

# The nineteenth-century industrial worker as exhibition visitor

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# The Nineteenth-Century Industrial Worker as Exhibition Visitor: Ways of Engaging with Making

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Claire Jones

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## Abstract

This essay focuses on the skilled industrial worker as an exhibition visitor in the second half of the nineteenth century. It analyzes two exhibitionary spaces that have been central to the display and categorization of made things: the museum and the international exhibition. The first part of the essay considers how industrial workers were represented as museum visitors, through close analysis of a painting and a statue. The second part draws on the published reports of industrial workers visiting the international exhibitions of 1862 (London) and 1867 (Paris), to further understand how they engaged with the objects on display. Together, these analyses aim to restore visibility and agency to the industrial worker as a central yet largely overlooked agent in the histories of art, craft and design. The essay argues that these exhibitionary spaces were in fact engaged with by highly knowledgeable visitors. The labor of industrial workers was skilled, often handmade, and recognized and critiqued by communities of makers. Focusing attention on these specialists offers insights into

labor histories, the continued significance of craft in industrial contexts, and the importance of exhibitions as sites of discourse and the construction of professional identity.

**Keywords:** industrial worker, Great Exhibition, international exhibitions, labor, museum, professional identity

## Introduction

This essay focuses on the skilled industrial worker as an exhibition visitor in the second half of the nineteenth century in Britain and France.<sup>1</sup> It analyzes two exhibitionary spaces that have been central to the display and categorization of made things: the museum and the international exhibition. There are clear points of convergence between these spaces, not least the fact that similar objects are at the heart of their practice, yet the scholarship tends to keep them apart within museum studies and exhibition histories, respectively. Public museums are viewed as sites of knowledge. They emerged in the nineteenth century in part to educate the working classes and improve the manufacture and the consumption of goods in Britain.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, international exhibitions are associated with commerce and industry. They proliferated worldwide after the seminal Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations of 1851 in London, known as the Great Exhibition, which promoted industry and the benefits of free trade, displayed over 100,000 objects, and drew over 6 million visitors from around the globe.<sup>3</sup> We might therefore assume that museums and international exhibitions engaged differently with the production and consumption of objects, but in reality, these boundaries were less clearly defined. In

the case of the South Kensington Museum, for example, where collections were formed from the proceeds of the Great Exhibition and directly acquired many objects from it, the Great Exhibition is still positioned as an exceptional event in the museum's pre-history, rather than as a direct and continuous presence in its collections, administration and outlook.<sup>4</sup>

Before the proliferation of exhibitions and museums that followed the Great Exhibition of 1851, visits to Britain's industrial cities, and to manufacturers' premises, were a key means of encountering and understanding new industrial processes and products. For example, in 1843, the Home Secretary arranged a day trip to Birmingham for the young Prince Albert, who had a long-standing interest in technology, art and manufacture, and would later be a key organiser and promoter of the Great Exhibition.<sup>5</sup> Isobel Armstrong's research offers an insightful analysis of this factory tourism, as "one of the earliest journalistic attempts at an ethnography of work."<sup>6</sup> Focusing on accounts of visits to glass factories, Armstrong assumes the visitor is a non-specialist—"an outsider." My research focuses on a more informed viewer.

In contrast to the factory visit, the maker is usually absent in the more commercial environment of the shop and public exhibition. Yet there were exceptions to this rule. Not only did the factory tours end with a visit to the showroom, but as the following examples reveal, shops displayed laboring workers, a strategy more typical of exhibitions. Joseph H. Larned has studied the case of an anonymous employee from the Wright Cut Glass Company, who worked for four days in a shop window in Indiana in 1910.<sup>7</sup> This drew the crowds, assuaged consumer anxieties around fake cut glass, and suggested that the rest of the shop's wares were of

