



The Decorative Threat

KEYWORDS

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These texts were written and workshopped during THE DECORATIVE THREAT, a Spring 2021 graduate seminar in the Department of the History of Art, Yale University.

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The word “decoration” comes furnished with synonyms that double as pejoratives: embellishment, ornament, artifice, accessory, to name but a few – words that mean, more or less, meaning little. So a glossary that treats the topic may seem unintuitive at best, a trifle fluttering in the wake of critical projects that have used the glossary as a form for carrying out cultural analysis. Raymond Williams’s 1976 *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* is foremost among them, a classic compendium of short essays on one hundred terms central to social life. Williams’s goal was neither to give a neutral overview of their meanings nor to resolve their conflicts. Instead, he aimed to show that our vocabulary emerges out of political and historical conditions, not as natural law or tradition, but instead as something subject to use, something that we must actively navigate and rework if we are to grasp the substance of our lives.

The keywords that follow take a page from Williams’s project by reworking and thickening the lexicon of “decoration” in the history of art. The texts were written and workshopped during the Spring 2021 graduate seminar “The Decorative Threat” in the Department of the History of Art at Yale University. Each week, one member of the seminar selected a single word to guide us through a discussion of the readings. A working definition was provided, which subsequently became the basis for the more substantial entries that appear here. A workshop at the conclusion of the course gave us the opportunity to discuss each entry and take in their sum. Together, they form the basis of a vocabulary for studying decoration and ornament in modern art, as well as the trace of our conversations over the course of a semester.

This assignment took inspiration from a collaborative text involving faculty and students in Princeton’s Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in the Humanities, produced at the conclusion of the graduate seminar “Interdisciplinarity and Antidisciplinarity.”¹ In comparison to their project of institutional analysis, our quarry might appear less self-reflexive. Yet the entries that follow compose a collective critique of modern art history’s desires, denials, and misgivings, condensed in the “decorative threat.” At turns wry and affecting, these texts survey our discipline’s efforts to cordon off the decorative arts from the fine arts, and mark the historical events and political motives behind these efforts. The encompassing nature of the keywords is a sign of the depth and pervasiveness of these motives.

Some of the entries reflect on artworks or arguments that we examined during seminar sessions, while others use the terms to trace trajectories between several themes, to burrow into controversies, or to flush out contradictions. We have made no attempt to adhere to a single approach or style, the better to evoke the shifting texture of our conversations from week to week. Despite this variation, this little book remains a collective work. Its force of argument comes not just from the accumulation of keywords, but from their entanglements. In this, our exercise translates into prose the interlacings, dependencies, mutualities, confederations, contingencies, and ineluctable attachments that characterize the “decorative.” I hope that is also a reminder that learning together can be characterized by those very same words.

Joanna Fiduccia

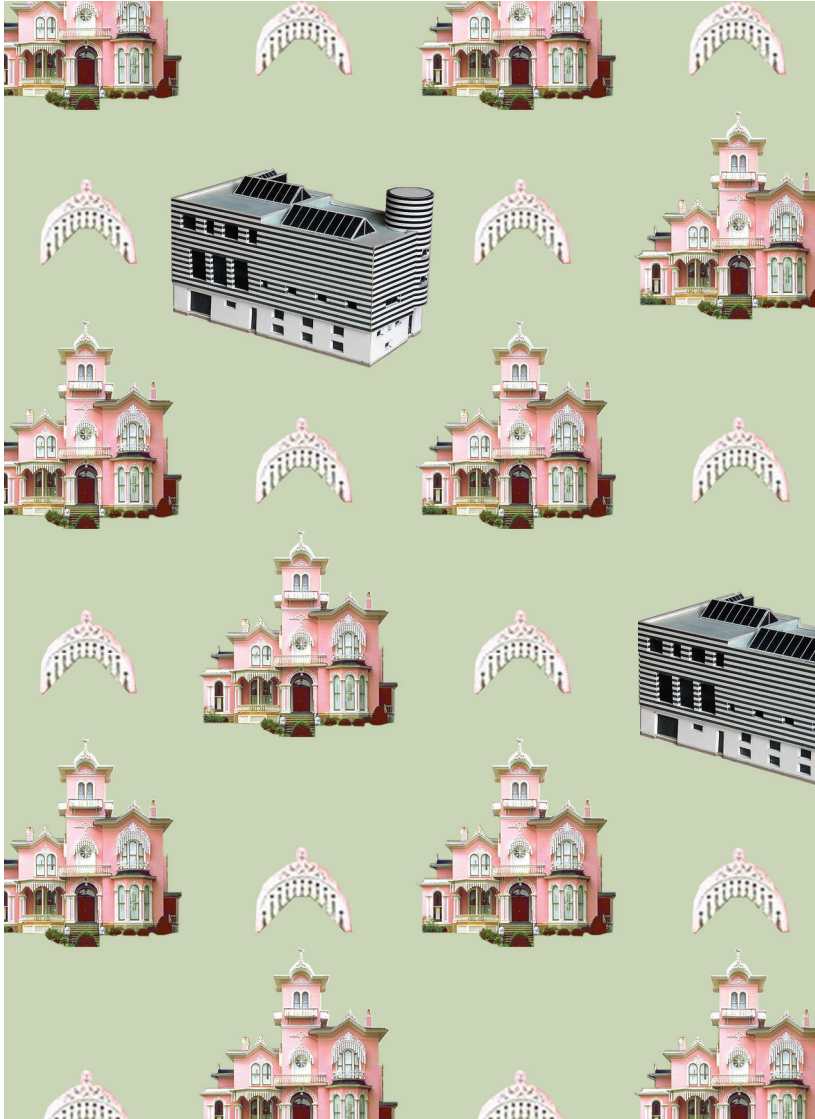
07/22/2021

Notes

¹ A Community of Inquiry, *Keywords: for Further Consideration and Particularly Relevant to Academic Life*, ed. D. Graham Burnett, Matthew Rickard, and Jessica Terekhov (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

KEY

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Autonomy NOUN

From the ancient Greek *autonomos* "having its own laws," from *autos* "self" + *nomos* "law"

Autonomy denotes self-determination and self-rule. Self-rule can at once mean to be independent of external forces and manipulations, and to be in full control of one's self, to be self-regulated. Kant's seminal work on morality posits autonomy as the defining quality of the rational and moral subject. In mainstream Western thought, from political theory to developmental psychology, autonomy is at the heart of concepts of sovereignty, rights, and responsibility.

Week 9: Chromophobia

"Autonomy" presented by Brian Orser on 03/31/20

Primary Sources

Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in *Negro Anthology, Made by Nancy Cunard, 1931-1933*, ed. Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart, 1934), 39-46.

Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today [excerpts]*, trans. James I. Dunnett (London: The Architectural Press, 1987).

A productive analysis of the decorative in terms of autonomy comes into focus in the figure of that sworn enemy of decoration, modernist aesthetics, especially modern architecture. Modernism in large part hinges on a bid for autonomy from history, from culture, from class. In addition to being intertwined with "European" gender identities, this politics of independence, purity, and control is intimately tied to political philosophical developments which we can trace from the French Enlightenment through Kant, Hegel, and then into modern aesthetic discourse. Kant, like Rousseau, seems to state that heteronomous action is absolutely nonmoral. Heteronomous action means action governed by anything other than pure will (in other words,

actions which are influenced by external forces, ignorance, ideology, social contract and law). Critics of autonomy have pointed out the historical application of similar theories of heteronomous non-morality to justify colonial politics and supremacist racial ideologies, as well as to support disempowering conceptions of female agency. In the recent history of architecture and other arts, theories of autonomy might at first seem to be a masked celebration of male genius. However, autonomy-heteronomy is a curiously useful device for unraveling the “decorative threat” which haunted modernism through its birth and growth.

