

BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Calè, Luisa (2019) Maria Cosway's Hours: Cosmopolitan and Classical Visual Culture in Thomas Macklin's Poets Gallery. In: Haywood, I. and Matthews, S. and Shannon, M. (eds.) Romanticism and Illustration. Studies in Romanticism. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 221-242. ISBN 9781108425711.

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/21671/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html>

or alternatively

contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.

'Maria Cosway's *Hours*: Cosmopolitan and Classical Visual Culture in Thomas Macklin's Poets Gallery'

'Invention in Painting does not imply the invention of the subject; for that is commonly supplied by the Poet or Historian', argued Sir Joshua Reynolds in 1771. What 'strikes upon the publick sympathy' is classical or Biblical: although 'no subject can be of universal ... concern', Reynolds recommended 'the great events of Greek and Roman fable and history', and the Bible, which will be 'known in those countries where our art is in request'.¹ The literary galleries reached for an alternative, British literary canon. Proposals headed 'The British Poets', published by Thomas Macklin on 1 January 1787, announced the publication of 'a Series of Prints illustrative of the Most Celebrated British Poets', from Chaucer to Smith, engraved from 'One Hundred Pictures of the Most Interesting Subjects from the Poets of *Great Britain*'. The list of painters was headed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, the President of the Royal Academy and ended with Benjamin West, 'Historical Painter to his Majesty'. Macklin's British Poets was designed to be 'Published in Numbers, each Number containing Four Prints; with Letter-Press, explanatory of the Subject, extracted from the Writings of the Respective Poets'.² If the poets of Great Britain provided the subjects, how would they be translated on canvas? What kinds of invention and what kinds of art did the alliance of poetry and painting offer Britain?

The literary gallery model raised the expectation for an art that would match the Old Masters and compare with the Vatican. Newspaper advertisements

¹ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. by Robert R. Wark (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 57-58.

² *PROPOSALS by THOMAS MACKLIN, No. 39 Fleet Street, for Publishing a Series of Prints illustrative of the Most Celebrated British Poets*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 200 B 280. On Macklin's Poets Gallery, see F. R. Boase, 'Macklin and Bowyer', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26:1-2 (1963), 148-77; Sean Higgins, 'Thomas Macklin's Poets' Gallery: Consuming the Sister Arts in Late Eighteenth-Century London' (unpublished PhD, London: Courtauld, 2002); G. E. Bentley Jnr, *Thomas Macklin (1752-1800), Picture-Publisher and Patron: Creator of the Macklin Bible (1791-1800)* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2016), esp.85-111. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

announced the publication of the first number and the opening of 'the Exhibition of such Pictures as have been painted for the above Work, at the Poets Gallery, late the Mitre Tavern, Fleet-street'.³ Associated with Samuel Johnson and the publishing industry, this address emphasized the role of print as a reproductive medium for the circulation of painting. The project promised 'a Monument to the English School',⁴ appropriating Horace's claim that writing can build a memorial more lasting than bronze, which publishers had used to celebrate their editions of authors. The printseller's national contribution to the field of art was presented through an unlikely comparison: 'this collection of paintings will be as lasting a monument of the powers of the pencil in England, as the Vatican is at Rome, and the names of Reynolds, Peters, Gainsborough, Stothard, Cosway, and Opie, will be held in as high estimation by foreigners as Raphael, Titian, Guido, Corregio, or any ancient master whatever'.⁵ Such comparisons depended on the circulation of reproductive prints in the age of mechanical reproduction, a museum without walls that had the potential to include the whole field of art. Galleries of prints produced a cosmopolitan visual culture by bringing together in a paper repository works dotted on the Grand Tour or closed up in aristocratic cabinets, but they also preserved the visual world of lost collections. After the Old Master paintings of Houghton Hall were sold to Empress Catherine of Russia in 1779, John Boydell's gallery of engravings performed a national function in preserving the collection on paper.⁶ Macklin's proposal emphasizes the 'influence the Fine Arts have on the Taste and Manners, and the

³ *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, Wednesday 9 April 1788; *The Times*, 16 April 1788; *The World*, 17 April 1788.

⁴ *The Morning Post*, 11 April 1788.

⁵ *The Morning Post*, 11 April 1788.

⁶ On Boydell's Houghton Gallery, see Kristin Campbell, "'The Proprietor exerts his utmost Care...': the Commercial and Commemorative Fates and Fortunes of John Boydell's Houghton Gallery Project", in *Agents of Space: Eighteenth-Century Art, Architecture, and Visual Culture*, ed. by Christina Smylitopoulos (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 78-100: 79; Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: 'Turning Readers into Spectators'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 24-25. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

Commerce of a Country', arguing for the benefits of reproductive engraving in turning unique artworks into sources of applied design, mechanical reproduction, and trade: 'they excite Genius and employ Industry at home, they extend Commerce and Credit abroad, and ultimately decide the Balance of Profit in favour of the Country in which they are most cherished'.⁷ Incongruous though it might seem, the comparison of Fleet Street with the Vatican and of modern painters with the Old Masters calls attention to the role of print in the transnational circulation of art, suggesting how a foreign and transnational market could be harnessed to national ends.

The national rhetoric shaping the literary gallery phenomenon in promotional publications and press coverage draws out the tension between the British and cosmopolitan coordinates of the field of art. 'Exhibiting Englishness' was key to the literary galleries' role in 'the Formation of a National Aesthetic', as Rosie Dias argues.⁸ English literature provides the national element in the first number of Macklin's *British Poets*, but the first artists chosen to illustrate them stand out for their cosmopolitan artistic careers. As foreign painters attracted to Britain by its emerging institutions, commissions, and exhibition culture, they exemplify a transnational field of art. In this paper I will focus on the first number of Macklin's *British Poets*, exploring the visual culture of Maria Cosway's *The Hours* to examine the alternative traditions and trajectories it articulates as an engagement between text and image. First, I will compare the exhibition and the serial publication to tease out the tension between painting and poetry, Englishness and cosmopolitanism, setting Thomas Gainsborough's *Lavinia* against Cosway's painting. I will proceed to reconstruct Cosway's cosmopolitan development as a painter, turning to her corpus

⁷ PROPOSALS by THOMAS MACKLIN; Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery*, 19-20.

