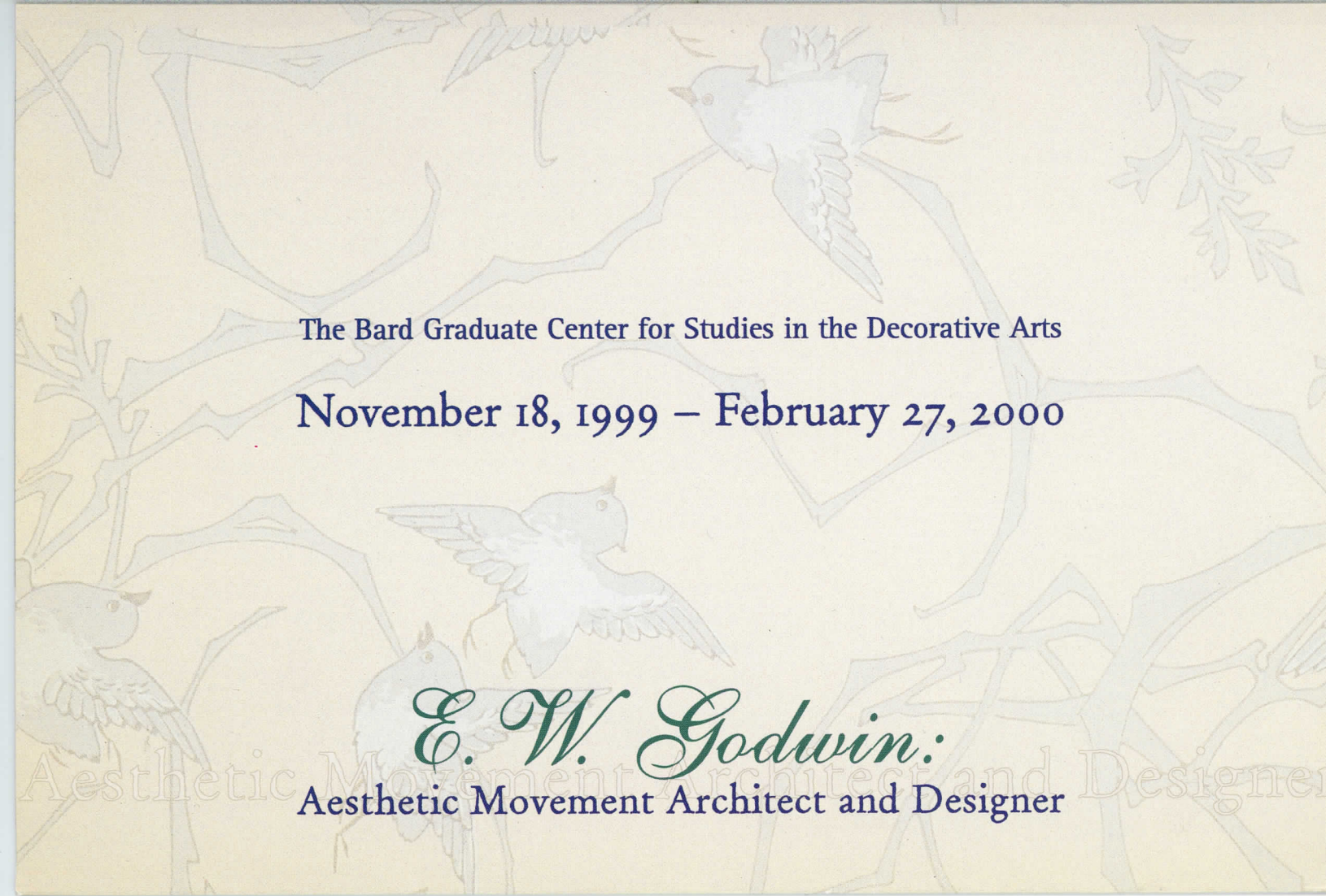


E. W. Godwin:
Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer



The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts

November 18, 1999 – February 27, 2000

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Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer is the first exhibition in this country to examine the prolific career of this leading figure in the Aesthetic Movement in Great Britain. It is curated by Susan Weber Soros, founder and director of the Bard Graduate Center, and opens at the Center on November 18, 1999. It will be on view through February 27, 2000.