Autonomy, understood as self-regulation or independence from external forces, reveals itself twice in ornament and decorative art, offering two readings which appear to contradict each other but which reveal a fundamental ambiguity in the dialectical definitions we have inherited of both pure art and decorative art. The first association between decoration and autonomy is established through modernism’s negation of decoration. Modern art and architecture have often been proposed to be wedded to a project of autonomy, in which art is purportedly lifted to a more pure atmosphere, through abstraction, de-referencing, and self-reflexivity. Accordingly, ornament and the decorative are commonly viewed as secondary, something added to the surface, which can be stripped away to reveal the real thing. This attitude towards ornament is reflected in the decontextualized

contents of 19th-century catalog-style handbooks of ornament. This modern view that the art object is autonomous from its decoration suggests, in a perverse reversal, that the decorative, too, is autonomous. In other words, if ornament survives being torn from the decorated surface, it must have its own internal reality, independent of its host object. The autonomous aspirations of the modern project reveal or generate an equal and opposite autonomy in the elements it hopes to strip away as inessential to the autonomous thing.

The second association between decoration and autonomy lies in the non-figural order which undergirds decoration, and ornament in particular. Decoration is deployed in relation to the structure and form of the decorated object, and often communicates meaning which may be figural and referential. So decoration is relational. Yet decoration also follows its own non-referential logic, order, and conventions. This logic takes the form of pattern, repetition, rhythm, and/or geometric form, and it is this underlying abstraction which makes a hexagonal grid of small painted flowers more obviously decorative than a single, specific flower painted on a canvas. The aggregated profiles of a complex crown molding all run parallel to the line between floor and wall, yet the repetitions and geometric inversions of its curvatures reflect an ancient idea about patterned light, rather than anything specific to that wall and that floor.

So, ornament can be understood as autonomous. Yet the work done by much ornament, especially surface decoration, is more heteronomous than autonomous, working along the lines of imbrication, implication, and figure-ground ambiguity. The term heteronomy originates in the 18th century, a new compound of *hetero-* ("other, different") and *-nomy*, from Greek *nomos* ("law"). Often used to describe foreign influence in a nation's politics, or a loss of political or moral autonomy, in the context of decorative art heteronomy suggests not the opposite of autonomy but the blurring and binding action of ornament, its constant threat to the individual self, the definite and moral actor, and the discrete object. Heteronomy is one form of the decorative threat.

Secondary Readings
 Mark Wigley, "Chronic Whiteness,"
 e-flux journal, November 10, 2020

David Batchelor, *Chromophobia*
 (London: Reaktion Books, 2000)

In other words, much ornament works to fuse object, surface, and subject into a thickened zone in which autonomy seems to have no place. How could we reconcile this with the idea that the decorative is autonomous? It may be that decoration is defined by having one foot in the real and one in the ideal, meaning that decoration is exactly that art which is half autonomous and half heteronomous. Or, it is possible that the autonomous reading of ornament only has meaning as part of a historical dialectic with a modernist concept of modern art's autonomy. Historicizing the contradiction between autonomous-decorative and heteronomous-decorative maybe reveals the fundamental fluidity and dialectical construction of these terms. Another way out of this bind is to distinguish between the decorative and the work that it does. While the decorative itself may be autonomous (following its own logics, able to be applied to and removed from other creations), the work it often does in situ is to fuse, merge, or blur separate parts into a whole, or at least to confuse object, surface, and image.



Complicity NOUN

Complicity, in its dictionary definition, means association, participation, or the state of being involved. Etymologically, the word derives from the Latin *complicare*, meaning to fold together. Such layering and turning back creates volume from surface, turns inside out and outside in. Complicity is a material metaphor, bound to textile as much as to text. When we say that a fabric has a certain *ply*, we are speaking in the same layered, folded language, a language that complicates the border between people and things. Complicity, though it is now often used to mean exclusively participation in wrongdoing, is also tied to the more neutral terms “complicated” and “complexity.” Complicity suggests both our inevitable entanglement in systems of oppression and the possibility of remaining present with and for each other.

Week 12: Ornamentalism

“Complicity” presented by Elizabeth Keto on 04/21/20

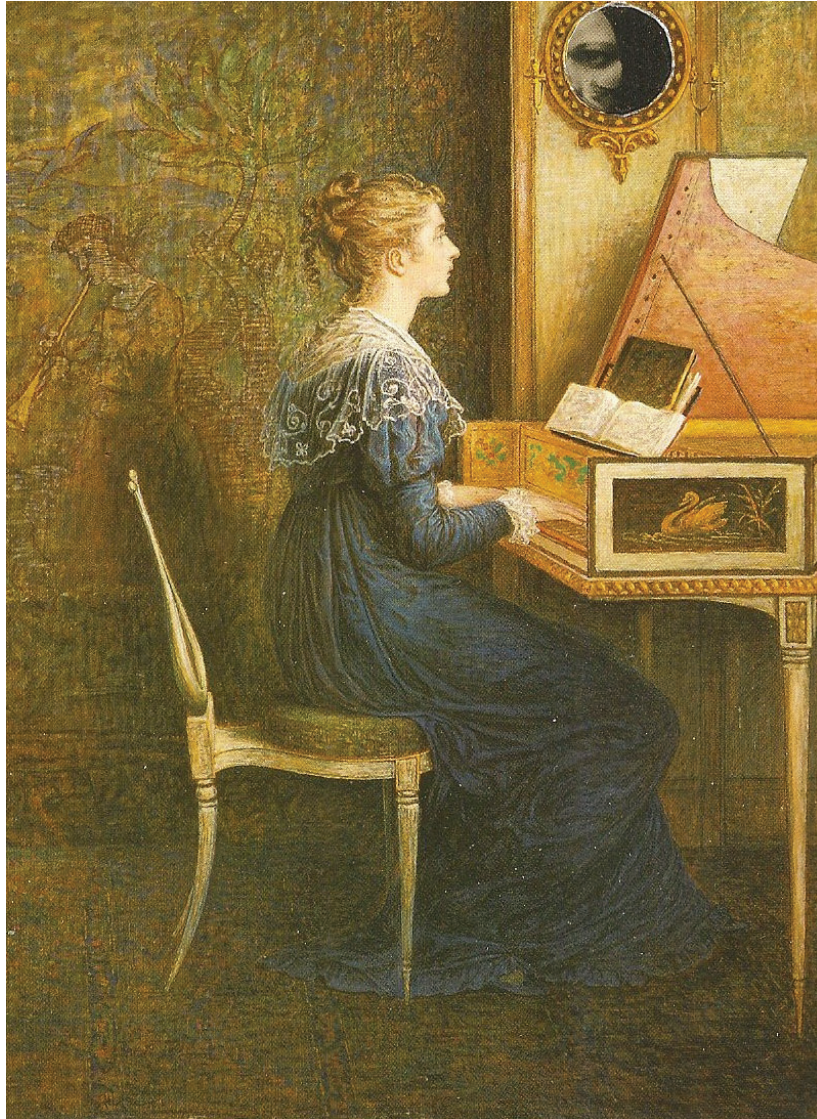
Readings

Anne Cheng, Ornamentalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Throughout this course, we have spoken of the threat posed by the decorative to modernism's self-conception. The decorative connotes the frivolous, the feminine, and the foreign. Yet in thinking through the idea of complicity, I also began to wonder whether we might think about the threat of the decorative to modernism's Others. The inclusion of works of art originating outside the mainstream of white, male Euro-American production into Western histories of art or museum spaces often takes place under the sign of the decorative. From nineteenth-century grammars of "world ornament" to the 2015 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition "China: Through the Looking Glass," the decorative has been Western art history's rubric for the absorption and assimilation of its others.

