

History of Design



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EDITORS
THE BARD GRADUATE CENTER

History of Design

DECORATIVE ARTS AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1400-2000

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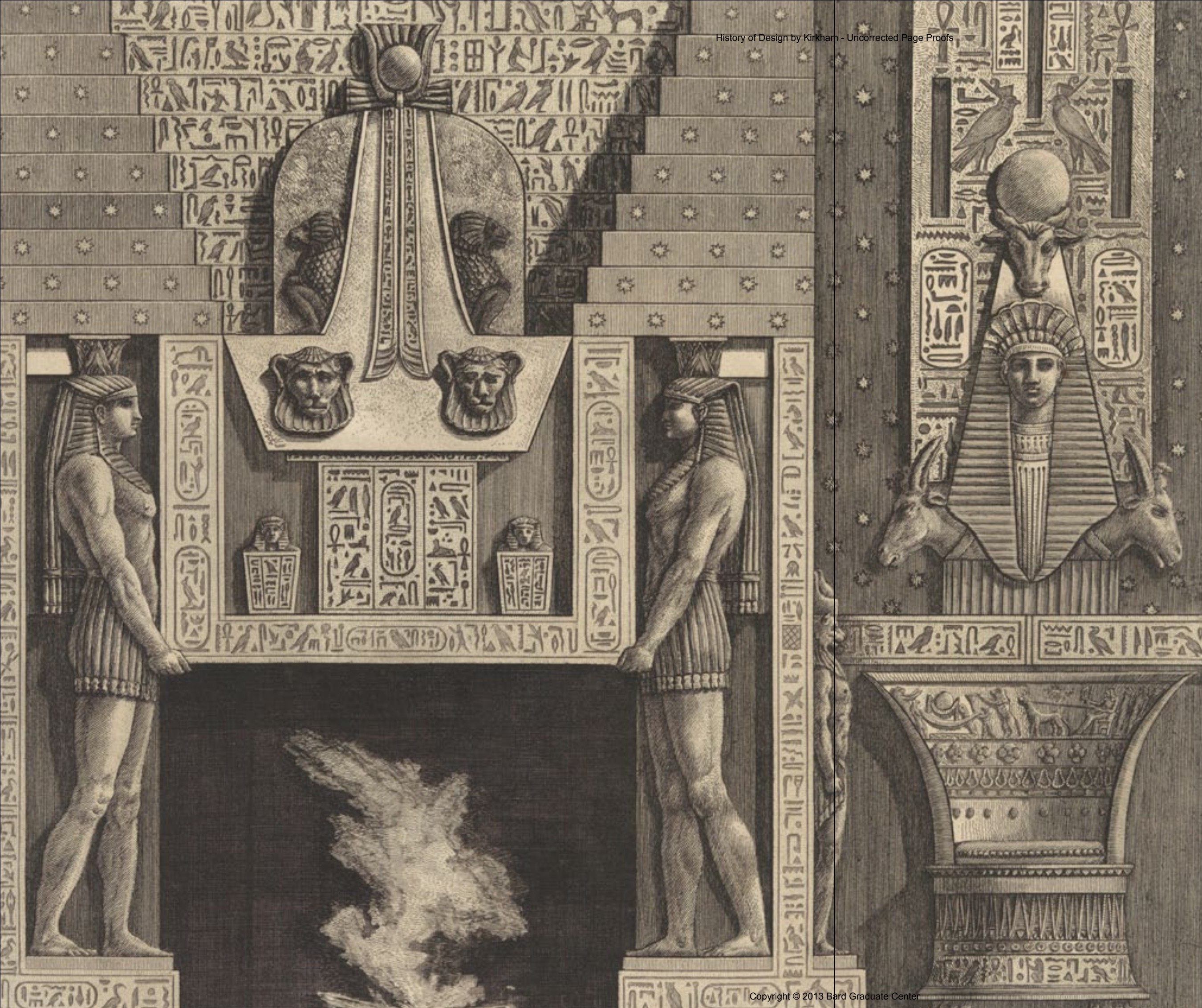
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DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Creating some form of textbook of decorative arts has been in the back of my mind since I founded the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts (BGC) in 1993. I realized that to expand the range of graduate and undergraduate courses addressing the decorative arts, we needed more pedagogical tools, and better ones. I remembered how central *Janson's History of Art* was to the survey courses I had taken while studying at Barnard College, and how, together, the book and the courses had provided me with a framework for further research. I envisaged a similar type of resource for our degree candidates at the BGC, and for students, teachers, and others outside the Center. There was simply nothing comparable at the time. This was largely because the examination of such things was seen as secondary to the exploration of the "fine arts" of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Indeed, to overturn this relegation of the decorative arts to a place of lesser importance was why I founded the BGC in the first place.

