

REPORT  
OF THE  
STIRLING MAXWELL CENTRE  
FOR THE STUDY OF  
TEXT/IMAGE CULTURES  
2017-18



**Stirling  
Maxwell Centre**  
University  
of Glasgow

This seventh year of the Centre's new incarnation, 2017-18, saw continued high-profile success and optimism for the future, as well as new directions. Items of specific note included:

- Once again an eclectic series of seminars with speakers from varied backgrounds, and subjects ranging from Aldine printing to Chilean photography.
- The *Comic Invention* and *Frank Quitely: The Art of Comics* exhibitions were resounding successes, drawing worldwide attention.
- Members of the Centre gave a number of invited lectures and keynotes (University of Winnipeg, Leeds Beckett University, Université de Bourgogne, University of Manchester, University of Edinburgh), and most notably at the Eleventh International Emblem Conference in Nancy.
- Completion to submission by 2 PhD PGRs.
- Numerous publications, including a double issue of *Yale French Studies* on *bande dessinée*, and *Emblems in Colonial Ibero-America* (GES 18).
- Stirling Maxwell Fellows from Canada and Italy, attracting associated external funding and bearing witness to the Centre's established international reputation.
- Centre activities were featured in a number of increasingly high-profile appearances on national and international TV and radio, as well as in mainstream international press.

## FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

The Centre's finances remained sufficient to fund the regular activities of the Centre.

We saw successful securing of external funding with respect to the exhibitions and conferences: Glasgow Life/Renfrewshire Council direct funding for IBDS conference hospitality events (valued c. £4000); external financing to enable key exhibition loans (e.g. for the Kunzle Collection of LA); EU funding from the *Scientific and Visual Images in Early Modern Europe* project for the SES conference (€440).

In 2017 the Centre came under the financial aegis of SMLC, working in cooperation with the Visual Studies cluster. We were saddened by the departure of Pedro Leal, whose work has been key to the Centre.

## EVENTS:

### ***Comic Invention and Frank Quitely: The Art of Comics***

Following the success of the 2016 Hunterian *Comic Invention*, its 2017 follow-up version at Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery, and associated outreach events, embraced the specifics of Dunbartonshire culture. Visitor numbers of 9121 (an average of c. 140 a day) were exceptionally high, and public feedback suggest objectives were achieved and surpassed.

Kelvingrove's *Frank Quitely: The Art of Comics* drew initial inspiration from the 2016 Hunterian *Comic Invention*. Key messages revisited include the status of comic artwork within a museum context, the ubiquity of the culture of comics, and Scotland's leading role in the art form's development and success.

Total footfall was 51 613, with income of £250 377. The University's Facebook Live broadcast (5 June 2017) with Laurence Grove and Frank Quitely reached a worldwide audience of over 35 000 and was viewed over 6 500 times.

Reviews have been universally positive. In terms of visitor feedback, one unsolicited email referred to the exhibitions as 'exciting and inspirational' for children with additional support needs.

Forward-looking opportunities have arisen: work is ongoing on recreating the theme of *Comic Invention* in further displays, with interest from Toronto, Montreal and Mexico City, and it is hoped that *Comic Invention* will prove to be a catalyst for a future National Centre for Comics.

## Medieval Monsters

Debra Higgs Strickland was consultant for the catalogue and major public exhibition of illuminated manuscripts at the Morgan Library and Museum, *Medieval Monsters, Terrors, Aliens, and Wonders* (New York, 8 June - 23 Sept. 2018), and consultant for major public exhibition, *The Book of Beasts: The Bestiary in the Medieval World* at the J.P. Getty Museum (Los Angeles, scheduled 14 May - 18 August 2019).

## Eleventh International Emblem Conference: Nancy 2017

The Centre was well represented at this July conference that attracted c. 150 international delegates. Centre members were active on the organising committee (Michael Bath, Laurence Grove), and Alison Adams gave the opening keynote on 'Emblems and Europe'.

## International Graphic Novel and Tenth International Bande Dessinée Society Conference: Dundee and Glasgow 2017

This major international conference took place in June, attracting c. 150 international delegates. The third day of the conference was spent at the *Comic Invention and Frank Quitely: The Invention of Comics* exhibitions.