equal quality and craftsmanship. Saloni Mathur's research recovers the experiences of Indian men, women and children as living displays at Liberty's Department Store in the Winter of 1885, and at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London, in 1886; challenging "the assumption that natives lack cosmopolitan histories or that indigenous mobilities are exclusively local."<sup>8</sup> Liberty's, renowned for its association with the Arts and Crafts, luxury and the handmade, brought Indian artists, carvers, weavers, embroiderers and performers to an "Indian village" in Battersea, with disastrous human and commercial consequences.<sup>9</sup> At the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, a contemporary Indian visitor observed that most viewers "do not see their [the Indian workers'] work, but only look at them and their movements"; whereas others, he observed with concern, "seem to look upon them as animals."<sup>10</sup> This echoes Armstrong's findings from the visits to glass factories that workers were "presented in semi-human terms or dematerialised."<sup>11</sup> These examples are stark reminders that exhibitions of making can involve real participants. And that the viewer response is not necessarily focused on the makers' skill and knowledge, but on the spectacle of their being perceived as different and potentially inferior, particularly in such imperial and capitalist contexts.

When nineteenth-century authors refer to museum and exhibition visitors, they tend to assume a non-specialist working class or middle class audience in need of being educated. Helen Rees Leahy's study of the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition (1857) draws on the writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Charles Dickens to describe the overwhelming reaction by visitors to the array of goods on display.<sup>12</sup> Yet textile weavers, hat makers, frame carvers and gilders

who visited the exhibition would have examined the paintings with a knowledgeable and critical eye. I argue that these exhibitionary spaces were also occupied by highly knowledgeable visitors—the skilled industrial workers—who have been side-lined in the histories of craft, fine art and the decorative arts because of their association with industrialization and the factory system.

Thinking about industrial makers in the exhibition spaces familiar to art and design historians encourages their reintegration into these very narratives and discourses. As Glenn Adamson has convincingly argued, craft did not disappear with industrialization; the industrial worker was often skilled, working by hand or at least in close proximity to the materials they were shaping.<sup>13</sup> This essay seeks to contribute to labor history, exhibition history and craft history by focusing on the continued significance of skilled, often handmade labor in industrial contexts and the importance of exhibitions as sites of discourse and the construction of professional identity. The first part considers how industrial workers were represented as museum visitors through close analysis of a painting and a statue. The second part draws on the published reports of industrial workers visiting the international exhibitions of 1862 (London) and 1867 (Paris) to further understand how these visitors engaged with the objects on display. The aim of this essay is therefore two-fold: to encourage researchers to work across seemingly distinct display spaces, and to restore visibility and agency to the industrial worker as a knowledgeable and specialized maker. Recognizing the movement of the industrial worker from the factory into the museum and international exhibition forces us to reconsider the industrial worker as a

mobile, active participant in the display and reception of their craft.

## The Museum Visit

This section focuses on representations, in a painting and a newspaper article, of industrial workers as viewers (of statues of James Watt). My readings are somewhat speculative, but given that these workers are often overlooked in the scholarship, or not yet fully excavated (or present) in archives and contemporary sources, this approach nevertheless offers a valid methodology for trying to identify and reflect on their presence in these exhibitionary spaces. As Lamerd asks, in his aforementioned study of a worker in a shop window, “How might it have felt to have your work on display? Not only the objects you crafted, but your actual, physical labor?”<sup>14</sup> While we cannot ever know for sure, this model of speculative characterization of the industrial worker can offer a way of recovering these makers and their experiences.

Our first case study is a painting, William Stewart’s *The Interior of the First Hunterian Museum with the Statue of James Watt* (before 1870) (Figure 1). The setting is the Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery, which opened in Glasgow in 1807. The building’s classical style can be seen in the fluted columns, and its function as an art gallery is hinted at by the two gilt picture frames just visible to the right. The Hunterian, a university museum, has a direct connection to James Watt. As an instrument maker for the university, it was here, while repairing Newcomen’s model steam engine (seen in the adjacent display case), that the young Watt considered improvements to steam engine technology, and ultimately created the separate condenser, which drove Britain’s

industrial revolution. The statue, by Francis Legatt Chantrey, was commissioned by the museum after Watt’s death in 1819 and it entered the galleries in 1830.

