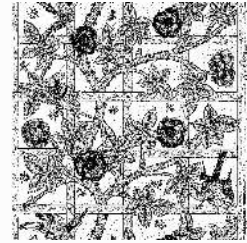


## Redesigning *British Art Studies*

Editorial by **Editorial Group**



In twenty-six issues, published across a period of nearly ten years, *British Art Studies* has built a catalogue of just over 250 articles and features, alongside about 4,000 images and films. “Born digital”, the journal was launched as an open access publication in November 2015, publishing new research on the histories of British art, architecture, and visual culture. The content of the journal has followed some core principles over this time. Central to these has been the desire to open and test the boundaries of “British” as a category, reflecting critically on methodologies and approaches for British art history. As an editorial group, we have encouraged contributors to use *British Art Studies* as a testing ground for their ideas and the journal as a platform from which to develop, expand, and share research. This approach to content has always travelled together with attention to the presentation of articles and features online, asking authors and us what the digital format enables for presenting art-historical research online. The digital environment of our operations has also foregrounded debates about the relationships between the digital humanities, open access publication, and copyright, and their connections to British art studies and art history more broadly. In this spirit of enquiry and experimentation, we have created a new platform for *British Art Studies*. The key drivers for this change have centred on issues of discoverability, accessibility, equity, and environmental impact. It feels like the right time for the journal to look ahead.

A key motivation for the redesign was to allow better engagement with earlier issues and to surface older content and enable journal users to make connections and create journeys through the articles and features. We have introduced a tagging

system that allows content to be described more systematically through the use of keywords. This will also enable connections between different articles and forms of content to be made across all issues of the journal. An index now allows an overview of content in one place. Single-sentence summaries provide a quick introduction to all articles and features, helping readers to easily browse the backlist. Overall, the search function has been improved. Each piece of content we publish lives in the ecosystem of *British Art Studies*, which is now made more apparent and useful for authors and readers.

A commitment to open access publishing motivated the creation of *British Art Studies*. The ability to share and circulate this publication widely has been one of its distinguishing features. However, over the years, the disparity between the ethos of operating an open access experience for readers and using a proprietary, closed, and bespoke back-end system to support the publication of the content of *British Art Studies* online has become starker. The decision to move to Quire, an open-source, multiformat publishing tool created by the Getty and free for others to use, with a commitment to longevity, discoverability, and scholarship, aligns with a desire to make *British Art Studies* open access in a truly holistic sense. New development work in Quire, commissioned by the journal for this platform, has already been shared back into the open-source community, for others to adapt and reuse freely.

Again, this intertwining of the journal's ethos, commitment to research, and its technologies has enabled us to learn a lot through the process of converting past issues for publication and setting up our templates to use for the present and future issues. The assumption that digital publication is somehow "greener" or more efficient than print is under much scrutiny as we learn the true environmental impact of data storage and the energy consumption of text and image processing technologies required to deliver the journal globally. To minimise our footprint, we have rebuilt our infrastructure to run on a host powered by renewable energy and implemented a content delivery network to bring data closer to our readers. Our development practices now prioritise sustainability, including efficient coding, a static site model, and caching webpages and documents to reduce unnecessary

regeneration with each visit. While many of these improvements operate behind the scenes, readers may notice one difference in our design—our decorative imagery has been processed using a dithering technique, compressing file sizes to reduce the data transferred to readers’ devices. We hope reducing data transfer may also make *British Art Studies* easier to read for those with low bandwidth, costly, or unreliable internet access.

The new website is also designed to meet WCAG 2.0 guidelines, ensuring accessibility for users with diverse needs. It includes support for keyboard navigation, screen readers, and adaptable layouts for various devices and assistive technologies. We have created alt text for all illustrations in the back catalogue, ensuring an equivalent experience for readers with visual impairments.

*British Art Studies* does not profess to offer answers, but it is part of a growing conversation about the ethical issues that all publishers and scholars face. For now, we offer this new platform to critically reflect on the methods, formats, and technologies that contribute to the field of British art studies. We hope you enjoy exploring the new design.

## **Acknowledgements**

We had many collaborators and advisors for this project, and are deeply grateful for all of their contributions. The website was designed by Fabrique and built by Design for Context. Knowledge Integration developed our Elasticsearch index. Sarah Saunders at Electric Lane helped us to build a bespoke taxonomy for content tags in *British Art Studies*. We received advice from Farrer & Co. and Bernard Horrocks on the legal implications of dithering imagery in the journal. Several advisory board members and authors, past and present, also generously participated in community feedback sessions to improve the initial design concept. Former contributing editor at the journal, Edwin Coomasaru, contributed to the research process and in particular helped to shape and apply our taxonomy of content tags. Scribely wrote descriptions for all of the media illustrated in our backlist. Colleagues at the Getty, Greg Albers and Erin Cecele Dunigan, ran

workshops that introduced our team to using Quire. Our sincere thanks to all for their expertise, creativity, and encouragement.

## About the author

## Imprint

<b>Author</b>	Editorial Group
<b>Date</b>	30 May 2025
<b>Category</b>	Editorial
<b>Review status</b>	Not Peer Reviewed
<b>License</b>	Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)
<b>Downloads</b>	PDF format
<b>Article DOI</b>	<a href="https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-26/editorial">https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-26/editorial</a>
<b>Cite as</b>	Group, Editorial. “Redesigning <i>British Art Studies</i> .” In <i>British Art Studies</i> . London and New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Yale Center for British Art, 2025. <a href="https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-26/editorial">https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-26/editorial</a> .