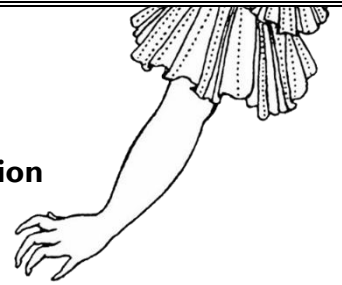


AB 2020: Beardsley Re-Viewed
28–29 May 2020, Bridewell Theatre, St Bride Foundation

Supported by the Alessandra Wilson Fund



Organised by Dr Sasha Dovzhyk

in association with the Birkbeck Centre for Nineteenth-Century Studies

‘The Beardsley “craze”, indeed – if “craze” there be – is really just beginning’.

H. C. Marillier (1899)

A ‘decadent fakir’ and ‘an intellectual Marcellus’, ‘the Fra Angelico of Satanism’ and ‘the only artist who knows what the dance of seven veils is, and can see that invisible dance’: Aubrey Beardsley was many things to many an observer. He ‘pictured’ some of the iconic volumes of the Yellow Nineties, including works by Ernest Dowson, George Egerton, and Oscar Wilde, and defined the style of the two key periodicals of the English Decadence, *The Yellow Book* and *The Savoy*. Exploiting the cheap, accurate, and speedy method of photomechanical reproduction, Beardsley’s black-and-white designs achieved, in his own words, ‘publicity without a frame, and beauty without modelling’. Provoked by his wanton line, the guardians of good morals, parodists, and imitators added fuel to the fire of the Beardsley Craze, while artists worldwide absorbed the lessons of his stylistic economy and near-abstract composition. Although his professional career spanned a mere six years, the aftermath of the 1890s Beardsley boom was felt throughout the twentieth century across the globe. With the publication of Linda Gertner Zatlín’s fundamental *Aubrey Beardsley: A Catalogue Raisonné* of 2016 to be followed by a major Beardsley exhibition at Tate Britain in 2020, are we in a new ‘Beardsley period’ today?

AB 2020: Beardsley Re-Viewed aims to reclaim the artist for the twenty-first century and revive the subversive and transformative potential of the Beardsleyesque. This two-day conference welcomes interdisciplinary approaches as interventions to established models for Beardsley scholarship and invites debate about academic and museological narratives that have shaped Beardsley’s reputation. In keeping with the transnational turn in the humanities, we will explore responses to Beardsley’s work from a variety of cultural locales and across the arts. We are curious about the metamorphoses of Beardsley’s imagery and styles in the work of Mina Loy and Pablo Picasso, Claude Cahun and Leon Bakst, Vladimir Nabokov and Alexander McQueen, as well as lesser-known cultural figures and movements. While highlighting new archival work, we seek to reassess Beardsley in relation to the urgent debates around mediality, queerness, disabled identities, and camp aesthetics. Finally, we are eager to view and review the largest exhibition of Beardsley’s original drawings scheduled for Spring 2020 at Tate Britain and scrutinise the current ‘Beardsley period’ from within.

Forms of participation

◆ Conference papers

We welcome *400-word abstracts* for 20-minute individual papers which may reflect on the following themes:

- AB as camp, AB in camp
- AB and the economics of artistic freedom
- Beardsley Women, Beardsley Men
- AB's sexuality and sexual iconography
- Line process in relation to AB
- Transnational Beardsleyism, global Beardsleyana
- AB and the mythologies of the artist
- Bibliophiles, collectors, Beardsleyites
- AB within New Decadence and New Modernist Studies
- AB and Medical Humanities
- Queer perspectives and appropriations of AB

◆ Contributions to the roundtable on Tate Britain's Beardsley show

We accept *150-word expressions of interest* from potential participants in the roundtable discussion of the upcoming exhibition at Tate Britain.

◆ Creative responses

We are interested in featuring creative works that in any way engage with or draw on Beardsley and the Beardsleysque. The projects may include but are in no way limited to installations, readings, performances, photography, textile art, printmaking. Proposals should include a *500-word project descriptions*, *artist's CV or Resume*, up to *6 links or images* of previous/related work.

Please email submissions and *50-word biographies* to sasha@sashadovzhyk.com by 30 December 2019.

AB 2020: Beardsley Re-Viewed is generously supported by the **Alessandra Wilson Fund**. Alessandra Wilson (1943–2007) was an outstanding teacher and a dedicated comprehensive head, who served 21 years, first at Walsingham School on Clapham Common and then Hampton Community College. Alessandra's entire professional career was devoted to pursuing the ideal of equal opportunity. In keeping with this vision, we are delighted to offer free attendance to all as well as travel bursaries to students and early-career participants of the conference.

