

**Objectifying Objects:
Omitting Ideology in Gustav Stickley Craftsman Period
Rooms**Alexandra L. Simpson

Abstract:

This paper examines the ideological implications of showing craft objects in period rooms and how this display technique functions within museums. In particular, the paper considers how pieces from the ideologically-motivated nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts Movement are shown: do museums emphasize or elide the political underpinnings of the movement? The paper takes into account two installations of recreated Craftsman rooms designed to feature the work of the American Arts and Crafts practitioner, Gustav Stickley. The first room was shown in *International Arts and Crafts* at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, 2005; the second room was shown in *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement* in New Jersey, Texas, and California. This paper considers current museum practices while also addressing nineteenth-century perceptions about the functions of display. This comparison is further complicated by the difference in ideological beliefs between British and American practitioners of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Each movement's varying comfort with commercialism and capitalism affected the production of the objects and their intended use, but opinions about social reform also influenced the approach to the display of works. This paper will consider whether the rooms encourage an illusion of domesticity that allows the visitors to consider the objects as commodities, and whether any such illusion neglects the original emphasis on the ethical circumstances of production and consumption. In other words, do current museum displays depoliticize the Arts and Crafts Movement in favor of commercialized display that fetishizes the art objects?

Keywords

Arts & Crafts Movement, Gustav Stickley, period rooms, display techniques, museum experiences

When viewing period rooms, visitors are encouraged to imagine that they are privy to an understanding of another time; in fact, these sites are carefully constructed to achieve this sensation.¹ Just as the impeccably organized showrooms illustrated in magazines do not represent the eclectic furnishings and knick-knacks found in many homes, period rooms favour an idealized conception of the past. Their static representations omit the multitude of un-fashionable or once-fashionable objects that continue to furnish homes even as styles change. Instead, period rooms conjure a snapshot of a fictitious past where each object exemplifies the intended time period. This artifice can be an enjoyable and educational experience, but it also has ramifications for the ways that audiences perceive the objects shown in these rooms. Museums and heritage homes—where period rooms are commonly found—are ideological sites, where the objects chosen, their organization, and display strategies demonstrate cultural ideals.

The use of display techniques is particularly relevant when considering objects that were originally produced in accordance with ideological concerns about consumption and display, as is the case with works from the nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts Movement. The movement initially developed in Britain, and it promoted a return to traditional crafts in response to increasing industrialization and commercialization. The principles were also compelling to several American practitioners who embraced the ideals in their own production. In recent years, there has been renewed interest in the movement and several exhibitions have featured key works. A few of these exhibitions constructed period rooms to demonstrate how the pieces would have been used in homes. This paper considers these contemporary installations through an investigation of studies of material culture, complex ideas about display in the nineteenth-century, and the distinctions between the British and American ideological responses within the Arts and Crafts Movement. Further, the paper will examine how two re-created Craftsman rooms function within the context of exhibitions, and consider whether the simulated rooms treat the objects as sites

of intervention or resistance, or whether they promote an exclusively aesthetic experience. If they do promote such an experience, is this inconsistent with the original ideology of the movement as social reform, or is it consistent with the American conception of the Movement?²

In 2005, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London produced the *International Arts and Crafts* exhibition, which was criticized for not sufficiently attending to the British roots of the Arts and Crafts movement.³ Critics suggested the ambitious nature of the project did not do justice to either the uniqueness of the British Arts and Crafts movement with respect to regional specificity from England, Scotland, and Ireland, or to the nationalities that the curators argued constituted an International movement.⁴ In 2011, The Dallas Museum of Art produced *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement*, which premiered at the Newark Museum and traveled to the Dallas Museum of Art and the San Diego Museum of Art.⁵ While the exhibition generated positive reviews, it too was criticized as an ambitious project that did not completely satisfy its bold claims. One reviewer suggested that the generic title might have been designed to attract funding and to appeal to a larger audience.⁶ Both exhibitions featured stunning installations of re-created Craftsman rooms designed by Jo Hormuth. This paper will examine the use of these rooms within the respective exhibitions. I suggest that the context of the installation at the Victoria & Albert Museum did not clearly delineate the distinction between the British and American Movements, or their varying comforts with commercial display, while the installation at the Dallas Museum of Art functioned to situate the room in an American context and to illustrate the desire for unified homes advocated by the practitioner Gustav Stickley.

The Arts and Crafts Movement developed in Britain in the late nineteenth century as a response to changes in labor that accompanied the industrial revolution.⁷ Leading theorists advocated social reform and design unity—they decried factories where employees were treated as cogs in the machinery rather than valued craftsmen.⁸ However, practitioners often found it difficult to reconcile the utopian ideals of the movement with practice, since handcrafted goods were expensive and could not be made in sufficient quantities to supply the greater public.⁹

These ideas were also disseminated throughout America and Europe, and they are integral to any analysis of the movement. The *International Arts and Crafts* exhibition interpreted the idealism of the movement as a unifying force:

Other countries adapted Arts and Crafts philosophies according to their own needs. While the work may be visually very different, it is united by the ideals that lie behind it.¹⁰

However, this seemingly straightforward statement oversimplifies the context of these ideals in service of the exhibition's thesis about an international movement. The statement suggests that different countries adapted the aesthetic style through the use of different motifs according to the geographic location, which is correct, but does not fully indicate the extent of the diverse manifestations of the ideals themselves in different locations and social conditions. This is particularly relevant when discussing the Arts and Crafts movement in the United States, which was more comfortable with some elements of industrialization.

