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Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame: Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850-1900*. London and New York, Routledge, 2000, 268 pp., 61 black-and-white illus., $24.95 U.S.

Deborah Cherry's *Beyond the Frame* continues the study of Victorian women artists begun in her 1993 book, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists*,[1] with the seven-year interval providing, once again, an impressive amount of original research. As in the earlier work, *Beyond the Frame* aims at an "exploration" (rather than a "fixed, deductive model")(p. 1) of Cherry's material, which in the present volume is centred on the encounters between Victorian visual culture, nineteenth-century feminism and the organized women's movement. The book makes an important contribution to studies of the Victorian period, arguing for the critical place of nineteenth-century feminism in any consideration of its visual culture, and especially in any study of the elite forms of Victorian art. In so doing, Cherry's work goes some way in reconfiguring not only the art history of this period, but also in setting a standard of scholarship based on solid and wide-ranging research integrated with a penetrating and judicious use of feminist, post-colonial and critical theoretical models.

One of Cherry's aims is to address what to her is often missing in many studies of Victorian art (as it is both conceived now and as it was practiced then), which is the tendency to "carefully screen out anything even mildly tinged with political debate and the women's movement" (p. 6). Her larger goal is to bring feminism, both then and now, into the "frame," arguing that it is not now and was not then merely an "intervention" into art and its literatures, but rather an integral part of visuality itself. Cherry builds her argument carefully, laying out her first "frame" in Chapter 1, that of the organized women's movement in Britain in the 1850s and 1860s. She points out the unmistakable parallels between the increasing number of women artists with their demands for reform and the newly organized women's movement in Britain (p. 9), providing a range of contemporary comments and examples of women's art alliances, friendships and the development of the concept of "sisterhood." Her elucidation of female "networking" further exposes the links between female artists and the organized women's movement. Cherry considers this connection, pointing out the presence of women artists' signatures on property rights petitions (an area already touched upon in her earlier book) and, likewise, the writings of feminist reformers such as Harriet Martineau on the situation of female art students.

In this chapter and the ones that follow Cherry is consistent in arguing for the recognition of the importance of "subjectivities as formed through encounters in and orderings of space" (p. 24). By rejecting the binary of the private/public and the separate sphere, Cherry concentrates instead on the increasingly visual definition of the modern metropolis as she considers such phenomena as professional middle-class women travelling across London's spaces. Here, Cherry draws on recent work by Lynda Nead[2] and on the theorists of urban geographies, arguing for the need to reconsider the defining of female bodies in terms of geographic spaces. Her analysis of such spaces as artist-run women's centres and her return to a painting discussed in her earlier volume, Emily Mary Osborn's *Nameless and Friendless*, tackle the issues of feminist challenges to exclusionary physical spaces, as well as to the boundaries of polite/elite culture.

Chapters 2 and 3 "track travelling feminists" (p. 59) and are particularly rewarding in their original contribution to the intersections between women artists, landscape and imperialism. After providing a cogent overview of recent post-colonial theory, Cherry focuses on the activities of artists and activists in Algeria, aiming, as she did in *Painting Women*, to deal with the multiplicities of women as "producers of discourses," a method which not only points out that women did not speak with a unified voice but also that the pursuit of feminist individualism was implicated in the colonial and imperial project. Her discussion of this individualism is indebted to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's analysis of the subjectivity of the militant female subject and her necessary relation to the excluded "Third World Woman"[3] as Cherry investigates the activities of British female artists in Algeria, then a French colony. Using the case of Barbara Leigh Smith (Bodichon, after her marriage) as an entry point into the complex relationships between British feminism and Algeria, Cherry considers the making of Algeria as a tourist destination, particularly for artists, who used Bodichon's Algerian residence as a "port of call" for their activities. Working beyond the binary of east/west, colonizer/colonized, Cherry considers Algeria not so much in terms of the "other," but rather as the Derridean "supplement," arguing that there can be no "separation between Algeria and Britain, between art and politics: what occurred in North Africa cannot be left beyond the frame" (p. 61). Accordingly, Cherry sets out to bring the Algerian images produced by British women artists into the "frame," analysing what she terms the "pictorializing" of Algeria, setting this construct up as a counterpart to Spivak"s notion of "worlding."[4] Like Spivak, Cherry argues that "Violence was integral to the making of landscape" (p. 80), and ponders the role of British women artists' agency in the violence of the imperialist project. Cherry notes, for instance, the marginalization of the Algerian population in Bodichon's landscape works and its contribution to the notion of uninscribed territory, as well as to "mainstream Orientalizing" (p. 92) and the racial typologies found in many figural images made by British women

artists. By considering the work of these artists in terms of theories of hybridity,[5] Cherry concludes that imagery produced by British women in Algeria must be seen within the "agility of colonial authority," but in such a way as to include the "tensions, complicities and departures" (p. 77) of this relationship.