Publications have always been central to activities at the BGC (now the Bard Graduate Center: Decorative Arts, Design History, Material Culture). Over the past two decades, the Center has created pioneering exhibition catalogues; supported books by outside scholars; published the scholarly journal *Studies in Decorative Arts* (expanded in 2011 and relaunched as *West 86th*); and, most recently, inaugurated a monograph series entitled *Cultural Histories of the Material World*. The volume before you, which covers a period of six hundred years and was almost ten years in the making, is part of the BGC's continuing commitment to encouraging and facilitating studies of the decorative arts, design, and material culture.

In 2013, the BGC celebrates its twentieth anniversary as a Center for graduate studies, exhibitions, and publications. Looking back, I realize that our achievements have far out-reached even my most ambitious aims. Without the vision and leadership of Leon Botstein, President of Bard College, the BGC would never have taken shape. He was a constant advisor even when the Center was little more than an abstract idea, and I want to thank him for all his help and guidance over the last two decades. Dean Peter Miller, under whom the Center has grown to its recent status as a research institute with a broad disciplinary, methodological, and geo-cultural scope, also deserves my thanks, as does Nina Strizler-Levine, Gallery Director, who for almost twenty years has guided our ground-breaking exhibitions programs. I also owe tremendous thanks to my fellow editor and the director of this particular project, Professor Pat Kirkham, who took on an enormous project with energy and enthusiasm. Her broad knowledge and insights helped to shape and refine this book at every stage, from the commissioning of the chapters to their final iteration.

As Director of the BGC, I gratefully acknowledge The Tiffany & Co. Foundation for its leadership role in supporting this publication and The Sherrill Foundation and Fundación Cisneros/Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros which generously provided additional funds. Finally, as the BGC celebrates its twentieth anniversary, an occasion this publication helps to mark, I want to thank everyone who believed in the Center's mission, and supported its development, as well as all those who are contributing to its future growth.

Susan Weber
Iris Horowitz Professor, and
Founder and Director of the Bard Graduate Center

EDITORS' ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We were also blessed with designers who understood our many ambitions for this project: Rita Jules, who brought to the project much that she learned while gaining an MA at the BGC, and Miiko McGinty, whose previous commissions have included editions of *Janson's History of Art*. Their design skills and aesthetic sensibilities shine through the beautiful book they have produced.

We count ourselves fortunate in that specialists from many countries and areas of interest graciously agreed to write for this project, and we extend our deepest appreciation to them: John Robert Alderman, Silke Bettermann, Marcus B. Burke, Jeffrey Collins, Aimée E. Froom, Annette Hagedorn, David Jaffee, Rose Kerr, Patricia Lara-Betancourt, Christian A. Larsen, Dana Leibsohn, Sarah A. Lichtman, Andrew Morrall, George Michell, Barbara E. Mundy, Amy F. Ogata, Jorge F. Rivas Pérez, Maria Ruvoldt, Tomoko Sakomura, Enid Schildkrout, Lee Talbot, Sarah Teasley, Carol Thompson, Tom Tredway, Norman Vorano, and Catherine L. Whalen.

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Last but not least, we thank all the private individuals as well as the many museums, libraries, picture agencies, and other institutions that have permitted us to publish images of items in their care. We are especially grateful to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Brooklyn Museum in New York, and the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

This book began with the idea of producing a series of introductory texts for students entering the Bard Graduate Center. We were expanding and reshaping our year-long “Survey of the Decorative Arts, Design and Material Culture: The Ancient World to the Present” (required of all entering MA students) in order to reflect the greater plurality of approaches that inform the BGC’s work and reinforce its ambition to be the leading study center for the cultural history of the material world.

This project represents both a new direction for the BGC and a reaffirmation of the ideals that brought the institution into being. It was founded to address a gap in university curriculums in the United States which placed the decorative arts (sometimes referred to as the applied arts), if they considered them at all, within the contexts of art history and architectural history, while seeing them as secondary to the fine arts. The many rich and compelling histories offered by studies in decorative arts, design, and material culture stand at the heart of the BGC curriculum, and we hope that this publication will play its part in raising the profile of such studies.

The lack of a broadly based “textbook” or “survey book” on the model of those in other educational fields has often been commented upon, especially by students. Our intention is for this book to provide a platform on which to construct broad geo-cultural introductions to the study of decorative arts, design, and material culture at graduate and undergraduate levels, and to help familiarize students with a wide range of objects, contexts, materials, and techniques, as well as approaches and issues. We are not seeking to establish canons, but rather to give frameworks, encourage discussion, and point to fertile areas for further study and research. The book’s title invokes “History,” but there are many histories, and we envision the ones told herein taking their place alongside existing and future ones.