The "decorative" is thus often a shorthand for Eurocentric art history's failure to understand the full complexity of a work of art, its deep imbrication in another culture and mode of being in the world. When we speak of a work of art as "decorative," we are often literally and figuratively remaining on its surface, complicit in its physical or ideological separation from a community in which it might have had a different and deeper meaning.

And yet... Anne Anlin Cheng's work suggests the forms of survival, even resistance, that can take shape precisely on the surface of things, at the site of oppressive constructions of race or gender. Complicity might be subversively recast as solidarity. Using deeply compromised language to craft a new grammar of personhood means staying with complexity and accepting certain forms of complicity. If we are to trace the contours of an alternative ontology of persons and things, a species of embodiment that is aesthetic as well as corporeal, we must attend to the complicity of an art historical praxis that is centered around things, but often claims some reparative value for persons. Such a praxis, compromised as it is, may not be a recipe for repair but simply a way of living within the brokenness of things, within the worlds that modernism has made and unmade.



Immanence NOUN

Immanence is a quality of perceptions and representations of the external world, that are both shaped by and inherent to the subjective human interior. Immanent representations or experiences often derive their incipency from encounters with material environments, but their contours and cadences are produced by the immaterial inner world. Although they constitute a form of interaction with the animate or inanimate Other, immanent sensory and creative impressions linger in the realm of introspection. This situated definition is informed by the late-Latin root of the word "immanent": the verb *immanere* (to remain in place). It is also informed by, but not directly modeled on, Theodor Adorno's definition of Søren Kierkegaard's immanent dialectic, which "transpires between subjectivity and its meaning."¹ In the context of the decorative, immanence is tied to interactions between extrinsic and intrinsic sensation within the ontological interior. Immanence evokes reflections on the decorative as sign and manifestation of mutualism existing between the inner self and the reflective, inscribed surfaces of its environment.

Week 4: Symbolism and the Nabis

"Immanence" presented by Isabella Galdone on 02/24/20

Primary Sources

J.K. Husymans, "Prologue," "Chapters 1-2, 4," *Against the Grain* (1884), trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 2003)

Maurice Denis, "Definition of Neotraditionalism," (1890) in *Theories of Modern Art: A Source Book By Artists and Critics*, ed. Herschell B. Chipp (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968)

Theodor Adorno, "Situation" and "Intérieur," Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989)

A foundational expression of this mutualism can be found in Maurice Denis's 1890 manifesto "Definition of Neotraditionalism," in which the artist formulates the planar surface of the canvas as a locus of emotion and a material mirror of immaterial sensory experience; a moment of intimate perception transposed and universalized. Denis's *Taches de Soleil sur la Terrasse* (1890) demonstrates this decorative fusion of object and sensation. In *Taches de Soleil*, Denis represents the exterior world through a self-reflexive arrangement of colors or symbols that reinscribe innate, interior processes of subjective perception. The painted surface emerges, not as an illusionistic copy of nature, but as evidence of an inherent process of subjective selection based on optical input, resulting in the flattening of multidimensional form into decorative pattern, and the collapse of exterior into interior space.

Notes

1 Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 30.

2,3 Anne Cheng, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 99.

Immanence applies not only to the painter's representation of the external world, but also to the relationship between the decorated interior and the bodies that inhabit it. In order to explore this relationship, it is useful to look at Edouard Vuillard's *The Salon: The Reader* (1896), a panel from a series designed to decorate the home of Henri Vaquez. This image is characterized by an intertwined relationship between animate and inanimate objects. A shimmering profusion of organic forms bleed from wallpaper and decorative textile into the pattern-enfolded bodies of the human figures, creating the impression that the individuals and their apartment function as one nervous

organism. This evokes Adorno's characterization of Kierkegaard's "situation" as the moment of powerless indifferentiation between subject and object. The decorated apartment provides perpetual immurement in internal sensation, enabling the occupant to engage in imaginative exploration while remaining locked in the fixed landscape of immanence.

The figures in *The Salon* are on the edge of being absorbed into the room's patterned surfaces, but on the other hand they are the only forms in the composition that appear truly voluminous and weighted. Does Vuillard's immanent decorated space constitute a site of absorption and dissolution in which the figures are overwhelmed by the agency of the object, or does it act as a kind of prosthetic, an artificial extension of the inner self? Immanent prosthetics are powerfully invoked in Anne Cheng's *Ornamentalism* (2018). In Chapter 3 of the book, Cheng refers to ornamentalism as "the forging of a sense of personness through artificial and prosthetic extensions."² In the same chapter, Cheng discusses Li Xiaofeng's *Beijing Memory number 5* (2009), describing the ceramic sculpture as an "exploration of troubled authenticity and distorted temporality."³ The gown/torso of *Beijing Memory* is composed of fragmented ceramic objects, originally constructed for life in the domestic interior, which are converted into an armor-like exterior cladding. The porcelain surface is hard and sharp, and yet it suggests fragility and permeability, as well as an interior hollowness. The absence of a material body in this prosthetic skin enacts a fusion between corporeal interior and extraneous decoration. It is in this space of negotiation between inside and outside that immanence asserts itself, infusing hard and artificial surfaces with animacy and depth.

Secondary Readings

Katherine Kuenzli, "Wagner as Intimist: Vuillard's Desmairis Decoration and the Symbolist Theater," *The Nabis and Intimate Modernism: Painting and the Decorative at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Surrey, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2010)

Debra Silverman, "Chapter 1: The Brothers de Goncourt between History and the Psyche," *Art Nouveau in Fin-de-Siècle France: Politics, Psychology, and Style* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989)

Background

George Mosse, "Max Nordau and His Degeneration," and Max Nordau, "Fin-de-Siècle," *Degeneration* (1892)

Rae Beth Gordon, "Ornament and Hysteria: Huysmans and Rachilde," *Ornament, Fantasy and Desire in Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).



Impulse NOUN

From the verb *impellere*, from *in-* (“towards”) + *pellere* (“to drive”)

- 1 a sudden urge or desire to act
- 2 a driving or motivating force

The theorization of ornament can be said to begin with the question “Why does ornament happen?” At its core, this is a question about the motivating impulse that compels human beings to adorn, a question with its own underlying drive. Theorists of ornament like Gottfried Semper and Alois Riegl sought to describe a primary and universal origin for the production of aesthetic forms. Their discernment of a universal impulse is marked by their own urge to universalize, a desire driven by nineteenth-century developments in evolutionary theory and anthropology. In this light, we might see ornament as an interface of convergent impulses, impulses that arise from the acting body and impulses that project meaning onto those bodily performances.