The *International Arts and Crafts* exhibition was shown in the Victoria and Albert Museum, which had a vital role in the development of the British Arts and Crafts movement. The Victoria and Albert Museum—initially called the South Kensington Museum—was established in 1852 in response to the success of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The museum was conceived as a pedagogical space to inspire British designers and manufacturers while simultaneously teaching the public about good taste.¹¹ When the current building was erected in 1857, it displayed the latest construction methods and materials, and showcased British design talent. This talent included key figures of the Arts and Crafts movement such as William Morris, Philip Webb, and Edward Burne-Jones.¹² The museum continues to maintain a large collection of pieces from the Arts and Crafts movement. The *International Arts and Crafts* exhibition included objects from Britain, America, Continental Europe and Scandinavia, many of which were taken from the museum's extensive collection. While the exhibition did not include examples of French Art Nouveau, it did include examples of the Mingei—or folk craft—movement from Japan, which was popular between 1926 and 1945. The exhibition included four simulated domestic rooms, which varied in their

appearance of artifice. These consisted of two British interiors, the American Craftsman room, and a Japanese room. To walk through the exhibition, visitors began in the British Arts and Crafts section, then moved into the American section, followed by the Continental European section, and finally ended in the Japanese section.

In the *International Arts and Crafts* catalogue, the section devoted to American objects is divided into three thematic essays: “The East Coast: Enterprise upon a Higher Plane;” “Progressive Chicago: Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School;” and “Western North America: Nature’s Spirit.” The exhibition was similarly organized, and the Craftsman room was included within the section entitled “The East Coast: Enterprise upon a Higher Plane.” The first vitrine displayed a beaded Yakima dress—which had been in the collection of Louis Comfort Tiffany—and an assortment of pottery, baskets, and a wool blanket that are Native American or feature appropriated motifs. Two photographs by Edward Curtis hung on the adjacent wall; the next vitrine contained art pottery, which in the catalogue comprises its own essay. The next display was the Craftsman living room, followed by a selection of East Coast art objects that were integrated into a longer display that included the remaining themes. While this choice of narrative is also potentially contentious, this paper focuses on the re-created Craftsman room.



Figure 1. Gustav Stickley, Craftsman House 10, Series of 1904. The Living Room. In *Craftsman Journal* 7(1)(1904).

The caption in the catalogue informs the reader that Jo Hormuth interpreted and designed the room from original drawings from the “Craftsman,” which was published by one of the key figures of the American Arts and Crafts Movement: Gustav Stickley (fig. 1).¹³ Stickley was a furniture manufacturer whose interest in the Arts and Crafts Movement stemmed from both personal taste and its potential as a marketable commodity. In *No Place of Grace*, Jackson Lears acknowledges the contradictory American approach to ideas of social reform that were so important to the British figures of the Arts and Crafts Movement.¹⁴ Lears includes a revealing anecdote about Stickley

that demonstrates how his expectation of morality in work ethic was used to denounce poor craft quality, rather than protect the civil rights of the workmen. Stickley criticized a foreman's order to ignore dropped nails because the carpenter's time was more valued than the nail. However, his complaint was not against the capitalist framework that created the situation, but rather that the act encouraged carelessness towards the employer's materials.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Stickley was inspired by some elements of social reform as advocated by the British Arts and Crafts Movement, and generally employed positive working conditions at his firm.¹⁶

Stickley, like the British practitioners, was interested in "the interior as a total work of art," yet he used the "unified ensemble" as an astute marketing tool. He tried to sell a lifestyle to his audience by publishing an ideal "Craftsman house, filled with harmonious, standardized Craftsman furniture, Craftsman metalwork, and Craftsman textiles."¹⁷ Stickley was not averse to methods of display that encouraged capitalism and commercialism. He and his designers would have been reading illustrated articles about the Turin International Exhibition of Art, and were interested in recreating those strategies used in the displays from the continent.¹⁸ In the winter of 1902–1903, Stickley traveled to Europe to find objects to include in an exhibition that he would mount early in 1903, first in Syracuse in March and then in Rochester in April. He visited Siegfried Bing's shop in Paris, where decorative objects were displayed in constructed domestic interiors. Bing had also organized the



Figure 2. London: Victoria and Albert Museum, Interior View (South Court). Late nineteenth century, photograph, 152 mm x 204 mm. Victoria & Albert Museum.

French exhibition at Turin, where he translated his popular display techniques from the retail space into the exhibition space.¹⁹ At Turin, these simulated display methods were sharply contrasted by the style used by Walter Crane, and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, whose English section resembled the contemporaneous display at the South Kensington Gallery (now the Victoria and Albert Gallery)(fig. 2).²⁰ The South Kensington-style display made an impression on Stickley in his European travels; he recounted that his conviction in democratic craft deepened following the trip where he saw "all other

historical types arranged in their proper sequence at South Kensington, precisely as specimens once having had organic life, are classified in a Museum of Natural History.”²¹ Stickley explains that he realized that each period is marked by a characteristic that influences the art made at that time, and he was inspired to consider how to apply his observations about contemporaneous American culture in order to manifest radical changes in his own workshops.