⁸ Rosie Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

of literary paintings and their dialogue with classical visual culture and the Old Masters. Finally I will explore how the painting is repurposed by Macklin, focusing on two acts of mediation: Francesco Bartolozzi's engraving, and the 'poetic illustration' provided by Thomas Gray's Ode on the Spring.

A visit to the Poets' Gallery entailed an intermedial practice of viewing and reading. The 'poetical descriptive catalogue' included in the one shilling admittance fee lists each exhibit by poet and painter, adding a title and a short excerpt indicating the scene or point in time illustrated. Longer extracts, where possible the poems in their entirety, faced the engravings in the numbers of the *British Poets*, which often included reference to a page number, and highlighted the point in time specifically represented in italics for ease of reference. From the third number, published in 1791, excerpts are also inscribed in the captions of the prints. Both Fuseli and Macklin compared the dissemination of engravings to the invention of printing. While engraving did for painting what print did for manuscript; in turn, the visual culture of prints produced new channels of circulation for literature.⁹ In other words, literature provided *Poetic Descriptions of Choice and Valuable Prints*.

The double attribution of a literary subject to a poet and a painter encouraged ekphrastic exercises. Reading the Catalogue from left to right meant seeing the name of the poet, followed by that of the painter, with the excerpt in the middle. This typographical layout bears out Henry Fuseli's claim that 'the excellence of pictures or of language consists in raising clear, complete, and circumstantial images, and turning readers into spectators'.¹⁰ Fuseli's statement adapts to pictures Joseph Warton's Aristotelian claim about rhetoric's power to bring images to the eyes of the

⁹ *Analytical Review*, 1 (1788), 216; Macklin, *Poetic Description*, iii.

¹⁰ *Analytical Review*, 1 (June 1788), 216.

Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

reader.¹¹ The Poets Gallery shows how a literary quotation works as a common ground, where poet and painter can be measured against each other. This intermedial play of text and image invited readers to associate alternative painters to their favourite texts, or alternative literary inventions to paintings on display.

Employing the most prominent modern painters offered a new contemporaneity to a canon of earlier poets, showing how painting can test and transform literary genres. The first exhibition catalogue, issued in April 1788, gives pride of place to Thomas Gainsborough's *Lavinia*, listed as an illustration from James Thomson's *The Seasons* (1730):¹²

The lamented name of Gainsborough occupies the first place, with one of the last perhaps, but surely one of the most beautiful products of his pencil. This is a faithful transcript of the forms and hues of nature, and the forms and hues of nature never leave the mind indifferent. ... but is this the sympathy that would seize our breast at the sight of such an infant as Lavinia? – the figure before us is the offspring and immediate heir of poverty; the stumpy shortness of her form, the raggedness of her garb and air take nothing indeed from her innocence, but never can allow her to be mistaken for the 'lovely young Lavinia that once had friends, and on whose birth fortune deceitful smiled.' – in framing this child, the artist, we affirm, never dreamt she was to be transformed into the heroine of Thomson's Autumn.¹³

In his review, Fuseli rejects the implicit upward narrative that the character from Thomson's *Seasons* projects on Gainsborough's rustic subject. His reading suggests

¹¹ Joseph Warton, *An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Poe*, 4th edn, 2 vols (London, 1782), II, 165; Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery*, 59-60.

¹² 1788, p. 3.

¹³ AR, 4 (July 1789), 368

Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

that once the association fails to work, one might try out reading the painting and the text as two stages of the character's development in a plot of improvement, though that too proves unconvincing. Thomson's *Seasons* was one of the most illustrated poems of the eighteenth century, so its choice as a subject for the Poets Gallery could respond to commercial demands.¹⁴ On the other hand, Gainsborough's art becomes the vehicle of a revaluation of Thomson's poetry. As Hazlitt later argued, visual culture invited 'to read poetry with the eye of a connoisseur': 'an admirer of Teniers or Hobbima might think little of the pastoral sketches of Pope or Goldsmith; even Thomson describes not so much the naked object as what he sees in his mind's eye, surrounded and glowing with the mild, bland, genial vapours of his brain'.¹⁵ Read through a realist visual canon of rustic subjects, the literary pastoral of earlier eighteenth-century poets comes across as abstract and their power of invention divorced from experience and actuality. Exposing Thomson's pen to Gainsborough's brush meant articulating a generational gap and an alternative politics of sympathy.

Seeing Literature at the Poets Gallery encouraged exercises in retrospective attribution. While Macklin's plan announced paintings 'illustrative of the British Poets', and suggested paintings commissioned for the purpose, as Fuseli pointed out, 'It appears that some of the pictures were not painted for the collection, or ever could be intended to illustrate any of the poets which the gallery professes to celebrate'.¹⁶ Gainsborough's *Lavinia* is among them; it was painted in 1786,

¹⁴ On illustrated editions of Thomson's *Seasons*, see Sandro Jung, 'Print Culture, High-Cultural Consumption, and Thomson's "The Seasons", 1780-1797', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44:4 (2011), 495-514.

¹⁵ Hazlitt, 'Mr Crabbe', in *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, ed. P.P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: Dent, 1930-1934), XIX, 53.

¹⁶ *AR* (1790). In addition to *Lavinia*, Fuseli also singled out Maria Cosway's *The Hours*, Gainsborough's *Hobbinol* and *Ganderetta* associated with Somerville, both of which were published in the second number of the *British Poets*, published in 1790; Reynolds's *The Vestal*, which recycled as *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

exhibited at Gainsborough's gallery in Schonberg House, then in Liverpool in 1787 under the title *Village Girl with Milk*, before being sold to Macklin and repurposed as *Lavinia* in 1788.¹⁷ These retroactive associations demonstrate complex processes of intermedial adaptation and canon formation, which elevate painters by way of literary classics and cast literature as a retrospective illustration of painting.

