

Professor Richard Woodfield

Honorary Senior Research Fellow

[Department of Art History, Film and Visual Studies \(/schools/lcahm/departments/historyofart/index.aspx\)](/schools/lcahm/departments/historyofart/index.aspx)

Contact details

Telephone **+44 (0)115 952 3320** (tel:+44 115 952 3320)

Email **r.woodfield@bham.ac.uk** (mailto:r.woodfield@bham.ac.uk)



About

I am the Editor of the ***Journal of Art Historiography*** (<http://arthistoriography.wordpress.com/>), which is an Open Access ejournal. Besides being deeply interested in the variety of practices associated with writing the history of art, I am specifically interested in the work and intellectual background of E.H. Gombrich and also eighteenth century English aesthetics and art theory.

Biography

In 1970 I signed up to work for a PhD with Ernst Gombrich at the Warburg Institute on eighteenth century art theory. My co-supervisor was Richard Wollheim at University College. As the two did not see eye to eye, I gave up and turned to publishing articles instead. In 1986 I rejoined Gombrich to work on the production of his *Reflections on the History of Art* and again in 1994 to work on *The Essential Gombrich*. I visited him fairly regularly from 1988 to 2000 for conversations about his work. In 2009 I founded the ***Journal of Art Historiography*** (<http://arthistoriography.wordpress.com/>).

Prior to my retirement in 2005 I was School Research Professor for the Nottingham Trent School of Art and Design, where I am now Emeritus Professor of Aesthetics and Art Theory. In 2007 I was appointed Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Art History in the University of Glasgow. In 2011 I joined the University of Birmingham at the invitation of ***Professor Rampley*** (</staff/profiles/historyofart/rampley-matthew.aspx>).

Research

I am currently working on a monograph provisionally titled 'Gombrich amongst the Anglophones', which is intended to set his work in its Viennese context. I am particularly interested in the development of sematology, first proposed by Heinrich Gomperz and then developed into a robust form of semiotics by Karl Bühler. In relation to that I am preoccupied with the work of the Vienna School of Art History, particularly with a series of problems formulated by Julius von Schlosser.

I have had a long-standing interest in eighteenth century English aesthetics and art theory and my most recent publication in that area was on the first English translation of Leonardo da Vinci's *Trattato della Pittura*. My current interest focuses on the decline of magic and demonology (as discussed in Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*) and connects to my interest in Gomperz and in Gombrich's work with Ernst Kris and Otto Kurz on *Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist*.

Other activities

I am responsible for the Gombrich Archive at **www.gombrich.co.uk** (<http://www.gombrich.co.uk>).

Publications

I recently published 'The 1721 English Treatise of Painting: a Masonic moment in the Culture of Newtonianism', in Claire Farago (ed.), *Re-reading Leonardo: The Treatise on Painting across Europe from 1550 to 1900* (Burlington VT and Aldershot: Ashgate) 475-91.

I have edited *Gombrich on Art and Psychology* (1986), *Gombrich's Reflections on the History of Art* (1987), *The Essential Gombrich* (1996), Ernst Gombrich, *Dal mio tempo: Città, maestri, incontri* (1999) and constructed the Gombrich Archive **www.gombrich.co.uk** (<http://www.gombrich.co.uk>). I have also published books on Riegl and Warburg and many articles and reviews. My publications are listed at **www.richardwoodfield.org.uk** (<http://www.richardwoodfield.org.uk>) and a selection of my papers is available on my site at **<http://birmingham.academia.edu/RichardWoodfield/Papers>** (<http://birmingham.academia.edu/RichardWoodfield/Papers>).