The movement’s concerns with issues of social reform and function in the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain and America were evident in the production of the objects; similarly, display techniques were also important to presenting the values underpinning the movement. In a recent essay, Morna O’Neill argues that an anxious relationship between the English Arts and Crafts Movement and the continental Art Nouveau was apparent in the display choices used at the *First International Exhibition of Modern Decorative Art* in Turin, 1902.²² O’Neill suggests that the English adoption of a museum paradigm—objects hanging on gallery walls and arranged in vitrines—encouraged visitors to view the objects as public works, whereas the simulated modern interiors—with architectural fittings and domestic arrangement of furniture—encouraged visitors to consider the works as private objects or commodities. She concludes that these differing display rhetorics revealed the cultural and political tensions regarding the meanings of decorative objects.²³



Figure 3. The Green Dining Room.
Decorated by Morris, Marshall, Faulkner
and Co, 1866. Victoria and Albert Museum.

This is not to say that the British practitioners were opposed to opportunities to showcase their talents to potential clients. In 1866–67 Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. accepted a commission to decorate the interior of the Western Refreshment Room, better known as the Green Dining Room or the Morris Room, in the South Kensington Museum (fig. 3).²⁴ The room was a unique opportunity to make a statement about their designs to a large public. However, the room was designed to be experienced as a beautiful and functional dining space—even now, the room continues to operate as a lunch and tea room. Clearly, the relationship

between the domestic interior and the domestic simulation as a retail innovation was already complicated during the nineteenth century, and revealed differences in ideology between the British Arts and Crafts movement and the manifestations both on the continent and in North America. The practitioners were interested in beauty and form, but function was also integral to their conceptions of social reform.



Figure 4. Jo Hormuth, Craftsman Living Room. Designed to evoke an illustration from Gustav Stickley's *The Craftsman*, primarily furnished with materials from Stickley's workshops. Installed at International Arts & Crafts at the Victoria & Albert Museum, 2005.

A comparable tension between public and private experiences of the object occurred in the *International Arts and Crafts* exhibition, where the use of the simulated room elided issues of social reform in favor of a de-politicized and aesthetic space (fig. 4). The room in *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts* functioned in a similar manner. The Craftsman rooms allude to the sensation of domesticity, yet they are recognizably artificial, which allows the viewer to consider the objects as commodities that could furnish their own homes. Moreover, visitors cannot physically enter the recreated rooms, and thus they experience the rooms from a distance as visual objects rather than embodied spaces. This also means that the sight of other visitors' anachronistic bodies in the room does not disrupt the illusion of an imagined

other time. Of course, it can be a pleasurable experience to view these rooms, and it is important not to dismiss the pure enjoyment of form as superfluous, yet it is equally important to remember that form and function were originally intended to complement each other for a sensual enjoyment of the pieces. This argument is complicated by the fact that the rooms shown are representative of the American Arts and Crafts movement, which, as Jackson Lears has argued, appropriated elements of the original British movement but was much more comfortable with commercialism and capitalism.²⁵ This is further complicated by the difference in perceptions of museum display and domestic spaces from the nineteenth century and present day.

In the following paragraphs, I will consider the current implications of these same re-creative strategies, and examine how these domestic simulations function in the museum context. Many museum scholars have discussed simulated display in ethnographic museums or the inclusion of “non-Western” artifacts in art museums, because that is where these diorama-inspired techniques are frequently—though not exclusively—employed. They argue that these simulation tactics promote an expectation that the viewer can completely understand a culture using only the information from the display. Another concern is that simulated rooms construct a view of progress as a continuum, whereby viewers categorize themselves as the pinnacle of this progression in comparison to other civilizations, cultures, or time-periods. The foremost concern is that the museum itself must be recognized as a technology, and understood to be a separate experience. For example, Susan Vogel observes that most objects in museums were not produced with the intention that they be seen within them, and are generally shown completely differently than they were intended.²⁶

Similarly, Michael Baxandall proposes three cultural terms that must be considered when exhibiting objects: first, the values from the culture where the object originates; second, the values from the arrangers of the exhibition, who incorporate theory about culture that other viewers may not share; and third, the unique “cultural baggage” and intentions of the visitors.²⁷ He considers these terms to be embedded in three agents: the maker of the object, the exhibitor, and the viewer. Baxandall suggests that in an exhibition, the agents come into contact in the intellectual space between the object and the label; he elaborates that the term label includes the wall text, but also the catalogue entry, lighting, and selection of objects. He explains that the label is not descriptive of the object, even if it shows a name or explains its function; rather, it “describes the exhibitor’s thinking about the object, or that part of his thinking [they feel] it to be [their] purpose to communicate to the viewer.”²⁸ Baxandall questions how objects should be exhibited, taking into account that even if the material is shown without any wall texts or written labels, the viewer will posit purpose into the object from their own cultural conditioning and create their own fictional description of the object. He advocates that the exhibitor should acknowledge “in a practical way that he is only one of three agents in the field.”²⁹ Vogel echoes this position, asserting

"[Museums] have an obligation to let the public know what part of any exhibition is the making of the artists and what part of any exhibition is the curator's interpretation."³⁰