Comparing the order of the exhibition catalogue to the sequencing of the print publication reveals divergent priorities. The success of the exhibition depended on the painters' reputation as well as on the choice of fashionable texts. While the exhibition catalogue starts with Gainsborough's rustic scene, which spells out the Englishness of English art, the first number of the *British Poets* tells a different story. Since Macklin's prospectus pointed out that 'Any One Number may be had separate, but no less than a whole Number will be Sold', it is important to pay attention to the juxtaposition of pictures in each number. The quality of the publication is sanctioned by the choice of the most established engraver of his day: three out of four stipple engravings published in the first number of *British Poets* are signed 'F. Bartolozzi R.A. & Engraver to his Majesty sculpt.', the fourth by his pupil P.W. Tomkins. While the proposals for *British Poets* had emphasized the Royal Academy titles and Royal appointments of Macklin's painters, the first number does not include Reynolds, nor West, nor Barry, the Professor of Painting. Instead, it tells a different story. Choosing Angelica Kauffman, Henry Fuseli and Maria Cosway as the first artists to illustrate the *British Poets* meant employing foreign painters formed on the Grand Tour and known for a cosmopolitan canon of literary subjects. Macklin's choice of Bartolozzi invited comparisons between the inventions of the British poets and his corpus of

an illustration to Gregory's Ode to Mercy, was not engraved in the *British Poets*; nor was The Reverend Peters' *The Death-bed of the Just* associated with Young.

¹⁷W.T. Whitley, *Thomas Gainsborough* (London: Murray, 1915), 264-5, 294; Ellis Waterhouse, 'Gainsborough's "Fancy Pictures"', *Burlington Magazine*, 88:519 (June 1946), 134-41, on 139. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

reproductive engravings, going from Raphael, Guercino, Guido Reni, Correggio, and Parmigianino to mythological and allegorical inventions by modern painters. The mediation of print encouraged the dream that such a paper gallery might stand up to Old Master Collections in the Vatican and the Uffizi. At the same time, the choice reflects priorities of the print market. Stipple engravings after Kauffman's works were among the most fashionable subjects for furniture prints in the 1770s-80s; Macklin's choice of *Selim, or the Shepherd's Moral* from William Collins's *Continental Eclogues* as her subject for the first number of the British Poets tapped into the fashion for oriental themes that she had championed through her portraits of English aristocrats in Turkish dress.¹⁸ Fuseli's subjects, Queen Katharine's Dream from Shakespeare and Prince Arthur's Dream from Spenser exhibited his skills as a painter of dreams and the supernatural associated with the most celebrated writers of the English canon. Cosway was by far the least established of the three. Like Gainsborough's *Lavinia*, Cosway's *The Hours* was retrospectively adapted as an illustration to a British poet. Yet, while Gainsborough's status as a painter clarifies why he might be critical to the success of the enterprise, what qualified Maria Cosway as an ideal ingredient for prospective subscribers to Macklin's series of engravings?

Maria Cosway's trajectory illuminates the cosmopolitan tradition expressed in the first number of The British Poets. Cosway was born in Florence from British parents who 'kept a lodging and boarding-house on a very large establishment, which was the resort of all the nobility and gentry who at that time visited Italy.'¹⁹ In an autobiographical letter written in 1830 Cosway mentions an early passion for

¹⁸ David Alexander, 'Kauffman and the Print Market in Eighteenth-century England', in *Angelica Kauffman: A Continental Artist in Georgian England*, ed. by Wendy Wassyng Roworth (Brighton: Reaktion Books, 1992), 140-192; Angela Rosenthal, 'The Inner Orient', *Angelica Kauffman: Art and Sensibility* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 123-54.

¹⁹ Stephen Gwynn, *Memorials of an Eighteenth-Century Painter (James Northcote)* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), 149.
Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

drawing, later nourished by the encouragement of Johann Zoffany and Joseph Wright of Derby, and a practice of copying masterpieces at the Uffizi and Palazzo Pitti in Florence. Moving to Rome around 1778, she became part of a circle including the painters James Northcote, Thomas Banks, Prince Hoare, and Henry Fuseli.²⁰ After her father died, 'she came over to England ... filled with the highest expectations of being the wonder of the nation like another Angelica Kauffman',²¹ with letters of introduction for all 'the first people of fashion - Sir J. Reynolds, Cipriani, Bartolozzi, Angelica Kaufman'.²² Apart from the President of the Royal Academy, the other names mentioned indicate a transnational Italian network of artists painting literary and mythological subjects engraved by Bartolozzi and adapted as motifs in interior decoration.

Maria Cosway's exhibition paintings drew on literature as a repository of subjects for painters right from the start. Among the first paintings she exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1781 she chose the subject of Rinaldo from Torquato Tasso's *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, a Renaissance chivalric poem first published in Italian in 1581, which was translated as *Jerusalem Delivered* by Edward Fairfax in 1600 and John Hoole in 1763. The poem was adapted to music, operas, and paintings by Guercino, Tintoretto, Van Dyck, Poussin, Boucher, and Tiepolo. Subjects from the poem had also been exhibited at the Royal Academy by Kauffman and Richard Cosway in 1772, and provided successful subjects for engravings. Maria Cosway's painting was considered 'in the style of Parmigianino' and got her billed as a 'rising

²⁰ Gwynn, 142.

²¹ Gwynn, 149-50.

²² Maria Cosway to Sir William Cosway, Lodi, 24 May 1830, Victoria and Albert Museum, 86 DD Box III, transcribed in G.C. Williamson, *Richard Cosway R.A.* (London: Bell, 1905), 12-15, 13; see also Gerald Barnett, *Richard and Maria Cosway: A Biography* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1995), 50. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

genius'.²³ In 1782 she made her mark with a fancy portrait entered in the exhibition catalogue with a quotation from Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1596). The *Morning Herald* commented that 'the fair artist has unquestionably a claim to a poetic fancy. In the personification of Cynthia she has evidently introduced the Duchess of Devonshire. The sprightly art which distinguishes that Beauty is admirably hit off in the advancing step of the regent of the night'.²⁴ Maria Cosway's fancy portrait suggests her recognition within the Duchess's fashionable milieu.²⁵ At the time, the Cosways' residence in Berkeley Square backed onto the Duke of Devonshire's. The painters' dealings with the Devonshires are documented by the many miniatures that Richard Cosway was commissioned to paint of the Duchess. The medium of the fancy portrait combines different exercises in recognition: in addition to detecting the likeness of the Duchess of Devonshire, whom Cosway remembers as 'then the Reigning beauty and fashion',²⁶ viewers were invited to think about how the sitter embodied the qualities of the literary character taken from the *Faerie Queene*. In turn the iconography of the portrait pointed to the text's circulation within a culture of literary enactments, in which portraiture was part of a spectrum of literary impersonations that included taking on the features of a literary character at a masquerade. Instead of classical or renaissance visual iconographies of Cynthia as an image of the Goddess Diana, Cosway's painting alludes to the attitude of Mercury descending from the sky painted by Raphael in a spandrel fresco of the Villa

²³ *Gazetteer & New Daily Advertiser*, 12 May 1781.