Edward William Godwin (1833–1886) was an architect, designer, interior decorator, antiquary, theatrical producer, and prominent writer and critic, who embodied the aesthetic conscience of Britain between 1865 and 1885. As one of Britain's leading design reformers of the nineteenth century, he was dedicated to addressing design issues related to the growing mass market for furniture, furnishings, and interior design. Godwin, an acknowledged leader of Britain's cultural elite, shared with his colleagues the desire to elevate the taste and aesthetic vision of the British public. His reputation abroad led to commissions from clients ranging from James Goodwin in Hartford, Connecticut, to Prince Esterhazy in Vienna, but his main work was carried out in Britain, where his clients represented a wide spectrum of society. It is no wonder that Oscar Wilde referred to him as "one of the most artistic spirits of this century in England."

Godwin first came to prominence as an architect with his design of the Northampton Town Hall (1861–1864), a project that also encompassed all aspects of the interior and furnishings. Other major public and private commissions in the 1860s contributed to his national recognition. Godwin's belief in the principle of utility combined with beauty translated to a distinctive design aesthetic that combined Gothic, Oriental, and vernacular details and constructional elements. As early as the 1860s, Godwin was one of the first architects of his generation to incorporate Oriental design details and principles in his work. Always striving for greater simplicity and economy of means, he was by the 1870s designing radically simple and functional house-studios in Chelsea for such notable painters as James McNeill Whistler; these creations led to his recognition as a leader of the Aesthetic Movement. He also was one of the architects responsible for the utopian community of Bedford Park, designing the first 18 houses for this planned suburban community.

Godwin also conceived a broad vocabulary of furniture forms and styles, many of which were displayed at the Vienna Universal Exposition (1873) and the Paris Universal Exposition (1878). An ebonized wood sideboard designed in 1867 has become an icon of modern furniture, and Godwin's bold, flat patterns, asymmetrical compositions, and stylized ornament reformed home furnishings including textiles, wallpapers, and floor coverings.

In addition to contributing extensively to architecture and the decorative arts, Godwin influenced the development of historical realism in English theater productions and was one of the first to create authentic stage sets, properties, and costumes. He was a leading Victorian intellectual and writer, whose interests extended from the ancient Greek home to the reform of the architectural profession and the conservation of England's historic buildings.

The exhibition consists of more than 150 examples of Godwin's architectural drawings, designs for the decorative arts, and interiors, furniture, ceramics, tiles, metalwork, wallpaper, and textiles. The objects have been loaned from major museums in this country and abroad, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Major loans also are forthcoming from private collections in the United States, England, and Germany.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a range of educational programs for scholarly and general audiences that will expand on the themes raised in the exhibition.



Figure 1



Figure 2

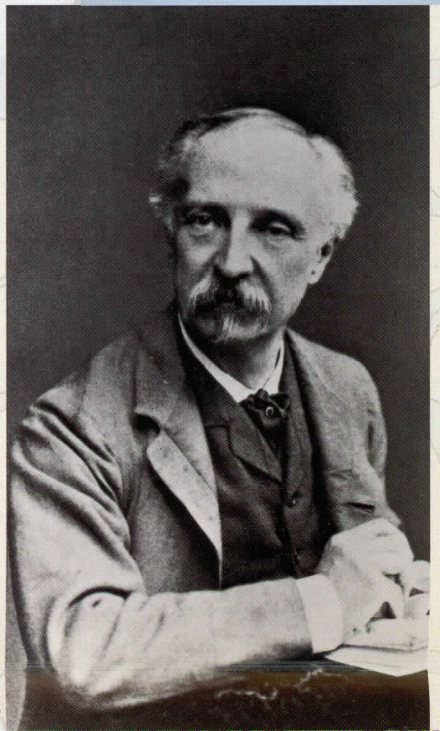


Figure 3

The Catalogue

The catalogue *E. W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement Architect and Designer*, published by Yale University Press and the Bard Graduate Center, examines the multifaceted life and career of this prodigious talent through a series of 13 essays by noted architecture, decorative arts, and design historians. It opens with a preface by Dr. Clive Wainwright, senior research fellow, Victoria and Albert Museum, and an introduction by Dr. Susan Weber Soros, founder and director of the Bard Graduate Center, curator of the exhibition, and editor of the catalogue. The volume has more than 300 illustrations, including more than 150 selected exhibition items and dozens of comparative pictures, from period photographs to engravings. An illustrated chronology of Godwin's work and the first full bibliography of primary and secondary sources are included.

