A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY BARRIE AND DEEDEE WIGMORE

‘GLOWING COLOUR’
THE ‘CHROMATIC TURN’
IN VICTORIAN ART, DESIGN AND FASHION

FRIDAY-SATURDAY 28-29 JUNE, 2019, SULTAN NAZRIN SHAH CENTRE, WORCESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD
The industrial supremacy of Victorian Britain is often perceived through the darkening filter of coal pollution. And yet, it led to innovations such as the invention of vivid aniline dyes. The ‘chromatic turn’ of the 1850s and 1860s mapped out new ways of thinking about colour in science, art, design and fashion. This ‘colour revolution’ came to prominence during the 1862 International Exhibition, a forgotten and yet key, chromatic event. But if colour became for the first time a major signifier of the modern, many writers and artists, rebelling against the industrial present, invited their contemporaries to learn from the ‘sacred’ colours of the past or from the gorgeous hues of the East.

Organised by the Ashmolean Museum, this groundbreaking conference will explore the impact of this ‘chromatic turn’ on Victorian art, design and fashion. It will help inform and shape a forthcoming major exhibition on Victorian colour at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven in 2022-23.

This conference has been made possible through the generous sponsorship of Barrie and Deedee Wigmore.
28 June

Panel 1: The Colours of the Past
Chair: KATE NICHOLS (University of Birmingham)

9.45 – 10.15 AM
Registration and Coffee

10.15 – 10.30 AM
Introduction: Alexander Sturgis | Director, Ashmolean Museum
Charlotte Ribeyrol | Sorbonne University
Matthew Winterbottom | Ashmolean Museum

10.30 – 10.50 AM
Stephanie Moser | University of Southampton
‘Bedaubed with gorgeous colours’: the engagement of Victorian artists and designers with the art of ancient Egypt

10.50 – 11.10 AM
Martina Droth | Yale Center for British Art
Seemly and unseemly colour: Chromatic turns in Victorian sculpture

11.10 – 11.30 AM
Megan Aldrich | Independent
Colour and the Gothic Revival: Crace, Pugin and the ‘True Principles’ of Gothic Colour

11.30 – 11.50 AM
Discussion

11.50 – 12.10 AM
Donato Esposito | Independent
Animation of colour in the work of the Old Masters

12.10 – 12.30 AM
Charlotte Gere | Independent
Colour in Victorian Jewellery

12.30 – 12.45 AM
Lunch

2.00 – 2.20 PM
Renate Dohmen | Open University
Colour and spice, and all things nice?

2.20 – 2.40 PM
Christine Olson | Yale University
Mediating Design Reform: Owen Jones and Chromolithography

2.40 – 3.00 PM
Harry Lyons | Independent
Christopher Dresser’s views on colour

3.00 – 3.20 PM
Discussion

3.20 – 3.40 PM
Clare Pollard | Ashmolean Museum
‘The instinct of colour’: The Victorian reception of colour in Japanese ornamental textiles

3.40 – 4.00 PM
Aileen Tsui | Washington College, Maryland
Blackness and the Japanese Curtain in Whistler’s Arrangement in Grey and Black: Portrait of the Painter’s Mother

4.00 – 4.15 PM
Discussion

4.15 – 4.40 PM
Tea

Panel 2: East & West: Displacing Colour
Chair: MALLICA KUMBERA LANDRUS (Ashmolean Museum)

2.00 – 2.20 PM
Stephanie Moser | University of Southampton
‘Bedaubed with gorgeous colours’: the engagement of Victorian artists and designers with the art of ancient Egypt

2.20 – 2.40 PM
Martina Droth | Yale Center for British Art
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Panel 3: The Colours of Modernity Part I
Chair: NICK GASKILL (University of Oxford)

4.40 – 5.00 PM
Alison Matthews David | Ryerson University, Toronto
Arrayed in Rainbows: Fashion, Colour and the Fabrics of Modernity, 1850-70

5.00 – 5.20 PM
Kirsty Sinclair Dootson | University of Cambridge
The Political Spectrum: Colour, Fashion, Film, and Feminist Aesthetics before 1900

5.20 – 5.40 PM
Edwina Ehrman | V&A Museum
‘Living Gems’: the use of natural colour in Victorian women’s fashion

5.40 – 6.00 PM
Discussion

6.00 – 7.30 PM
Delegates’ Drinks Reception
in the Provost’s Rose Garden, Worcester College
PANEL 4:
THE COLOURS OF MODERNITY PART 2

Chair: ELIZABETH PRETTEJOHN
(University of York)

10.00 - 10.20 AM
COLIN HARRISON | Ashmolean Museum
‘You ought to love colour, and to think nothing quite beautiful or perfect without it’: The role of colour in John Ruskin’s teachings on art

10.20 - 10.40 AM
WILLIAM WHYTE | University of Oxford
The Victorians and Structural Polychromy

10.40 - 11.00 AM
CAROLINE ARSCOTT | Courtauld Institute of Art
Colouristic monochrome: Idylls of the 1860s

11.00 - 11.20 AM
DISCUSSION

11.20 - 11.40 AM
JOYCE TOWNSEND | Tate, London
British artists and their use of new materials in the later 19th century: followers or leaders?

11.40 - 12.00 PM
SABINE DORAN | Pennsylvania State University
‘Earth’s blood on fire’: Sacrificing the Colour of the Sanguine in the Fin de Siècle

12.00 - 12.15 PM
DISCUSSION

12.15 - 2.00 PM
LUNCH

PANEL 5:
EXHIBITING COLOUR: THE 1862 INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

Chair: ALEXANDRA LOSKE
(University of Sussex and Royal Pavilion, Brighton)

2.00 - 2.20 PM
MAX DONNELLY | V&A Museum
‘A certain glow of harmonious colour’: furniture at the International Exhibition of 1862

2.20 - 2.40 PM
JASMINE ALLEN | Stained Glass Museum
‘A vehicle of light and colour’: stained glass at the 1862 International Exhibition

2.40 - 3.00 PM
ALICIA ROBINSON | V&A Museum
Ironwork 1850-1875 and colour: Scott, Skidmore and the V&A

3.00 - 3.20 PM
PAUL ATTERBURY | Independent
New Ideas, New Techniques, New Colours — the revolution in Victorian ceramics

3.20 - 3.50 PM
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

3.50 - 5.00 PM
TEA