²⁴ *Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser*, 8 May 1782.

²⁵ Barnett, *Richard and Maria Cosway*, 58-59.

²⁶ Maria Cosway to Sir William Cosway, Lodi, 24 May 1830, Victoria and Albert Museum, transcribed in Williamson, *Richard Cosway*, 13.
Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

Farnesina in Rome.²⁷ Cosway's choice of literary subjects and her allusions to the Old Masters emphasized her cosmopolitan world.

Cosway's 'The Hours' was exhibited at the Royal Academy Exhibition in 1783, but it is now lost. Although no literary reference was associated to the painting in the title and catalogue entry, its field of allusion was quickly unveiled by Peter Pindar in *More Lyric Odes, to the Royal Academicians* (1783), his parodic homage to the Royal Academy exhibition. To assess Cosway's ambition, Pindar draws on the trope of ineffability in a rhyming couplet: 'No, no! with all my lyric pow'rs / I'm not like Mrs COSWAY's *Hours*'. However, the rhyme aligning 'lyric powers' with Cosway's *Hours* is debunked in the following line, which qualifies her *Hours* as 'red as cock turkeys, plump as barn door chicken'. Pindar's parody continues in a learned footnote, where his act of appreciation mobilizes a fashionable aesthetic vocabulary: 'a sublime picture this! The expression is truly Homeric, - The fair artist hath in the most surprizing manner communicated to canvas the old Bard's idea of the *Brandy-fac'd Hours*. - See the *Iliad*'.²⁸ Pindar's retitling activates the conventions of literary painting. In Alexander Pope's 'Poetical Index' to Homer the Hours are listed under 'Allegorical and Fictitious Persons' and defined 'Keepers of the Gates of Heaven'.²⁹ Pindar's writing unveils Homer's airy allegories of time in their fleshly embodiments. Their survival in the contemporary world was degraded, their performance subjected to innuendo. Such debasement undermined Cosway's reputation and turned her literary ambition into bathos.

²⁷ Raphael's fresco from the Chigi Gallery Spandrel of the Villa Farnesina was engraved by Marcantonio (BM Department of Prints and Drawings, H,2.93).

²⁸ Peter Pindar, *More Lyric Odes, to the Royal Academicians*, by Peter Pindar, a distant relation to the Poet of Thebes, and Laureate to the Academy (London, 1783), 4. ²⁹ Alexander Pope, *The Iliad of Homer, translated by Mr Pope*, 6 vols (London: Lintot, 1715-1720), VI, 'Poetical Index', identifies *Iliad*, V.929; see also I, 255; VIII, 534-41; 478-9.

²⁹ Alexander Pope, *The Iliad of Homer, translated by Mr Pope*, 6 vols (London: Lintot, 1715-1720), VI, 'Poetical Index', identifies *Iliad*, V.929; see also I, 255; VIII, 534-41; 478-9. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

So how would such a painting qualify as an illustration of Macklin's British Poets in 1788? What did Maria Cosway bring to Macklin's enterprise? By the mid 1780s, Cosway's Royal Academy exhibits included literary subjects taken from Spenser, Virgil, Homer, and Ossian. Her academic ambition is ridiculed in a visual satire entitled *Maria Costive. at her Studies* (1786), which features the artist at work in her studio, with a selection of her Royal Academy exhibits arranged chronologically from top to bottom to her right: 'Giants of Ossian' must allude to her 1782 *Darthula, in defending the body of her vanguisued father, discovers herself to Cairbar her lover – Ossian*; beneath it hangs 'Eolus' (1782), while on the easel sits 'Samson' (1784), and 'Deluge' (1785) is cast sideways in the corner, half outside the frame. The painter's dress and stance allude to a portrait made by her husband, Richard Cosway, and engraved by Bartolozzi in 1785, in which she poses in the dress and manner of a Rubens portrait. A drawing resting beneath a bowl on the floor reads 'Dicky Caus', announcing the satire's companion piece, published two days later, entitled *Dicky Causway in Plain English*, which parodies a portrait which presented Richard Cosway in a Raphaelesque pose, sitting next to a biography of Rubens.³⁰ The Cosway portraits reference the Old Master style of Rubens mediated through the fashion for chalk drawings associated with French eighteenth-century portraits by Boucher and Watteau. Such choices indicate the Cosways' cosmopolitan cultural identity and their ambition as artists and connoisseurs known for their collection of Old Masters.³¹

In 1784 they had moved to Schomberg House in Pall Mall, where they became neighbours of Gainsborough, and their home backed onto Carlton House, the

³⁰ Anna Reynolds, Lucy Peter, Martin Clayton, *Portrait of the Artist* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2016), 192 and cat. nos 110 and 111.

³¹ Barnett, *Richard and Maria Cosway*, 66.

Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

residence of the Prince of Wales. The new address signalled their social position as artists in a Georgian geography of London's entertainments. The Cosways' home occupied the premises once occupied by John Astley and recently vacated by Dr James Graham, who had turned his suite of rooms into an Aesculapian Temple of Health and Hymen. This classical establishment included a 'Great Apollo Apartment', where fertility cures promised to revive classical pleasures, 'hymenaeal charms' and 'blissful nights' thanks to an 'art of generation' that featured the electromagnetic effects of his famous 'Celestial Bed'.³² The 'insignia of Dr Graham' continued to mark the premises when the Cosways moved in soon after Graham's practice was shut down.³³ Fashion and intrigue also coloured reports of the fashionable gatherings and musical entertainments they hosted at Schonberg House, which were attended by the Prince of Wales and aristocrats she had first met in Italy.³⁴ Her cosmopolitan networks were expanded in trips to Paris in 1785, 1786, and 1787. Among her new acquaintances was the antiquarian Pierre d'Hancarville, known for his writings about Hamilton's Vases, the art of Pompei and Herculaneum and the uninhibited pleasures of Roman antiquity, who became a long term correspondent. Her Parisian socialising included the Duke of Orleans and culminated in her Parisian romance with Thomas Jefferson.³⁵ Horace Walpole ironically captured the international appeal of her soirées at Schomberg House imagining 'the representatives of all the princes of

³² *The Celestial Beds; or, A Review of the Votaries of the Temple of Health, Adelpi, and the Temple of Hymen, Pall-Mall* (London: Kearsly, 1781); *The Temple of Pleasure: A Poem* (London: Langham, 1783), 3-4; Peter Otto, 'The Regeneration of the Body: Sex, Religion and the Sublime in James Graham's *Temple of Health and Hymen*', *Romanticism on the Net*, 23 (August 2001), accessed 5 March 2018; Peter Otto, *Multiplying Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 68-75.

³³ Barnett, 66, quoting from *Morning Herald*, 8 August 1785.

³⁴ Barnett, 65-6.

³⁵ On Cosway's purported affair with Jefferson, see Barnett, *Richard and Maria Cosway*, 90-99, 103-106.

Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

Europe at Mrs Cosway's Diet.'³⁶ She was styled 'The Goddess of Pall Mall, alias La Decima Musa, alias the Magnetic Muse'.³⁷ Showcasing her painting alongside works by Kauffman and Fuseli in the first number of the British Poets signalled Macklin's desire to reach out to her cosmopolitan milieu.

Cosway's *The Hours* is entered in the first Poets Gallery catalogue in 1788 under the title 'Ode to Spring'. Instead of Homer, Cosway is associated with Thomas Gray and the first stanza of his poem is reprinted to anchor her invention to a literary source:

Lo! Where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
 Fair Venus' train appear,
 Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
 And wake the purple year!
 The Attic warbler pours her throat,
 Responsive to the cuckow's note,
 The untaught harmony of spring:
 While whisp'ring thro' the clear blue sky
 Their gather'd fragrance fling.

³⁶ Horace Walpole to Lady Littleton, 28 October 1787, *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. W.S. Lewis, 48 vols (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1937-83), 42: 200, quoted in Tino Gippi, *Maria e Richard Cosway* (Turin: Allemandi, 1988), 15.

³⁷ Tiberius Cavallo to Prince Hoare, 1788, quoted in Gippi, 15.
Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

*Vid. Gray's Ode to the Spring.*³⁸

The alternative, earlier title 'The Hours' is recorded in the caption of the stipple engraving by Bartolozzi published in the first number of Thomas Macklin's Poets Gallery.³⁹ Using this earlier title as a way into Gray's poem signals the convergence of literary and visual iconographies as the poem became a subject for painters. To compare Cosway to Gray is to identify their subjects' common denominator in a culture of commonplacing.

Originally entitled 'Noon-tide An Ode', Gray's composition was a response to a poem by Richard West.⁴⁰ Their poetical exchange was recorded in Gray's Commonplace Book and circulated in correspondence, before being published anonymously in Dodsley's miscellany in 1748.⁴¹ In the Commonplace Book West is identified by the pseudonym Favonius, the Latin equivalent of the Greek Zephyrus, the God of Spring and the West wind. Such a cypher reveals Gray's emotional investment in the allegorical re-enactment of the classical personifications of Spring. Gray's commonplacing offers a rich context for reading the Ode. Under the heading of 'Comparison' Gray entered literary extracts about flowers as fragile symbols of promise, sexual awakening, wasting, and fading away. He started with the famous Chorus of virgins from Catullus's Nuptial Song, which celebrates the flower untouched by the plough compared to the maiden in her prime.⁴² In Catullus's poem

³⁸ *A Catalogue of the First Exhibition of Pictures, Painted for Mr. Macklin, by the Artists of Britain, illustrative of the British Poets* (14 April 1788), 5-6 (No. VI, Ode to Spring).

³⁹ *The Exhibition of the Royal Academy. The Fifteenth* (London, 1783), No. 261, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Richard West to Thomas Gray, 5 May 1742, *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. by P. Toynbee and L. Whibley, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), I 201; 'Ode', *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, 3 vols (London: Dodsley, 1748), II, 265-67; it takes the title 'Ode on the Spring' in *Poems by Mr Gray* (London: Dodsley, 1768), 3-8.

⁴¹ Thomas Gray to Richard West, 3 June 1742, *Correspondence*, I, 213, 250-2; Thomas Gray to Horace Walpole, October 1746, HWC, 14, 7.

⁴² 'Ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis...' ('As a flower springs up secretly in a fenced garden'), Catullus, CIX.39-47, in *Catullus, Tibullus and Pervigilium Veneris*, trans. by F. W. Cornish (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 88-9.

Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

this image is presented by the Chorus of virgins, to which the male Chorus responds with the alternative image of the vine married to the elm tree, but Gray extrapolated the image of the flower from its nuptial ending and stopped time before the plot could move towards a heterosexual resolution. Within Gray's *Commonplace Book* the more personal inflection of flowers as symbols of the fragility of time is mediated by a powerfully allusive record of shared reading. Entries transcribing poems and lists of flowers are interspersed with transcriptions and translations from Catullus's erotic poetry. The erotic tempo of Catullus's injunction to 'seize the moment' before the withering of youth acquires a dramatic urgency marked by the inscription of names and dates, which speak of an exchange terminated by death.⁴³ On the page where he transcribed West's Ode Gray also wrote 'from Catullus: Lesbia, let us (while we may) / Live & love the Time away'. On the following page, he copied Catullus's question: 'Quaeris quot mihi basationes...';⁴⁴ below the transcription he added 'Fav: wrote, May 11 1742 He died, the first of June following'.⁴⁵ The quotations mobilise Catullus's erotic poetry, opening up the 'ambrosial bed' of Zephyrus and Flora to a homoerotic reading. This possibility is defused in the transition from the privacy of the *Commonplace book* to the public circulation of print. Fixed in the world of print, entered under the name of the author, Gray's Ode was cut off from the personal histories of the *commonplace*.