Notes

¹ Gottfried Semper, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts*, trans. by H. F. Mallgrave and M. Robinson (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute, 2004), 82. See also Spyros Papapetros, “World Ornament: The Legacy of Gottfried Semper’s 1856 Lecture on Adornment,” *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 57–58 (Spring/Autumn 2010): 309–29.

In Semper’s theory of ornament, humans are driven to adorn by a “cosmogonic instinct”: the creation of ornament obeys a universal world order in which objects manifest macrocosmic and microcosmic elements of natural laws.¹ Whereas for Semper, ornament is determined by natural laws, Riegl’s theory of ornament is less deterministic; he understands the origin of human artistic creation as a force he calls *Kunstwollen*, or “free and creative artistic impulse,”

Week 2: Dekorative Fragen

“Impulse” presented by Kevin Hong on 02/10/20

Primary Sources

Gottfried Semper, from “Concerning the Formal Principles of Ornament and Its Significance as Artistic Symbol” (1856), in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750–1940*, ed. Isabelle Frank, trans. by David Britt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000)

Alois Riegl, from *A Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts (1897–99)* and “Introduction,” *Problems of Style (226)*, in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750–1940*

also translated as the “will to art.”² Both theorists’ search for a primary creative impulse is motivated by the idea that ornament, along with other branches of art, can be ordered: it either adheres to scientific principles, or it can be broken down according to an empiricist language. Crucially, this motivation is entangled with a colonial drive: both writers demonstrate an impulse to classify and absorb the ornament entering Europe from various regions of the globe. This impulse is betrayed by both historians’ genealogical instincts: Semper, in particular, holds up Hellenistic Greece as the paragon of a self-conscious production of a well-directed aesthetic, whereas so-called “primitive” people produce bodily adornments that only unconsciously express deeper universal laws.³ The desire to construct a teleological history of ornament connects marginalized and colonized societies with primitive, bodily urges, and Western societies with a drive toward scientific knowledge. A universalizing theory, then, is an application of power that absorbs “lesser” and “other” forms into a teleological history that ends with the West.

2 Alois Riegl, “Introduction to Problems of Style,” in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European & American Writings, 1750–1940*, ed. by Isabelle Frank, trans. by David Britt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 227.

3 Gottfried Semper, “From Concerning the Formal Principles of Ornament and Its Significance as Artistic Symbol (1856),” in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European & American Writings, 1750–1940*, ed. by Isabelle Frank, trans. by David Britt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 102.

4 Deborah Silverman, “Art Nouveau, Art of Darkness: African Lineages of Belgian Modernism, Part I,” *West 86th*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2011): 139–181; Deborah Silverman, “Art Nouveau, Art of Darkness: African Lineages of Belgian Modernism, Part II,” *West 86th*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2012): 175–195.

5 William Morris, “The Arts and Crafts of To-day,” in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European & American Writings, 1750–1940*, ed. by Isabelle Frank (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 62.

If ornament is universalized by the impulse to categorize and discipline, it may also serve as a site of displacement for the extractive and violent activities of empire. As Deborah Silverman has shown in her analysis of Art Nouveau’s relationship to the Belgian Congo, the drive for conquest and capital bleeds into art’s unconscious, where it is aestheticized and disguised.⁴ In her study, real images and projected fantasies of the Congo make their way into the designs and decorations of artists such as Henry van de Velde and Victor Horta, a process by which the violence of global domination is transferred into a modernist aesthetic of vitality and unity.

Theorists have also found in the will to ornament a primary impulse that might offer techniques of survival and freedom to the performing body. For William Morris, ornament manifests the basic human desire to commune with nature and delight in labor. The value of the applied arts is akin to “the pleasure of satisfying hunger,” suggesting a surplus, not of capital but of sensuality that surpasses mere use value.⁵ By linking the desire to decorate with the drive to eat and drink, Morris indicates that the act of adornment is a form of bodily possession – and as such, a resistance of the processes of industrialization that alienate the working class from the products of its labor. Zora Neale Hurston also describes a subversive potential in

6 Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression," in *Negro: An Anthology*, ed. Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart, 1934), 24.

7 See Elizabeth Alexander, "Toward the Black Interior," in *The Black Interior* by Elizabeth Alexander (Saint Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2004), 3–19.

8 Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 17–18.

Secondary Readings

Spyros Papapetros, "World Ornament: The Legacy of Gottfried Semper's 1856 Lecture on Adornment," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, vol. 57–58 (Spring/Autumn 2010): 309–29.

Alina Payne, "Art Historians, Objects, and Empathy" (read sections on Riegl and Schmarschow), *From Ornament to Object: Genealogies of Architectural Modernism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

Background

Margaret Olin, "Style as Structural Symbolism," *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press 1992).

Spyros Papapetros, "Foreword" to "On the formal principles of adornment and its meaning as a symbol in art (second section)," trans. Kathryn Schofert and Papapetros, *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, vol. 57–58 (Spring/Autumn 2010): 299–308.

Spyros Papapetros, "Ornament as Weapon: Ballistics, Politics, and Architectural Adornment in Semper's Treatise on Ancient Projectiles," *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

the "will to adorn," which she finds in the decorated interiors of African American homes.⁶ For Hurston, the will to adorn is linked to Black English-speakers' modification and reinterpretation of language. As language might be embellished with simile and metaphor, one's domestic interior might be adorned, an act that would manifest a private space of imagination against a public gaze that seeks to racialize and spectacularize.⁷

Ornament, then, is a matrix of forces, an interface between inner and outer drives that in fact breaks down the dichotomy of inside and outside, essence and supplement. For Anne Anlin Cheng, ornament materializes scopic drives that project racial and sexual fantasies upon the human subject, at the same time that it serves as a screen through which one's identity might be performed or protected. What is deemed human is read through the objects that adorn the body and form the basis for projected fantasies. If this is the case, we might also look to ornament as a form of "synthetic invention" that registers the impulse to self-determination.⁸



Kitsch NOUN, ADJECTIVE

Emerging in the 1860s in the German-speaking art market to describe low-end works of poor quality, the term “kitsch” has come to embody a much broader spectrum of artistic production in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. It has been defined as a populist aesthetic expression with over-exaggerated features and simplistic or superficial nuances. Most often carrying negative connotations of “poor taste,” “vulgarity,” and “low quality,” the concept is the result of socio-economic and cultural developments of the nineteenth century which saw the formalization and standardization of taste. As such, kitsch is a direct outcome of the Industrial Revolution and technological advancements of the nineteenth century that led to mass production, synthetic materials, and mass consumption. The evolution of kitsch has been associated with urban agglomeration and expansion, and the emergence of a rigid social structure as a consequence of a growing bourgeois class in Europe. Consequently, it encompasses a complex and multifaceted character due to its history and socio-cultural and economic dependencies.

