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Abstract

This dissertation will use Dulwich Picture Gallery as a case study for exploring how art institutions can re-evaluate their own histories in light of the urgent contemporary issue of systemic racism. The history of the public life of Dulwich Picture Gallery (1811-17) will be presented through a site-writing methodology (Rendell 2010). Utilising a ficto-critical (Friochet and Stead 2020) approach archival sources will be re-animated to subvert the history of one of Sir John Soane's most famous surviving buildings. Conceived as a figuration that, after Rosi Braidotti, 'deterritorialise[s] and destabilise[s] the certainties of the subject'[1] this text uses a mix of writing styles, both academic and poetic, to inflect the history it tells with the author's own subjective encounter with the building and the archive. Through this approach the dissertation reveals the founding mythology of the Gallery and challenges the ways in which it has been presented to the world through a 'white Eurocentric lens'[2] that imbues it with status as a British heritage asset. The archival sources chosen reveal visitors' experience of the space as a destination for arts appreciation and education. Photographs of walks taken by the author are integral to the text. Accompanied by historic maps these walks locate the Gallery as an historic object within the city, tracing journeys taken to and through it by the public over 200 years.

1. Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006), 90.
2. Meneesha Kellay, 'Why Museums Must Decolonise and Diversify For Their Own Survival', 2021, accessed 27 August 2021, https : / / elephant . art / why - museums - must - decolonise - and - diversify - for - their - own-survival-16072021/.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation asks new questions of a familiar building, Sir John Soane's Dulwich Picture Gallery (1811-17). As one of Soane's most famous buildings the Gallery has been written about extensively in traditional works of architectural history, such as John Summerson's *Georgian London* (1945). However, I will revisit it in light of the urgent contemporary issue of systemic racism within public art institutions in the U.K. Existing histories of the building have tended to focus on its technical achievements, its stylistic placement within the canon of European art, its significance in Soane's oeuvre and its influence upon art gallery design in the 20th-century. It is England's first purpose-built public art gallery and yet, focusing almost exclusively on the building's design, these histories lack a thorough investigation into the experience of visitors themselves, telling us little of the life of the Gallery.[1] I will follow Peg Rawes who 'contribute[s] to architecture on the basis that it is located in society', as I share her belief that it is 'lived as an experience that is embedded in existing structures'.[2] In the immediate aftermath of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 the notion of anti-racism has emerged into mainstream discourse. As a result many art galleries have publicly acknowledged entrenched structural inequality and have posted anti-racist statements promising to confront this issues head on in the future.[3] As part of this moment of reckoning institutions are rethinking their past in order to decolonise. Dulwich Picture Gallery's origins are idiosyncratic, the curious facts of its existence often remarked on. Therefore the Gallery has developed a particularly intense mythology of its own history. The founding story is retold continually and yet the founders' motivations have been infrequently analysed. But, as Alice T. Friedman (1992) states 'analysis of the roles of patrons and their programs […] in the making of […] buildings'[4] is a key part of understanding their history. In considering the urgent question of how systemic racism is to be dismantled within our institutions, unpicking Eurocentric notions of the taste and legacy of the people that founded them, is essential. I therefore believe the time is right to revise the history of Dulwich Picture Gallery's founding and subsequent public life. I trace this history through research at the Gallery and Dulwich College archives, my sources chosen to reveal visitors' experience of the space as a destination for arts appreciation and education. I will use critical theory, creating 'a space of imaginative abstraction outside the immediate remits and dictates of historical discourse'[5] in

1. See Giles Waterfield, 'Dulwich Picture Gallery,' in *Sir John Soane Master of Space and Light*, eds. Margaret Richardson and MaryAnne Stevens (London: Royal Academy, 1999), 174-179, Ptolemy Dean *Sir John Soane's London* (Hampshire: Lund Humphries, 2006), 55-61 and John Summerson, *Georgian London* (London: Barrie and Jenkins Ltd, 1945), 144-5.

2. Lili Zarzycki, 'Interview with Peg Rawes', 2021, accessed 30 August 2021, https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/profiles-and-interviews/interview-with-peg-rawes.

3. See 'Anti Racist Action,' Whitworth Manchester, accessed 4 September 2021, https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/about/antiracistaction/. and 'Anti-racism Statement,' Serpentine Galleries, accessed 4 September 2021, and https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/anti-racism-statement/.

4. Alice T. Friedman, 'Excerpts from 'Architecture, Authority and the Female Gaze: Planning and Representation in the Early Modern Country House'', in *Gender, Space, Architecture: An interdisciplinary Introduction*, ed. Iain Borden Jane Rendell Barbara Penner (London: Routledge, 1992), 332.

5. Iain Borden and Jane Rendell, 'From chamber to transformer: epistemological challenges in the methodology of theorised architectural history', *The Journal of Architecture* 5:2 (2000): 220.

order to analyse my archival discoveries. In this way, I will use Dulwich Picture Gallery as a case study for exploring how art institutions can re-evaluate their own histories in the service of anti-racism.

I will present the history of the public life of Dulwich Picture Gallery through a site-writing methodology, as developed by Jane Rendell. In the text I work with a mixture of writing styles to inflect the history it tells with my own subjective encounter with the building and the archive. The two writing styles used are different registers or narrative modes through which I present my research. One is formal, solidly academic, a conventional style for writing essays with. The second is creative non-fiction prose and it has a contemplative, poetic quality. Photographs of walks I have taken as part of my research are also a narrative mode integral to the text. These are presented as a cartography, locating the Gallery as an historic object within the city, by re-tracing journeys taken to and through it by the public over 200 years.

This configuration of narrative modes can be seen as a way to present multiple inter-related and situated historical positions. In the concluding chapter of *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis: Spaces of Transition* (2017), Rendell presents a series of reflections on the concept of figuration, as present in the work of a range of post-modernist thinkers. Rendell has configured her text to place her reflections on these works – deconstructing the closely related concepts of figure, figural, figurative and figuration in post-structuralism – next to quotes from each author studied. Each double page spread in Rendell's chapter is therefore configured so it can be read as a prescription for thinking about architecture with. Figuration is central to the work of feminist materialist philosopher Rosi Braidotti, who describes her own conception of them in *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (2006):

> Figurations are not mere metaphors, but rather markers of more concretely situated historical positions. A figuration is the expression of one's specific positioning in space and time.[6]

Rendell traces the conceptual history of figuration as a term, showing that the figurative allows for literal representation of the figure. However its function is also related to the concept of the figural, considered by Jean-François Lyotard and Gilles Deleuze, which allows for metaphysical or abstract representation.[7] Braidotti re-configures Deleuze's definition of figuration, as thought that is both 'illustrative' and 'figurative',[8] stating in *Nomadic*

6. Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, 90.
7. Jane Rendell, *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis: Spaces of Transition* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017), 212.
8. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 34.

Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Different in Contemporary Feminist Theory (2011) that:

> Figurations are not figurative ways of thinking, but rather materialistic mappings of situated, i.e., embedded and embodied, social positions. A cartography is a theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present.[9]

Figurations therefore come close to allegories, but express material reality directly, rather than through metaphor. Braidotti is clear that their main function is to 'express'[10] and 'account for' different 'subject positions',[11] demonstrating how they can be used as a 'methodology'[12] and 'a living map'.[13] In describing their function Braidotti says:

> figurations deterritorialise and destabilise the certainties of the subject and allow for a proliferation of situated or 'micro' narratives of self and others.[14]

By working in several different registers, both textual and visual, I am providing space in my text for such micro narratives to occur. As in the example of Rendell's chapter 'Figurations', a configuration is an arrangement, in this case of different textual and visual fragments on a page. In presenting a history as a configuration of narrative modes I am also constructing a figuration. This figuration is an expression of my own situated knowledge of and subjective encounter with the Gallery, after Braidotti, and Rendell:

> I have frequently argued following Donna J Haraway, that objectivity is partial and knowledge is situated, that one constructs one's viewpoint and performs one's critical attitude through writing in relation to one's lived and located experiences.[15]

Using a methodology of figuration is a way to present a history of the Gallery that is purposefully inflected by my own 'lived and located experiences'. I am here. My research is not disembodied. I am not an all-powerful narrator. I am a human, walking through the city

9. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodied and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 4.
10. Braidotti, 11.
11. Braidotti, 11.
12. Braidotti, 8.
13. Braidotti, 10.
14. Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, 90.
15. Jane Rendell, 'Marginal Modes: Positions of Architecture Writing', 2020, accessed 7 August 2021, https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/marginal-modes-positions-of-architecture-writing.

and the Gallery, searching through the archive. Stopping, thinking, learning as I go. My photographs document this.