However, Vogel's statement does not take into account that inclusion in the museum should be seen as an act of interpretation, a point which Brian Durrans addresses; he notes that art museums are moving towards traditionally ethnographic expectations for appreciation of the original meaning(s) of the maker and users of the objects.³¹ Durrans has two objections to attempts to provide a complete cultural biography to the objects. His first objection is similar to those of Baxandall: that it is impossible to appreciate the sensory experiences even if an aesthetic *effect* is reproduced. It is impossible to reproduce the exact circumstances because of the different complex interplay of variables involved. He explains that a creator will produce a form that suits the particular functions of the object. He warns that "if the object is then viewed in another position, against another background, from another angle, or by an observer familiar with a different range of other objects," the aesthetic intended or anticipated by the artist will no longer be relevant and the object is being used in service of a completely different experience. He notes that sensory aptitudes are culturally varied, and muses that it might not ever be possible to reproduce an aesthetic experience "even if all the circumstances were faithfully repeated."³²

Furthermore, participation in the museum institution itself alters the situation. Durrans claims that reconstructing a version of the original context either through information panels or "authentic" reconstructions conceals the new context of the museum. He explains, "The museum display is a context in its own right, and not just more or less of the original context it may seek to reproduce."³³ He further notes that museums do not generally acknowledge this isolation from their original context, and suggests that the tension could be relieved if the museum could draw the visitors' attention to the "circumstances in which objects were not only made in their original setting but also acquired by the museum in which they are now displayed. How have they been exhibited in the past, and why are they now being shown differently?"³⁴ Donald Preziosi warns that period rooms that attempt to simulate the ambience of a period confer a false homogeneity in the original environment, so that the beholder can try to identify traces of "a certain uniformity of style,

mentality, ethics, or aesthetic sensibility pervasive or dominant at a given historical moment.”³⁵

Baxandall considers how issues of exhibitability are further complicated by the functional nature of objects. He elaborates that objects designed for exhibition and visual interest are those that are less likely to be misunderstood than objects that are exhibited for their cultural interest or as evidence of cultural or technical skills, since the museum visitor is disposed to examine all objects for their visual interest.³⁶ He clarifies: “The exhibitable object is one made *for* visual exhibition or display;” although the viewer will probably bring their own baggage to it, the exhibitor can address their assumptions.³⁷ This suggests that there is an inherent tension in exhibiting functional objects in spaces that prioritize visuality. When considering the Arts and Crafts movement, this becomes particularly poignant because these objects were made to be seen and to be beautiful, but they were also intended to be useful and functional pieces. When these pieces are shown in the museum there is the danger that they will be examined solely for their visual and aesthetic interest, or that they are subject to suppositions about their use that differ from their intended functions.³⁸

Recreations cannot possibly give enough information to present an “authentic” re-creation because there are too many variables and the viewer will always bring their own cultural baggage to their viewing. The Craftsman room presents a setting of domesticity, which appeals to viewers’ expectations for a home, rather than to what Durrans considers “an appreciation of the original meaning(s) for those who made and used it.”³⁹ In the *International Arts & Crafts’* Craftsman living room, the first agent to be considered is Gustav Stickley, but the larger exhibition includes artists from several countries. The second agent(s), the curators of the show, have not accommodated either Stickley’s ideology or the original British agenda of social reform through art. The description that the exhibitors have presented for the viewer is an uncomplicated and consumable room: in other words, the label is a comfortable and attractive room, which adheres to Arts and Crafts conventions, but also to current taste.



Figure 5. Living Room at Craftsman Farms as shown in *Antiques and the Arts Online*, July 2011.

To illustrate that contemporary taste affects the presentation of recreations, the Craftsman room can be compared to another recreated room that replicates the aesthetics of Gustav Stickley (fig. 5). This living room is situated in the Stickley Museum at Craftsman Farms, which is Stickley's former home. It is a designated National Historic Site, and there has been work to restore it to its former appearance.⁴⁰ It becomes very clear in comparing the two rooms that they both use aesthetics of the Arts and Crafts style, but they are nonetheless distinct.⁴¹ The Craftsman Farms website compares historic

photographs with contemporary photographs of the room. While they certainly appear to be similar, they are also distinctly different. There are small changes to the structure of each room, but even if the rooms could be exactly replicated, they would be different because it is unavoidable that the viewers will experience the sites differently.



Figure 6. Stickley's model dining room for the Arts and Crafts exhibition in Syracuse, March 1903.