Week 7: Ornament and Crime

“Kitsch” presented by Faraz Olfat
on 03/17/20

Primary Sources

Adolf Loos, “Ornament and Crime”
(1910) *The Theory of Decorative Arts: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750–1940*, ed. Isabelle Frank, trans. by David Britt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000)

Therefore, the formation and concept of kitsch is brought about by the bourgeois socio-political struggles and anxieties over status, identity, and wealth. In defining the populist lower end of the market, kitsch allowed for the categorization of the opposite end of the spectrum of production as refined and artistically valuable. In that light, notions of fashionableness and exclusivity are defined in reaction to populist and undesirable aesthetics. This relationship depends, however, on a constantly revolving, trend-oriented material production because imitation and mimicry threaten such stylistic distinctions and their corresponding social associations, which in turn calls periodically for new modes of aesthetic representation. This cycle of consumption extends through social hierarchies in encouraging further consumption on a capitalist model. Even though the associations of taste, materiality, and social status have a long trace in human

history as it relates to artistic and material production, with the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century, kitsch introduced a new dimension to the relationality of class and aesthetics. Taste and material possession as a signifier of wealth and status were no longer relevant in the age of mass production, and so style and aesthetics became ever more important in communicating the social position and aspirations of the consumer through stylistic expression. Subsequently, ornament became a major aspect of this visual representation and was charged with various socio-political and cultural connotations. The historicism and hybridity of nineteenth-century aesthetics directly relates to this growing need for a broader visual culture, which resulted in the fetishization and appropriation of foreign visual models through orientalism.

The history of kitsch is entangled with social, anthropological, and economic issues which have shaped its position within global cultural production and consumption. As an all-encompassing nineteenth-century phenomenon, by the end of that century, kitsch had come to define strong and apparent gendered connotations and reflected on sexuality through consumption. As Miriam Gusevich has observed, kitsch carried intricate sexual implications throughout the nineteenth century, and it became part of a complex social performance signifying sexual status, sexual availability, and sexual difference. While men participated in the ritual mainly as spectators, purveyors, and providers, it was women who were the committed consumers of kitsch. As a capitalist phenomenon, kitsch expanded its market through other novel commercial entities such as department stores and advertising agencies, which supplied and promoted such objects. In this cycle of consumption and amalgamation, encouraged by changing trends and evolving technology, the woman becomes part of this system as the most valuable trinket in her house. This fetishization and sexualization of the commodity collapsed the boundaries between the consumer and the product within the gender interplay of the nineteenth century. This further highlights the relationship between sexuality and material consumption in the period because the purchase and display of certain objects, and even the vendor they were acquired from, reflected on the sexual desirability of the consumer.

Secondary Readings

Beatriz Colomina, *"Interiors," Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994)

Anne Cheng, *"Skin, Tattoos, and the Lure of the Surface" and "Housing Baker, Dressing Loos," Second Skin: Josephine Baker & the Modern Surface* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Finbar Barry Flood, *"God's Wonder: Marble as Medium and the Natural Image in Mosques and Modernism," West 86th, Vol. 23, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2016): 168–219*

Background

Miriam Gusevich, *"Decoration and Decorum, Adolf Loos's Critique of Kitsch," New German Critique, no. 43 (Winter 1988): 97–123.*

Due to its populist associations and aesthetic inferiority, kitsch has been a constant topic of criticism for modernist thinkers and critics since the turn of the nineteenth century. The root of such criticisms of kitsch as industrially produced items of no artistic value could be understood in light of design reformers and thinkers such as August Webley Pugin and William Morris. The Arts and Crafts Movement's pursuit of refined taste and artistically redemptive decorative arts were early reactions to the emergence of kitsch objects. Later in the early twentieth century, for figures such as Walter Benjamin and Hermann Broch, kitsch was described as being different from art because it was mass-produced and purely imitative, because it fetishized the commodity without any critical connection to the individual. In his 1969 analytical volume, *Kitsch: an Anthology of Bad Taste*, art critic and philosopher Gillo Dorfles notes that the "kitsch problem...is judged to be one of global proportions infecting all man's forms of expression."¹ Through the modernist lens, kitsch is perceived as the main source of social decay in production and consumption as its purely decorative essence strips it of any socio-cultural value. Reflecting on objects that are ornamental and lack practical functionality, kitsch stands against the notion of *sachlichkeit* or objectivity as promoted by German Modernists. Subsequently, anti-ornamental sentiments by designers and thinkers such as Adolf Loos address the issue of kitsch as a social, cultural, and economic problem of the modern industrial age.

Notes

¹ Gillo Dorfles, *Kitsch: an anthology of bad taste* (London: Studio Vista, 1969), 26.

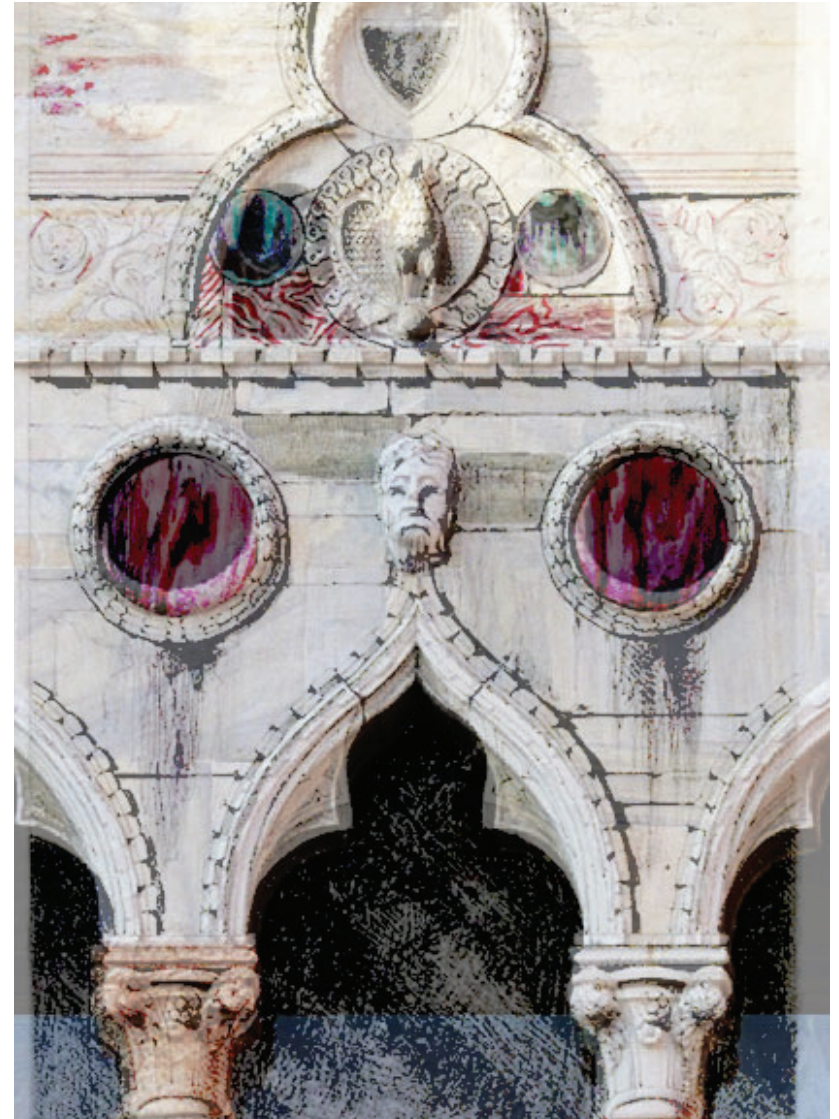
² Further readings

Ruth Holliday, *Kitsch! cultural politics and taste* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

Robin Schuldenfrei, *Luxury and Modernism: Architecture and the Object in Germany 1900–1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Winfried Menninghaus, "On the Vital Significance of 'Kitsch': Walter Benjamin's Politics of 'Bad Taste'," *Walter Benjamin and the Architecture of Modernity*, eds. Andrew Benjamin and Charles Rice (Re-press, 2009).