The visitors seem to be making the connection between engine and statue. One has just read the inscription on the sculpture’s plinth, and is grasping his friend’s arm as if to say “it’s him, it’s Watt!.” The painting positions the two visitors as the direct heirs of Watt’s labors and also recognizes Newcomen’s contribution to Watt’s achievements. These are individual as well as professional and historical narratives of industrial progress. Workers such as these, the painting implies, are concerned with self-improvement, accessing the new public museums springing up throughout Britain’s expanding cities. Their clothing—greyed jackets and trousers, and peaked hats—might suggest components in the industrial machine, but they are far from passive observers; they inhabit the space, sharing their knowledge, finding their own connections with the exhibits, and with other members of their profession.

Watt, unsurprisingly, was the subject of many statues in the nineteenth century. One, by Alexander Munro, was erected in the center of Birmingham in 1868, at around the time the painting was made (Figure 2). Like the Stewart painting discussed above, the statue embodies a specific connection between Watt and a city. At the statue’s unveiling, the *Illustrated London News* noted that from the time Watt had settled in Birmingham in 1775, the city’s population had risen from 50,000 to 350,000, assisted in their work by 700 steam engines.<sup>15</sup> By 1791 it was hailed as “the first manufacturing town in the world.”<sup>16</sup> The same article notes that the Birmingham public were familiar with the earliest statue of Watt by Chantrey, including





**Fig 1** William Stewart, *The Interior of the First Hunterian Museum with the Statue of James Watt*, before 1870. Oil on canvas, 54 × 46 cm. Photo credit: @ The Hunterian, University of Glasgow, Acc. No. GLAHA: 44095.

our example at the Hunterian. It also provides a rare insight into how local workers might have viewed, or were meant to view, the statue, on their route to and from work:

Then and there may be seen hundreds of men looking up at this statue with silent awe and admiration, their feelings best expressed by their rapt gaze and their whispering remarks to each other as they

learn and discuss what James Watt did to lighten human labour and to advance the manufacturers of the country. Who, then, may calculate the moral and intellectual influences of such a statue?<sup>17</sup>

This image of responsible urban workers is reminiscent of those at the Hunterian. Both these scenarios, whether inside or outside the museum, embody the so-called “civilising”



**Fig 2** “Statue of James Watt, by A. Munro, at Birmingham” from “The Birmingham Statue of James Watt,” *Illustrated London News* (November 7, 1868), 440. © Illustrated London News/Mary Evans Picture Library.

effect of the public museum, in which approved behavior was to be “quiet, careful and most orderly.”<sup>18</sup> The engagement with the statue via whispered conversation and quiet reverence are representative of the model worker and citizen.

But how exactly *did* the skilled worker engage with these works, apart from being quietly reverential? What are the specific ways in which they might have approached, understood and debated the very objects they themselves were involved in making? The scholarship on the nineteenth-century museum as an educational space for the working classes tends to offer somewhat generalized readings of “visitors” within these new public spaces. There has been little consideration of the skilled publics, and their knowledgeable and considered engagement with the objects on display. Yet as Ben Russell explains in his study of Watt, industrialization depended upon a range of handicraft practices and the creation of a knowledge economy.<sup>19</sup> He examines not so much theoretical science, but how science operated in practice, on the factory floor. Tacit knowledge was a key part of industrial production.<sup>20</sup> The skilled worker would have brought this knowledge, and their familiarity with the cult of Watt’s personality, to their encounters with these objects. Such resonances would have been particularly acute in centers of industry such as Glasgow and Birmingham, where the new public museums were springing up.

