

Dr Richard Clay BA, MA, PhD

Senior Lecturer in History of Art

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About

Most of my research publications discuss aspects of eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century French and, to a lesser extent, British visual cultures. However, I've also published on contemporary jewellery and I lead a collaborative research project about the history of Birmingham's suburbs (1880-1960). My interest in collaborative research across disciplines and across sectors led me to be appointed as the Co-Director of the Digital Humanities Hub - a c.£3.5m project focused on the use leading edge multi-touch technologies, especially in museums, libraries, and archives.

Qualifications

- BA(York)
- MA(dist)
- PhD (University College London)

Biography

I gained my PhD from UCL in 1999 and held a Henry Moore Postdoctoral Research Fellowship there until I joined the department at the University of Birmingham as a Research Fellow in 2002. I was appointed as a lecturer in 2004 and a Senior Lecturer in 2009.

Teaching

- Third year and MA, 'Visual cultures in the Age of Revolution, 1789-1848'

Research

Richard's research has focused particularly on 'iconoclasm', especially in revolutionary Paris, and on French visual cultures of Catholicism during the 'Enlightenment'. His book, *The Transformation of Signs: Iconoclasm in Paris, 1789-1795*, will be published by SVEC (Oxford) in 2012, he is an academic advisor for the Tate Britain *Iconoclasm* exhibition that is due to open in September 2013, and co-investigator (with Professor Leslie Brubaker, IAA) for the associated AHRC-funded *Iconoclasm* international network.

Richard has also published on prints representing Joseph Priestley in the 1780s and 1790s. He was lead curator on the Barber Institute exhibition *Matthew Boulton and the art of making money* (2009). The show explored the production, dissemination, and reception of coins, medals, and tokens produced between 1787 and 1809, mostly at Boulton's Soho manufactory. In his essay for the exhibition's catalogue, Richard argues that Boulton helped make Birmingham, briefly, the 'art capital of the world' - at least in quantitative terms!

As the Principal Investigator on the AHRC-funded collaborative research project, *Suburban Birmingham: Spaces and Place, 1880-1960*, Richard is conducting research into visual representations of bombing in the city's suburbs during World War II. He has also published on contemporary jewellery as 'wearable art'.

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- [Accessibility/transcripts/artsandlaw/historyart/clay.aspx](#)

Research grants

Richard is Co-Investigator for a c.£50k international network project that is funded by the AHRC (PI, Professor Leslie Brubaker, IAA). The project brings scholars from diverse disciplines together with museum professionals from the UK, the USA, France and Japan to move forward debates about iconoclasm across cultures and historical periods. The network will be informed by, and will help to inform, *Tate Britain's* 2013 exhibition on iconoclasm and will lead to a range of scholarly publications.

Richard is Principal Investigator on the AHRC-funded (£282,000) collaborative research project, *Suburban Birmingham: Spaces and Place, 1880-1960* (budget £380,000). The project collaborators are University of Birmingham, University of Birmingham Special Collections (UBSC), Birmingham Libraries and Archives (BLA), and Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries (BM&AG). Starting in October 2008, the grant is being used to buy out librarians, archivists, and curators from UBSC, BLA, and BM&AG for one week per month. Two such teams, working together for 12 months alongside Richard and his co-Investigators (Professor Ian Grosvenor and Dr Francesca Berry), are using the collaborating institutions' collections to conduct research into the history of Birmingham's suburbs. The teams are selecting hundreds of objects from the collections for conservation and digitisation, the resulting scans, along with catalogue entries and essays, will be used to build a major new website that will be launched in 2011. In the same year, the partner institutions will also be installing new displays designed by the research team, focusing on the city's suburbs.

Richard is the Principal Investigator for *Suburban Birmingham: Hands On*. This c.£40k project's team includes Human-Computer Interaction experts from UB and a freelance graphic designer who are working with Richard to produce a multi-user, multi-touch output based on the website data produced by the main *Suburban Birmingham* project (see above). The *Hands On* output will be displayed on new multi-user, multi-touch screens in the £192m Library of Birmingham (opening 2013), the £10m 'Birmingham History Galleries' at Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries (opening 2012), and in the new Cadbury Research Library at the University of Birmingham. HCI academics will work with psychologists from UCL to test the new software with user groups from all of the partner heritage organisations.