Visual representation activates the erotic possibilities of the text. Gray's 'rosy-bosomed Hours' rhyme with the 'long expecting Flowers'. Literally their expectation refers to the transition from night to day, and winter to Spring, but it also suggests

⁴³ Thomas Gray, 'Comparatio', *Commonplace Book*, Pembroke College, Cambridge, 3 vols, I, 93, 98.

⁴⁴ 'Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus', Carmen V, *Catullus, Tibullus and Pervigilium Veneris*, pp. 6-7; 'You ask how many kissings of you, Lesbia, are enough for me', Carmen VII, *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁵ Gray's *Commonplace Book*, 'Carmina', I, 256-257.

pollination, impregnation, and gestation as key stages in the natural cycle. While the poet is cut out from this promise of Spring, Cosway concentrates on the hours as an allegory of women's promise of fertility. Her composition corresponds to Gray's anatomical detail. Her 'bosomed', scantily clad Hours are suspended in the clouds surrounding a dark sphere symbolising the earth. Their dance-like procession moves from morning to evening, symbolized by two larger kneeling figures representing Aurora thrusting flowers to the left and Night casting her mantle over them as they leave the scene to the right. As Fuseli pointed out, 'These are said to be the vernal hours of Gray; but the whole is a creation of the fair author'.⁴⁶

Cosway's composition alludes to the Borghese Hours, one of two celebrated bas reliefs from a neo-attic Roman sarcophagus bought by Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1587 - 1633) and mounted above opposite doors in the great Gallery of Villa Borghese.⁴⁷ Engravings of the bas relief appeared under the title 'Nuptiales Chorae' (Nuptial Dances) in Giovanni Pietro Bellori and Pietro Santi Bartoli's *Admiranda Romanorum Antiquitatum ac Veteris Sculpturae Vestigia* (1693), later reproduced under the title 'Danseuses' (dancers) in Bernard de Montfaucon's *Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* (1719),⁴⁸ and listed as 'dancing hours' in Josiah Wedgwood's 1779 catalogue.⁴⁹ As part of a Roman sarcophagus, these classical figures captured the ephemeral, transient life of maidens on the threshold of

⁴⁶ *Analytical Review*, 4 (July 1789), 369.

⁴⁷ Les danseuses Borghèse, Paris, Louvre, MR 747; Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 195-6; Adriano Aymonino, 'The Fortune of the Borghese Dancers in Eighteenth and early Nineteenth-Century European Art and Decoration', *Roma fuori Roma: L'esportazione dell'arte moderna da Pio VI all'Unità (1775-1870)*, ed. by Giovanna Campitelli, Stefano Grandesso, Carla Mazzarelli (Rome: Campisano, 2012), 477-92.

⁴⁸ *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*, III (Paris : Florentin Delaulne, Hilaire Foucault, Michel Clousier, Jean-Geoffroy Nyon, Etienne Ganeau, Nicolas Gosselin, et Pierre-François Giffart, 1719), III, part II, pp. 314-5, plates 172-173.

⁴⁹ 'Dancing Hours', *A catalogue of cameos, intaglios, medals, busts, small statues, and bas-relief; with a general account of vases and other ornaments, after the antique, made by Wedgwood and Bentley, and sold at their rooms in Greek Street, Soho, London*, 5th edn with additions (London, 1779), p. 29, no. 205; Alison Kelly, *Decorative Wedgwood* (London, 1965), p. 64. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

adulthood. Detached from its physical location and function, this classical composition could be adapted to many uses.

The metamorphosis of maidens into dancers and then hours involved a process of abstraction. Bartoli and Bellori's engravings reduce the three-dimensional bas reliefs on the sarcophagus to two-dimensional works on paper. In the transfer from stone to the page, the design acquires a literary corpus. A caption inserted underneath the engraving identifies the subject as 'Nuptial Dances', and associates it to the epithalamic tradition. A quotation from Claudian's 'Epithalamium of Palladius and Celerina' and a reference to Catullus's *Pervigilium Veneris* bring home the Bacchic implications of the cycle of bloom and procreation.⁵⁰ The epithalamic tradition also affects the reproduction of the design, which adds iconographic props not present in the original bas relief: a stick and a puck that Montfaucon interpreted as phallic attributes associated with Bacchic rituals.⁵¹ These references are strengthened when this composition is read as part of a pair representing two moments in the epithalamic ritual. Upon turning the page, the engraving representing the other side of the sarcophagus is titled 'Nuptiale Festum' (Nuptial Feast), followed by a quotation from Statius's Epithalamion, while on the right-hand side, just above the location 'in Hortis Burghesis', another title clarifies the subject as 'Baccha'.⁵²

⁵⁰ 'NUPTIALES CHORAE | ET FASTI IUVENUM PLAUSUS MIXTAEQ CHOREIS AUDITAE PER RURA LYRAE. Claudian. *Virginum Chorus nuptias celebrat; nec absimilis ritus in Pervigilio Veneris Catulliano – in Hortis Burghesiis*', *Admiranda Romanarum antiquitatum ac veteris sculpturae vestigia anaglyphico opere elaborata ex marmoreis exemplaribus quae Romae adhuc extant. Notis J.P. Bellorii illustrata. Restituit auxit D. de Rubeis* (Rome, 1693), plate 63 (Nuptial Dances 'and joyous acclamation of youth and the strains of the lyre accompanying dancing in the streets'), see 'Epithalamium of Palladius and Celerina', *Claudian*, trans. Maurice Platnauer, 2 vols (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1922), II, 206-7, lines 22-3. The quotation is followed by the comment 'the chorus celebrates the weddings of virgins; nor is a dissimilar rite in Catullus's *Pervigilium Veneris – In Villa Borghese*' (author's translation).