Braidotti believes that style of delivery is central to the expressive potency of a figuration and specifically advocates for 'mixtures of speaking voices or modes'[16] where her own practice is to 'mix the theoretical with the poetic or lyrical'.[17] In blending different voices, I am practicing a form of ficto-criticsm. As Hélène Friochet and Naomi Stead have laid out in *Writing Architectures: Ficto-Critical Approaches* (2020) the practice takes root from the work of feminist theorists such as Simone de Beauvoir and Hélène Cixous who, as Friochet and Stead point out, are two authors who 'interrupt their own philosophical tracts with unconventional modes of expression'.[18] In her introduction to Friochet and Stead's book, Rendell advocates for inserting fiction into architecture writing, particularly for those 'trained in critical academic traditions':[19]

> Fiction gives access to the I, to subjectivities, to character, plot, story, narration, to point of view and to different genres – memoirs, essays, diaries.[20]

Although I am using creative non-fiction prose this is still a ficto-critical approach because it is a form of creative writing. Mixing this style into an academic text allows me to do 'different things with words',[21] to complicate and enrich the story. Combining academic and literary writing styles, I can construct a narrative that provides an alternative kind of engagement with history – with its plot, its characters, its truth. In this I emulate Mireille Roddier who, in her essay *The Indelible Traces of Her Footsteps* (2020), employs a similar non-fictional ficto-critical style, effectively utilising the access it provides to subjectivity. Roddier refers to Virginia Woolf's essay 'Street Haunting' (1930) in a passage that moves between Woolf's interaction with the city and her own. Describing her embodied experience of walking through Paris taking photographs, her text can be read as a figuration of her own subject position within the historic city, as she begins; 'From the tail-end, I follow a crowd of jostling ghosts'[22] and continues; 'Constellations form and transform and a cartography of interconnected clusters emerges'.[23] As I walk through the city, to and from and through the Gallery, I take photo-

16. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodied and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 66.
17. Braidotti, 66.
18. Hélène Frichot and Naomi Stead, 'Waking Ideas from Their Sleep: An Introduction to Ficto-critical Writing in and of Architecture', in *Writing Architectures: Ficto-critical approaches*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Naomi Stead (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 13.
19. Jane Rendell, 'Prelude: The Ways in Which we Write', in *Writing Architectures: Ficto-critical approaches*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Naomi Stead (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 4.
20. Rendell, 4.
21. Rendell, 'Marginal Modes: Positions of Architecture Writing'.
22. Mireille Roddier, 'The Indelible Traces of Her Footsteps', in *Writing Architectures: Ficto-critical approaches*, ed. Hélène Frichot and Naomi Stead (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), 130.
23. Roddier, 130.

graphs that are a living cartography. As another narrative mode, my own photography is integral to the aesthetic of my text. I present sets of images from each walk preceded by historic maps that locate the Gallery within its environs and accompanied by descriptions of my experience of completing them. Through this cartography the reader can walk with me through the city, to and through the Gallery and feel a sense of time unfurling. Thus, my figuration expresses my subjective encounter with the Gallery and its history, which is enacted within the vast complexity of interconnected spatial and temporal planes that exist in the palimpsest of an historic city.

Through inserting creative non-fiction prose into my academic narrative, I can include multiple other experiences of the Gallery. Drawing on the historicisation of the Gallery space as a British heritage asset, the actions of historic characters invoked from the archive will be delineated by a 'Soane Red' colour, derived from that of the Gallery walls. This re-animation of source material has the potential to subvert it. Inspired by the work of Saidiya Hartman who, as Rendell describes, uses a method of 'critical fabulation as a way of doing decolonial history',[24] I will inflect the history I write not only with my own subjectivity but also with the presence of those who might be absent or less prominent in the archive, such as women and people of colour. In her 'nomadic subject project'[25] Braidotti promotes figuration as a methodology which can be used to 'critique Eurocentrism from within'[26] and the efficacy of such an approach to the problem of 'dominant visions of the subject, identity and knowledge'[27] will be central to my consideration of the anti-racist responsibilities of an 'Old Master' art gallery within 21st-century London. This methodology is therefore conceived in order to destabilise the Gallery's history, to question its founding mythology, revealing and challenging the ways in which it has been presented to the world.

24. Rendell, 'Marginal Modes: Positions of Architecture Writing'.
25. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodied and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 7.
26. Braidotti, 7.
27. Braidotti, 8.

Chapter 2

Strangers

Anti-Racism

On 10 June 2020 a statement is posted on Dulwich Picture Gallery's website entitled 'Black Lives Matter'. In it, Director Jennifer Scott and Chair of Trustees Evelyn Welch, draw on the Gallery's history stating 'Dulwich Picture Gallery was established more than 200 years ago specifically to make art accessible. As the first public art Gallery in the country, we recognise our responsibility to provide meaningful and relevant experiences for everyone.'[1]

In a recent blog post 'Why Museums Must Decolonise and Diversify for their Own Survival' (2021),[2] curator Meneesha Kellay highlights the urgency of addressing racial inequality within museums. Kellay reminds the reader that 'anti-racism statements' deal with the 'previously marginal belief that museums need to be anti-racist institutions'.[3] She is sceptical, commenting; 'the world has finally woken up to the systemic and sustained racism black people have experienced for centuries'.[4] Focusing on practical ways to engender change – from actively diversifying museum workforces to re-thinking the use of the term BAME – Kellay makes it clear that no institution is immune from facing up to the spectre of systemic racism. She issues a challenge to museums and galleries to put words into action:

> We will be keeping a keen eye on which museums take a root-and-branch approach to dismantling systemic racism and those that are seeing this as a 'moment rather than a movement'.[5]

In their anti-racist statement, Scott and Welch mythologise the Gallery's history, using it to assert that the institution already has a long track record of making 'art accessible'.[6] This sentiment is distilled from the famous phrase in founder Francis Bourgeois's Will, that the collection should be left; 'For the inspection of the public', which is a quote that has been consistently used to cement its place in history as England's first purpose-built public art gallery. In a speech made in 1999 for a national conference on cultural diversity and the heritage sector 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', Stuart Hall looks 'critically at the whole concept of British Heritage from the perspective of multicultural Britain'[7] and I argue that Dulwich Picture Gallery can be see as part of what

1. Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Black Lives Matter', 2020, accessed 27 August 2021, https://www.dulwichpictu regallery.org.uk/about/news-blog/2020/june/black-lives-matter/.
2. Kellay, 'Why Museums Must Decolonise and Diversify For Their Own Survival'.
3. Kellay.
4. Kellay.
5. Kellay.
6. Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Black Lives Matter'.
7. Stuart Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', *Third Text* 13:49 (1999): 3.

Hall calls ‘The Heritage’. This is identified by Hall as an ongoing canonisation of ‘the whole complex of organisations, institutions and practices devoted to the preservation and presentation of culture and the arts’[8] that gives certain artefacts ‘value’[9] as part of a ‘British idea of Heritage’[10] because they contribute to the ‘unfolding national story’[11] that is to say ‘tradition’.[12] Today, Bourgeois’s words are still quoted on the ‘About Us’ page of the Gallery’s website, alongside a description that positions it as a ‘cultural hub’ with a ‘wide-ranging programme’.[13] In this first chapter I consider the founders’ own understanding of who the public were and I recall impressions of visitors from the archive.

Dulwich College Picture Gallery

In his Will, Bourgeois did indeed bequeath the collection of European paintings he collected with his friend and benefactor Noel Desenfans to Dulwich College; ‘For the inspection of the public’[14], but his ‘Book of Regulations’ held in the Dulwich College archive [15] reveals the specific ways in which its founder envisaged Dulwich College Picture Gallery operating when it first opened in 1817. It includes an order that stipulates to obtain entry, ‘strangers’ must apply for a ticket in advance from a select group of art dealers in central London. The use of the word ‘strangers’ reveals what the word public actually meant to Bourgeois. It was a privately owned collection that certain members of the public were allowed to see, but only if they could prove respectability by gaining permission from the College authorities to enter. A list of ticketing rules shows strangers are all those who are not known to the College, as ‘the Master, Warden and Fellows’ are ‘to have admittance without tickets and with any number of persons they choose’. Strangers are also people who are outside of the artistic establishment, as: ‘The Academicians and officials of the Royal Academy with any friends that accompany them’ are also to be ‘admitted without tickets’ and this includes ‘students of painting’, but ‘all other persons […] must apply for tickets’. However elitist this may now appear, this level of public access was revolutionary for its day, as the appreciation of fine art had traditionally been the preserve of the aristocracy. Amongst the list of establishments that

8. Hall, ‘Un-settling ‘The Heritage’, Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?’, 3.
9. Hall, 4.
10. Hall, 4.
11. Hall, 5.
12. Hall, 5.
13. Dulwich Picture Gallery, ‘About Us’, 2021, accessed 25 August 2021, https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/about/.
14. The Will of Francis Bourgeois, 1811, Second Series MS LXXXII, Dulwich College Manuscripts, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK
15. Francis Bourgeois’ Book of Regulations, MS XVIIb, Dulwich College Manuscripts, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK.

would provide tickets to the Gallery, is the 'foremost printmakers of the day',[16] Boydell & Co. at 90 Cheapside. Opening his Shakespeare Gallery at 52 Pall Mall in 1789, owner John Boydell capitalised on a growing public habit of visiting temporary 'exhibition rooms'.[17] This fashion for arts appreciation, that flourished in Pall Mall in the 1790s, precipitated the rise of public galleries in Britain during the 19th-century, of which Dulwich is one of the earliest examples.[18] Architecturally 'a sequence of plain round arches linking the exhibitions spaces at Dulwich',[19] is thought to be directly influenced by George Dance's design for Boydell's Gallery.

