

The Art-Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850-1880 by Katherine Haskins. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012. xii, 213 pp. + 52 b/w illus. ISBN 978-1-4094-1810-8. \$119.95.

At a recent university book-sale I came across a near-complete edition, in beautiful condition, of *The Art-Journal* (1839-1912). Resplendent in red-and-gilt covers, the weighty tomes lined up in authoritative dignity, representing a cultural treasure-trove of Victorian art journalism, bourgeois taste-making, and fine-art publishing in the form of the steel-plate engravings distributed with each issue. With personal constraints on time, space, and finances, I could admire, but not purchase, this magnificent archive. As much as I burned with the desire of possession, however, I also longed for a comprehensive guide to the periodical that dominated the Victorian art world until just before the Great War. Scholars have quarried *The Art-Journal* and critically deployed selected contents in numerous scholarly studies, but until now there has been no overview of the periodical's editorial strategies and public effect. Katherine Haskins's *The Art-Journal and Fine Art Publishing in Victorian England, 1850-1880* provides the first detailed study of the journal's role in connecting high art and mass media through its unique combination of commercial, informational, and aesthetic discourses. An art historian by training, Haskins uses the Introduction and Conclusion to establish a larger context for the entire print run of this influential periodical, which was owned by the print publishers Virtue and Co. during most of its publication. Historically grounded, theoretically informed, and lucidly written, her four informative and insightful chapters focus on the cultural significance of *The Art-Journal* at the height of its influence in the third quarter of the century, under the editorship of Samuel Carter Hall (1800-1889).

As Haskins demonstrates, the decades between 1850 and 1880 constitute a formative cross-section of *The Art-Journal*'s long life. These decades coincide with Virtue and Co.'s ownership (which began in 1848 and continued almost to 1912) and Hall's editorship (which began with the founding of the journal in 1839 and ended with his retirement in 1880). Hall's collaboration with Virtue and Co. not only put *The Art-Journal* on a solid financial footing, but also consolidated the audience and influence of the periodical. Significantly, this influence was due in no small part to the owner's prominence as a book, periodical, and print publisher.

Haskins's leading question – "What did it mean for a picture to be *published*?" – opens up her investigation into the complex interconnections among fine art publishing, the book trade, and everyday life in Victorian middle-class homes. Inevitably, such a question also leads to issues of production and circulation, and to the cultural values of reproduction in the