

Artists' Houses in London 1764-1914 by Giles Walkley. Brookfield, VT: Scolar Press, 1994. 281 pp., 180 illus. ISBN: ISBN 0-85957-962-4, \$79.95 (cloth).

Giles Walkley's recent monograph introduces the reader to a world previously little explored. The goals of the author, a professional architect, are many, but first and foremost he has passionately created a detailed study of residences built or remodelled for London's artists between 1764 and 1914. His knowledge and research regarding this topic is most impressive, for he has discovered dozens of artists' homes and flats one would assume had long since disappeared from that great city's landscape. While the book covers some one hundred-fifty years, its focus is clearly upon the period from the mid-1850s to the mid-1880s, that "golden age" of Victorian art when guineas flowed plentifully into the pockets of professional artists. One outward manifestation of this temporarily flourishing profession was the building boom accounting for the majority of the thirteen hundred artists' domestic studios constructed between the 1850s-1914, varying from inexpensive mass produced studio flats to elegant custom designed homes called studio houses.

Various chapters introduce the reader to this wide-range of artists' housing. With the aid of many lively contemporary accounts, the author reveals the uniqueness and special qualities of many of these residences. He focuses above all on studio homes, which because of their highly original designs and often uniquely decorated interiors enjoyed considerable coverage by the popular press and with potential patrons, consequently playing a central role in the careers of many artists. Among these pages readers curious about how and where Pre-Raphaelite artists and their circle lived and worked will be well rewarded for among references to hundreds of artists are numerous photographs, plans, and elevations of the residences of Boyce, Burne-Jones, Hunt, Millais, Rossetti, Woolner and others.

With its plentiful black and white plates and a useful gazetteer, this book serves above all as an architectural study of and guidebook to artists' residences. It is also a useful introduction to aspects of the Victorian art world still little understood or considered by scholars. As Walkley emphasizes, the specialized Victorian building craze he examines became by the mid-1870s a very organized effort, as four artists' communities clearly emerged, centred in Chelsea and the new suburbs of Hampstead, Kensington (especially Holland Park), and St. John's Wood. Most of the showcase studio houses were built in these four newly fashionable areas. Several of the finest were designed by such rapidly rising young architects as R. Norman Shaw and Philip Webb for many of the leading artists: John Millais, Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Frederic Leighton, and George Frederic Watts. Where the famous artists went, lesser lights and ambitious students followed. Due to their significance during the late Victorian era, Walkley devotes a chapter to each of the artists' colonies. These chapters focus on individual houses, but, read along with "Fiction and Faction in Studioland," also expose us to numerous lively anecdotes