⁵¹ 'La premiere & la derniere qui ont une main libre, tiennent l'une une espece de palet, l'autre un petit bâton', Montfaucon, *L'Antiquité expliquée*, III, part II, p. 314.

⁵² 'NUPTIALE FESTUM | FRONDE VIRENT POSTES ET FERVENT COMPITA FLAMMIS SERTA FERUNT. Statius epit. *Stellae in Nuptiis ac festis diebus sarta arborumq rami prae foribus affigebantur. Martian Capella Claudian. | Baccha. In Hortis Burghesiis.*', in Pietro Santi Bartoli, *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

When Montfaucon reproduced these plates, he did not include Bellori's captions, and moved the discussion of the Bacchic context to the body of the text, freeing the plates from their association with an epithalamic corpus charged with sexual undertones. Defusing the Bacchic elements of the design meant that the composition could be domesticated to decorate the eighteenth-century interior.

Reproductive media had a significant role in the process of abstraction that freed the iconography of the Dancing Hours. Both Bartoli's and Montfaucon's engravings render the three-dimensionality of the bas relief through cross-hatching. In contrast to their 'baroque shadowy manner', Robert Rosenblum traced the rise of linear abstraction through the choice of techniques that 'reduced' forms 'to completely two-dimensional configuration' in which 'the spatial environment has been completely eradicated'.⁵³ In a new publication reproducing William Hamilton's Vases in the 1790s, Wilhelm Tischbein advocated classical forms 'confined [...] to the simple outline'.⁵⁴ As Thora Brylowe points out, this practice of simplification was part of '“a way of seeing” that idealised and remade the antique'.⁵⁵ Freed from the materiality of the originals, classical composition could be reproduced in a range of media, as exemplified in the work of John Flaxman and the Wedgwood factory. Through Flaxman's versions, The Hours became a fashionable model for chimney

Giovanni Pietro Bellori, and Domenico de Rossi, *Admiranda*, plate 64: Wedding Feast | The doorposts are green with foliage, the crossroads ablaze', Staius, 'Epithalamion in honour of Stella and Violentilla', *Sylvae*, ed. and trans. D.R.Shackleton Bailey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 58-59, lines 231-2.

⁵³ Robert Rosenblum, *The International Style of 1800: a Study in Linear Abstraction* (New York: Garland, 1976), esp. 34-35, 51, 120.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Thora Brylowe, 'Two Kinds of Collections: Sir William Hamilton's Vases, Real and Represented', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 32:1 (Winter 2009), 23-56, at 43.

⁵⁵ Thora Brylowe, 'Antiquity by Design: Re-Mediating the Portland Vase', *Romantic Antiquarianism*, ed. by Noah Heringman and Crystal Lake, *Romantic Circles* (2014), para 11; Vicky Coltman, 'Sir William Hamilton's Vase Publications', *Journal of Design History* 14 (2001), 1-16. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

pieces, table tops, doors, sometimes commissioned directly from artists resident in Rome, sometimes mediated by casts and prints.⁵⁶

Macklin's British Poets has a different print aesthetic: rather than calling attention to the flat medium of paper, Bartolozzi's stipple engraving of Cosway's *The Hours* stands out for the soft volumes and luminosity obtained by the tonal qualities of its dotting technique. Macklin's 1787 proposal announced engravings 'in the manner of Chalk', an intaglio technique that aimed to reproduce the texture of chalk drawings in the crayon manner, to be executed by 'Mr Bartolozzi, his School, and other Eminent Artists'. The first number features stipple engravings, a technique derived from the crayon manner, which did not, however, attempt to reproduce drawing.⁵⁷ In contrast to the flat aesthetic of the outline propounded by publications that turned vases into designs on paper, stipple rendered the soft sensuous texture of flesh, while cross-hatching conveyed a three-dimensional sense of volume. It was associated with furniture prints after Kauffmann.

Compared to the sources, Cosway's *The Hours* stand out for depth, animation, and a reciprocation of looks that is different from the allegorical hours carved out of marble or traced in outline. The marble hours and their reproductions remain within the confines of their medium; they respect their ornamental roles as allegories, fictitious beings deprived of agency; they do not step out of line. By contrast, Cosway's dancers are engaged in a reciprocation of looks that involves the viewers in the action, inviting them to join the dance. Their performative potential is enhanced when the visual composition is compared to poetry. The literary genres of

⁵⁶ Haskell and Penny, 196; Aymonino, cit; Eileen Harris, 'A Tale of Two Tables', *Burlington Magazine*, 155 (June 2013), 390-95.

⁵⁷ On chalk or crayon manner and stipple engraving, see Anthony Griffiths, *Prints and Printmaking: an Introduction to the History and Techniques* (London: British Museum Publications, 1980), 81-83, 119. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

the epithalamion and the ode call on readers to take on the first and second person pronouns and take part in the action. The epithalamion invites readers to join a ritual of initiation into the life cycle of Spring and fertility. The ode is a means of enthusiasm that traditionally employed music to transport the mind 'above its ordinary state' rendering it fit to address the Gods, or to reach the height of eloquence required to celebrate heroes, while Anacreon and Horace composed 'festive and amorous odes'.⁵⁸ Gray's Ode activates such expectations to emphasize the poet's exclusion. His apostrophe takes the form of an injunction to look, but the line of sight predicated by the poem is not reciprocated: his Hours are contained within the third person pronoun, devoid of agency, limited to the function of connotation. Where William Wordsworth would criticise the abstractions of earlier eighteenth-century poetry and discard personifications for the sake of keeping 'the reader in the company of flesh and blood',⁵⁹ Cosway turns the Hours into aesthetic subjects endowed with the power of interpellation. Just as Doctor Graham had looked back to 'celestial wives' to restore classical energy to his rituals of fertility, Cosway activates the performative power of the classical ode and the epithalamion to offer a modern cult of fertility that bypasses Gray's sterile inflection. Reaching back to shared classical sources associated to the iconography of the Hours, to Bartoli, Bellori, and Montfaucon, Cosway rearticulates the classical corpus of text and image to revive their incitement to metalepsis, to step outside the frame and transgress the boundary between art and life.