Let us pause on the steam engine. As the 1868 reviewer noted, the engine in Munro’s statue is rendered with every attention to detail:

The value of the work is increased by the careful and painstaking manner in which the various details of the accessories are carried out. The cylinder is not a conventional but a real cylinder; it is carefully worked down to every bolt and moulding, from a model made from a drawing by James Watt itself. Its metallic character and finish are clearly indicated.<sup>21</sup>



Munro was associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, an artistic movement championed by John Ruskin for its concern with truth to nature. This could account for the detailed realism in the statue; if not truth to nature, then truth to machine. A further incentive might have been the fact that the statue was partly funded by Birmingham workmen as well as industrialists.<sup>22</sup> Munro must have been conscious that it would be scrutinised closely by an audience of workers and owners knowledgeable about steam engines.

The engine in Stewart's painting is enclosed in a vitrine, where it serves a variety of functions. It is a relic, a monument to Britain's industrial supremacy, and an artefact of engineering. The engine's display also questions the perceived educational role of the museum. What can be gained by looking at the outside of a static engine? Were visitors able to examine it in action, or to take it apart to analyse its constituent parts? As we have seen, Watt himself had been given privileged access as a museum employee. The vitrine was central to Victorian exhibition culture. As seen here at the Great Exhibition (Figure 3), the vitrine enabled portable and precious objects to be displayed in public. This example is lantern-shaped, to capture as much light as possible in order to showcase the metal objects within. Yet the vitrine also reduces the visitor's experience to the purely visual. Here, a man peers intently through the glass; two women pause, studying their guidebook for information. This reflects a historic shift from the multisensory to the visual; part of a broader imperialist project built on a hierarchy of the senses, as thoughtfully analysed by Constance Classen and David Howes.<sup>23</sup> In terms of our skilled worker, the design historian Rafael Cardoso Denis

introduces a further factor to this increasingly visual experience; "with the advance of mechanisation, the value of labour would cease to depend on manual dexterity or mechanical strength and become reduced to their powers of vision—as mere overlookers of machines."<sup>24</sup>

The increasingly visual engagement with objects in museums might therefore also mirror the alienation and deskilling of some forms of labor in the industrial workplace.<sup>25</sup> However, Denis's conclusion cannot be applied to all industries, processes or objects. We need to be cautious in inadvertently withholding agency and skill from these workers. In the museum, this risk is potentially exacerbated by the fact that objects can be separated and relocated, and that the maker and the making process can be uncoupled from the finished article. As Malcolm Baker has explained, this separation was explicitly enacted at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 1909, when it decided to move its technology collection across the road to the Science Museum, which in turn meant that the V&A emphasized national schools and style rather than technological and social processes of making. This shift in curatorial practice limited the available narratives, for curators and visitors alike.

Focusing on how the exhibition of objects forms distinct histories and practices of making opens up more diverse histories of objects and labor. These meanings and resonances will change dependent on the knowledge and understanding the visitor (and historian) brings with them. Arguably, as the skilled industrial worker was amalgamated into the generic category of museum 'visitor,' the museum risked losing the very visitors who could engage with their objects in the



**Fig 3** “Medieval Court” at The Great Exhibition 1851, by Louis Haghe. Lithograph, from *Dickinsons’ Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Dickinson Brothers, 1854). © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

most knowledgeable ways. How might we recover these historical experiences in the museum, and more widely in the circuits of production and exhibition? In the following section, we encounter skilled workers at the international exhibitions, and their published responses to the objects, and professions, on display.