The Essays

Edward William Godwin (1833–1886): Aesthetic Polymath by Lionel Lambourne, former head of the Department of Prints and Drawings, Victoria and Albert Museum, and author of a recent and important study on the Aesthetic Movement, presents previously unpublished information on Godwin's life and examines his relationships with key figures in the nineteenth-century art world.

E. W. Godwin as an Antiquary by Catherine Arbuthnott, historian, London, explores Godwin's antiquarian interests and discusses the ways in which his study of the past influenced his designs for architecture, theater, and decorative work.

E. W. Godwin and Japonisme in England by Nancy Burch Wilkinson, professor, Oklahoma State University

E. W. Godwin and Modernism by Juliet Kinchin, professor of history and criticism, Glasgow School of Art, explores Godwin's critical reputation in the decades after his death and his appropriation by scholars seeking to establish him as a precursor to modernism.

An Aesthetic Education: The Architecture Criticism of E. W. Godwin by Richard W. Hayes, architect and Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University, considers Godwin's extensive writings in the area of architectural criticism, which brought his aesthetic vision to a far wider audience than did his executed commissions.

The Architectural Career of E. W. Godwin by Aileen Reid, architectural historian, Courtauld Institute, discusses Godwin's architectural designs, including sacred, secular, and municipal designs.

E. W. Godwin and Interior Design by Susan Weber Soros, founder and director of the Bard Graduate Center

The Furniture of E. W. Godwin by Susan Weber Soros

The Textiles of E. W. Godwin by Linda Parry, curator, Victoria and Albert Museum

E. W. Godwin and Wallpaper Design by Joanna Banham, former archivist, Arthur Sanderson & Sons; former curator, Leighton House; chair of the Wallpaper History Society in England; editor of the *Encyclopedia of Interior Design* (Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997)

E. W. Godwin and Ceramics by Catherine Arbuthnott

E. W. Godwin and Design for the Theater by Fanny Baldwin, theater historian, London; Ph.D., Courtauld Institute, London; author of the dissertation "Victorian Artists and Stage Design, 1870–1905" (1991)

The Genetic Legacy by Lionel Lambourne delineates Godwin's influence on his famous son, the theatrical designer Edward Gordon Craig.

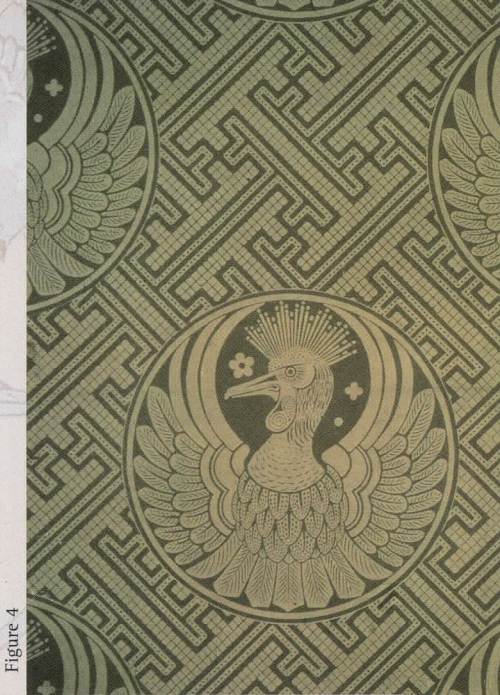


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

Funding has been provided in part through a generous grant provided by The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and Jan and Warren Adelson. Additional funding has been provided by Edgar Astaire, Donna and Carroll Janis, James Joll, Martin Levy, Murray Weber, and an anonymous donor.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an array of public programs, including tours, courses, lectures, and a scholarly symposium. Special events for youth and senior audiences will be held. For information on these offerings, please call 212-501-3013, TTY 212-501-3012, or e-mail programs@bgc.bard.edu.

For further information, call 212-501-3072 or 3074.

