

VISUAL STUDIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE

RSVP to vsri@usc.edu. See <https://dornsife.usc.edu/vsri/> for updated information.

FALL 2024 EVENTS

Images Out of Time Seminar



Magic into Metaphor: The Victorian Search for Re-enchantment and the Origins of Art

AMY WOODSON-BOULTON

Professor of History, Loyola Marymount University

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

5-7pm PST

THH 309K

Readings and links for Images Out of Time events will be made available when you RSVP to vsri@usc.edu.

In the smoky, jingoist last decades of the nineteenth century, many Britons thought of their new industrial world as different from all other human history. What they had lost or gained became points of heated debate across multiple cultural fields. Ancient and living traditional societies could help clarify this distinction, but was it to be celebrated or mourned? Sharing a chapter from her book in progress, historian Amy Woodson-Boulton brings together works usually treated separately—by William Morris, James Frazer, Andrew Lang, Jane Harrison, and William Lethaby—to explore surprising points of convergence and revealing differences. For each author, considering the origins of art was part of negotiating a new and modern relationship with nature, one founded on control and extraction as opposed to continuity and ritual. Using artistic fieldwork in Iceland, travels in Greece, and Britain's growing anthropology collections, they asked, How did the old way of appeasing nature with magic and ritual slip into metaphor, a representation existing only for itself? And would recovering the old enchantment uncover a different kind of art?

Amy Woodson-Boulton is the author of *Transformative Beauty: Art Museums in Industrial Britain* and co-editor (with Minsoo Kang) of *Visions of the Industrial Age, 1830-1914: Modernity and the Anxiety of Representation in European Culture*. She is Professor of History at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

RSVP
to
vsri@usc.edu for
more information
and for
readings.

Image Credit: Edward Burne-Jones, William Morris in Iceland, 1870. Source: Wikimedia commons.