### The Exhibition Visit

The Great Exhibition of 1851 initiated a series of subsequent iterations throughout the

world. Within these international exhibitions, selection and specialization was key. Exhibition committees determined object categories; the juries assessed the entries; the specialist and popular press mediated these works for their publics. Published and unpublished sources, from committee archives to illustrated catalogues, are central to the scholarship. This body of material tends to prioritize particular voices involved in design reform: industry, the state and the museum. But at the time, these exhibitions were seen as spaces for the education of the worker:

[exhibitions] tend [...] to improve the art workman; it gives opportunity for the display of his skill; it causes a school of art to grow up and extend itself; and if it err by excess, it at any rate creates the ability to do right.<sup>26</sup>

This essay considers workers beyond the “art workman” as carriers of knowledge, with the ability to educate others and develop their profession. Skilled workers examined and critiqued the exhibits. Some were even funded by the state, private organisations and local councils to report back on their visits. This section focuses on examples of these published findings from the international exhibitions of 1862 (London) and 1867 (Paris). These sources document not only what these groups of specialist workers saw but also the ways in which the visits and reports afforded them the opportunity to come together as a community, write the histories of their professions, and set out their aspirations and priorities for change.

These reports have been largely understudied by scholars. This might seem surprising, given that the Great Exhibition purported to bring everyone under one roof. But as Jeffrey A. Auerbach’s compelling study of the Great Exhibition reveals, “the arrangement of exhibits, admission prices, patterns of attendance, and latent fears of the working classes reflected and reinforced hierarchies and divisions within Victorian society.”<sup>27</sup> From the Central Working Classes Committee (CWCC), to contemporary poetry, Auerbach demonstrates the complex ways in which workers—and industrial labor—were perceived at the Exhibition, and the difficulties of negotiating capitalist exploitation in an exhibition that celebrated the “dignity of labor.” The same is perhaps true for later

scholars; I am acutely conscious of inadvertently downplaying the perniciousness of industry for the vast majority of workers, by focusing on a relatively broad category of “skilled industrial worker.”

One contemporary who closely observed the different visitors to the Great Exhibition was the publisher John Tallis, whose three-volume *History and Description of the Crystal Palace and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851* distinguished between ways of looking:

[visitors] appeared to set themselves more resolutely to study the particular construction and contrivances which had for them a practical interest. This was very noticeable with the artizan [sic], both English and foreign. [...] Education of eye and mind was going on at a thousand points at the same moment, directly and indirectly,—formally and informally—by example, suggestion, and illustration.<sup>28</sup>

Tallis’s close observation of the crowds reveals that different visitors carried their own interests and knowledge to the exhibition, and responded to the exhibits accordingly. While class was undoubtedly a factor here, his observations draw out specific professional experience and embodied knowledge. The process of seeing was a complex amalgamation of personal and external factors.

So how might we get closer to understanding how skilled industrial workers responded to an exhibition? Published reports by delegations of workers to the international exhibitions provide insight into how specialist workers engaged with works on display and reveal the centrality of the handmade and of communities of makers to

industry.<sup>29</sup> Just as workers, skills and materials were brought together by manufacturers in the creation of individual objects, so these exhibitions brought their makers together and fostered a sense of identity as a highly skilled workforce.

An example is the three-volume Reports of the Workers' Delegations to the Paris International Exhibition of 1867, which comprises 100 reports by 315 workers' delegations.<sup>30</sup> Each report follows the same format: it sets out the origin and history of each profession, presents a study of the objects exhibited, offers a comparison of arts and industries in France and abroad, and ends with a statement of the wishes and needs of the workers, and their social concerns. The reports are spaces in which workers write their own histories, identify significant figures in their profession (either positively or negatively), set out a case for state support for their efforts, and collectively discuss and document their lived experiences as makers. The number of reports and the names of the delegations attest to the division of labor in industry. Yet they also embody specialization, professional communities and collective knowledge and action. Scholars tend to focus on the jury and press reports, which prioritize the manufacturer and their broader specialism. In contrast, workers' reports document the professions that make up these broader industries. So instead of looking at specific manufacturers, Fourdinois in cabinet making for example, these reports would look at the professions: marquetry cutters (*découpeurs marqueteurs*) and mechanical cutters (*découper a la mécanique*).