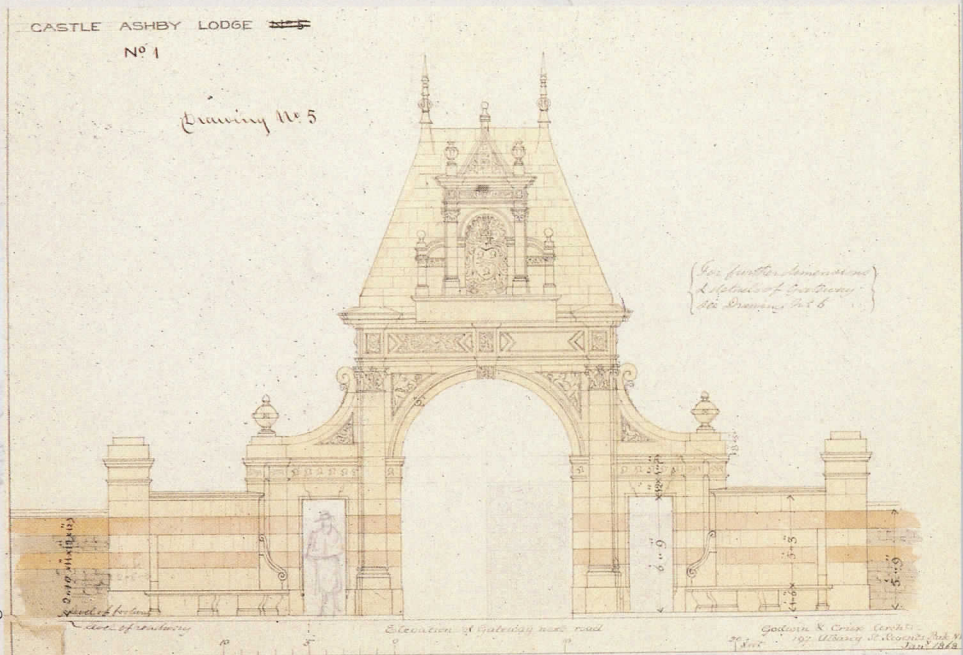
Fax: 212-501-3079

Website: www.bard.edu/graduate/BGC/index.html

The Galleries are open Tuesday through Sunday,
11:00 am to 5:00 pm and Thursday to 8:00 pm.

Admission is \$2 for adults; \$1 for students and seniors.

Figure 7



The Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts
18 West 86th Street, New York, NY 10024



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Cover image. E. W. Godwin. Front side and plan of Frank Miles's House. Dated June 24, 1878. Includes a design for a couch and a doorknocker. Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 1. E. W. Godwin. "Butterfly Brocade," ca. 1874. Made by Warner, Sillett and Ramm. Jacquard woven silk; 34 1/16 x 21 9/16 in. (86.5 x 55 cm). Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 2. E. W. Godwin. Table with folding shelves, ca. 1872. Probably made by Collinson and Lock. Walnut with gilt brass fittings; 29 7/16 x 16 x 32 1/8 in. (74.7 x 40.6 x 81.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Figure 3. Edward William Godwin with sketchbook in hand, ca. 1880. Photo courtesy of Helen Craig.

Figure 4. E. W. Godwin. "Peacock" wallpaper, ca. 1873. Made by Jeffrey and Company. Block-printed wallpaper; 26 1/2 x 191/4 in. (67.2 x 48.9 cm). Manchester City Art Galleries.

Figure 5. E. W. Godwin. Sideboard, ca. 1877. Made by William Watt. Ebonized mahogany with brass pulls and hinges, glass panels; 72 1/2 x 100 1/2 x 19 3/4 in. (184.2 x 255.3 x 50.2 cm). Private collection.

Figure 6. E. W. Godwin. Design for costumes for the Provost's guards and the Abbot in *Juana*, 1881. Pencil, pen and ink, and watercolor; 10 7/8 x 6 7/8 in. (27.5 x 17.5 cm). Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Figure 7. E. W. Godwin. Elevation of the Central Gateway, South Avenue Lodges, Castle Ashby, Northamptonshire. 1868. India ink and colored washes with some pencil detail; 10 7/16 x 14 11/16 in. (26.5 x 37.4 cm). British Architectural Library, Drawings Collection, R.I.B.A. London.

Background image. E. W. Godwin. "Sparrows and Bamboo," 1872. Made by Jeffrey and Company. Block-printed wallpaper; 13 7/8 x 16 7/8 in. (35.1 x 43 cm). Manchester City Art Galleries.

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