## Visualising Shakespeare from Page to Stage

This event took place on 1 June, juxtaposing the Hunterian Shakespeare first folio (the first folio with the oldest annotations), comics by Gianni De Luca, and the actor Marco Gambino's interpretation of *Othello*, adapted by Roberto Cavosi. The experience was organised by Enza De Francisci, who secured sponsorship from the Italian Cultural Institute (Edinburgh), the Society for Italian Studies, and the Garibaldi Mazzini Charitable Foundation.

## Invited Lectures

Members of the Centre gave invited lectures and keynotes on text/image subjects at the St Bride Foundation London, University of Winnipeg, Leeds Metropolitan University and Université de Bourgogne, University of Glasgow, University of Manchester and University of Edinburgh.

## IMPACT CASE STUDY: SCOTLAND AND THE CULTURE OF COMICS

The exhibitions and related activities will form the basis for an Impact Case Study for REF 2021. *Scotland and the Culture of Comics* will point to the raising public awareness of the important cultural and educative role of comics, and the importance of Glasgow and Scotland in this area.

Since going live in April 2016, the Education Scotland Curriculum for Excellent *Astérix* project has seen ongoing development and usage throughout 2017, at one stage reaching third place in the number of hits for all subjects across the country. The resource is a key outreach element and features strongly in the ICS.

### **SQUARE IT**

This year saw final development and submission of the € 5 416 216 Grenoble-based *SQUARE IT (Symbolic cultural objects: data for QUALitative understanding of european inclusive cultuRE, and for advanced curation IT tools development)* Construction de l'Espace Européen grant bid. The Glasgow section was for € 660 760. The bid was unsuccessful, but will form the basis for further applications.

### **FREEDOM BOUND**

The Centre has contributed to the *Freedom Bound* project team in the context of Simon Newman's AHRC-funded slavery project. *Freedom Bound* is a graphic novel, with artwork by Warren Pleece, telling of the history of slavery in Scotland via the angle of 'Runaways'. The book is to be distributed to all schools nationally, and has received national press and TV coverage

### **FRANK QUITELY**

Laurence Grove sponsored Frank Quitely for the Honorary degree of Doctor of Letters, which was awarded on Commemoration Day 2017, attracting considerable media attention

### **NATIONAL COMICS CENTRE**

Following ongoing discussions with Jill Miller (Director of Cultural Services, Glasgow Life), Alex Maclean (Special Projects Manager, Glasgow Life), Duncan Dornan (Director, Glasgow Museums), and Steph Scholten (Director, The Hunterian) an agreement has been made in principle that stage 2/3 of the Kelvinhall Project should include a National Comics Centre.

### **STIRLING MAXWELL CENTRE SEMINAR SERIES**

The Centre welcomed papers from Gonzalo Leiva (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, on images from Chile's dictatorship), Neil Harris (Università degli Studi di Udine, on the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*), Luis Gomes (Glasgow, on the Arch of the Flemish), Lina Rodriguez (Warburg Institute, London, on Flemish emblems in Peru), Peter Davies (Glasgow, on *Jacques Croquédur i voéyage*, a Picard comic strip in the 1950s), Marie Ferron Desautels (Université du Québec à Montréal, on the Album of Katherine Jane Ellice (1814-1864), a Scottish watercolorist travelling to North America), and *Visualising Shakespeare: From Page to Stage*, whereby actor Marco Gambino performed excerpts from a recent adaptation of *Othello* by Roberto Cavosi against a backcloth of Gianni de Luca's Shakespeare comics and the GUL annotated copy of the 1623 first folio.

### **GLASGOW EMBLEM STUDIES AND ECA**

- A further volume is in preparation: *Emblems on the European Stage* edited by Rosa de Marco and Sandra Paterson-Reid, has already received generous sponsorship, and is expected to appear in 2019.
- *European Comic Art*, co-edited from Glasgow, published issues 10.2 (on Historical Perspectives, Theory and Practices) and 11.1 (on Spanish Comics, part I).

