

Max Nanny Prize 2011 Richard Taws

2011 Max Nanny prize

Richard Taws, (University College London,) "Trompe l'Oeil and Trauma: Money and Memory after the Terror,"

Oxford Art Journal 30:3 (2007): 353-76.

The selection committee wrote:

This essay illustrates and combines in an inspiring way the merits of close-reading and far-reaching historical research. Taws' article focuses on a little-known series of images representing "assignats," the paper-bonds that the French Revolutionary government introduced after the confiscation of church properties in 1790. The new State had gone bankrupt, and the use of paper money, along with its counterfeiting had caused a terrible hyperinflation. Initially, the assignats symbolized the shift from clerical or aristocratic authority to revolutionary sovereignty, but they came to signify the economic failure of the new regime. Taws focuses most pertinently on the historical life of a color trompe-l'oeil etching by François Bonneville, which he considers an example of "traumatic mimesis." As Taws shows, the trauma caused by the Revolution produced various forms of repetition, of which this image is an example, as well as of "mimetic trauma," a repetitive play with the conditions and signs of what underlies the repetition. Knitting together History with a capital Hand visual histories of the authentic and the fake, Taws discloses a multilayered interpretation of lesser-known images whose importance for the interaction of mages and stories, symbols and discourses, is paramount.

Honorable mentions went to:

– Cordula Grewe for "The Kunstlerroman as Romantic Arabesque: Parody, Collaboration, and the Making of The Modern Vasari (1854)," in Catriona MacLeod, Véronique Plesch and Charlotte Schoell-Glass, eds., *Elective Affinities: Testing Word and Image Relationships* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2009), 79-97.

– Jane Partner for "Vision, Appearance and Skin Colour in the Painted Emblems from Hasted Hall," *Word & Image* 25.2 (2009): 178-91.

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