Shundana Yusaf
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Mitchell Akinyama

Man looks at the creation of architecture with his eyes. One can only deal with aims which the eye can appreciate, and intentions which take into account architectural elements. — Le Corbusier, Toward a New Architecture

In the mid-1900s, architect and critic Johann Pallasmaa published a slim polemic that indicted architecture for its blind obsession with vision. The eyes of the Skin scathingly equated the West’s ocularcentrism (and its attendant qualities of detachment and domination) with a cold functionalism in which its architecture, influenced by the work of scholar and Jesuit priest Walter Ong, Pallasmaa located architecture’s hostility to non-visual ways of sensing in the Western tradition’s transition from orality to textuality.1 And, like Ong, he held that the ubiquity and influence of sonic media might help to return architecture and society to a more communal and connected sense of being. While Pallasmaa was primarily focused on the haptic and the tactile, he helped to open architectural discourse to previously omitted or marginalized forms of sensory experience. The eyes of the Skin only touched, as it were, on the importance of auraity in architecture, but in the years since its publication a handful of works — Emily Thompson’s The Soundscape of Modernity and Berry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter’s Spaces Speak. Are You Listening? are notable examples— have more deeply probed the relationships between sound and the built environment.

Charmaine A. Nelson
Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica
London and New York: Routledge, 2016
416 pp.; 16 colour plates, 26 b&w illus. £49.95 pb. ISBN 9781138968012

Renee Ater

Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica is a deeply researched

fostering the imagined communities that constituted the modern nation state. This is why the emergence of scholarship that deconstructs our assumptions about media along sensory lines is so important. When Yusaf writes, for example, “I explore how the unifying and harmonizing sense of hearing meddles with the clarifying and distinguishing sense of sight” (18), she perpetuates a problematic truism about the essential differences between the senses. Jonathan Sterne contests this cliché, one he calls the audio-visual litany, arguing that it problematically sets sensing and phenomenology outside of history. While Yusaf shows herself to be a self-appointed historian of institutions and cultural production, it is important to remember that the senses too, have a history.

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imagery is rooted in what she terms “the racialization of the land” (8), which, she argues is rooted in how “a
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Five through Eight focus on the colonial landscape and depictions of slavery in Jamaica. Similar to Chapter Four, Chapter Five explores the “landscaping” of Jamaica in order to understand the British imperial imaging and imagining of the island. Chapters Six through Eight engage and interpret images from William Clark’s Keys Views in the Island of Antigua… (1823) and James Hakewill’s A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica… (1835) to understand the ways in which Jamaica and its sugar production were visualized. Nelson argues that Hakewill erased black bodies and slave labour from the tropical landscapes in his illustrations, creating a sanitized, pro-slavery discourse. To counter this erasure, she examines the “material, social, and cultural realities of slave life in Jamaica that his images denied” (147). At the heart of Nelson’s book is a critique of the disciplines of slavery studies and art history. She argues that slavery studies has not engaged with visual art in meaningful ways outside the human body, and that art history has failed to raise significant and consistent questions related to race, colonialism, and imperialism because of the “unsuitability of […] dominant methodologies and practices” (2) to such discourses. Because of the focus on the human body in slavery studies and the resistance of art history to tough discussions related to slavery, land, and empire, Nelson deliberately and methodically excavates the meaning of slavery in these two colonial locations through landscape art. Chapter Six exemplifies her project: she offers a close reading of Hakewill’s A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica… and his erasure of the enslaved body from the land. At the same time in this chapter, she writes poignantly about white male sexual exploitation of black women in Jamaica and the astonishingly brutal nature of Jamaican slavery. She does this in order to challenge Hakewill’s imperial vision of Jamaican sugar plantations as scenes of “picturesque tranquility” (235). Her comparative project signals her aspiration as scholarly activist and practitioner of a hybrid art history that incorporates a close attending to the visuals, a concern for what is seen and not seen, and a self-reflexivity concerning how the author positions herself. Throughout the book, one senses her outrage and indictment of the slavery complex as well as her commitment to telling a new story about the visualization and imaginings of slavery, geography, and empire in the nineteenth-century colonial world of Montreal and Jamaica.