Workers' rights are also a central feature of these reports, from discussions around wages, training and apprenticeships, to the right to unionize (citing examples where

manufacturers have formed associations) and the question of authorship. The objects exhibited were rarely designed and made by a single hand, although they were largely displayed under the name of a single manufacturer, who had access to a range of in-house and externally-sourced makers, materials, techniques and equipment, and drew on a different combination of these, dependent on the project at hand. As I have previously argued, the division of labor here is not wholly negative; it also equates with specialization and value added because of an individual's ability to execute a skill extremely well.<sup>31</sup> Yet the ways in which authorship was valued and recorded were contested. For example, the Jewellery delegation noted that at each exhibition, the owners received the rewards, and asked, "shouldn't the cooperators ('cooperateurs') also have their merit?"<sup>32</sup> The Bronze delegation to the London International Exhibition of 1862 took the opportunity to document the names of all the sculptors and ornamentists involved in Christofle's table center for the Hotel de Ville in Paris, and explicitly redressed the manufacturer's omission in naming the six metal chasers involved in the project.<sup>33</sup> These reports are distinct from object labels in the museum; they record what is otherwise unrecorded, but is known by those involved in their professions.

Accessing the objects on display was not, however, as straightforward as might be assumed in a "public" exhibition. For example, in 1867, the Jewellery delegation had to ask three times to see works they wished to examine in the French section, and had to refer to the Commission d'Encouragement to do so. A member of the Commission had to convince the manufacturers that they did not come to copy their



models, as they imagined. This was exacerbated where international competition was concerned. “Only one exhibitor, Mr Philips, from London (merchant), rewarded with the gold medal, formally refused to show us any jewels, despite the steps taken with him.”<sup>34</sup> Philips’ refusal might be explained as a protectionist stance against French competition, and is indicative of manufacturers’ desire to keep the workers hidden from view unless benefiting them directly, as when naming a particular goldsmith or sculptor involved in a specific object, raising the status of the object through its association with fine art, and expanding the range of medals and awards

related to the firm. For a limited number of industrial workers the international exhibitions provided the opportunity to leave the factory, enabling them to occupy the same space as the manufacturer and to question their visibility and status within industry.

These workers were also less invested in the canon of the decorative and industrial arts being created through public exhibitions in the nineteenth century. The delegation of bronze workers to the International Exhibition of 1862 in London took the opportunity to visit the South Kensington Museum to see a famous piece by the renowned French metal worker Pierre Gouthière (1732–1813). On close



**Fig 4** Part of the French Court, No. 2, by John Absolon, 1851. Watercolour drawing, 282 × 379 mm. Purchased with Art Fund support and assistance from the Friends of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



examination they concluded that a modern piece, by the French goldsmith Fanni re [Fr res], was far superior in its general effect and execution; the Gouthi re “has a lot of dryness which passes as fineness.”<sup>35</sup> This might seem a minor example, but it denotes an alternative connoisseurial eye, and counters dominant narratives prioritizing royal provenance and historic objects. Who better than a bronze chaser to assess the quality of a bronze? The workers approach objects in ways that I, as an art historian, simply cannot. These reports thus reveal specific histories, skills and discourses, which provide insight into how specialist workers engaged not only with objects, but with making. Of the carved furniture, the grand buffet by Fourdinois of Paris was singled out for particular praise for its composition and execution (Figure 4). As the artist and arts administrator Richard Redgrave argued in his report on design, French production was superior because it has “that art-knowledge, which, combined with handicraft, constitutes the true art-workman.”<sup>36</sup> While Redgrave’s analysis is more likely to have been interpreted in terms of the broader rhetoric around the union of art and industry, and of international competition, this article has sought to demonstrate how it could also be applied literally, to the analysis of individual workers within industry.

## Conclusion

Paying attention to skilled makers as knowledgeable and active participants in exhibitions, questions the supposed divisions between craft and industry, and between the museum and the international exhibition. This article has combined speculative readings of visual and textual representations of workers engaging with objects on display, with their own published critiques of the exhibits.

