Rethinking the Artist Catalogue for the Online Age: Thomas Girtin 1775-1802

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Date: 5 October 2022
Time: 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Location: Paul Mellon Centre and Online
Speaker: Greg Smith

This lecture relates to the publication *Thomas Girtin (1775–1802): An Online Catalogue, Archive and Introduction to the Artist*, due to be released on 4 October.

I will begin by outlining the scope of the project and my thinking behind the site’s tri-partite structure and title: An Online Catalogue, Archive and Introduction to the Artist. Particular attention will be paid to two challenges: how to make a free-to-access site straightforward to use for a non-specialist audience; and then, how best to ensure the future of the site as an academic resource that can develop through the incorporation of new material and research. I will then move on to consider the different sections of the site, beginning with the approximately 1550 catalogue entries that form its core. Emphasis will be placed on the features that distinguish the site from a conventionally published catalogue and why it is that I have studiously avoided using the term catalogue raisonné. I will then look at each of the sections of the Archive, focusing first on the challenge of relating the material to the rest of the site, and then summarising their current status in relation to my ambition to produce a comprehensive if not definitive record of sales, exhibitions and publications, together with extensive transcriptions of all the early biographical accounts and related manuscript material. I will conclude my introduction to the site by looking at some of its inevitable limitations, not least as a challenge to my audience to use it as a resource for the investigation of themes beyond the project’s scope.

Greg Smith is an independent art historian, who has published extensively on the history of British watercolours and watercolourists, as well as landscape artists working in Italy. He has also worked as...
a curator at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, the Design Museum, London, and the Barber Institute of Fine Art, Birmingham, and has organised exhibitions on the work of Thomas Girtin (Tate Britain), Thomas Jones (National Gallery of Wales), and Thomas Fearnley (Barber Institute of Fine Art). As Senior Research Fellow at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Greg Smith is developing a major online project: Thomas Girtin (1775–1802): An Online Catalogue, Archive and Introduction to the Artist.

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URL:
https://www.paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk/whats-on/forthcoming/rethinking-the-artist-catalogue/