16. Rosie Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 18.
17. Giles Waterfield, *Soane and After The Architecture of Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1987), 10.
18. Dias, *Exhibiting Englishness: John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery and the Formation of a National Aesthetic*, 23-26.
19. Waterfield, *Soane and After The Architecture of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 11.

A Walk from Cheapside to Pall Mall

I encounter the Gallery's history through walking, taking photographs as I go. I walk between 90 Cheapside and 52 Pall Mall (Figure 1)[20] remembering the strangers who collected their tickets from central London art dealers.

Figure 1: Lambert, *Westminster and Southwark Map showing Pall Mall* (1806) © The British Library.

20. 'Westminster and Southwark Lambert 1806', Layers of London, 2021, accessed 3 September 2021, https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/


90
Buses & cycles
only
Mon-Fri
7am-7pm
105 yds ahead


amama
McAleer
& Rushe


NICHOLSON'S
THE OLD BELL


SOMERSET HOUSE
59


PALL MALL
EAST SW1

Figure 2: *Cheapside to Pall Mall* (2021, photographs by author).

Impressions

I trace the Gallery's history through its archive. I visit on several occasions. On my first visit, I am looking for visitors. I unpack boxes loaded with ephemera. I follow strangers to the Gallery, reading accounts of visits taken over 200 years. I discover a box labelled 'Impressions'.[21] I leaf through an eclectic compilation. An archivist has copied notes from diaries by hand, typed out transcripts of letters, photocopied extracts from biographies, travel guides and press clippings. The location of the Gallery on the outskirts of London necessitates a day long excursion, meaning the journeys taken to get there are a constant feature of the tale. Each visitor recalls a charm and tranquility imbued in the oft remarked upon leafy environs of Dulwich Village, their arrival almost always accompanied by an expression of relief and reprieve from the discomforts of central London.

In a letter dated New Year's Day 1838 the artist William Etty recalls a dreamlike excursion to the country. His letter is a fable. He tells of riding a stage coach south from Elephant and Castle being put down at Camberwell Grove. Relieved to leave the 'smoky metropolis' behind he walks the final two miles through lush leafy environs, and arrives in an idyllic setting, Dulwich Village. He is enraptured by 'a pretty green lane which so beautifully leads to the Valley beyond' and draws a moral lesson from his surroundings. Dwelling on their simple pleasures he reprimands himself for being too easily distracted by gaming, drinking and debauchery in the city. 'Reverie follows' at the Gallery, a 'Temple of Virtuous and Intellectual Pleasures'.[22]

In 2000 the American Federation of Arts staged an exhibition of the Gallery's paintings. In the catalogue director Desmond Shawe-Taylor explained their normal context to an audience who would not be visiting Dulwich:

> the visitor is aware of the founders […] This is partly because they are buried on site, in the Gallery's mausoleum, but also because […] their vision can be experienced in a remarkably unchanged fashion […] The setting is unique: within a garden […] the heart of Dulwich Village a famous oasis of parks, playing fields, and Georgian houses […] All these things act as a splendid frame for the paintings themselves: one of the most important collections of 17th and 18th-century European art'[23]

21. Box H4 Impressions of the Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.
22. Letter from William Etty to Mrs Payne, 1st January 1838, Box H4 Impressions of the Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.
23. Giles Waterfield, 'A History of Dulwich Picture Gallery', in *Rembrandt to Gainsborough: Masterpieces from Dulwich Picture Gallery*, ed. Giles Waterfield Ian A.C. Dejardin Desmond Shawe-Taylor (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), 8.

This is the founding mythology of Dulwich Picture Gallery – hidden in a picturesque landscape, it is a palace of art, a sacred site of pilgrimage. In her blog post Kellay comments; 'The status quo is not an option because it is dishonest'.[24] The status quo at Dulwich is for the Gallery to be experienced as a delightful destination for a day trip, somewhere visitors can refine their minds by communing with the Old Masters.

In 1871 Pre-Raphaelite painter James Smetham writes; 'I went down to Dulwich last week. It is the most delightful Gallery in arrangement and surroundings that I know. You don't turn out of a hot street' but 'You walk along a breezy quiet road […] under green trees and after green fields'. He exclaims with delight; 'How kind! How civil! How silent!' and recalls; 'You write your name in a visitors book and see that yesterday John Ruskin was here.'[25]

The impressions of men feature heavily in the archive – artists, actors, poets, novelists. There are many other accounts – John Ruskin, Robert Browning, Charles Dickens. However there is, at least, one female voice, written under the masculine pseudonym by which she is still known.

In 1859 novelist George Eliot visits the Gallery and later records the journey in her diary. She describes a 'delicious drive to Dulwich and back' when 'we staid an hour at the Gallery'. But for Eliot, 'better than the pictures was the fresh greenth of the spring, - the chestnuts just on the verge of flowering beauty, the bright leaves […] the rich yellow-brown of the oaks, the meadows full of buttercups'.[26]

It is known that Virginia Woolf visited, her signature is in the visitors' book for 1908,[27] but I don't find her in the archive between Evelyn Waugh and W.B.Yeats.

If Woolf ever did write an account of her visit to Dulwich, it has not been published. Perhaps she would have seen past the leafy façade of Dulwich Village and read ominous signs in the sky above the Gallery, as she did in her critique of the British Empire exhibition of 1923, 'Thunder at Wembley'; 'The Empire is perishing; the bands are playing; the Exhibition is in ruins. For that is what comes of letting in the sky'.[28]

24. Kellay, 'Why Museums Must Decolonise and Diversify For Their Own Survival'.
25. James Smetham, Letter to T.A. *letters of James Smetham*, (1871), 232–233, Box H4, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London UK.
26. George Eliot, 'Chapter IX.', in *George Eliot's Life: As Related In Her Letters And Journals*, ed. John Walter Cross, George Eliot Archive, accessed August 15, 2021, https://georgeeliotarchive.org/items/show/222. (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1885), 87.
27. Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Dulwich Picture Gallery Celebrates 200 Years of Visitors', 2011, accessed 18 August 2021, https://www.dulwichpicturegallery.org.uk/about/press-media/press-releases/dulwich-picture-gallery-celebrates-200-years-of-visitors/.
28. Virginia Woolf, 'Thunder at Wembley', in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf, Vol 3*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1923), 410-13.

A few decades after Woolf's visit the Gallery would indeed come to ruin, as the Mausoleum was destroyed by a German bomb that fell on 20 July 1944. (Figure 21) The Gallery we visit today is a reconstruction, an historicised approximation of the place the visitors we have met experienced before WWII. Unlike their accounts from the archive, Shawe-Taylor's description, published in a Gallery catalogue, comes from the mouth of the institution itself. Several interior views of the Gallery exist to evidence his comment that it has changed remarkably little (Figure 16 and Figure 17), although he does not acknowledge that by the time he was director in the late 20th-century, this had become a strategic choice. Reading like marketing copy this text underscores the fact that the Gallery is so often experienced as a palace of art, because this is how it has been consistently presented to the world. Finishing my work, I pack up the box and leave the Gallery's library. Walking out into the grounds I see a tent set up for families attending an art workshop. It is a hot day and people are sitting on deck chairs on the grass enjoying drinks and snacks from the café . Today, the Gallery is still a tranquil destination on the outskirts of a busy city.

Chapter 3

A Myth and a Mausoleum

A Walk from Pimlico to Dulwich Village

In 1822 The Revd. T.F. Dibdin rides a cabriolet carriage as far as Camberwell Green and walks with some friends the last two miles to the Gallery. He effusively describes 'green, rich, warm and luxuriant' surroundings.[1]

I decide to walk to Dulwich Village from my home in Pimlico and arrive at the Gallery like many strangers have before me, via Camberwell (Figure 3).[2] As I move through the city, climbing Denmark Hill, the frenetic energy of the main arterial roads gradually fades out. As for the leafy environs, the rich and luxuriant verdure, there is still an echo of the old trope as I stroll along a tree-lined avenue bordered by playing fields and pass through Dulwich Village, today a wealthy enclave of South East London.

Figure 3: Davies, Benjamin and Rees, *London and its Environs Map showing Dulwich and Camberwell* (1844) © The British Library.

1. T.F. Dibdin, 'A Day at Dulwich College', *The Museum* (1822): 263–264, Box H4 Impressions of the Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.
2. 'Davies, Benjamin and Rees, London and its Environs 1844', Layers of London, 2021, accessed 3 September 2021, https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/


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HALL BRIDGE


NHS SER
IN-STORE
TOP-UP
BACK HOME


COVID-19
Vaccination Centre


020 8299 2906
BEAUTY AESTHETICS & LASER CLINIC

Figure 4: *Pimlico to Dulwich Village* (2021, photographs by author).

Desenfans and Bourgeois

In 1947 The National Gallery exhibited pictures from the Dulwich collection, as the Gallery was not rebuilt until 1953. The catalogue begins; 'The history of the collection is curious enough to merit some description'. The author introduces the figure of Noel Desenfans who 'imported into this country numerous pictures of importance' as he 'was commissioned to form a Gallery of pictures for the King' of Poland Stanislaus Poniatowski. However 'in 1759 Stanislaus was forced to abdicate' and Desenfans 'left with a number of pictures collected for the King of Poland but never paid for', and so upon his death in 1807;'he bequeathed all his collection to his widow [Margaret] and to his friend, Sir Francis Bourgeois'.[3]

A version of this story appears countless times in catalogues throughout the Gallery's history, the 'curious' facts of its existence consistently placed in the foreground. Today, the first room visitors enter, Gallery 3 leading to the Mausoleum, contains portraits of the three founders – Noel Desenfans (d.1807) (Figure 18) and his wife Margaret Desenfans (d.1814) (Figure 19) and their friend, Sir Francis Bourgeois R.A. (d.1811) (Figure 20).