Aside from its apparent cultural and artistic threat to the modernist agenda, kitsch has proposed a graver issue due to its financial power. Cheaply produced, readily available, and culturally appealing to the masses, kitsch objects comprise a great portion of the capitalist market of industrial societies. Therefore, criticisms of kitsch as non-artisanal objects reflect anxieties over commercial competition, as in the case of the Design Reform Movement in Britain. Similar sentiments were expressed by the Bauhaus as the school and its leaders aimed to reform the traditional modes of production and consumption through minimalist and functional aesthetics. The concept of kitsch is therefore related to the systematization of taste as well as the scholarly and academic study of art history as a broader socio-cultural and economic phenomenon.²



Matter NOUN

The term “matter” refers to the substance of which all bodies consist. In classical physics and chemistry, matter is defined as a substance of a particular kind with observable characteristics. Matter denotes something that has mass and volume, and therefore occupies space. As a result of their internal, constituting properties, different types of matter behave differently in response to external forces within a given environment.¹

In its scientific associations and everyday parlance, the term “matter” denotes something utterly tangible and localized, as well as something undetectable and diffuse. Matter is the stuff of which the universe is made and remade, stuff that is always *in fieri* through a process of aggregation, evolution, and shifts in quantities. A “matter” is also something under consideration, a topic up for discursive exploration which thrives on the friction of diverging rhetorical positions. Focusing on the material presence of ornament helps us recover its complex visual and phenomenological qualities.

Week 3: Arts and Crafts

“Matter” presented by Caterina Franciosi on 02/17/20

Primary Sources

John Ruskin, “*The Lamp of Beauty*” (1849) and “*Modern Manufacture and Design*” (1859), in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750-1940*, ed. Isabelle Frank, trans. by David Britt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000)

John Ruskin, from *The Stones of Venice* (1851) (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903)

William Morris, “*The Revival of Handicraft*” (1888) and “*The Arts and Crafts of To-day*” (1889), in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings, 1750-1940*

William Morris, “*On the Origins of Ornamental Art*,” <https://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/ornament.htm>

Notes

¹ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/matter>.

In his creative analysis of William Morris’s and John Ruskin’s theoretical and artistic understanding of ornament, Lars Spuybroek defines the “matter of ornament” as a property of objects that comes to exist as, and is continuously subject to, a process of reconfiguration.² As ornament transforms itself, it acts upon its surrounding environment and restructures the relationship between the viewer and its own domain. Spuybroek argues that ornament is not separate from, not superimposed on, the “mass” of objects and buildings, but rather is an inextricable, constituting quality thereof. This inextricability manifests itself in the way in which surface and texture, two complementary aspects of ornament, occur within and through “zones of transition” between the dimensions that characterize the linear logic of patterns. The viewer, Spuybroek suggests, apprehends this movement between dimensions as an “event.”

Caroline Arscott notes that the designs in William Morris’s tapestries are constituted by and experienced as a continuous oscillation between surface and depth. This oscillation mirrors the technological processes of discharge and the seeping of the dye of woodblock printing. The production of ornament that Morris’s printing technique enables occurs at the level of the “mass” of the objects. It exploits the materiality of both the wallpaper and the design to generate a thickened surface that references and reiterates the processual quality of the source of its imagery as well as of its intended viewer: the stuff of nature, as created and recreated by processes of growth and evolution, and the human body, with its continuous reformulation of corporeal and mental matter enabled by sensory experience.³

Secondary Readings
 Caroline Arscott, *Interlacings: William Morris & Edward Burne-Jones*, (*New Haven: Yale University Press*, 2008)

Elizabeth Carolyn Miller, "William Morris and the Form and Politics of Replication," *Replication in the Long Nineteenth-Century: Remaking and Reproductions*, eds. Julie Codell and Linda K. Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018)

Lars Spuybroek, "The Matter of Ornament," *The Sympathy of Things: Ruskin and the Ecology of Design*, revised and expanded edition (London: Bloomsbury, 2016)

How do we square ornament's work of continuous reconfiguration, of itself and the viewer, with its tendency towards spatial (re)ordering? Is ornamental matter restless or inert? Does ornamental matter make us restless or inert? Questioning the degree of activeness of decoration (its tendency towards change and transformation, but also towards inertia) also means focusing on its ability to involve and activate the viewer in space and time. Oleg Grabar centers his discussion of the semantic work of ornament on the role of the corporeal involvement of the viewer. If abstraction is the underlying, generating principle of a decorative surface, the embodied experience that it invites counters and complements this work of visual distillation by continuously expanding and shifting the boundaries of aesthetic perception, and thus of meaning-making.⁴ The mechanisms whereby ornament is produced by the viewing subject are not unlike those that characterize "matter" as broadly conceived by physics: the intervention of external stimuli over a period of time is required to obtain changes in quantities and transformations of status, which is to say, to make the system (the decorative object or surface) alive.

What, then, are the different statuses that the matter of ornament can manifest within an environment? How do the confections and shifts that ornament effects – between mass and matter, surface and depth, interiority and exteriority – shape the viewer's relationship to these different manifestations in a variety of spaces? Michael Hatt's discussion of queer masculinity and the aesthetic interior points to one of these possible statuses of ornamental matter and to its relational

economy. Hatt focuses on the psychic baggage of the materiality of surfaces in decorated interiors. The "shiny" and "sticky" surfaces of queer domestic spaces – the screens, mirrors, and veneers – create a dynamic of attraction and repulsion that mobilizes the viewer's embodied self. In so doing, these surfaces invite the transgression of their own boundaries, enabling the subject to interiorize objects, interiority to externalize itself, and the private to fold itself into the public.⁵ The activation of the subject in terms of transgression speaks to the permeability of ornamental matter, a quality of liminality that once again defines it as fundamentally unstable, mobile, and reconfigurable.

If we stepped out of the interior and into the social world, what would stick to the viscous and glossy matter of ornament? This stickiness of ornament and its shimmering manifestations are central to Anne Cheng's argument about the decorative logic of racialized representations of Asiatic femininity. The "sartorial" quality of Asian women's bodies, their being intensely organic and at the same time thing-like, relies on the ability of ornamental matter to be seamlessly transferred onto and incorporated into the matter of the body. As the gleaming body of Anna May Wong flickers between hyper-visibility and invisibility, between exposure and constraint, we sense the profoundly restless nature of ornamental matter. The ever-changing matter of ornament produces an array of meanings across the spaces of representation and society. This semantic agency depends on the viewing subject's engrained fascination with its duplicitous nature.⁶

4 Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

5 Michael Hatt, "Space, Surface, Self: Homosexuality and the Aesthetic Interior," *Visual Culture in Britain* 8, no. 1 (2007): 105–128, 140.