In contrast with the *International Arts and Crafts*, the catalogue for *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts* does not include documentation of the recreated Craftsman dining room featured in the exhibition; however, the catalogue does reproduce a photograph of the original model dining room shown at the Syracuse exhibition of March 1903 (fig. 6). In the catalogue, curator Kevin Tucker addresses the importance of the model dining room as a display technique that Stickley used to market the lifestyle that he similarly advocated in his magazine *The Craftsman*. Tucker elaborates that the room "provided him with the opportunity to establish a

controlled context for his work and to emphasize the alignment of his factory-produced furniture not only with Arts and Crafts principles but also with the work of numerous craft-related societies and individual artisans."⁴² Similarly, John Marciari—



Figure 7. Jo Hormuth, Craftsman Dining Room. Designed to mimic model dining room from Syracuse Exhibition. Installed in *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement*.

curator at the hosting institution, San Diego Museum of Art—emphasizes that Stickley marketed philosophies and a lifestyle through his manufacturing business and magazine. Marciari suggests that the model dining room is “the fullest expression of Stickley’s design aesthetic for an interior” since it includes furniture from his firm complemented by pottery, textiles, and metalwork to create a total aesthetic.⁴³

The original exhibition was well received; Stickley’s colleague, Irene Sargent, praised the setting, displays, and lighting, which she credited with its success as a social meeting place and representation of American handicraft.⁴⁴

The recreated room addresses Stickley’s interest in pleasant rooms as a sales tactic (fig. 7). Nonetheless, at *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts*, some critics recognized the recreated room as an allusion to Stickley’s marketing skills, but still criticized it as being too ostentatious and therefore not representative of Stickley’s main ideology. For example, scholar and dealer Robert Edwards suggested:

Jo Hormuth, Craftsman Dining Room. Designed to mimic model dining room from Syracuse Exhibition. Installed in *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement*. This [collection of rare and unique pieces] is celebrating preciousness, everything Gustav Stickley isn’t. There’s absolutely nothing run-of-the-mill, his bread and butter that furnished houses across the country.⁴⁵

John Marciari defended the surprising inclusion of highly ornamental works, arguing that while they fit uneasily into the ideals of a simple design aesthetic, Stickley needed to produce these pieces to remain a commercially viable enterprise. In other words, Marciari considers the pieces to be representative of the uneasy relationship that Stickley experienced between philosophical ideals and practical concerns.⁴⁶ In this case, as in *International Arts and Crafts*, Baxandall’s first agent remains Gustav Stickley. The second agents, the curators, have explicitly

focused on Stickley's oeuvre, and his comfort with both craft ideals and commercialism; while the room is again a comfortable and attractive room, it also adheres to Stickley's own marketing strategies.

In summary, recreated rooms and experiences can never offer the truly "authentic" experiences that they promise, or an automatic appreciation of the original meaning for those who made and used them.⁴⁷ When they are part of a museum or an institution, they are subject to the curatorial agent and display a particular narrative. In the case of the International Arts and Crafts exhibition, did this strategy of simulation elide questions about the initial ideology of social reform? I would argue that an examination of the Arts and Crafts ideology, and the tension between commerce and ideals that was present in the initial display techniques of simulation demonstrate that the ideology and methods of display were extremely important to the movement. The fact that these were not fully addressed shows there was indeed an inconsistency between the simulated Craftsman room and the initial ideologies. Perhaps it could be argued that the curators felt comfortable presenting an American recreated room rather than an English recreated room, but it is not clear that the exhibition even acknowledges the uneasy relationship between commerce and display in England, let alone distinguishes this relationship from the one in North America.⁴⁸ By not distinguishing this, the exhibition structure implies that the British Arts and Crafts and the American Arts and Crafts were ideologically homogenous, with different manifestations of their motifs simply arising due to different local inspirations, which is misleading.⁴⁹

In his essay, Baxandall concludes that "exhibitors cannot represent cultures;"⁵⁰ I would suggest that similarly they cannot recreate cultures, as was attempted at the *International Arts and Crafts* exhibition. Maybe, as Peyton Skipworth and Peter McCormack have suggested, this uncomfortable omission of a discussion of ideology would have been relieved by an exhibition that tried to do justice to the British roots of the movement, instead of trying to construct a narrative of an International Arts and Crafts that didn't allow for sufficient recognition of the uniqueness of the regional social diversity. In comparison, though the scope may have been broad, *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts and Crafts Movement* situated the room as an aesthetically pleasing and integral part of a narrative that

acknowledged its underpinning ideologies. Period rooms can be entertaining devices to help visitors to consider another era, but it is nonetheless important to consider the ramifications of the display technique on the ways that audiences consume the information presented, particularly when discussing objects that were produced with specific ideological intentions.

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Endnotes

¹ Period rooms often attract visitors to institutions, but it can be difficult to entice them to revisit once the novelty of the experience wears off; Eve M. Kahn, "Antiques—Museum Adds Illusion to Static Period," *New York Times: Art & Design*, February 23, 2012, accessed February 23, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/24/arts/design/antiques-playing-house-exhibition-at-brooklyn-museum.html?_r=2&ref=design.

² See for example, Wendy Kaplan, ed., *"The Art that is Life": The Arts & Crafts Movement in America, 1875–1920* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1987); Karen Livingston and Linda Parry, eds., *International Arts and Crafts*, (London: V&A Publications, 2005); T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Figure of the Artisan: Arts and Crafts Ideology" in *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994; Tom Crook, "Craft and the Dialogics of Modernity: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 2 (1) (2009): 17–32.

³ *International Arts and Crafts* was exhibited at the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) from March 17, 2005 to July 24, 2005. Another blockbuster show about the Arts and Crafts movement, *The Arts and Crafts Movement in Europe and America, 1880–1920: Design for the Modern World*, was exhibited by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) between December 19, 2004 and April 3, 2005. The LACMA would also later produce *The Arts and Crafts Movement: Masterworks from the Max Palevsky and Jodie Evans Collection* in 2008–2009.