Dulwich College

In a pamphlet stamped with the Dulwich College crest the author includes a reminder that the Gallery and the collection it contains was bequeathed to; 'The Foundation of Alleyn's College of God's Gift', (1613) and notes 'It is a surprise to many people that a Gallery containing such a fine collection of paintings should be part of an educational institution'. [4]

However, the connection to Dulwich College is central to the story of the Gallery. Quite apart from its location on College land, the fact that the Gallery became an asset of the school also resulted in a strained financial situation. Despite Soane's commitment 'to economise the expenditure as far as is consistent with the solidity and durability of construction […] the Governors were still short of £2,500'[5] needed to meet his estimate. In his essay 'A History of Dulwich Picture Gallery' (1999), Giles Waterfield recalls; 'In the early 19th-century Dulwich College was a prosperous and indolent institution better known for its hospitality than for educational zeal'.[6] What made the College, 'from Bourgeois's point of view' seem like 'an

3. Some Pictures from the Dulwich Gallery, 1947, Dulwich College Collection of Dulwich Picture Gallery Catalogues, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK.
4. Dulwich College Picture Gallery, n.d., Dulwich College Collection of Dulwich Picture Gallery Catalogues, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK.
5. Francesco Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2000), 46.
6. Waterfield, 'A History of Dulwich Picture Gallery', 23.

appropriate beneficiary'[7] was the beauty of the estate itself and the fact that he believed the 'freshness of the air' in the country 'would benefit the pictures'.[8] Bourgeois chose the College because he was attracted by the same verdant environs that have become so integral a part of its mythology. He died suddenly in 1811, fatally injured falling off a horse. On his deathbed, he met with the Master of Dulwich College Lancelot Baugh Allen who later recorded the details of their conversation in a document entitled 'The Last Testament of Francis Bourgeois'.[9] This gives a clearer sense of Bourgeois's motivations in relation to the bequest. Allen records him saying 'he wished for the collection to go down to Posterity, just as it was, that this object had perpetually occupied his mind'. For this reason he rejected the idea of bequeathing the paintings to The British Museum as 'he did not approve of' the habit of the Governors in retaining 'the right of putting up, and taking down, and getting rid of anything they might choose'. Therefore Bourgeois 'was better satisfied with the unpretending merit of Dulwich College, than with these great institutions'. The account reveals that when Bourgeois speaks of posterity, it is with the particular wish; 'That if Mr Desenfans could put his Head out of the Grave He might be able to see them as much as possible in the same state as he left them'. In leaving the collection to Dulwich College, Bourgeois is motivated primarily by a sense of needing to preserve the life's work of his friend (and himself) by keeping the collection intact.

7. Waterfield, 'A History of Dulwich Picture Gallery', 23.
8. Waterfield, 23.
9. The Last Testament of Sir Francis Bourgeois, Private Correspondence IX/D/2/2, Manuscripts, Sir John Soane Museum Archive, London, UK.

A Walk Around Dulwich College

I arrive at the rear entrance to the Gallery, next to Edward Alleyn's College of God's Gift (1613) (Figure 5).[10] Soane's original idea was to create a 'collegiate quadrangle'[11] connecting the Jacobean College buildings, via an arcade running from Alleyn's chapel, to the entrance of the Gallery (Figure 22).[12]

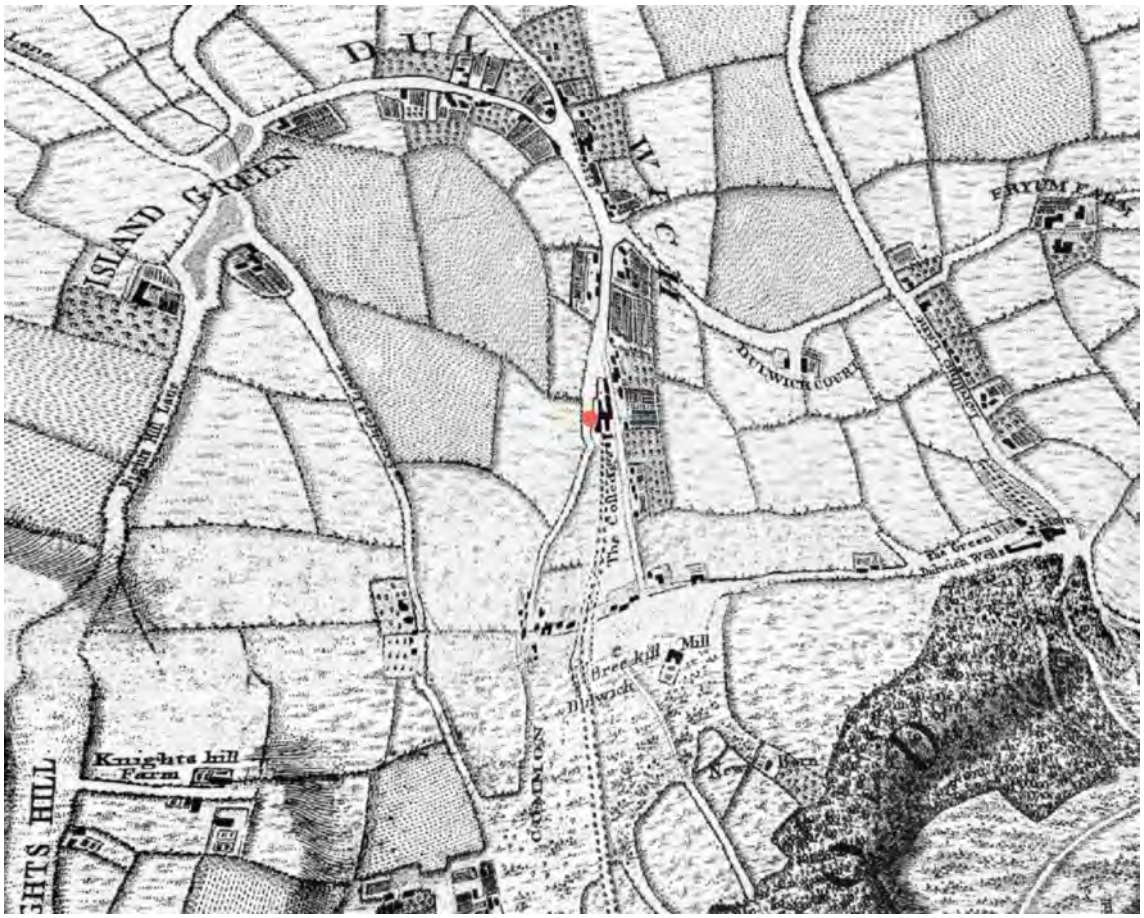

Figure 5: John Rocque, *London Ten Miles Round Map showing Alleyn's College of God's Gift* (1746) © The British Library.

10. 'John Rocque's Map of London Ten Miles Round, 1746', Layers of London, 2021, accessed 3 September 2021, https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/
11. Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 164.
12. Nevola, 41.

Figure 6: *Alleyn's College of God's Gift*, (1613) (2021, photographs by author).

By 1896 a Baedeker recommends travelling to Dulwich by rail from Victoria station, advertising the fact that it can be reached 'in only 20 minutes' and that 'the scenery around is very pleasing'. On leaving the station the authors note 'we observe in front of us the New College, a handsome red brick building in the Renaissance style'.[13]

The new school building was designed by Charles Barry Jnr. in the 1870s (Figure 7).[14] It is here I view the Wills of the founders and read the 'Book of Regulations', kept in the Dulwich College archive. I note the palatial grandeur of Barry's building, another architectural treasure built for this elite public boys' school. By the 1890s, all the main features of the suburban neighbourhood of Dulwich Village we know today were in place – the Gallery, the school, the park and the railway line.

Figure 7: *OS Map showing Dulwich College* (1893–1896) © The National Library of Scotland.

13. Baedeker, 34. Dulwich, 1896, Box H4 Impressions of the Gallery, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.
14. 'OS Map 1893–1896', Layers of London, 2021, accessed 3 September 2021, https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/


DULWICH COLLEGE
FOUNDED 1619
DULWICH COLLEGE
Open Events for Year 3, 4 and 5 entry

Figure 8: *Dulwich College*, Charles Barry Jnr, (1870s) (2021, photographs by author).

Sir Francis Bourgeois R.A.