The diverse voices that shine through the chapters that follow indicate something of the variety of approaches between and within particular academic disciplines. Various approaches to the study of objects are evident. Some, for example, are associated with the academic disciplines of Art History and Architectural History, others with Anthropology, but all are informed by the various shifts within the discipline of History to include wider ranges of people, events, movements, and ideas than had previously been considered worthy of serious examination. Sometimes referred to as “history from

below,” this perspective challenged traditional hierarchies. In some circles, even the term “decorative arts” came under attack, in part because some curators and scholars focused so greatly upon elite objects that everything else seemed marginalized. As they emerged in the 1970s, two new disciplines—Design History and Material Culture Studies—both of which addressed the intersections between objects and culture and embraced sociological, ethnographic, and anthropological approaches to objects, neatly sidestepped accusations of elitism and marginalization while broadening the questions asked of objects, their appearance, production, and consumption. They also accommodated a wider range of objects—such as clothing, graphics, interiors, gardens, and theater and film design—not traditionally considered within the purview of the decorative arts. In the years since we began the project, the fields of study have further expanded, with a renewed interest in inter- and cross-disciplinarity. Post-disciplinary approaches to scholarship have also grown significantly. Art History and Architectural History have become more welcoming of Design History, Material Culture Studies, and “object studies” approaches. Many historians, philosophers, sociologists, literary scholars, and others now take greater notice of materiality, and this book, by its scope at least, contributes to current concerns for international, transnational, and global histories.

One of our challenges was to identify expert and adventurous scholars willing to write across broad swathes of time and place, including some relatively new areas of study. In some of the latter, such as the Americas, we felt that the material was best served by scholars working in teams. From the outset, we encouraged authors to address continuities as well as changes, in part to transcend Modernist narratives of innovation but also to stress the deep immersion of objects and ideas in broader cultural, ideological, socio-economic, and political contexts. Our contributors have been attentive to the ways design and the decorative arts enriched daily life, as well as to special ceremonies and rituals. Readers are encouraged to think about how prevailing ideas, tastes, technologies, materials, and traditions shaped the ways things looked and how they were fabricated, thought about, and used. The chapters that follow raise questions about hierarchies of value, relationships between “high” and “low” culture, the intersection of objects with notions of race, class,

status, and gender, as well as personal, regional, and national identities. When read together, the chapters presented here encourage attention to wide-ranging issues of manufacture, patronage, consumption, reception, cross-cultural appropriation, and cross fertilization.

Collaboration has been central to this project; indeed, all scholarship, especially surveys, builds upon what has gone before. We and all of our contributors remain deeply grateful to the teachers, peers, and students, both past and present, on whose research and ideas we have drawn and to whom we owe so much. We thank all the generations of scholars whose pioneering efforts in little-trodden, nontraditional, and sometimes unorthodox fields have made a project such as this not just thinkable but doable. It is only because of those who came before that we can offer this contribution to a burgeoning field of historical inquiry. If this project has taught us one thing, it is that we are all students with a great deal more to learn. We hope this book takes you, and us, some distance toward where we want to go.

Pat Kirkham, BGC Professor, Project Director, and Editor
Susan Weber, BGC Founder and Director, Professor,
and Editor

EDITORS' NOTE TO THE READER

As the project took shape, it became clear that it would be beyond the scope of a single volume to explore every period, from antiquity to the present, while still preserving the desired level of detail and interpretive complexity. We therefore decided to begin our coverage in 1400. The six centuries this book addresses are divided into four chronological sections—1400–1600, 1600–1750, 1750–1900, and 1900–2000—and six geo-cultural areas, namely East Asia, India, the Islamic World (including North Africa), Africa (primarily sub-Saharan Africa), Europe, and the Americas. In future editions, we plan to include Australia/Oceania.

To help orient readers and guide those who wish to read continuously through chapters related to a particular area, pages are color-coded with a tab in the margin: East Asia, for

example, is always **ORANGE**, Africa always **TURQUOISE BLUE**. This aids navigation within and across the four sections, as does the repetition of chapter number, title, and date at the foot of each page. The area chapters build on each other from section to section, with numerous cross-currents within and across the sections. Rather than burden the printed text with a plethora of cross-references, the index serves as a means of identifying thematic and historical connections. Wherever possible, we have included references to images in other chapters which help to reinforce these cross-cultural connections. The figure numbers begin with the chapter number; “fig. 20.3,” for example, is the third illustration in chapter 20 (India 1900–2000).

Primarily for reasons of accessibility and ease of reading, we also decided not to encumber the texts with extensive notes or citations of the specific sources used in researching the texts. Only sources for direct quotations are given in endnotes, which start on page 000. Instead, further reading lists are provided for those seeking more information; many of these entries were consulted by the authors. Decorative arts terms and techniques are often explained in a general way when they are first mentioned, but readers in search of more detailed information will discover excellent resources online, such as the databases on the Getty Research Institute website, and again, our index will serve as a guide.

In the captions, the reader will find enough information to enhance their understanding of the object, particularly within the framework of this book. In general, we identify the designer(s) or maker(s) responsible for originating the object, give the title or a description of the piece illustrated, and state where and when it was made. We are sometimes able to identify others who contributed to the piece, such as craftspeople or manufacturers, and in a few places we have included inscriptions or other relevant information. Dimensions are arranged with height preceding width preceding depth. Occasionally a single dimension is used, with an abbreviation: L. (length), Diam. (diameter), and H. (height). The repository that owns an object is identified in the caption, but all photographic credits are listed separately at the end of the book.

Maps for each geographical area, starting on page 000, are intended to complement the text rather than provide the level of information available in a comprehensive historical atlas.