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978-1-107-40740-4 - The Victorian Artist: Artists' Life Writings in Britain, c. 1870–1910

Julie F. Codell

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## The Victorian Artist

*The Victorian Artist* examines the origins, development and explosion of biographical literature on artists in Britain between 1870 and 1910. Analyzing a variety of narrative modes, including gossip, anecdotes, and serialization, as well as the differences among genres – autobiographies, family biographies, biographical histories, and dictionaries – Julie F. Codell discerns and articulates the multiple, often conflicting identities that were ascribed to artists collectively and as individuals. Her study demonstrates how this body of literature, combined with images of artists' bodies, their works, and their studios, reflected anxiety over economic exchanges in the art world, aestheticism, and the desire to tame artists in order to fit them into an emerging national identity as a way of socializing new audiences of readers and spectators. Her book serves as a timely sociological and cultural overview of the art world in Britain in the decades before World War I.

Julie F. Codell is Professor of Art History and English at Arizona State University. A specialist of nineteenth-century British culture, particularly literature and art, she is Editor of *Imperial Co-Histories: National Identity and the British and Colonial Press* (2003), and co-Editor of *Orientalism Transposed: The Impact of the Colonies on British Culture* (1998).

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**JULIE F. CODELL**

Arizona State University



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,  
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781107407404](http://www.cambridge.org/9781107407404)

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First published 2003

First paperback edition (with corrections) 2012

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-81757-8 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-40740-4 Paperback

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**T**his book is dedicated to my grandparents, Bessie and Joseph Rosenthal, whose biographies I wish someone had taken the time to write; and to my mother, Rosalie, for the infinite ways in which she encouraged my work and life.

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## Preface

Research for this essay was originally funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities Travel-to-Collections Grant in 1986 which allowed me to examine the Spielmann Papers in the John Rylands University of Manchester Library and begin my long study of Victorian artists' careers and public images. An NEH Summer Stipend in 1988 allowed me to examine letters and catalogs of professional societies in the Victoria and Albert National Art Library, the British Library, the Royal Academy Library, and archives of the Royal Painter-Etchers Society and Royal Water-Colour Society. I wish to thank Michael Spender for allowing me access to the latter two archives at Hopton Street, London. An NEH stipend to attend an Institute on Victorian Culture and Society at Yale in 1991 gave me access to many artists' biographies. An NEH Fellowship in 1993 freed me up for a semester to begin writing this book, and a Fellowship from the Yale University Paul Mellon British Art Center in 1994 offered me an opportunity to examine artists' self-representations in paintings. My research was further aided by research grants, a 1989 mini-sabbatical to attend the London conference on British art institutions, and a sabbatical (1986–87) from the University of Montana; and a research grant (1992) and sabbatical (1997–98) from Arizona State University.

I wish first to thank my editor Beatrice Rehl, who has had great faith in this project. Her support and enthusiasm have meant a great deal to me. I have had valuable support and criticism from friends and colleagues over the many years in which this book was written and rewritten: Debra Mancoff has advised me on many of the book's points for the long years of our friendship; Dianne Sachko Macleod helped me think through this project for years, and her own research on patronage was a valuable resource for me; Susan Casteras, who pioneered the study of Victorian art in the United States, read several chapters deeply and insightfully. Many colleagues read

Cambridge University Press

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and improved drafts of chapters and offered lively critiques: Linda Hughes and Joseph Law on domestic biography, Julia Watson on autobiography, Andrew Leng on Ruskin and Rossetti, Linda Austin on Ruskin's political economy of art, and Jonathan Rose on serialized biographies. Kathy Psomiades's suggestions about Vernon Lee were valuable in helping me understand Lee's parodic style. Many colleagues and friends shaped my thinking through conversations on the topics of this book and through the inspiration I drew from their work: Andrew Stephenson, Michaela Giebelhausen, Joseph Lamb, and Ted Solis. I want to thank my research assistants: Linda Lewis, Lindsey Pedersen, and Karen Fiorito. Anonymous readers of my initial manuscript and its subsequent revisions were deep readers whose suggestions forced me to sharpen my arguments, deepen my historical contexts, hone my prose, and distinguish this body of Victorian literature from what went before and came after.

I owe a great deal of appreciation to the many librarians and archivists who assisted me in my research at the Special Collections Library at the University of Reading, the Bodleian Library, the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Library, the Pierpont Morgan Library, the Special Collections Library at the University of British Columbia, the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester, the Harry Ransom Humanities Center at the University of Texas at Austin, and the Special Collections Library at Arizona State University. I wish to thank those who helped me obtain reproduction and citation permission rights: Joanne Ling of Sotheby's Picture Gallery; David Sutton and Judith Priestman of the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; and Edward Whitley, Bernard Horrocks, and James Kilvington of the National Portrait Gallery. Every effort has been made to track down the copyright holders and owners of images. Copyright permissions were sought through public announcements, correspondence with publishers, searches through WATCH (Writers, Artists, and their Copyright Holders) jointly maintained by the Harry Ransom Humanities Center, University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Reading, and correspondence with archives holding unpublished documents. For permission to quote from letters and for help in obtaining photographs I wish to thank Geoffroy Millais for his generous help; Deborah Cherry; Fiorella Superbi of the Villa I Tatti for permission to cite letters between George Bell and Sons and Bernard Berenson; Ray Johnson and the Camphill Village Trust for permission to cite a letter to Mary Berenson; the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; and Michael Bott at the Special Collections Library at the University of Reading.

Versions of this book have appeared in scholarly journals and books, and I wish to thank the editors and anonymous readers for their suggestions;

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in addition to those I have named here, I would also like to thank Caroline Arscott, Susan Hamilton, Ellen Harding, David Latham, Helene Roberts, William Scheuerle, and Margaret Watson. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals for sharing their knowledge of the press with me and assisting me formally and informally over many years and in ways too numerous to list. Parts of this book are reprinted in revised form with permission of the following publishers, editors and journals:

“The sociologies of the text: Artists’ biographies and the anxieties of national culture,” *Victorian Review* (2001), 1–35.

“Serialized artists’ biographies: A culture industry in late Victorian Britain,” *Book History*, 3 (2000), 94–124. Copyright 2000 by The Pennsylvania State University. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

“Victorian artists’ family biographies: Domestic authority, the marketplace, and the artist’s body,” *Biographical Passages: Essays in Victorian and Modernist Biography*. Edited by Linda Hughes and Joseph Law (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 65–108. Reprinted by permission of the University of Missouri Press. Copyright 2000 by the Curators of the University of Missouri.

“Constructing the Victorian artist: National identity, the political economy of art, and biographical mania in the periodical press,” *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 33 / 4 (2000), 283–316.

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“The public image of the Victorian artist: Family biographies,” *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, n.s. 5:3 (Fall 1996), 4–29.

“The artist colonized: Holman Hunt’s ‘bio-history,’ masculinity, nationalism and the English school,” *Re-framing the Pre-Raphaelites: Historical and Theoretical Essays*. Ed. Ellen Harding (Aldershot: Scolar, 1996), 211–29.

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