Despite how often it is repeated, accounts of the founding rarely do more than recall the same basic facts about the people involved. I return to the Gallery archive, intent on discovering more. I am intrigued by an obscure article I find on Bourgeois, which reveals far more than the books available in the Gallery shop. In "The White-Faced Man': Sir Francis Bourgeois, 1756–1811' (1989)[15], Waterfield, the Gallery's first director, presents Bourgeois as a man who lived 'on the fringes of society, a status he was determined to transcend'. This meant that Bourgeois's activities as both an artist and art dealer were secondary to 'the business of being a gentleman, an ambition that consumed much of his energy'. This drive for self-elevation is demonstrated by the fact that, although his knighthood was a 'counterfeit' title, originally bestowed upon him not by George III but by Stanislaus, Bourgeois continued to use it even after the Polish king was deposed. Similarly, the honour of R.A. was crucial for him as 'a painter for whom the practice of art was principally a means of social advancement' and he evidently pursued it with a great deal of determination, only achieving full membership in 1793 'after four unsuccessful candidatures'. Waterfield argues that Bourgeois's 'artistic talents were, to say the least, questionable' and states that 'Bourgeois's success, both artistic and social, was much assisted by the energetic publicity campaign organised […] by Desenfans'. As a teenager Bourgeois was abandoned in England by his father who made him 'effectively an orphan' by placing the boy in Desenfan's care and leaving the country.[16] Bourgeois lived with Desenfans who 'educated him' and 'by the 1780s Bourgeois was Desenfans's assistant in dealing'.[17] On the face of it this arrangement seems purely altruistic, but Waterfield asserts that 'Desenfans was a man of no social standing'. Waterfield argues that Bourgeois's career as an artist was a means of Desenfans's own social advancement as; 'He was also extremely ambitious and in Bourgeois he perceived a tool'.[18]

In 1776 Desenfans married Margaret Morris who brought 'a large fortune'[19] and in 1786 he bought a house at 38–9 Charlotte (now Hallam) Street, 'a fashionable address'[20] in Marylebone. Bourgeois lived with the couple even as an adult and their shared home was the private forerunner of the Gallery, the paintings displayed to be admired by guests. In life, determined as they were to build up their own social standing, the house was a place where the friends could demonstrate their taste and consolidate their reputation as art connoisseurs and gentlemen. In death, this social ambition was translated into efforts to ensure their legacy

15. Giles Waterfield,"The White-Faced Man':Sir Francis Bourgeois, 1756-1811', *Turner Studies His Art and Epoch – 1775–1851*, (1989): 36–48, Box H3 Francis Bourgeois, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.
16. Jan Piggott, *How a King's Art Collection Came to London* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2018), 10.
17. Piggott, 10.
18. Waterfield,"The White-Faced Man", 36.
19. Piggott, *How a King's Art Collection Came to London*, 6.
20. Piggott, 7.

was kept intact and their memory lived on. Margaret Desenfans was instrumental in the fulfilment of this wish. It was she that 'broke the deadlock'[21] between the College and Soane over funding, intervening at the last minute to offer Soane an additional £4,000 'for the completion of the building'.[22] Evidently Margaret shared in the men's determination that their legacy should live on, because without her there would be no Dulwich Picture Gallery. As is recorded in Allen's account of his last testimony, before he settled on Dulwich, Bourgeois first 'had an idea of getting the House where he Lived, made freehold' in order to convert it to a public gallery, but this was not to be permitted.[23] However, Margaret bequeathed her collection of decorative furniture to the Gallery. As Sarah Moulden describes in *The Furniture at Dulwich Picture Gallery* (2009); 'Assembled together, the pictures and furniture at Charlotte Street would have blended effortlessly'.[24] The Gallery's enfilade is 'derived from the tradition of long galleries in English country houses'[25] and Margaret Desenfans signalled the founders own domestic taste within its interior, re-creating the atmosphere of their private townhouse in the public space of the Gallery. Recalling the grandeur of a country house, the Gallery was always envisaged as a palace of art.

The Mausoleum

When Bourgeois made his testimony, Desenfans was already interred at Charlotte Street, in a mausoleum designed by Soane (Figure 24). Later in the testament Bourgeois states that he specifically wished for 'some little nook […] to be set apart' for the founders' entombment at the College and confirms 'he meant, he said as were in his chapel' at Charlotte Street.[26] Soane's original idea was to place the mausoleum on the East façade (Figure 25). As Jonathan Hill describes in *The Architecture of Ruin* (2019), this would have made it 'emphatically face the visitor',[27] thus placing the founders in the foreground of their encounter with the space. I walk around the exterior, observing the mausoleum to consider how its placement affects its impact. I remind myself this is a reconstruction, as Soane's original was destroyed in the blitz (Figure 9).[28]

21. Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 46.
22. Nevola, 46.
23. The Last Testament of Sir Francis Bourgeois,
24. Sarah Moulden, *The Furniture at Dulwich Picture Gallery* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2009), 11.
25. Waterfield, *Soane and After The Architecture of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 10.
26. The Last Testament of Sir Francis Bourgeois.
27. Jonathan Hill, *The Architecture of Ruin: Designs on the Past, Present and Future* (London: Routledge, 2019), 161.
28. 'Bomb Damage, 1945', Layers of London, 2021, accessed 3 September 2021, https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/


DONATE

Figure 10: *Dulwich Picture Gallery Exterior and Mausoleum* (2021, photographs by author).

As built the mausoleum is set in the background on the West façade. It's symbolism is therefore toned down, but not reduced entirely, as it is 'still expressed as a distinct entity'.[29] In 'Dulwich Picture Gallery: An Artist's Shrine?' (1996) Waterfield argues that 'Bourgeois and Desenfans's mausoleum'[30] should be seen in its specific 'intellectual climate'.[31] This is that it emerges from a common interest at the time in 'the commemoration of great men'.[32] This was shared by Soane and Desenfans who wanted to see 'the advancement of a nationally-organised scheme for this purpose'.[33]

In a catalogue from 1910 the author recalls that 'in 1799' Desenfans 'published a plan for the establishment of a National Gallery' but this offer was 'naturally disregarded by the Government of Mr Pitt, intent on war and regardless of Art'. And so, 'disappointed in this noble scheme […] Desenfans left the whole of his collection to his friend Sir Francis Bourgeois R.A.[34]

The Gallery is designed to consolidate the reputation of its founders, to act as a symbol of their taste and refinement, even after their death. But this is also about establishing national hierarchy. It is about creating a place that can be seen, in modern parlance, as world-leading. Therefore the Gallery is a place that is enshrined with a Eurocentric sense of cultural hierarchy. The mausoleum is central to this because through it the founders can link themselves back to the pinnacle of all Western culture, classical antiquity. Mausolea are a recurring theme in Soane's work partly because, as David Watkin notes in *Monuments and Mausolea in the Age of Enlightenment* (1996) he realised they 'played a key role in the public life of the ancient world […], celebrating the actions of heroes'.[35] Mausolea were 'an expression of civic virtue' and a 'moral exemplar' and, Watkin says; 'This custom [was] echoed in modern times by Soane's patron Sir Francis Bourgeois'.[36] Hill comments that 'Soane's further purpose was to model contemporary buildings on ancient ruins' and that by doing so he 'emphasises that a history is an interpretation of the past in the present, never neutral and always partial'.[37] The mausoleum is therefore emblematic of the fallibility of history itself. After all, derived from classical literature, myths are both histories and stories of the self and with the mausoleum, Dulwich has an inbuilt reminder that it is from the ancient world that Eurocentric identity is constructed, both individual and national.

29. Hill, *The Architecture of Ruin: Designs on the Past, Present and Future*, 161.
30. Giles Waterfield, 'Dulwich Picture Gallery: An Artist's Shrine?', in *Soane and Death*, ed. Giles Waterfield (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 60.
31. Waterfield, 60.
32. Waterfield, 60.
33. Waterfield, 60.
34. Pictures in the Dulwich Gallery Princess Victoria Series, 1910, Dulwich College Collection of Dulwich Picture Gallery Catalogues, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK.
35. David Watkin, 'Monuments and Mausolea in the Age of Enlightenment', in *Soane and Death*, ed. Giles Waterfield (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1996), 9.
36. Watkin, 11.
37. Hill, *The Architecture of Ruin: Designs on the Past, Present and Future*, 187.

Chapter 4

Education

Artists and Architects

Perspectives on what the word public actually encompasses have changed greatly since 1817. The regulations reveal that for Bourgeois, this primarily meant fellow artists. Following the traditional training of learning through copying, it was 'students of painting' from the Royal Academy, who were given special privileges to visit. Originally these students would all have been men, as women were not permitted to study at the Royal Academy until 1860.[1] The Gallery was also a place of architectural education, as Soane's pupils 'were sent to take progress views' of his buildings 'in the course of construction'.[2] In 1815 Soane delivered his twelfth Royal Academy lecture with which five 'large-scale copies of progress views'[3] of the Gallery are associated (Figure 23). In *Soane and After: The Architecture of Dulwich Picture Gallery* (1987), Waterfield includes testimonials from architects influenced by the Gallery's design, including Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown[4] and James Stirling.[5] Part of the Gallery's mythology is that it is a place of architectural pilgrimage, a site that continually inspires new generations of architects.