Ideally, a triangulation might be possible between these and the actual objects they made, so as to understand more fully the ways in which makers produced these objects, reflected on their profession, and were viewed by others. While such an approach is necessarily tentative, it might nevertheless encourage a deeper dive into the archives for worker records and testimonies, and enable us to edge closer towards understanding these exhibitionary spaces and their objects from the makers’ own perspectives. Focusing on skilled workers restores their agency as a community, and the importance of specialist know-how within a system predicated on the division of labour. It also has the potential to open up spaces of exhibition as areas of shared collective practice and knowledge exchange. This does not mean entirely sidestepping the Foucauldian analysis of the museum as a space of representation, “an institution that puts on display the ways that objects are conceptually understood” as Beth Lord explains.<sup>37</sup> But, by acknowledging that there are experts in their fields other than the curator or collector, experts with direct, tacit knowledge related to the objects on display, we can perhaps begin to look to other ways in which objects are conceptually, bodily and professionally understood. As makers, industrial workers are also perpetually present in exhibitionary spaces, even if their names and contributions are unrecorded. Calling attention to their skill and experience has the potential to challenge the authority of the museum, the art critic and manufacturer as the gatekeepers of knowledge. I end by asking how we might better acknowledge and learn from skilled industrial—and non-industrial—workers, both within and beyond the museum and exhibition. Do current exhibitionary practices allow

for this, or do we need to fundamentally rethink our approach to makers, objects and displays in order to engage with a wider, more inclusive understanding of makers and practices of making?

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes

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- 2 There is a vast bibliography on the nineteenth-century museum. See for example Giles Waterfield, *The People's Galleries: Art Museums and Exhibitions in Britain, 1800-1914* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2015).
- 3 There is a vast bibliography on the Great Exhibition. See for example Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). Geoffrey Cantor, *Religion and the Great Exhibition of 1851* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), is particularly perceptive in considering multiple (in his case religious) responses to an exhibition.
- 4 On the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) see for example Julius Bryant, *Creating the V&A: Victoria and Albert's Museum (1851-1861)* (London: Lund Humphries: In Association with V&A Publishing, 2019); John Physick, *The Victoria and Albert Museum: The History of its Building* (London: V&A, 1982).
- 5 Alistair Grant and Angus Patterson, *The Museum and the Factory: the V&A, Elkington and the Electrical Revolution* (London: Lund Humphries in association with V&A Publishing, 2018), 25–6.
- 6 Isobel Armstrong, "Factory Tourism: Morphology of the 'Visit to a Glass Factory,'" in *Victorian Glassworlds: Glass Culture and the Imagination 1830-1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 19. For Armstrong, this "industrial imaginary" not only opens up a space for contradictions and questions, but it "actively produce[s] these questions" (36).
- 7 Joseph H. Lamerd, "The Worker in the Window: Class, Cut Glass, and the Spectacle of Work, 1910," *The Journal of Modern Craft* 13, no. 2 (July 2020): 119–36.
- 8 Saloni Mathur, "Ethnological Exhibits: The Case of 1886," *Cultural Anthropology*, 15, no. 4 (November 2000): 517.
- 9 The recruiting agent did not provide the food, salary, housing and clothing specified in the contract; legal proceedings began and a relief fund to facilitate the return of the participants to India. The exhibition was also a commercial and publicity failure for Liberty's.
- 10 Mathur, "Ethnological Exhibits," 508; quoting *The Indian Mirror* (June 6, 1886).
- 11 Armstrong, "Factory Tourism," 32.
- 12 Helen Rees Leahy, "Walking for Pleasure? Bodies of Display at the Manchester Art-Treasures Exhibition in 1857," *Art History* 30, no. 4, (2007): 545–65.
- 13 Glenn Adamson, *The Invention of Craft* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2013).
- 14 Lamerd, "The Worker in the Window."
- 15 "The Birmingham Statue of James Watt," *Illustrated London News* (November 7, 1868): 440.
- 16 Arthur Young, *Annals of Agriculture and Other Useful Arts* (Bury St. Edmunds, 1791), 532; reproduced in *The Encyclopedia of the Industrial Revolution in World History*, ed. Kenneth E. Hendrickson (New York; London; Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014).
- 17 "The Birmingham Statue of James Watt," 440.
- 18 Report by the Museum of Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh, Parliamentary Papers 1837-38 (119), 22.

