

never have been considered masculine in early modern civil conversation, yet by the 1790s they appear to have dominated in the secular music heard in the salons of Berlin and Vienna. The overtly feminine traits found in the music were seen to be reflected in the women who both listened and played in these gatherings. Botstein, like others, notices that music assumed a particularly important role in Jewish acculturation. No doubt the kind of freedoms enjoyed by Jews in these musical environments appeared, like the music itself, unthreatening to the more powerful segments of society, just as did the hostess of the salon in comparison to her wealthy and usually more politically engaged husband. Nonetheless, as Hahn's study of the early Berlin salonnieres demonstrates, freedom, even when practiced in the safety of the salon, sometimes resulted in the overthrowing of societal conventions, if only by individual women, and often at great cost to themselves.

However, as the section of the introductory essay on "The Political Salon" argues, most of these cultural spheres intersected to some greater or lesser extent with the politics of the day. While this aspect of salon conversation is most obvious in the studies of the Italian milieu, for example when the authors use the Milanese salon of the Russian exile Anna Kuliscioff to illustrate the role of subversive politics among the cultural elite, politics surface throughout all of the studies. Indeed, the power to which the authors refer in their title would be nonexistent unless the conversations that took place in the salons of modernity had some connection to those who were engaged in social and political actions of consequence at the time. Such connections may not always be demonstrable, nor are they overtly sought by some of the individual contributors to this volume, but Bilski and Braun are surely correct to presume that cultural significance ultimately depends on power.

It should be noted that this volume is handsomely produced with numerous illustrations in color. Furthermore, it contains a valuable array of scholarly apparatuses, most notably a carefully researched section by Shira Brisman containing biographies of all of the major Jewish women discussed in the other essays. Both a useful bibliography and a meticulous index enhance the overall contribution of this book to the growing literature on Jewish identity and visual culture.

Notes

1. For Guazzo, see the important volume edited by Giorgio Patrizi, *Stefano Guazzo e la Civil Conversazione* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1990).
2. Rudolf Wittkower, "Imitation, Eclecticism, and Genius," *Aspects of the Eighteenth Century*, Earl Wasserman, ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1953, pp. 149).
3. Francis Haskell's seminal study of art patronage in the seventeenth century made this point admirably; see Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963).

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Silk Stocking Mats: Hooked Mats Of The Grenfell Mission. Paula Laverty. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005; 92 colour illustrations + 198 pages.; ISBN 0-7735-2506-8; \$44.95 (paper).

Paula Laverty, curator of three major Grenfell mat exhibitions, has successfully translated these exhibits into a sumptuously illustrated new book. With 92 full-colour illustrations, as well as numerous black and white images of the workers and related ephemera, *Silk Stocking Mats: Hooked Mats of the Grenfell Mission* is a

delightful read, bringing the rich history of the Grenfell Industrial to life. Wilfred Thomason Grenfell (1865-1940), an evangelical medical doctor from London, England, founded the Grenfell Mission in 1892 in Labrador and Newfoundland. He did not believe in simply handing out charity. Instead, following in the footsteps of the Arts and Crafts Movement, he intended to use the crafts for the economic and personal betterment of Labrador and Newfoundland's women. In 1906 the Grenfell Industrial was formed to carry out this mission. Jessie Luther was employed to start a weaving industry; however, by 1908 Luther recognized that an indigenous craft existed, mat hooking. She introduced the images that would become synonymous with Grenfell mats: fish, dogs, seals, ducks, bears, ships and gulls. Soon mat bundles, including patterns marked on brin (burlap) and hooking materials (ranging from cotton to the famous silk stockings), were sent home for women to complete. Mat hookers received up to \$20 a year for their work, a remarkable sum considering that families earned less than \$500 a year. Mat hooking became a "bonanza" for the Industrial, resulting in sales outlets in New York, Toronto and London, and revenues exceeding \$63,000 in 1929. Despite two World Wars Grenfell mats remained popular. Ironically, mat hooking became stigmatized only when Labrador and Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949 and government assistance became available.

Lavery's book is nicely laid out in two parts, the first providing a history and timeline, and the second focusing on the mats. Her footnotes are informative and reflect the vast amount of primary research that she has completed. There is a romantic tone to the entire book. While this romanticization works well stylistically, there are several moments in the text when it marginalizes problematic issues surrounding the Grenfell Industrial. For example, when Dr. Grenfell arrived in 1892, 1,700 Inuit lived in Labrador. While

these indigenous peoples served as popular motifs on the mats, the reader is left wondering if they were active participants in the making of the mats. The colonial nature of Dr. Grenfell's Mission is explained as being one of self-sacrifice: "English gentlemen were intent on conquering the undiscovered world and carried with them a passion for bettering the human condition, especially in remote areas" (3). This is a troubling assertion, particularly when coupled with the lack of agency given to the women who hooked the rugs. They were, and remain, anonymous, and their efforts are collectively credited to Grenfell. Although Lavery's notes and bibliography reveal an extensive list of interviews with mat hookers, she does not name them in the body of the text, thus reinforcing this silence. Despite these criticisms the fact remains that *Silk Stocking Mats: Hooked Mats of the Grenfell Mission* is an important contribution to the growing field of Canadian craft history. Lavery, and McGill-Queen's University Press, must be commended for this book, and hopefully next we can look forward to a rigorous critical examination of the socio-political issues it raises.

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