Access

On the 27 March 1858 'museum reformer'[6] Richard Redgrave presented a report to the College recommending a number of improvements to the Gallery.[7] In this he refers to 'the strange regulations that have hitherto prevailed' and jibes they seem to have been 'formed […] purposely to exclude the public'. He specifically criticises 'the system of admission by tickets, obtainable only at a distance'. The involvement in the Gallery's operations of a curatorial figure such as Redgrave, who was the first Keeper of Paintings at The South Kensington Museum, is reflective of a 'burst of interest in art'[8] within Victorian society. Public art galleries and museums proliferated all over the country in 'the last three decades of the 19th-century'.[9] By then, this did not only included major institutions such as The National Gallery (1824)

1. Google Arts and Culture, 'Women and the Royal Academy of Arts', 2021, accessed 25 August 2021, https : / / artsandculture . google . com / exhibit / women - and - the - royal - academy - of - arts - royal - academy - of - arts/YwJyhhGlQJ4DIQ?hl=en-GB.
2. Margaret Richardson, 'The Education of the Architect', *Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Symposium of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain*, 1993, 18.
3. Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 112.
4. Waterfield, *Soane and After The Architecture of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 96.
5. Waterfield, 95.
6. Giles Waterfield, ed., *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790–1990* (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1991), 18.
7. Richard Redgrave,'Report on the Collection of Pictures at Dulwich College', 27 March 1858, Minutes of the Dulwich College Picture Gallery Committee 1857–1995, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK
8. Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790–1990*, 21.
9. Waterfield.

but local galleries started by philanthropists, such as The South London Gallery (1890) in nearby Peckham.[10] As Waterfield notes in *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790-1990* (1990), such galleries were founded as places for 'educating the masses' enabling them to 'appreciate the possibility of a better life through the medium of art'.[11]

The original regulations specifically stipulate that 'tickets of admission […] do contain a request that visitors will bring no children under twelve'.[12] This is one of the regulations most soundly criticised by Redgrave who says it 'seemed to have been framed to prevent the Pictures being a means of implanting a love for art in the minds of the young'.[13] By 1984, a formal Education programme was established, as the Gallery benefited from an Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) scheme where art teachers were seconded into galleries and museums to 'draw visits from schools'.[14] The archive contains ephemera from the Education programme. I come across flyers, brochures, press cuttings and reports illustrated with pictures of primary school children sitting in the enfilade, raising their hands to answer questions in front of Gainsborough's portraits, or creating their own paintings and drawings inspired by the works they've seen.

An article entitled 'Accessible and pleasurable to a mixed Community', published in 1984, states; 'The aim of the Education programme is to make Old Master paintings accessible to those who would not normally visit an art gallery', and continues 'it brings nearly 8,000 children a year to Dulwich, many from inner city primary schools'.[15]

I am struck by the language used to described these audiences. Who are the children who would not otherwise visit? In a range of other pamphlets various words are used. There is 'outreach' to 'minority groups', children are described as 'deprived', 'disadvantaged', 'troubled' and 'culturally barren'. At a distance of nearly forty years these phrases feel outdated and euphemistic.[16] The awkward phrasing belies unspoken assumptions about the level of cultural capital these 'inner city' children can be expected to have. This is made explicit by Jan Piggott in *How a King's Art Collection Came to London* (2018), when he describes Waterfield 'overcoming ignorant and even hostile suspicion'[17] from teachers and their pupils. This implies there is a correct attitude to have in relation to an art gallery, which

10. South London Gallery, 'SLG History', 2021, accessed 15 August 2021, https://www.southlondongallery.org/history-collections/slg-history/.
11. Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain 1790–1990*, 23.
12. Francis Bourgeois' Book of Regulations
13. Richard Redgrave,'Report on the Collection of Pictures at Dulwich College'
14. Piggott, *How a King's Art Collection Came to London*, 36.
15. Graham Fuller 'Accessible and Pleasurable to a Mixed Community' *Museum Visitor*,1984, Box H12, Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.
16. Assorted Education Pamphlets, Dulwich Picture Gallery Education file, Dulwich College Archive, London, UK
17. Piggott, *How a King's Art Collection Came to London*, 36.

these audiences are perceived to lack. Although the word black is entirely absent, the race (and class) of these young people is still present in these references to the inner city. In *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* (2017) Reni Eddo-Lodge comments that; 'The word urban […] was coded, a term that implied inner cities, poverty and dilapidation. Urban here […] was code for 'black people live here".[18]

In 1986 Head of Education Gillian Wolfe writes in the ILEA journal, extolling the benefit to children of experiencing fine art. She warns against 'the uneven distribution of culture which maintains class division by exclusion'. As 'society highly esteems' certain 'artefacts', Wolfe maintains, they must be made 'accessible' because 'art is used to preserve elite boundaries and dominance' but 'art appreciation is a matter of training' and; 'To make […] high culture accessible' is therefore a great 'responsibility'.[19]

A Walk Down Railton Road

Each step in the city is a choice, a potential composition to be caught on camera. Leaving the Gallery, I walk home along Railton Road. (Figure 11)[20] I pass neat rows of terraced houses, all bricks and bay windows. I notice youth centres, pubs, play schemes, a front garden filled with flowers. All made by people, all loved, all precarious. This is a road with a unique history, one that is rooted in black community activism and LGBTQ+ liberation. It is a place with its own multi-faceted culture. I pass number 167, a blue plaque commemorating it as the home of writer and activist C.L.R. James. The road is gentrified, tinged with loss. It has been called 'the front-line', the place where Brixton's 'social uprisings of 1981 and 1985 began'.[21] This is a name that embodies residents' perseverance and solidarity in the face of racism and police brutality, a history that cannot be contained by bricks and mortar. Instead, it exists in the memories of those who lived it, such as poet Linton Kwesi Johnson and activist Melba Wilson.[22] I think about lives in a community, intermingling like the scent of flowers on a hot day, fleeting but essential. Railton Road's history is remembered in the Black Cultural Archives in Brixton. Items held there reveal many years of grassroots politics, protests and education projects. The archive holds a plethora of art, books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets and other ephemera connected with this road and Brixton itself, revealing the story of a place on the periphery of the Gallery, that is its own centre.

18. Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 132.
19. Gillian Wolfe, 'The Picture Pioneers', *ILEA Contact*, 1986, 8–9.
20. 'Map', Layers of London, 2021, accessed 3 September 2021, https://www.layersoflondon.org/map/
21. Sireita Mullings-Lawrence, 'Voices from the Front Line: Young People Interrogating Railton Road's Heritage', *Photography and Culture* 12:3 (2019): 338.
22. Mullings-Lawrence, 339.

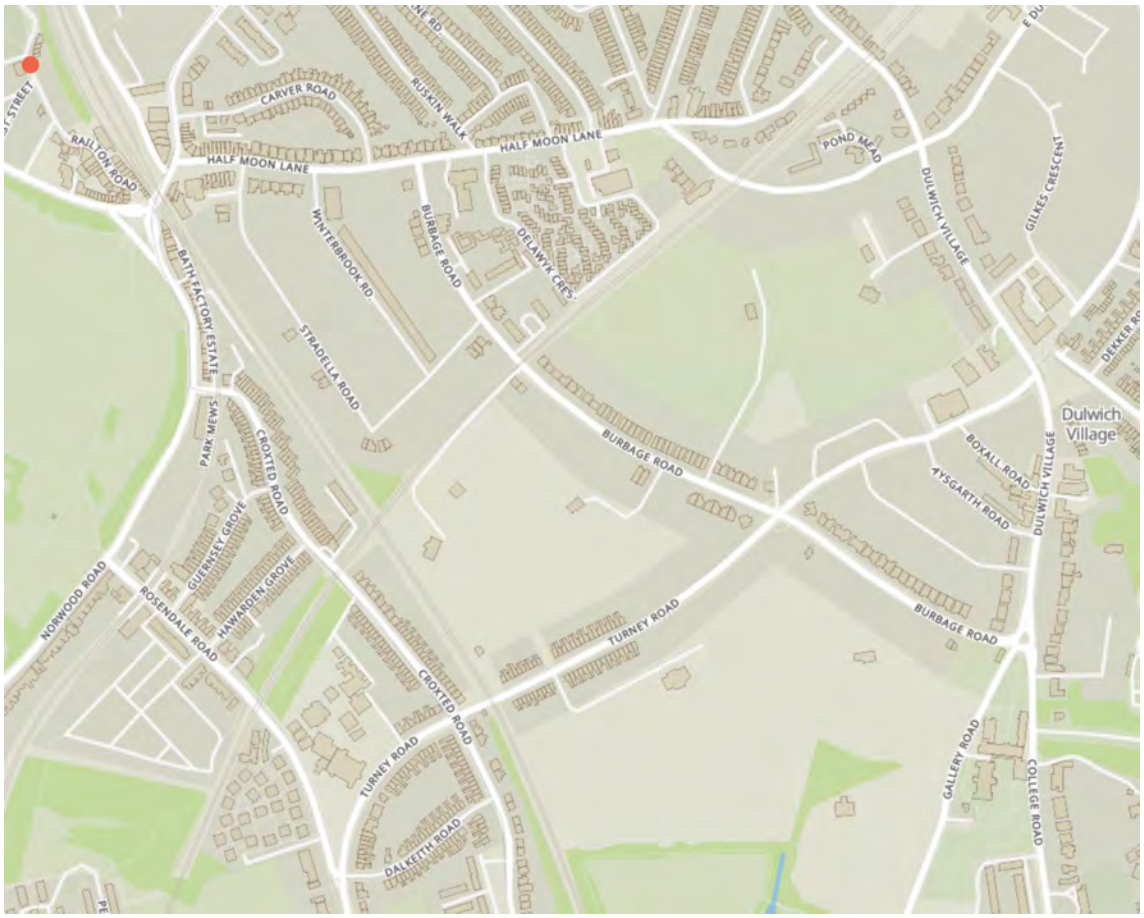

Figure 11: *Railton Road* (2021).