⁴ Peyton Skipworth notes that the exhibition at LACMA differentiated between England, Scotland, and Ireland, whereas the V&A did not make that distinction clear. He elaborates, “If I seem to be over-critical of the Victoria & Albert exhibition it is because, with its unique and extensive holdings and its reputation for scholarship, the museum is the primary institution in the world capable of mounting the best Arts and Crafts exhibition ever held, and it has failed;” Peyton Skipworth, “Arts and Crafts in London and Los Angeles,” *Apollo* (May 2005): 83; See also, Peter Cormack, “A Truly British Movement,” *Apollo* (April 2005): 49–53. A more generous review, suggested that the broad scope served to question “what other countries or continents, if any, could have adopted similar ideologies;” Jason T. Busch, “Review: *International Arts and Crafts*,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture* 4(3)(2005), accessed February 29, 2012, <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/index.php/autumn05/202-international-arts-and-crafts>.

⁵ *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts and Crafts* was exhibited in the Newark Museum September 15, 2010 to January 2, 2011; at the Dallas Museum of Art February 13 to May 8, 2011; and at the San Diego Museum June 18 to September 11, 2011.

⁶ Mark Alan Hewitt reserves the majority of his criticism for the catalogue, where he argues that the content suffered from overreaching claims; Mark Alan Hewitt, “Gustav Stickley and the American Arts and Crafts Movement,” *West 86th*, October 18, 2011, accessed February 14, 2012, <http://www.west86th.bgc.bard.edu/exhibition-reviews/gustav-stickley.html>.

⁷ The movement was also associated with the Aesthetic Movement. The name was coined at the October 4 1889 exhibition at the New Gallery in London, which displayed work by newly formed Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Walter Crane asserted that their mission statement was “to turn our artists into craftsmen and craftsmen into artists;” as cited in Pamela Todd, *The Arts & Crafts Companion* (New York: Bullfinch Press, 2004), 11.

⁸ Theorists such as William Morris, John Ruskin, C. R. Ashbee, W. R. Lethaby, and Walter Crane.

⁹ Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan offer an excellent summary of the movement, explaining that there were four main principles: design unity; joy in labor; individualism; and regionalism. Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991): 7.

¹⁰ Victoria & Albert Museum, *International Arts and Crafts*, accessed February 20, 2012, http://www.vam.ac.uk/vastatic/microsites/1312_artsandcrafts/the_exhibition/the_arts_and_crafts_movement/.

¹¹ Allison Arieff explains that while the first director, Henry Cole, described the museum as an “impressive schoolroom for everyone,” it also disseminated the ideology of a particular group of industrialists; Allison Arieff, “Reading the Victoria and Albert Museum,” *Victorian Poetry* 33(3/4)(1995): 403.

¹² Charlotte Gere, *Artistic Circles: Design & Decoration in the Aesthetic Movement*, London: V&A Publishing, 2010: 60.

¹³ Jo Hormuth is an artist and professor at the Art Institute of Chicago.

¹⁴ Lears elaborates, “By stressing the ennobling qualities of even the dullest work, they melded pre-industrial craftsmanship with the assembly line, collapsed the critique into the thing criticized, and legitimized modern factory labor as a form of character building. By ignoring external conditions of labor to concentrate on the formation of proper attitudes, they transferred responsibility for shoddy workmanship from the proprietors and managers to the worker himself. Rather than criticize industrial capitalism, they attacked individual performance within capitalism;” Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 84.

¹⁵ Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 84.

¹⁶ David Cathers, “The East Coast: ‘Enterprise upon a Higher Plane,’” in *International Arts and Crafts*, ed. Karen Livingstone and Linda Parry (London: V&A Publications, 2005), 156. Donald Davidoff explains, “The supporters of the Arts and Crafts Movement passionately believed that design affects society—that the character of the living and working environment molds the character of the individual. The proponents of the movement believed that by restoring honesty and integrity to the objects common to daily living, the quality of life could not help but be improved;” Donald A Davidoff, “Maturity of Design and Commercial Success: A Critical Reassessment of the Work of L. and J.G Stickley and Peter Hansen,” in *The Substance of Style: Perspectives on the American Arts and Crafts Movement*, ed. Bert Denker (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis du Pont Museum; Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1996), 164.

¹⁷ Cathers, “East Coast,” 157. Davidoff suggests, “Gustav, in his promotion of a new design aesthetic, certainly helped shape America’s

taste. He reveled in his role as the apostle of the movement, selling not only furniture but a philosophy of living as well. His interpretation of the arts and crafts credo of surrounding oneself with 'the art that is life' reverberated in everything he published or produced." Davidoff, "Maturity of Design and Commercial Success," 170.

¹⁸ Cathers, "East Coast," 155.

¹⁹ O'Neill notes that Bing was inspired to use these strategies in a retail setting by a collective of Belgian artists in The Maison d'Art in Brussels. "With decorative objects displayed in a domestic setting, it was 'a home where things could be purchased,' a salon as well as an exclusive boutique with admission by appointment only and for a fee. A visit to Brussels inspired the entrepreneur Siegfried Bring to establish similar salerooms in Paris. In doing so, Nancy Troy argues, Bing acknowledged the decorative object as a commodity while enacting a critique of consumer culture." O'Neill, "Rhetorics of Display," 210. She elaborates that Bing popularized exhibits with decorative objects arranged in a domestic interior, including mirrors and intimate objects to encourage the visitor to imagine themselves in the space; she explains, "the more exhibitions attempted to become 'real,' the more that the 'real' became indistinguishable from the exhibition;" O'Neill, "Rhetorics of Display," 213.

