <i>The Works of John Ruskin</i> , edited by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 volumes, George Allen, London, 1903–12	Robertson	W. Graham Robertson, <i>Time Was</i> , Hamish Hamilton, London, 1931
Hallé	Charles Hallé, <i>Notes on a Painter's Life</i> , John Murray, London, 1909	Surtees	Virginia Surtees, <i>Coutts Lindsay</i> , Michael Russell, Norwich, 1993
ILN	<i>Illustrated London News</i>	TB	<i>The Builder</i>