The relationship between feminism, imperialism and race is continued in Chapter 4, where Cherry narrows her focus to consider in detail Harriet Hosmer's well-known statue of *Zenobia*. She is particularly interested in the contemporary debates surrounding its authorship and sets out to answer the questions of "Why was her [Hosmer's] standing as the author of her work so hotly contested? And what issues of authority and power were engaged by her work?" (p. 105) Again, no easy answer is sought for as Cherry takes on an exploration of the complexities of nineteenth-century debates on women's authority – Hosmer stood accused of having her work executed by a Roman workman – and women's representation of a non-domestic subject. The issues of professional women artists in the Victorian period, particularly those practising the public form of sculpture, are further problematized by Cherry as she discusses a female artist's representation of a "warrior queen, savant and woman of colour" (p. 119). Many trajectories are here considered: the representation of race by women, the heterogeneous positions of contemporary spectators, the dictates of art theory regarding differences between artist and artisan, and gendered categories of art reviewing and criticism. In addition, a stimulating discussion of the very real problems of the representation of female militancy/slavery and the "woman of colour" make this chapter a valuable addition to discussions of Hosmer's famous statue,[6] particularly in terms of the racializing of difference.

Chapter 5 ("Tactics and Allegories, 1866-1900") is the last of the book, taking a sweeping look at the intersections between female artists and female suffrage. This very breadth – ranging from artists and suffrage campaigns, the image of the learned woman (in terms of witch, sorceress and sibyl), medical knowledge and masculine power, to reforms to women's education – may result in some loss of legibility, but at the same time it underlines the very intertextualities and multifaceted "framings" Cherry is arguing for. (Cherry herself notes the problems of the "tangle" in attempting to explain "the non-coincidences or dissonances between a woman's politics and her art," p. 178). Her struggle to fashion new readings which both take up and push beyond feminist content is evident in her discussion of the representation of women as "new social actors" (p. 186), that is, those mainly middle-class women in roles of city management, factory inspectors, school boards, etc. As Cherry notes, this representation occurred mainly in print culture and photography; however, it is painted portraiture which especially becomes her focus, for it is here that the problems of representing "new women" in an elite form surface. The question of how to portray such women in a culture in which formal portrayal of professional individuals had been limited to men is both posed and then responded to through a fresh look at several case studies of portrait paintings. (It should be noted that Cherry's book is well-supplied with black-and-white images, many of which will be new to most readers.) By considering several visual strategies employed in the fashioning of a new imagery for prominent public women – she speculates for instance on Emily Mary Osborn's Venetian *seicento*-inspired representation of Jane Cobden Unwin (the first woman counsellor on London County Council) and its possible connotations of metropolitan administration – Cherry demonstrates the hybrid nature of these works by locating them firmly in the larger visual culture of the period. Sketches and political cartoons are interwoven into the discussion of the painted portraits, as is a consideration of the spaces in which these portraits were to hang, or perhaps more importantly, not to hang.

Cherry concludes *Beyond the Frame* with a call for an "allegorical reading"[7] which allows for "feminist readings to be sustained alongside and in confrontation with others" (p. 212). She argues against, for instance, a simple acceptance of the symbolist construct of abstract idea/symbol/visual form in her consideration of allegorical paintings made by women, proposing instead a reading which takes into account not only the artist but "the reader/viewer and the work's 'site-specificity'" (p. 200). When considering, for instance, an allegorical picture made by Emily Ford for Newnham College, Cherry aims to move beyond "familiar interpretations of symbolism and allegory," confronting the "slipperiness" of meaning in a time in which feminists, socialists and elite culture all utilized allegory and symbolism.[8] Similar considerations of allegory, historical contexts, communities of viewers and reciprocities of image and text become the mainstay of her analysis of the visual culture of women's suffrage so as "to enable new understandings of late nineteenth-century painting and sculpture" as well as "to allow feminism and visual imagery to 'talk to' one another" (p. 201). As in her previous chapters, Cherry draws on a wide field, attending to nineteenth-century spiritualism, colour theory, women's education, and the politics of suffrage. Her strategy works, for this abutting, jostling and overlapping of readings and meanings opens up new ways for "feminist readings to be sustained alongside and in confrontation with others" (p. 212).

