



The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem, 1850–1925

Annie Ravenhill-Johnson, edited by Paula James

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A groundbreaking book that considers trade union emblems and banners as art objects in their own right, studying their commissioning, their designers and the social conditions and gender relations that they knowingly or unwittingly reveal.

“The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem, 1850–1925” is a totally engaging read. It offers a truly scholarly approach to the reading of trade union banners, drawing upon art historical method and a full understanding of the classical references which we need to understand the symbolic import of the banners. But of equal importance is the contemporary historical reference that the author and editor bring to their analysis, showing how trade unionists could both co-opt classicism and high art in the service of political and social struggle to transform the lot of their members. This is a bold tale, well told, and visually compelling.

—Professor Nick Stanley, Honorary Research Fellow, The British Museum

‘The Art and Ideology of the Trade Union Emblem, 1850–1925’ is a groundbreaking book that considers trade union emblems and banners as art objects in their own right. It studies their commissioning, their designers and the social conditions and gender relations that they knowingly or unwittingly reveal. The volume celebrates working-class culture and shows how it could be both innovative and derivative. Annie Ravenhill-Johnson’s exploration of the artistry of the emblems – the art of and for the toiling masses – sets these images of labour in their historical, cultural and ideological context.

Contents

Preface; Acknowledgements; About the Authors; List of Plates; Introduction; Chapter 1: The Genre; Chapter 2: The Emblem within the Emblem; Chapter 3: Depicting the Worker; Chapter 4: James Sharples and His Legacy; Chapter 5: The Development of the Architecture of the Emblem; Chapter 6: Arthur John Waudby and the Symbols of Freemasonry; Chapter 7: Men, Myths and Machines; Chapter 8: The Classical Woman; Chapter 9: Walter Crane; Chapter 10: The Art of Copying; Conclusion: Reprise and Review; Notes; Glossary; Bibliography; Index

About the Author(s) / Editor(s)

Dr Annie Ravenhill-Johnson, born 1942, is from Jersey in the Channel Islands. She gained her BA (Hons) from the University of Warwick, and holds a postgraduate diploma with distinction and an MA with distinction in the history of art and design from the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (University of Central England in Birmingham), where she also studied for her DPhil.

Paula James was born in Southampton in 1950. She holds a PhD in Latin from the University of Southampton, and is a senior lecturer with the Classical Studies Department at the Open University, having held the post since 1993. She is also a staff tutor in the Arts Faculty of the Open University’s South East Region.

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