Richard is Co-Investigator for *Shiphape 3D* with Nigel Nayling (University of Wales Trinity Saint David) on a c.£40k project whose team includes Human-Computer Interaction experts from the University of Birmingham. This project is based on laser scans of medieval ship remains found recently at Newport in Wales and on digital models based upon them. Together, the team are developing ways of displaying this data in interactive 3D multi-user ways that can be displayed on active stereo multi-touch screens. Like *Hands On* (see above), the outputs will be tested with user groups from various heritage organisations.

Richard is Co-Investigator on a £15k AHRC-funded project (PI, Dr Phil Jones, GEES) that focuses on cultural learning and cultural intermediation historically and in the contemporary world. This cross-university and cross-sector collaborative project has led to the submission of a major grant application (decision pending).

Richard was co-organiser of, and speaker at, the British Academy-funded conference *The five senses and the eighteenth century* in May 2008. In 2011 an essay by Richard ('Smells and Bells in Revolutionary Paris') will be published among selected papers from the conference in *Eighteenth Century Studies*.

Working alongside Dr Paul Spencer-Longhurst, between October 2007 and March 2008 Richard organised and spoke at a series of six AHRC-funded international workshops, *Investigating and Communicating the Historical Significance of Matthew Boulton (1728-1809)*. The events were run in collaboration with the Birmingham Assay Office, Birmingham Libraries and Archives, Birmingham Museums and Art Galleries, the Lunar Society, and Revolutionary Players. Speakers from the UK, Australia and the USA addressed audiences drawn from academia, museums, libraries, archives, and community groups. The series helped bring together stakeholders involved in the planning of the Matthew Boulton bicentenary to share their knowledge and understanding of Boulton, of the world in which he lived, and of the challenges faced in communicating his historical significance in 2009.

The catalogue that Richard edited, *Matthew Boulton and the art of making money* (Brewin, 2009) was generously funded by the Henry Moore Foundation and by the University of Birmingham's Dean's Special Initiative Fund.

Other activities

- Co-director of the [Digital Humanities Hub \(/facilities/digitalhumanitieshub/index.aspx\)](#)
- Member of the University's Block Grant Partnership Management Board
- Member of the Library of Birmingham ICT Advisory Committee

Publications

- Richard Clay, 'Matthew Boulton and Birmingham 'the Art Capital of the World'', in Richard Clay (ed.), *Matthew Boulton and the Art of Making Money*, Studley, 2009
- Richard Clay, 'Riotous images: representations of Joseph Priestley in British prints during the French Revolution', in *History of Education*, 27 (4), 2008, pp. 585-605
- Richard Clay, 'Signs in flux: the art of contemporary British jewellers', in Norman Cherry (ed.), *Masters and Protégés*, Koyosha-inc, 2008, pagination unknown.
- Richard Clay, 'Bouchardon's statue of Louis XV; iconoclasm and the transformation of signs', in Stacy Boldrick & Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, Ashgate, 2007, pp. 93 - 122
- Richard Clay, 'Contested objects; contested terms', in Stacy Boldrick & Richard Clay (eds), *Iconoclasm: contested objects, contested terms*, Ashgate, 2007, pp. 5 - 11
- Richard Clay, 'The expulsion of the Jesuits and the treatment of Catholic representational objects during the French Revolution', in John W. O'Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. (eds), *The Jesuits II: cultures, sciences, and the arts, 1540 - 1773*, Toronto University Press, 2006, pp. 691 - 706
- Richard Clay (ed), *Travel by the Book*, George Bell Institute, 2006
- Richard Clay, 'Violating the sacred: theft and 'iconoclasm' in late eighteenth-century Paris', *Oxford Art Journal*, 26 (2), 2003, pp. 1- 22
- Review of the Hayward gallery exhibition, 'Goya: drawings from his private albums', *Print Quarterly*, July 2001
- Richard Clay, 'Saint-Sulpice de Paris: art, politics and sacred space in revolutionary Paris (1789-1795)', *Object*, 1, 1998

Forthcoming

- Richard Clay, *The Transformation of Signs: Iconoclasm in Paris, 1789-1795*, SVEC, Oxford, 2012
- Richard Clay, 'Smells and Bells: Iconoclasm in Paris during the French Revolution', in *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 2012

Expertise

Iconoclasm/vandalism, especially of the French Revolution; French and British visual cultures (especially French) of the 18th and 19th centuries

Languages and other information

Co-Director of the [Heritage and Cultural Learning Hub \(/facilities/digitalhumanitieshub/index.aspx\)](#) - a c.£3.5m project focused on the use leading edge multi-touch