²⁰ "In this respect, the [Turin] display resembled those staged annually from 1888 to 1890, and then triennially, by the Society and the New Gallery in London... The Society's displays recalled those of the newly renamed Victoria and Albert Museum, formerly known as the South Kensington Museum. In the Prince Consort Gallery from 1882, for example, vitrines encased a plethora of forms ordered and classified according to material." O'Neill, "Rhetorics of Display," 215.

²¹ Gustav Stickley, "Thoughts Occasioned by an Anniversary: A Plea for a Democratic Art," *Craftsman Journal* 7 (1) (1904): 43.

²² Morna O'Neill explains: "Here [in Turin] the forms of the displays themselves belied the philosophical and political differences between the Arts and Crafts movement, as presented by the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in the English Design section, and Art Nouveau, in particular Siegfried Bing's contribution to the French section at the exhibition;" Morna O'Neill, "Rhetorics of Display: Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau at the Turin Exhibition of 1902," *The Journal of Design History* 20 (3)(2007): 205. This anxiety is also discussed in K. Olsen Theiding, "Anxieties of Influence: British responses to Art Nouveau, 1900–1904," *Journal of Design History* 19 (2006): 215–231.

²³ O'Neill, "Rhetorics of Display," 205.

²⁴ Sally-Anne Huxtable, "Re-reading the Green Dining Room," in *Rethinking the Interior, c. 1867–1896: Aestheticism and Arts and Crafts*, ed. Jason Edwards and Imogen Hart (Surrey, England; Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2010): 25.

²⁵ T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

²⁶ Vogel asserts, “Almost nothing displayed in museums was made to be seen in them. Museums provide an experience of most of the world’s art and artifacts that does not bear even the remotest resemblance to what their makers intended.” Susan Vogel, “Always true to the object, in our fashion,” in *Exhibiting Cultures the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 191.

²⁷ Michael Baxandall, “Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects,” in *Exhibiting Cultures: the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 34.

²⁸ Baxandall, “Exhibiting Intention,” 38.

²⁹ Baxandall, “Exhibiting Intention,” 39.

³⁰ Vogel, “True to the Object,” 191.

³¹ Durrans muses, “What is curious, however, is that while ‘ethnic’ art objects have been cut loose from their social moorings by the western art world, to be displayed in flattering solitude, most ethnographic museums have been obsessed with doing just the opposite. For them, a prerequisite for understanding the art object is an appreciation of its original meaning(s) for those who made and used it. Some museums of Western art have also been moving in this direction; no longer content simply to hang a painting in a gallery, they sometimes provide a package of background information that allows it to be assessed in something approaching its original context.” Brian Durrans, “The Future of the Other: Changing Cultures on Display in Ethnographic Museums,” in *The Museum Time Machine*, ed. Robert Lumley (London; New York: Comedia, Routledge, 1988), 157.

³² Durrans explains, “First, appreciating the social and cultural setting of an object does not exhaust and is not a substitute for an appreciation of the object itself. The object might be experienced through a combination of sense-impressions, each responding to a different quality or configuration of qualities. These qualities may depend not simply on the material or form of the object, or on how it is confronted, but on a complex interplay between these variables... Since sensory aptitudes are culturally varied, it might in any circumstance be impossible to reproduce this aesthetic experience even if all the circumstances were faithfully repeated.” Durrans, “Future of the Other,” 158.

³³ Durrans elaborates that reconstructions conceal the new context of the museum display, but notes that this can simultaneously bring

attention to its artifice. He suggests, "Museums tend to be informative about the 'naturalized,' original context of the object, yet silent about its alienation. To redress the balance they might draw visitors' attention to the circumstances in which objects were not only made in their original setting but also acquired by the museum in which they are now displayed. How have they been exhibited in the past, and why are they now being shown differently?" Durrans, "Future of the Other," 158.

³⁴ Durrans, "Future of the Other," 162.

³⁵ Donald Preziosi, "Seeing Through Art History," in *Knowledges: Historical and Critical Studies in Disciplinarity*, ed. Ellen Messer-Davidow, David Shumway, and David Sylvan (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993): 226.

³⁶ Baxandall explains, "First, the objects least likely to cause misunderstanding between viewer and maker are objects intended for exhibition. I mean that objects designed for their visual interest are those that properly can be displayed and examined for their visual interest. A viewer looking at an artifact that is not designed for looking at but that is exhibited as culturally interesting, culturally telling, or indicative of a cultural or technical level is hard put not to be a voyeur, intrusive and often embarrassed. But I have more in mind the point that an object that has been made with a view to be examined for its visual interest—to signify, if you will, visually—is less likely to be misread by the viewer disposed to look at things for their visual interest. In other words, there seems to me to be an issue of exhibitability. The exhibitable object is one made *for* visual exhibition or display. The viewer may indeed bring inappropriate concepts and standards to his examination of it (and this is something the exhibitor can do something about), but the visual curiosity itself will not be improper;" Baxandall, "Exhibiting Intention," 39.