### **FURTHER PUBLICATIONS**

The following is no more than a selection of publications by members of the Centre:

- Debra Higgs Strickland, 'Edward I, Exodus, and England on the Hereford World Map', *Speculum* 93/2 (April 2018), 420-469.
- Grove, Laurence, Kirsty Hunter and Sha Nazir. *Frank Quitely: The Art of Comics* (Glasgow: BHP Comics, 2017).
- Grove Laurence and Michael Syrotinski, eds. *Bande Dessinée: Thinking Outside the Boxes*. Numbers 131 and 132 (2017) of *Yale French Studies* (Yale University Press).
- Grove, Laurence. 'Ferdinand de Saussure's Unknown *Bandes Dessinées*'. *Bande Dessinée: Thinking Outside the Boxes, Yale French Studies*. pp. 46-61.
- Grove, Laurence. 'Emblems and Impact'. Eds. Ingrid Hoepel and Simon McKeown. *Emblems and Impact*. pp. 1-23 (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2017).
- Mercer, Lucy and Laurence Grove. "Emblems and Antiquity: An Exploration of Speculative Emblematics." Ed. Christopher Schliephake. *Ecocriticism, Ecology, and the Cultures of Antiquity*. pp. 243-258. (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2017).

## STIRLING MAXWELL FELLOWSHIPS

We welcomed Tomasso Ranfagni (National Institute of Renaissance Studies (INSR), Florence, on the *tabula rasa*) and Marie Ferron-Desautels (Université du Québec à Montréal, on Katherine Jane Ellice, the 19c Scottish watercolorist).

In the case of Marie Ferron-Desautels the application generated funding from her home institution and national research bodies. The diversity of topics and the international nature of their outlook remains a particular mark of the Centre's success.

## TEACHING AND RESEARCH STUDENTS

Members of the Centre have continued to provide an Honours Option, open to students in French and Comparative Literature, and text-image focused courses in History of Art, including the new Renaissance Art History MLitt.

Student evaluations indicate that the integration of Glasgow's unique resources into undergraduate teaching is much appreciated: 'I feel incredibly lucky to be a part of this course [...] it really is incredibly inspiring. I don't want this class to end! [...] overall this is the best course I have done at University' (student feedback).

Future plans are in the offing for an MLitt on *Comics Studies*.

We are pleased to congratulate Sarah Lightman and Zanne Domoney-Lyttle both of whom have submitted their doctoral thesis, and Nyla Ahmad, who has submitted her MPhil thesis.

Further PGR students work in affiliated areas of text/image interaction:

- Claire Allison on North African comics
- David Boyd on Deleuze and manga
- Jean Paul Brandt on Chilean photography
- Sophie Conaghan-Sexon on queer approaches to medieval devotional texts and images (AHRC)
- Jordanna Conn on Jewish proto-comics
- Adam Flint on monstrosity in early modern wonder books (GU College Scholarship)
- Lauren Gating (LKAS scholarship) on comics and cancer care
- Andrew Godfrey on comics and medicine (AHRC with Dundee)
- Ciara Haverly (MPhil) on Victorian flower emblems
- Lucia Jackson on female superheroes
- Guillaume Lecomte on adaptation and BD
- Johanna Pollick on medieval texts and images related to Christ's wounds (AHRC)
- Danielle Schwertner on female identity and the *Glasgow Looking Glass*
- Gareth Vile on comics and theatre theory (AHRC with Dundee)
- Chris Vezza on emblematic aspects of album covers.

## IN THE MEDIA

The Stirling Maxwell Centre has been called upon fully by international media to comment on text/image matters, and *Frank Quitely: The Art of Comics* received coverage worldwide. A Kelvingrove live streaming attracted over 5000 views in two hours. STV's *The People's History Show* has had episodes on the *Glasgow Looking Glass* and on the cartoons of Archie Gilkison. Laurence Grove was also involved in the filming of *Les Mystères de Tintin* for TV5.

## FUTURE PLANS

The SMC's future plans include:

- the creation of a T&R post in Text/Image Studies, that will support the Centre's activities and lead to the implementation of an MLitt in *Comics Studies*
- further visiting scholars
- updating of the Centre's website at <http://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/mlc/research/stirlingmaxwellcentre/>
- further volumes of Glasgow Emblem Studies and *European Comic Art*
- building on the momentum of the *Comic Invention* exhibition and events, further progress towards the creation of a National Comics Academy
- progress towards a royal entries digitisation project and associated funding
- sponsorship of Leverhulme PGF applications, with projects from Vincent Robert-Nicaud (Oxford) on subversive iconography in official displays and from Claire Bitoun (Oxford) on weeping statues and other aesthetic monsters
- Comics Night at the Museum, to take place on 1 December 2018
- *Drawing the Line*: initial work on a Hunterian-based exhibition on caricature and censorship