6 Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2019)

7 John Ruskin, *The Complete Works of John Ruskin*, vol. VIII (New York: F. DeFau, 1912), 233–234.

The processual quality of the matter of ornament also hinges upon a linear understanding of time. The forward movement of time is fundamental to the viewer's experiential access to ornament, but also to the expression of its restlessness. Think about a building: inert materials are incorporated in ornamental schemes, but the passage of time reveals their protean and perishable nature. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, Ruskin calls this aesthetic agency of history "the golden stain of time": history manifests on the building in the form of material decay, rendering its surface a layered accumulation of the spirit of different ages and their people.⁷ Living with ornamental objects also produces traces that reveal their social life: their worn surfaces point to their passage through multiple phases of usage and existence. The intervention of time in ornament is therefore constituted by a double operation of layering and stripping away: time "stains" ornament, overlaying its surface with the inevitability of its material instability, but also seeps into and cuts through it, expressing its passage through encrustation as well as through lack and decay. The true character of ornament is revealed in a double movement of layering and wearing away, of a thinning and thickening of surface. Perception enables the mediation of these two complementary forces, stretching their operation while also scaling them down into the timescale of private aesthetic experience.



Parergon NOUN

Parsed etymologically, parergon is comprised of the prefix *para-* (beside [*parallel*], distinct from [*paradox*], auxiliary to or derivative of [*parody*], abnormal or defective [*paranoia*]) and the Greek word *ergon*/ἔργον (work, function). Parergon is, then, a term that articulates the identity of one entity relative to another (the *ergon*). The parergon does not exist in and of itself, but rather, only in relation to that which has been defined as the *ergon*.

In the history of art and aesthetic theory, the parergon has been closely aligned with the ornamental. Since antiquity, it had been used to refer to ostensibly insignificant details (staffage figures, still lifes) in a painting, subordinate to and separate from the main subject and thus deemed mere accessories, embellishments, or ornaments. Kant, for example, defines the parergon as an ornamental addendum (e.g. picture frames, draperies on statues), an added supplement that is purely external to the work, existing beyond its core structure and meaning. In this sense, the concept of the parergon ultimately reinscribes the binarism of ornament/structure, decorative/functional that we have sought to question and deconstruct.

Week 5: Orientalism and Abstraction

"Parergon" presented by Sarah Rapoport on 03/03/20

Primary Sources
Henri Matisse, "Notes of a Painter" and "On Travel," in *Matisse on Art*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995)

More recent theorizations of the parergon have sought to complicate Kant's definition. Troubling the separation of *ergon* and parergon, Derrida approaches the work as the site of a perceived "lack," in which the autonomy of self-contained, complete meaning is made impossible by its dependence on liminal devices (the frame). The literal and conceptual frame "gives rise" to the work, completing it in a way that the work alone cannot, and allowing for a conceptual and material expansion of the work's parameters.

Similarly rendering boundaries unstable, J. Hillis Miller offers a definition of the "thing in '*para*'" that suggests the fundamental both/and-ness of the parergon and thus of ornament. Miller conceives of the thing-in-*para* as a "permeable membrane connecting inside and outside, confusing them with one another, allowing the outside in, making the inside out, dividing them but also forming an ambiguous transition between one and the other."¹ And, "though any given word in '*para*' may seem to choose unequivocally or univocally one of these possibilities, the other meanings are always there as a shimmering or wavering in the word which makes it refuse to stay still in a sentence." Following these formulations, we might consider ornament's parergonality not as a marker of supplementarity that reinforces modernist binaries, but as precisely the source of its potential to threaten the stability of such antinomies.

Notes

¹ J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Spring, 1977): 441.

Secondary Readings

Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Jonathan Hay, "The Passage of the Other: Elements for a Redefinition of Ornament," *Histories of Ornament: From Global to Local*, eds. Gülru Necipoğlu and Alina Payne (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016)

Finbar Barry Flood, "Picasso, The Muslim: Or, How the Bilderverbot Became Modern (Parts 1 and 2)," *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 69/70 (2018)

In its ultimate refusal of total semantic or ontological closure the ornament troubles binary constructs – between work and addendum, structure and ornament, essential and inessential, naturalism and abstraction, high and low – by virtue of its unruly ambivalence. Thus, modernism's fetishistic tendency to subsume the decontextualized ornament of the Other into the drive towards abstraction may be precisely the weakness of its aesthetic project of medium specificity. As Finbar Barry Flood has shown, the arabesque – a form taken up by such artists as Matisse, Picasso, and Kandinsky – generated intense ambivalence amongst aesthetic theorists as to whether it constituted the "essence of abstraction" or the "epitome of ornament," and whether it would reduce abstract paintings to Oriental carpets. (Mis)understood as pure form, such ornaments could undermine attempts at radical flatness and abstraction through the imminent threat of the figurative or decorative. To understand the ornament as parergon is to recognize the ways in which it might encompass and highlight the continuities between figuration and abstraction.

The shimmering semantic and ontological instability of the parergon further raises the problem that the autonomous viewing subject poses to modernist aesthetics. Oleg Grabar and Jonathan Hay have argued for the need to recognize that the perception of motifs as ornament or not-ornament, abstract or figurative, is conditioned for each embodied viewer by a unique set of factors – atmospheric conditions, context, format, cultural and historical factors, and so on. These factors, which inflect perception and meaning, themselves constitute a type of ornamental parergon, which can even extend to scholarship, art criticism, and other cultural products (e.g. poems) that take a work of art as their subject. Thus, meaning does not inhere in the ornamental form itself, but rather ornament accrues and sheds meanings over time and with each viewer.

As parergon, the ornament functions as an interface between an embodied viewer and an artifact, a site of continued transformation of the viewed artifact, and a sensitive and receptive skin upon which the structure, ontology, and meaning of the artifact might be continually transformed by an active beholder.

Naomi Schor, writing on the related issue of detail, describes the way in which a beholder can upend aesthetic hierarchies and seemingly fixed identities of pictorial elements: “if a spectator comes up too close to a painting, the mimetic detail dissolves into a swirl of points and incoherent strokes.”² “This pulverulence,” she claims, “is the final stage in the sublimation of the prosaic detail...filtered through a myopic gaze for which all things resolve themselves into a haze of indistinct and dull color.” Just as the minute ornamental detail might be momentarily transformed into the utterly abstract, so, too, might the abstract be wrested from its anti-mimetic purity, desublimated into the representational or the decorative. As much is evident in Georges Didi-Huberman’s account of the pang of recognition of the resemblance – when seen up close – between the trompe l’oeil marble panels of Fra Angelico and the abstract paintings of Pollock. In this unpredictable interplay between an active, embodied viewing subject and the parergon, we might find a challenge to Greenberg’s proclamation that the all-over painting could “escape collapsing into decoration, mere wallpaper patterns” – that the decorative could transcend itself through monumental scale. The continued reframing of the work of art with each instance of viewing might be conceived of as a scalar operation, rendering Greenberg’s redemptive monumentality unreliable with each expansion and contraction of the conceptual and material boundaries of the work.

2 Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics of the Feminine* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 43.

