

History of Art & Architecture



Melanie Hall

Director; Museum Studies, Associate Professor; Museum Studies

TITLE

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EDUCATION

B.A., University of Leeds

Ph.D. Leeds Beckett University

As a scholar and a teacher, Melanie Hall considers what we save and how we save it. Focusing on heritage, memory, art and museums in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly in Britain and North America, her interest is driven by three interlinked questions: how do ideas and types move across cultures; how does cultural transfer relate to nationalism, internationalism and imperialism; how do heritage sites and museums relate to cultural diplomacy and international relations. She also has an interest in women's roles in this. Her particular focus is on nineteenth- and early-twentieth century preservation of buildings and landscapes, and those transatlantic networks that helped to support this activity. She has recently completed a book-length study of the origins of the (British) National Trust (now the most successful preservation organization in the world) that reveals the transatlantic dimensions of this. Her preliminary work on this subject was published by Yale University Press, Studies in British Art series. Her publications include *Towards World Heritage, International Origins of the Preservation Movement 1870-1930* (2011). This edited volume arose from a working conference at Boston University that she organized, bringing together an international group of scholars and practitioners. This collaborative, inter-disciplinary project sought to uncover the emergence of ideas behind the world heritage phenomenon; it continues to be well reviewed in multiple scholarly journals. Her work has appeared in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*, the *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, *Architectural History*, and *Furniture History*. Most recently she has published an article on 'Political Ambition, Civic Philanthropy and Public Sculpture, 1900 ...' in a volume in honor of her mentor, Dr. Terry Friedman, and has a forthcoming article on 'Octavia Hill and the National Trust' in a volume commemorating the work of this remarkable Victorian woman.

Dr. Hall is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, London, and is Secretary of the New England chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. She has been awarded grants and fellowships by the Friends of the Courtauld Institute, London; the Jubilee Fund, Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust; the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society. Her career began at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds City Art Galleries. For many years she worked for the Historic Monuments and Buildings Commission for England on a nation-wide survey of historic houses and towns, for which she produced over 30 one- and two-volume published Reports, which all received the approval of the Secretary of State for the Environment. Earlier in her career she

worked as a museum curator and has been involved ever since with museums. She has served on the Board of the Nichols House Museum, Beacon Hill, Boston, as chair of its Furniture Committee and chair of its Interpretation Committee. With the Nichols Museum, she has hosted several conferences on heritage and museum themes at the Boston Athenaeum.

She currently serves as Director of Museum Studies.

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