If this is Cherry's goal for her book, she has achieved it and more. *Beyond the Frame* offers both a challenge and a gift to anyone concerned with the complexity of historical visual culture and of cultural history in general. As Cherry herself reminds us in her concluding remarks, the realm of the gift is associated with the feminine, and such "gifts are dangerous

since they destabilise the entire system" (p. 28), which is just what her new readings of urban space, gender, class, race and imperialism ought to do.

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Notes

1 Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists* (London and New York, 1993).

2 Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon. People, streets and images in nineteenth-century London* (London and New Haven, 2000).

3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," in Henry Louis Gates Jr, ed., *"Race", Writing, and Difference* (Chicago, 1986), 262–80. The article was originally published in *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), 243–61. Spivak's article comments on the construction of First World female subjects – as individuals and as independent – through the representation of the "Third World Woman" as collective and plural.

4 Spivak's concept of "worlding" is part of her analysis of the representation (Spivak focuses on literary representation) of an uninscribed "Third World," which only becomes a "world" through European imperialism. See Spivak, "Three Women's Texts;" and G.C. Spivak, "The Rani of Sirmur," in Francis Barker et al., eds, *Europe and Its Others*, vol. 1 (Colchester, 1985), 128–51.

5 For a discussion of theories of hybridity, including a critique of Homi Bhabha's original use of the term, see Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London, 1995).

6 Cherry provides a good overview of the feminist analysis of *Zenobia*, from Roszika Parker and Griselda Pollock, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London and New Haven, 1982), to Whitney Chadwick's *Women, Art and Society* (London, 1990).

7 Cherry refers mainly to the critic Craig Owens' essay "The allegorical impulse: toward a theory of postmodernism" in Scott Bryson, Barbara Kruger, L. Tillman and Jane Weinstock, eds, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture* (Berkeley, 1992), 52-69.

8 For a recent and stimulating discussion of Symbolism and a Symbolist feminist aesthetic, see Patricia Mathews, *Passionate Discontent: Creativity, Gender, and French Symbolist Art* (Chicago, 2000).

Christine Stevenson, *Medicine and Magnificence: British Hospital and Asylum Architecture, 1660-1815*. New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000, 312 pp., 86 black-and-white illus.

> Hospitals must be solidly but simply built. With absolutely no other kind of building is luxury more destructive of propriety ... Magnificence announces too much money in the foundation, or too little economy in the administration ... Too much beauty in a house of charity ... stifles charity ... Great cleanliness and convenience [are wanted] but no ostentation at all.[1]

The premise of this curious and challenging, at times entertaining and occasionally perplexing book seems to be that the asylum (in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries) was a product of different and multiple discourses that circulated through images and texts as well as through buildings. It is therefore, perhaps, fitting that the structure of the book and each of its ten chapters is as digressive, diffuse and episodic as the discursive production that the author has set out to explain. Among the discourses pursued are those of political economy and Christian morality, both demanding that architecture distinguish useless ostentation (luxury) from noble liberality (magnificence). In this history the social and medical uses of architecture collide or collude with the ambitions of architectural practice and theory. Christine Stevenson also sets out to explore the paradox that although hospital buildings were much criticized as ostentatious, ineffective and even dangerous to health, they were also built in abundance. Conventional architectural formats for studying asylum and hospital architecture are largely eschewed – architect, typological study, monograph do not order the material here, although all are discussed. *Medicine and Magnificence* aims to represent these institutions "as their contemporaries understood them as buildings" (p. 1), rather than by the conventions of present-day history. This, for the most part, the author does admirably.

It is perhaps this intention that explains the unusual flow of the narrative. It follows the itinerary of a discourse about asylum and hospital architecture as it was articulated in two often conflicting sites of consideration – medicine (involving physicians, institutional custodians and governors, scientists) and magnificence (engaging political economy, architecture). This is not an easy undertaking, despite the inspiration and example of Foucault, who is generously referenced in the bibliography. Specific hospitals and asylums seem to disassemble into the various components that link them as a category – hospitality, monuments, patriarchal medicine – and consequently into "the frets of luxury," "Golden names," and "native American architecture" (Chapter 1). Under the chapter heading "Looking at asylums," one will find Chelsea Hospital, Palladianism, Alexander Pope's "Epistle to Lord Burlington," Venetian windows, Hogarth's "Rake in Bedlam," various illustrations dating from 1775 to 1809 of London's first St Luke's, at Moorgate, by George Dance the Elder (1750) and its new St Luke's at Old Street by George Dance the Younger (1782–87), and the younger Dance's All Hallows London Wall. The array brings to mind Foucault's comments about "a certain Chinese encyclopedia" in