Background
John Neff, “Matisse and Decoration:
The Shchukin Panels,” *Art in America*
63 (July–August 1975), pp. 38–48

For those who have been made Other (by virtue of Asian-ness, Blackness, femininity, queerness, etc.), the parergal nature of ornament – that is, its refusal of clear or fixed distinctions and identities – may well constitute a form of powerful resistance within and beyond the realm of aesthetic debate. The very lack of categorical clarity – between surface and structure, pure and referential form, parergon and ergon – that threatens modernist aesthetics can be mobilized against the burdensome and threatening politics of legibility. As Anne Cheng has written of such figures as Anna May Wong and Josephine Baker, play with the indistinct boundaries between embodied subject and abstracted object, presence and absence, reality and fantasy, body and ornament, afforded these women a protective and agentive cladding that lures and deflects the fetishistic and racializing gaze. Ornament can be seen at once to articulate the underlying structure of the body *and* to obfuscate that structure beneath encrusted ornamentations, both material and conceptual. Here, the attendant fetishistic fantasies and stereotypes of celebrity, race, and gender are parerga, too, inflecting the viewer’s perceptions and desires, mobilized as a “second skin.” For Derrida, riffing on Kant’s identification of the draperies of statues as a parergon par excellence, the transparent veil lays bare this very dynamic, rendering the boundary between body and garment fluid and indistinct.



Perception NOUN

Perception is a term that synchronizes the six meanings given in the first branch of its definition in the Oxford English Dictionary and conveys them all at once: (1) the subject's becoming conscious of things; (2) a perceptible trace; (3) the subject's becoming conscious of *physical* objects and phenomena through senses; (4) the faculty of perceiving; (5) the mental product of the act of perception; (6) the action of the mind by which it refers sensations to *external* objects and phenomena as their cause. Hence, perception encompasses, on one hand, an idealist or intellectualist reality and, on the other hand, a reality of an empirical or realist kind.

We could thus advocate for an understanding of perception that stems from the dialectical tension between these two poles. The act of perception is not quite idealist or empirical, but rather somewhere in between. Put differently, perception poses the question of what circulates between the subject and the world, or, what is the nature and cause of the product arising from perception. Is it a mere intellectual or mental construct? Or is it the fruit of the interrelationships between the subject and the world? Does the material world matter? Or does the mind determine the world? Does the world engender ideas? Or do ideas engender the world?

Week 13: The Decorative Threat

"Perception" presented by
Théo de Luca on 04/28/20

Primary Sources

Clement Greenberg, "Milton Avery,"
The Collected Essays and Criticism:
Volume 4, Modernism with a
Vengeance, 1957–1969 (Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1993)

Clement Greenberg, "The Crisis of the
Easel Picture," The Collected Essays
and Criticism, Volume 2: Arrogant
Purpose, 1945–1949 (Chicago: Univer-
sity of Chicago Press, 1986)

Clement Greenberg, "Detached Obser-
vations," Arts Magazine (December
1976)

Clement Greenberg's aesthetic attitude is somewhere between idealism and empiricism, too. His consciousness – if such a thing exists – is *perceptual*. His mode of knowing the world is *perceptual*. As such, the *enfant terrible* of American art history and criticism runs counter to an intellectualizing strain that prevailed among the subsequent generation of art historians. Greenberg thinks with his eyes. As Hubert Damisch put it, a painting is made not only to be *seen*, but also to be *perceived* in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's sense of the word. In other words, a painting does not pertain to *imaging* consciousness, but rather to *perceptual* consciousness. Within that framework, perception may stand as the very act that saves the decorative from becoming expendable. The so-called decorative components of painting, in their pictoriality and as revealed by perception, may actually prove to be what John Onians called the "bearers of meaning." May *meaning* equate with *aporia*.

Secondary Readings

Elissa Auther, "The Decorative, Abstraction, and the Hierarchy of Art and Craft in the Art Criticism of Clement Greenberg," *Oxford Art Journal* 27, no. 3 (2004): 341–64.

Naomi Schor, "Introduction" and "Chapter 1," *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007)

Tom Folland, "Robert Rauschenberg's *Queer Modernism: The Early Combines and Decoration*," *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 92, no. 4 (December 2010): 348–265.

- Photograph by Joanna Fiduccia
Rudolph Hall, Paul Rudolph
- COVER
- 15 Collage by Isabella Galdone
- William John Hennessy, *An Old Song*, 1874. Watercolor, gum arabic and gouache on paper, 37.3 x 28.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
- Walker Evans, *Girl in Fulton Street*, New York, 1929. Gelatin silver print, 28.3 x 15.3 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Collage by Faraz Olfat
- 24
- Versace by Rosenthal, *Jungle Animalier Plate*, 2019. Printed porcelain, 33 cm diameter. Gianni Versace, Milan.
- Raphael (Raffaello Santi), *Sistine Madonna*, 1513–1514. Oil on canvas, 265 cm x 196 cm. Gemäldegalerie, Dresden.
- Johann Joachim Kaendler, *Trumpeter*, 1753. Hand-painted porcelain, 15 cm x 7 cm x 6 cm. Meissen, Dresden.
- Edouard Tailland, "Shopping," *Le Journal des Dames et des Demoiselles* (1878). Engraving, 277 mm x 211 mm. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.
- Jean-Louis Prévost, *Bouquets* (New York: Paris Etching Society, 1945).
- "Flamingo," <https://science4fun.info/flamingo/>

- 5 Collage by Brian Orser
- "McMansions 101: What Makes a McMansion Bad Architecture?" *City Data* (forum). City-Data. August 12, 2016. <http://www.city-data.com/forum/real-estate/2628913-mcmansions-101-what-makes-mcmansion-bad-2.html>
- "House for Josephine Baker." *Pintrest*. <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/a4/18/9e/a4189e35a181eb4bbb5be897dab70cd5.jpg>

- 11 Collage by Elizabeth Keto
- Joseph Willems, *Chinese Musicians*, ca. 1755. Soft-paste porcelain, 14 1/2 x 14 1/2 x 14 5/8 in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Image in the public domain.

- 30 Collage by Caterina Franciosi
- John Ruskin, "Plate VIII, Decoration by Disks—Palazzo dei Badoari Partecipazzi," *The Stones of Venice: Volume I: The Foundations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1880).
- Collage by Kevin Hong
- 19
- E. De Wildeman and L. Gentil, "Landolphia owariensis," *Lianes caoutchoutifères de l'État indépendant du Congo* (Brussels: Jules Leherste-Courtin, 1904).
- Victor Horta, Winter Garden of the Van Eetvelde House, 1895–97. Horta Museum, Saint Gilles.
- 36 Collage by Sarah Rapoport
- Gustave Moreau, *Salome Tattooed* (Salome Dancing), c. 1874. Oil on canvas, 92 x 60 cm. Musée Gustave Moreau, Paris.
- Anna May Wong, Daughter of the Dragon, 1931. Lloyd Carrigan, dir. Paramount Pictures. Josephine Baker
- 43 Collage by Sarah Rapoport
- From Jacques Derrida, "The Parergon," trans. Craig Owens, *October* 8 (Summer 1979), p. 10.
- Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, ca. 1560. Oil on canvas, 73.5 x 112 cm. Royal Museum of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels.
- "c. 1950s picture frame," <https://www.ebay.com/itm/163947365618>
- W.H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts" (1940) *W.H. Auden*, ed. Tony Sharpe (London: Routledge, 2007).