KEBAB
GRILLED DISHES


RAILTON ROAD
SE 24
lark


lárk
Come in
We are open
lark


BOOKS
1973
BLACK PEOPLE
AGAINST STATE
HARASSMENT
1978 B.A.S.H


249

Figure 12: *Railton Road* (2021, photographs by author).

The ephemera from the Education department reveals prejudiced attitudes amongst its staff in the 1980s, views that are firmly rooted in Eurocentric notions of high culture. Moreover the sentiments expressed, that black and working-class children don't have access to cultural experiences and that they need to be elevated in society by being taught to appreciate fine art, is entirely misplaced. In the 1970s, at the same time that the ILEA was establishing its Museum Education Service[23] it was embroiled in a discrimination scandal. In a film entitled *Education* (2020) Steve McQueen[24] draws on the text that outed the ILEA for failing black pupils, Bernard Coard's *How the West Indian Child is made educationally sub-normal in the British School System* (1971).[25] This film tells the story of how black parents overcame the prejudice their children faced in ILEA schools. One way they fought back was by setting up supplementary Saturday schools to introduce them to the black history, literature and art that the ILEA schools did not cover. This powerful film shows the damage that can be done in an Education system that elevates European culture above all others. By their nature Education programmes welcome diverse audiences, but these sources reveal that the notion of access is itself rooted in cultural hierarchy. Kellay asserts; 'We need to scrutinise how we have historicised the past through a white, Eurocentric lens',[26] but the Dulwich anti-racism statement does not do this, instead it falls back on its previous track record of providing access to the collection. However, as raised by Stuart Hall in his 1999 speech; 'Since the eighteenth century, collections of cultural artefacts and art have also been closely associated with informal public education'.[27] The idea of 'making art accessible'[28] could actually be seen as a modern version of the Victorian philanthropic zeal for, as Hall puts it, 'educating the citizenry'[29] to 'refine the sensibilities of the vulgar and enhance the capacities of the masses'.[30] Access programmes are not inherently helpful to anti-racism, they can still be part of a system that upholds Eurocentric hierarchies of culture within society. Hall explains that there has been 'a rise amongst the excluded of a 'politics of recognition' alongside the old politics of equality'[31] and this is still reflected in much contemporary discourse about racial equity in the arts and architecture. For example, Sound Advice is a 'Platform exploring

23. See, Papers of Gene Adams, 1953-2008, UCL Institute of Education Archive. As described in the UCL Library catalogue entry; 'In 1975 Gene Adams was appointed the Art and Museum Education Advisory Teacher at the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). Here she developed educational activities in museums and art galleries, including school visits, holiday activities, in-services training courses for ILEA teachers, and general information leaflets for teachers on museums education'.
24. Steve McQueen, *Education* (London: BBC, 2020).
25. Bernard Coard, *How the West Indian Child is made educationally sub-normal in the British School System* (London: New Beacon Books, 1971).
26. Kellay, 'Why Museums Must Decolonise and Diversify For Their Own Survival'.
27. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 4.
28. Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Black Lives Matter'.
29. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 4.
30. Hall, 4.
31. Hall, 7.

spatial inequality in architecture through music'[32] run by Joseph Henry and Pooja Agrawal. These practitioners have called for a 'A New Model of Recognition' asking 'What if it's not about recognition but instead about love?'[33] Through provocative statements posted using eye-catching graphics on Instagram, these practitioners poke fun at much anguished hand-wringing amongst white design professionals around diversity and inclusion in architecture and instead seek to dismantle structural inequalities by creating 'an alternative vision of celebration'[34] of black and brown architectural talent in the U.K. Similarly, architect Neba Sera, co-director of Black Females in Architecture, has spoken on a podcast about ways to make the Gallery a more inclusive space for black visitors. In her talk, she draws upon parallels between the mausoleum and West African tombs and suggests a collaboration with the Black Cultural Archives.[35] For Sera, this is an obvious way for the Gallery to celebrate black history and involve the diverse populations of Dulwich Village's urban neighbours Peckham and Brixton in its programming.

32. Sound Advice, 'Platform exploring spatial inequality in architecture through music', 2021, accessed 27 August 2021, https://www.instagram.com/sound_x_advice/.

33. AA School, 'A New Model For Recognition Sound Advice', 2021, accessed 30 April 2021, https://www.aaschool.ac.uk/publicprogramme/whatson/a-new-model-for-recognition.

34. AA School.

35. About Buildings and Cities, 'Conversation 3, Dulwich Picture Gallery', 2019, accessed 30 August 2021, https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/about-buildings-cities/id1147205326?i=1000445463586.

Chapter 5

For the Inspection of the Public

A Rescue Mission

After it was rebuilt in 1953, the Gallery became a heritage asset. Its future was by no means certain and it found a passionate advocate in architectural historian John Summerson, whose words are remembered by Nevola; 'The decision to rebuild Dulwich will be endorsed by anyone who has the slightest respect for architecture as a fine art'.[1] The restoration was faithful to and actually improved on the pre-war Gallery, as it was at this time that the entrance was moved from the south to the East façade 'as originally intended by Soane'.[2] As the act of rebuilding was also one of historisisation, the mythology of the Gallery as a sacred monument to fine art and high culture was not only reconstructed along with the Gallery, but re-enforced. Rebuilt, the Gallery was canonised and became part of Hall's 'unfolding national story'.[3] However, after this significant moment of recognition no major architectural work was carried out for half a century, a symptom of the Gallery's increasingly precarious financial situation.

In May 1998 the Art Newspaper publishes a supplement entitled 'The Battle for Dulwich Picture Gallery' written by director Desmond Shawe-Taylor. He says; 'In January 1993 a press conference at Christie's London, announced to the art world a most dispiriting and shocking story: England's oldest public art gallery was threatened with imminent closure' due to 'financial crisis'. But, the story has a 'happy ending', a 'rescue' was enacted by 'another generation' of 'private individuals' who following in the footsteps of the founders, securing its future by setting up an 'Endowment Appeal with a target of £10.5m'. Thus 'The Gallery was saved by the vision and generosity of private benefactors'. The wealth of Lord Sainsbury, The Linbury Trust and The Garfield Weston Foundation amongst others, was offered to sustain the Gallery and the reason given was these 'enthusiasts' were people who 'believe in great art and the incalculable pleasure it can give to all'.[4]

These two stories of redemption of the Gallery as a treasured artistic monument belie opportunities presented but not taken. These sources reveal no evidence of reflection on or even acknowledgement of, the Gallery's underlying Eurocentrism. Instead the myth was perpetuated, patrons taking over from the founders in promoting the benefits of fine art for the masses. In 1995 the Gallery was set up as an independent charity and it is still reliant upon funding from such trusts, foundations and corporate sponsors. Thus, names of benefactors are inscribed in marble plaques on the walls of each room and carved into stone slabs

1. Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 150.
2. Waterfield, 'A History of Dulwich Picture Gallery', 35.
3. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 5.
4. Desmond Shawe-Taylor, 'The Battle for Dulwich Picture Gallery' Art Newspaper Supplement, 1998, Box H12, Dulwich Piture Gallery Archive, London, UK.

on the floor of an extension built in 2000 (Figure 26).[5] For these major capital works, the Gallery was the beneficiary of an £8.5m grant from the newly established Heritage Lottery Fund[6] Designed by Rick Mather Architects this addition takes the form of 'a bronze and glass cloister linking all parts of the new and old buildings'.[7] As such it is a modern re-imagining of Soane's earliest vision for the Gallery site as a 'collegiate quadrangle'.[8] It incorporates visitor services including a café , toilets, a lecture theatre and a studio; The Sackler Centre for Arts Education.

The Heritage

To enter the interior, I pass through the cloister to get to the main entrance on the East façade. The mausoleum is equally integral to Soane's treatment of the interior space, as Hill describes:

> Proceeding from the Gallery to the mausoleum, the visitor passes from warm, quiet rooms with timber floors, rich red walls and an even light to pale stone surfaces, echoes, chilled air, defined shadows and an amber glow. […] The effect of the sepulchral light and frigid climate is […] the visitor stands symbolically at the threshold between mortality and the afterlife.[9]

I stand in front of the mausoleum, on the border between this world and the next. In so doing I encounter the Gallery's mythology for myself, inscribed on a panel. On entering the Gallery, I receive a lesson on the generosity of its founders.

