

GLASGOW COLOUR STUDIES GROUP

Notes following the Twenty-First Meeting, 27th November 2013

The twenty-first meeting of the GCSG took place in Room 1, English Language, University of Glasgow. Thanks are due to Carole Biggam who organized the meeting, Carole Hough who acted as master of ceremonies, and to Christian Kay and Carole Hough who organized the refreshments.

Our speaker was Clare Paterson, Senior Archivist and College Librarian, Glasgow University Library.

Clare Paterson spoke on ‘Colourful Patterns – the Design Archive of A. F. Stoddard and James Templeton & Co.’

Her abstract is as follows:

“This session will look at colour within the Design Archive of Scotland’s largest carpet manufacturers, Stoddard’s and Templeton’s. Templeton’s own film, *From Glasgow Green to Bendigo*, will be shown to give an insight into the carpet design and manufacturing process in Glasgow in the 1950s. Design sketches and patterns from the Archive will be on display to demonstrate the designers’ use of colour and the sources they used for inspiration. We will also look at how Archive Services has sought to include colour as a way of describing the designs themselves.”

Commentary (by Carole Biggam; checked by Clare Paterson)

The Stoddard-Templeton Collection was purchased by a consortium of the University of Glasgow, Glasgow School of Art, and Glasgow City Council in 2009 when the company was liquidated. Records date from the mid nineteenth century, and comprise what is probably the best carpet archive collection in the world. The collection is housed in three locations. Over 400 pieces of carpet are kept by Glasgow Museums, a collection which also includes complete carpets, such as the giant carpet made for the Glasgow Exhibition of 1901, and others made for coronations, the Festival of Britain (1951), Cunard liners and others. The company’s business archive is kept in University of Glasgow Archive Services, including copies of *Templetonian*, the company’s in-house magazine.

James Templeton became involved in the shawl industry in the 1820s, and then adapted the chenille technique to the manufacture of carpets. By the 1830s, it was possible to use a larger range of colours, and make carpets on a larger scale. Templeton’s famous factory, modelled on the Doge’s Palace in Venice, was built on Glasgow Green in the 1890s, and, by the 1930s, the company was the biggest employer in the area. They were also of international significance, being the largest carpet manufacturer in the British Empire, and, for many years, were of huge importance to Scotland’s business and cultural history.

The company created a design library, collected from all over the world, to inspire their own designers to create new patterns, but they also bought in designs from, for example, Arthur Silver and William Morris in the nineteenth century, and Mary Quant in the 1960s. Colour

plays an important part in the modern cataloguing of the archive, along with the designers' own classification system which used standard descriptors. The present archive records colours by means of the British Standard, as well as design names, dates (where possible), size, condition and so on. The collection is available for researchers, artists, designers and others to consult.

A film entitled 'From Glasgow Green to Bendigo', made in 1961 about the work of Stoddard-Templeton, can be viewed at the website of the Scottish Screen Archive at <http://ssa.nls.uk>

News

If you have suggestions for, or offers of GCSG talks (any format), please contact Carole Biggam at c.p.biggam@btinternet.com. Please note that we attempt to produce a balanced programme (i.e. different disciplines) and do not necessarily accept talks in the order in which they are offered. Nonetheless, all offers are most welcome and will be acknowledged.

Please also inform Carole Biggam (c.p.biggam@btinternet.com) about any new publications (books or articles) which are directly related to colour in any discipline, and I will collect them together for these reports which follow the meetings. Of course, you may also like to report such items on our discussion list at ColourStudies@jiscmail.ac.uk Let me start the lists with the following:

Jones, William Jervis. *German Colour Terms: A Study in their Historical Evolution from Earliest Times to the Present*. (John Benjamins, 2013).

Sterman, Baruch, with Judy Taubes Sterman. *The Rarest Blue: The Remarkable Story of an Ancient Color Lost to History and Rediscovered*. (Lyons Press, 2012). [Concerns *tekhelet*, a dye mentioned in the Bible].