³⁷ The italics are his emphasis, not mine; Baxandall, "Exhibiting Intention," 39.

³⁸ Much of this interpretation relies on the assumption that objects are mute and that it is the presented context that has authority. Spencer and Sims state that "Authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects have no authority; people do. It is people on the exhibition team who must make a judgment about how to tell about the past. Authenticity—authority—enforces the social contract between audience and the museum, a socially agreed-upon reality that exists only as long as confidence in the voice of the exhibition holds;" R. Spencer Crew and James E. Sims, "Locating Authenticity, Fragments of a Dialogue" In *Exhibiting Cultures the Poetics and Politics of*

Museum Display, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 163.

³⁹ Durrans, "Future of the Other," 157.

⁴⁰ The website explains that the log house has been designated a National Historic Landmark and is also part of an "Official Project of Save America's Treasures," which is part of a partnership between the Whitehouse Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation; <http://www.stickleymuseum.org/aboutcf.php>.

⁴¹ A similar photograph was initially used in an article, *The Furniture of Gustav Stickley* in *Magazine Antiques* where the caption in the article notes that "All the furniture illustrated is oak and original to the house," which does not make a specific claim of authenticity, but it doesn't dispel the notion either. The caption does note that the table is in the Metropolitan Museum, which suggests that the room itself is not restored to the exact appearance that it would have had. The caption reads: "Corner of living room in Stickley's house, Craftsman Farms. All the furniture illustrated is oak and original to the house. The top of the hexagonal table is covered with leather tacked on with copper-headed studs. The table is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art;" Carol Lorraine Bohdan and Todd Mitchell Volpe, "The furniture of Gustav Stickley," in *Magazine Antiques American Furniture* (May 1977): 984–989. However, this room must have been considered authentic, given that it was used to illustrate *Arts and Crafts In Britain and America* by Isabelle Anscombe and Charlotte Gere with the caption: "Gustav Stickley- Interior with Craftsman Workshops furniture, c. 1910." That Stickley is named, rather than a curator, suggests that he is responsible for the current interior decoration. The wording suggests that the photograph depicts the room in 1910, even though it is clearly a full-color photograph—taken in 1977—falsely suggesting that the room has sat in a state of timelessness since 1910 and that the furnishings and decorations have not changed since Stickley's original design, which is not the case; Anscombe, Isabelle and Charlotte Gere, *Arts and Crafts In Britain and America* (London: Academy Editions, 1978): 146.

⁴² Kevin Tucker, "Art From Industry: The Evolution of Craftsman Furniture," in *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement*, ed. Kevin Tucker (Dallas; New Haven; London: Dallas Museum of Art; Yale University Press): 44.

⁴³ John Marciari, "Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement—Exhibition Tour" (July 2011), video clip, accessed February 17, 2012, YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LTvnwisD2Q&feature=player_embedded.

⁴⁴ Irene Sargent, "A Recent Arts and Crafts Exhibition," *The Craftsman* 7 (2) (May 1903): 69.

⁴⁵ Ann Jarmusch, "Gustav Stickley: Furnishing a Lifestyle," *Union-Tribune San Diego*, June 11, 2011, accessed February 20, 2012, <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2011/jun/11/gustav-stickley-furnishing-lifestyle/?page=2#article>.

⁴⁶ Marciari, "Exhibition Tour."

⁴⁷ Durrans, "The Future of the Other," 157.

⁴⁸ On the other hand, the catalogue does set up a dichotomy between British and American Arts and Crafts in terms of Modernity. In the catalogue, Cathers states, "For all their admiration of British, Native American and Japanese craftwork [...] and whatever yearnings they felt for a simpler, pre-industrial past, East Coast Arts and Crafts practitioners saw themselves as 'modern' men and women imbued with a strong sense of national identity," which subtly situates the American figures of the Arts and Crafts as "modern" because of their acceptance of an economic model that encouraged capitalism in a way that Morris' socialist model did not; Cathers, "East Coast," 151. Similarly Donald Davidoff argues, "The two primary reasons why the arts and crafts movement succeeded in America were the democratic nature of our society and the unwillingness of American manufacturers to bind themselves to the philosophical limitations set down by the proponents of the English movement;" Davidoff, "Maturity of design and commercial success," 164. However, Tom Crook has argued that the yearning for a pre-industrial past should actually be considered as an innovative and modern strategy employed by the Arts and Crafts movement; Crook, Tom, "Craft and the Dialogics of Modernity: The Arts and Crafts Movement in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England," in *The Journal of Modern Craft* 2 (1) (2009): 17–32.

⁴⁹ Tony Bennett argues that the elision of politicized contexts frequently takes place in museums and heritage sites: in a discussion about the Open Air Museum at Beamish, he explains, "Many of the artifacts displayed might well have been exhibited in such a way as to suggest their associations with popular political movements. However, the tendency is for them to be severed of such associations, and to serve, instead as vehicles for the nostalgic remembrance of sentimentalized pasts;" Bennett, Tony, "Museums and 'the people'" in *Exhibiting Cultures the Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 67.

⁵⁰ Baxandall, "Exhibiting Intention," 41.

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