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The book contains an introduction and eight interlocking chapters. In Chapter One, Nelson considers geography as a representational practice and its role in colonial space. Chapters Two through Four look closely at slavery in Montreal and its relationship to the production of landscape art. Chapter Two provides an overview of slavery in Montreal under French and then British rule. Chapter Three investigates two images, François Malepart de Beau- court’s Portrait of a Haitian Woman (1786) and George Croly’s African Canadians (1807), providing in-depth analyses of the representation of the enslaved African in Montreal. Chapter Four considers how the British used maps and architectural plans to impose an imperial vision on their newly acquired settlement. Chapters Five through Eight focus on the colonial landscape and depictions of slavery in Jamaica. Similar to Chapter Four, Chapter Five explores the “landscaping” of Jamaica in order to understand the British imperial imaging and imagining of the island. Chapters Six through Eight engage and interpret images from William Clark’s Keys Views in the Island of Antigua… (1823) and James Hakewill’s A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica… (1835) to understand the ways in which Jamaica and its sugar production were visualized. Nelson argues that Hakewill erased black bodies and slave labour from the tropical landscapes in his illustrations, creating a sanitized, pro-slavery discourse. To counter this erasure, she examines the “material, social, and cultural realities of slave life in Jamaica that his images denied” (147). At the heart of Nelson’s book is a critique of the disciplines of slavery studies and art history. She argues that slavery studies has not engaged with visual art in meaningful ways outside the human body, and that art history has failed to raise significant and consistent questions related to race, colonialism, and imperialism because of the “unsuitability of […] dominant methodologies and practices” (2) to such discourses. Because of the focus on the human body in slavery studies and the resistance of art history to tough discussions related to slavery, land, and empire, Nelson deliberately and methodically excavates the meaning of slavery in these two colonial locations through landscape art. Chapter Six exemplifies her project: she offers a close reading of Hakewill’s A Picturesque Tour of the Island of Jamaica… and his erasure of the enslaved body from the land. At the same time in this chapter, she writes poignantly about white male sexual exploitation of black women in Jamaica and the astonishingly brutal nature of Jamaican slavery. She does this in order to challenge Hakewill’s imperial vision of Jamaican sugar plantations as scenes of “picturesque tranquility” (235). Her comparative project signals her aspiration as scholarly activist and practitioner of a hybrid art history that incorporates a close attending to the visuals, a concern for what is seen and not seen, and a self-reflexivity concerning how the author positions herself. Throughout the book, one senses her outrage and indictment of the slavery complex as well as her commitment to telling a new story about the visualization and imaginings of slavery, geography, and empire in the nineteenth-century colonial world of Montreal and Jamaica.

This anthology, dedicated to architectural historian Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey, consists of sixteen essays that are bracketed by an introduction celebrating the career of du Prey and a postlude written by du Prey on the importance of mentors. The essays explore the significance of the language, morphology, and replication of classicism in Western building practices. The chapters, more or less arranged in a chronological order, centre on various aspects of the classical tradition in architecture from antiquity to mid-twentieth century while also considering the conceptual influences of classical ideas on cartography and on the nationalist discussion of all the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The essays would have a broad geographical focus and address not only Western European traditions but also colonial South American and modern Canadian building programs. The scope of the text is reflected in the book’s subtitle, Architecture and the Classical Tradition from Pliny to Pasterity, which is derived from two of du Prey’s important contributions to the study of architectural history: his online scholarly portal, Archi- tecture in the Classical Tradition, and his book, The Villas of Pliny, from Antiquity to Pasterity.

Before delving into this rich anthology, I will mention my lone criticism: the structure of the introduction, which centres on a lengthy tribute to du Prey. Although such a tribute is undoubtedly justified and could easily have been expanded, it

had with the modern period. The chapters in the sections on antiquity and the medieval period foreground issues of style. In his exploration of historical orders, Mark Wilson Jones demonstra-

tes that the Greeks did not share our perceptions of the orders as being finite in form and function, but were rather multivalent in application and meaning. Eric Fernie provides a historiography of the Romanesque that brings out both the positive and pejorative connotations affixed to the term. Like Jones, Fernie indicates that stylistic terminology and codifica-
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