Cosway's invention had a local as well as cosmopolitan circulation in print, which is recorded in a letter that Jefferson sent her from Paris on 27 July 1788:

⁵⁸ Hugh Blair, *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 2 vols (London, 1783), II, 354-355.

⁵⁹ William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols, ed. by W.J.B.Owen and J. W.Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 150. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

With none do I converse more fondly than with my good Maria: not her under the poplar, with the dog and string at her girdle: but the Maria who makes the Hours her own, who teaches them to dance for us in so charming a round, and lets us think of nothing but her who renders them *si gracieuses*. Your Hours, my dear friend, are no longer your own. Every body now demands them; and were it possible for me to want a memorandum of you, it is presented me in every street of Paris. Come then to see what triumph Time is giving you. Come see every body stopping to admire the Hours, suspended against the walls of the Quai des Augustins, the Boulevards, the Palais royal &c. &c. with a 'Maria Cosway delint.' at the bottom.⁶⁰

Sightings of Cosway's engraving trace a geography of the Parisian print market. The engraving's circulation across borders suggests that Macklin's initiative to enlist Cosway among his artists worked in disseminating the British Poets in the transnational print market before the Revolution.

However, while the works of an anglo-italian artist and an Italian engraver capture a cosmopolitan culture of art, a different vision was presented by Reynolds in the discourse to Royal Academicians at the end of the year. Delivered on the anniversary of the founding of the Royal Academy, the annual address was a fitting occasion to evaluate the state of art and acknowledge the contribution of Gainsborough, who had died over the summer: 'if ever this nation should produce genius sufficient to acquire to us the honourable distinction of an English School, the

⁶⁰ Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, 27 July 1788, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by Julian P. Boyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950-2007), XIII (1956), 423-4, and her response on 19 August 1788, *ibid.* pp. 524-5. See also Jacques Louis David: 'On ne peut pas faire une poesie plus ingenieuse et plus naturelle', quoted in Philippe Bordes, 'Jacques-Louis David's Anglophilia on the Eve of the French Revolution'. *The Burlington Magazine*, 134:1073 (August 1992), 482-490: 485 *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

name of Gainsborough will be transmitted to posterity, in the history of the Art, among the very first of that rising name'.⁶¹ Celebrating Gainsborough brought into focus the directions taken by English art since the founding of the Royal Academy. In his comments on Gainsborough, Reynolds seems to return to the agenda he had set out in his first discourse, where he had identified the Academy's task to support the study of 'authentick models' and build on the example of past ages, following the model of Raphael - 'all Rome, and the works of Michael Angelo in particular, were to him an Academy'.⁶² The difference between Rome and London emphasized the need to establish collections of paintings and sculptures, prints and casts. Yet Reynolds presented the predicament of the new generation of English painters in a positive light: 'we shall have nothing to unlearn'.⁶³ In a marked contrast to that inaugural discourse, retracing his steps in the light of almost twenty years of academic practice, Reynolds invited painters to 'unlearn much of the common-place method' associated with painters of the Grand Tour.⁶⁴ While in the third discourse he had recommended subjects from literature and history, Gainsborough's achievements went in a different direction: 'if Gainsborough did not look at nature with a poet's eye, it must be acknowledged that he saw her with the eye of a painter'.⁶⁵ His corpus pointed to an alternative practice of invention, which separated the painter from the poet.

The demise of the literary galleries season is symbolically marked by the acquisition of the former Shakspeare Gallery in Pall Mall by the British Institution for Promoting the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom, founded by aristocrats, collectors,

⁶¹ Reynolds, *Discourses*, 248.

⁶² Reynolds, *Discourses*, 15

⁶³ Reynolds, *Discourses*, 16.

⁶⁴ Reynolds, *Discourses*, 249.

⁶⁵ Reynolds, *Discourses*, 253.

Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).

and connoisseurs. Their decision to exhibit Old Master paintings on loan from aristocratic collections was harshly criticized by British painters as emblematic of the lack of support and patronage for modern painting.⁶⁶ In response, in 1813 the British Institution inaugurated a series of posthumous British art retrospectives, which claimed to 'oppose the genuine excellence of modern, to the counterfeited semblance of ancient productions'.⁶⁷ The exhibition catalogue for the following year celebrates Hogarth, who 'adopted a new line of art, purely English', claiming that 'the pictures of Gainsborough, as well as those of Hogarth, were drawn entirely from English nature'.⁶⁸ Gainsborough's paintings filled the North Room, substituting Boydell's Shakespeare with 'cottage children' and 'rustic scenery'. The painting that Macklin had retitled *Lavinia, from Thomson's Seasons* hung under the earlier title *Girl with Milk*, on loan from the collection of Samuel Rogers. Freeing the Gainsborough's rustic subject from its association with Macklin's Poets Gallery and Thomson's *Seasons* sanctioned the divorce of 'the eye of a painter' from 'a poet's eye'.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Francis Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum: Old Master Paintings and the Rise of the Art Exhibition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 48-50.

⁶⁷ British Institution, 'Preface', *Catalogue of Pictures by the late Sir Joshua Reynolds, exhibited by the permission of the Proprietors, in honour of the Memory of that Distinguished Artist, and for the Improvement of British Art* (London: Bulmer, 1813), 9. On the institution of posthumous exhibitions of modern British painters, see Haskell, *The Ephemeral Museum*, 50-63.

⁶⁸ British Institution, 'Preface', *Catalogue of Pictures by the late William Hogarth, Richard Wilson, Thomas Gainsborough, and J. Zoffani. Exhibited by the Permission of the Proprietors in Honour of the Memory of those Distinguished Artists, and for the Improvement of British Art. To which are added etchings distinguishing the names in the Florentine gallery and Royal Academy* (London: Bulmer, 1814), pp. 10-11.

⁶⁹ British Institution, *Catalogue of Pictures by the late William Hogarth, Richard Wilson, Thomas Gainsborough, and J. Zoffani*, p. 16, no. 71. *Romanticism and Illustration: Placing Pictures 1775-1840*, ed. Ian Haywood, Susan Matthews and Mary Shannon (CUP).