- 19 Ben Russell, *James Watt: Making the World Anew* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014).
- 20 On this topic, see Ezra Shales, *The Shape of Craft* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017).
- 21 "The Birmingham Statue of James Watt," 440. Ben Russell at the Science Museum, London, has confirmed that this is a largely accurate representation of sections of a Watt engine, down to the four-sided bolts, apart from the upper section of the pipe, where an extra flange has been added for classical symmetry. Email conversation with the author.
- 22 George T. Noszlopy, *Public Sculpture in Birmingham* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998), 32.
- 23 Constance Classen and David Howes, "The Museum as Sensescape: Western Sensibilities and Indigenous Artifacts," in *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums and Material Culture*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, and Ruth B. Phillips (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), 199–222.
- 24 Rafael Cardoso Denis, "An Industrial Vision: the Promotion of Technical Drawing in Mid-Victorian Britain," in *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. Louise Purbrick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 74.
- 25 The vitrine has received surprisingly little research. See for example, John C. Welchman, *Sculpture and the Vitrine* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).
- 26 *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851: Reports by the Juries on the Subjects in the Thirty Classes into Which the Exhibition Was Divided* (London: Printed for the Royal Commission by William Clowes & Sons, 1852), Class 26, decorative furniture etc., 545.
- 27 Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851*, 128.
- 28 John Tallis, *History and Description of the Crystal Palace: And the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851* (London: John Tallis and Co.), vol. 1, 102.
- 29 For a close analysis of reports by sculptor-ornamentists and sculptors to the international exhibitions of 1862 and 1867, see Claire Jones, *Sculptors and Design Reform in France, 1848 to 1895: Sculpture and the Decorative Arts* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).
- 30 Arnould Desvernay, ed., *Rapports des délégations ouvrières, contenant l'origine et l'histoire des diverses professions, l'appréciation des objets exposés, la comparaison des arts et des industries en France et à l'étranger...: ouvrage contenant 100 rapports rédigés par 315 délégués... / Exposition universelle de 1867 à Paris* (Paris: A. Morel [1868]), 3 vols. These were published by public subscription under the auspices of the Commission d'Encouragement pour les études des ouvriers. All delegates were appointed by universal suffrage, and adhered to the following principles: equality before the law, freedom of contracts, the right to discuss professional matters, and the desire to arrive peacefully and progressively at the realization of their wishes.
- 31 See Jones, *Sculptors and Design Reform in France*.
- 32 Desvernay, *Rapports des délégations ouvrières*, vol. 1, *Ordre des Rapports*, A-F, 18.
- 33 *Rapports des délégués des ouvriers parisiens à l'Exposition de Londres en 1862 publiés par la commission ouvrière* (Paris: Chabaud; Wanschooten and Grandpierre d'Argent, 1862–1864), 633.
- 34 Desvernay, *Rapports des délégations ouvrières*, vol. 1, 19.
- 35 *Rapports des délégués des ouvriers parisiens à l'Exposition de Londres en 1862*, 632. The goldsmiths Fannièrre Frères (1839–1900) was founded in 1839 by François-Auguste Fannièrre (1818–1900) and François-Joseph-Louis Fannièrre (1820–1897).
- 36 Richard Redgrave, "Class 30, Supplementary Report on Design," in *Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, 722. Redgrave was involved with the Government School of Design in the 1840s and 50s.
- 37 Beth Lord, "Foucault's Museum: Difference, Representation, and Genealogy," *Museum and Society* 4, no. 1 (2006): 5.