The panel describes: 'The Story of the Gallery', entitled; 'A Gift for the Public'. The results of the founders' beneficence is 'the world's first purpose-built public art Gallery' which houses 'one of Britain's finest collections of Dutch, Flemish, Italian, Spanish and French Old Masters',[10] provided for in an 'architectural masterpiece'[11] created by 'their friend Sir John Soane'.[12]

5. Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 168.
6. Piggott, *How a King's Art Collection Came to London*, 38.
7. Nevola, *Soane's Favourite Subject: The Story of Dulwich Picture Gallery*, 164.
8. Nevola, 164.
9. Hill, *The Architecture of Ruin: Designs on the Past, Present and Future*, 162–163.
10. Text from interpretive panel about the Gallery's founding hung in Gallery 3, as seen by the author, 26 July 2021
11. Text from interpretive panel outside the Gallery entitled 'Welcome to Dulwich Picture Gallery', as seen by the author, 26 July 2021
12. Text from interpretive panel about the Gallery's founding hung in Gallery 3, as seen by the author, 26 July 2021

Due to Covid-19 the Gallery has been closed for most of a year. But as a result it has been re-hung, new flooring and lighting has been installed. The walls of the enfilade have been repainted 'in Mylands Dulwich Red, a unique shade evoking Sir John Soane's original design scheme'. In order to maintain social distancing the hang has been thinned out, but it is still traditionally art historical, arranged by geographical school so that it 'tells the story of European painting between 1600 and 1800'.[13]

13. Text from interpretive panel about the Gallery's founding hung in Gallery 3, as seen by the author, 26 July 2021

Figure 13: *The Cloister,* Rick Mather Architects, (2000) (2021, photographs by author).

Figure 14: *The Entrance Hall and Gallery 3* (2021, photographs by author).

Figure 15: *The Enfilade* (2021, photographs by author).

The Gallery memorialises its founders because, believing in a social hierarchy, they used their collection to attain the highest possible status, both in life and death. But they also saw it as deserving of national recognition. In the preservation and historicisation of the Gallery after the war and in its change in status to a charitable trust supported by wealthy patrons in 1995, its place in the cultural hierarchy of the country was confirmed. It can therefore be seen as part of 'The Heritage', as conceptualised by Hall. However, Hall argues the 'social memory'[14] of The Heritage is also 'highly selective'[15] and; 'Equally, it foreshortens, silences, disavows, forgets and elides'.[16] Citing the fact that such historic collections and their buildings have, since their inception, 'adorned the position of people of power and influence'[17] he points out that they have also 'been related to the exercise of power in another sense – the symbolic power to order knowledge, to rank, classify and arrange'.[18] This is the systemic or institutional power of an art gallery and one that is, as Hall demonstrates, indelibly tarred by racism:

> it is really very complex to understand how appropriately these communities should now be culturally represented in mainstream British cultural and artistic institutions. Our picture of them is defined primarily by their 'otherness' – their minority relationship to something vaguely identified as 'the majority', their cultural difference from European norms, their non-whiteness, their 'marking' by ethnicity, religion and 'race'. This is a negative figuration, reductive and simplistic'[19]

The Education materials I uncovered in the archive are one such example of a negative figuration, in this of case children, based on their race (and class). However, Braidotti is clear that a figuration can be utilised as a 'politically informed reading of the present' and argues 'a cartographic approach' can provide 'analytic tools' for 'creating theoretical alternatives'.[20] My figuration of the Gallery's history provides analysis, revealing ingrained attitudes to race in institutional practices and it can also be used in the service of dismantling them. Despite a gap of over twenty years between them, there are many similarities between Kellay's decolonial blog post and Hall's speech on 'The Heritage'. Both provide many practical ideas to engender change. Hall calls for 'a substantially enhanced programme and training and recruitment of curators […] from 'minority communities'.[21] But, like Kellay, Hall is sceptical of the possibility of real progress emerging from 'some straws in the wind and a lot of

14. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 6.
15. Hall, 6.
16. Hall, 6.
17. Hall, 4.
18. Hall, 4.
19. Hall, 9.
20. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodied and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 4.
21. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 9.

wordage'.[22] Both authors issue a challenge to institutions to take these ideas seriously, with Hall demanding that:

> majority, mainstream versions of the Heritage should revise their own self-conceptions and rewrite the margins into the centre, the outside into the inside.[23]

Braidotti's thinking is rooted in the legacy of Michel Foucault in that she analyses 'locations in terms of power' which is either 'restrictive (*potestas*)' or 'empowering […] (*potentia*)'.[24] At the time of writing the Gallery has already begun to incorporate more empowering and inclusive elements of programming, those that foreground the talents of people of colour. In 2021 a group of 'community curators' have been given the chance to re-interpret paintings from the collection for themselves, drawing on their own lived experiences of migration.[25] Such activity is welcome, because it suggests the Gallery is sincere about its own Black Lives Matter statement, that the pledge – to do better, to listen and to 'ensure we are reflective of the world we live in'[26] – are words that are already being turned into action.

22. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 9.
23. Hall, 10.
24. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodied and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 4.
25. Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Community Curators bring experiences of migration to shine a fresh light on Old Masters', 2021, accessed 30 August 2021, https : / / www . dulwichpicturegallery . org . uk / about / press - media/press-releases/journeys/.
26. Dulwich Picture Gallery, 'Black Lives Matter'.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Each time I leave the Gallery, I walk home. It helps me to reflect on my own encounter with the space and with the archive. Walking reminds me the Gallery is part of a city which is forever changing, a place where even our most sacred spaces are in flux. Over the coming weeks I will sit in my flat and write and re-write these words to present my research. I will scroll through photographs of the archival sources I have seen, plucking at its history. I will order and re-order my own retelling on the page, trying to represent the facts faithfully through my configuration and at the same time reveal and challenge the mythology. I will consider my authority as an historian, asking myself if I should personally pass judgement on curatorial or programming choices? I will come to understand that throughout its history, the Gallery has been presented and revered through a 'white Eurocentric lens'.[1] In presenting itself so consistently as a palace of art it does not own up to the fact that its founding and subsequent public life is rooted in a Eurocentric hierarchy of culture. I will see that even as a place of learning it perpetuates this hierarchy. I will arrive at this conviction – in order to acknowledge and dismantle systemic racism, the Gallery needs to step away at long last from its hallowed status as a palace of art and embrace a new 'self-conception'.[2] Joseph Gandy's watercolour *Preliminary design in Perspective* (1812) (Figure 27), presents a heady vision of a Dulwich Picture Gallery that was never built, that only ever existed as an ambition in the mind of Sir John Soane. In order to achieve an anti-racist future for England's first purpose-built public art Gallery, its curators, educators, director, trustees and donors, need to be equally visionary. Considering how real change can achieved, a question will form in my mind; does this mean that in the future, Dulwich Picture Gallery needs to see itself as a museum?

As Hall's speech makes abundantly clear, museums are just as guilty of perpetuating systemic racism as any fine art gallery. But the urgent question remains, how can an institution such as Dulwich Picture Gallery revise the way it sees itself, in the service of anti-racism? In her book *Culture Strike Art and Museums in an Age of Protest* (2020) Laura Raicovich asserts:

> Amid calls for diversity, equity and inclusion in our spaces of culture, there is no way around a confrontation with neutrality as a persistent ideology within the museum.[3]

The mausoleum is emblematic of the fact that history is never neutral and yet Dulwich Picture Gallery is as guilty as any other institution of hiding behind a myth of neutrality. But what if our whole conception of what a museum is could be re-defined? How could this

1. Kellay, 'Why Museums Must Decolonise and Diversify For Their Own Survival'.
2. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 10.
3. Laura Raicovich, *Culture Strike: Art and Museums in an Age of Protest* (New York: Verso, 2021), 176.

help institutions confront the myth of neutrality that enables systemic racism to continue? Raicovich recalls how, 'recently a group of International Council of Museums (ICOM) members'[4] decided to do just this, proposing a new definition that sees them as;

> democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures that safeguard memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people.[5]

A European fine art gallery that took this conception of a museum as its driving ethos, would be able to radically change every aspect of how it saw itself and how it operated, in the service of anti-racism. At this moment of societal reckoning with racial injustice, it is pertinent that ICOM are currently consulting their global members on this new definition for what museums can be, with a final vote scheduled for their annual general meeting in 2022. This consultation tackles critical issues that every institution genuinely intent on being anti-racist needs to consider deeply, including the 'social value' of museums and the question of 'who museums work for and the nature of their relationship'.[6]

In this dissertation I have begun a revision of the Gallery's history, destabilising its established narrative in my figuration of its founding and public life. What I have done here is to provide the beginnings of a case study for how a history of an art gallery could be rewritten in the service of anti-racism. I have used a methodology of ficto-critical site-writing to enable a situated, cartographic and multi-voiced representation of a place and its history to emerge. To extend its usefulness this history would need to be a figuration that put Dulwich Picture Gallery fully into its context of what Hall calls 'the palimpsest of the postcolonial world',[7] and for this it would need to be inflected with multiple other lived and located experiences, not only my own as a white, middle-class woman. It would need to include a range of encounters with the Gallery, from those with different race, gender, sexuality and class identities. In this it would be a co-figuration, which is an approach currently being developed by Rendell.[8] To have true impact for anti-racism such a co-figuration would naturally need to foreground the voices of people of colour. Such a history could enable not only the emergence of theoretical 'alternative figurations',[9] but the practical application of their insights within museum programmes, manifesting true equality of representation, recognition and celebration within our cultural spaces. In this way architectural history can

4. Raicovich, *Culture Strike: Art and Museums in an Age of Protest*, 209.
5. Raicovich, 209.
6. ICOM, 'ICOM Museum Definition Consultation 3 (Sept 2021)', 2021, accessed 4 August 2021, https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ICOMUKMUSDEFsept2021.
7. Hall, 'Un-settling 'The Heritage', Re-imagining the Post-nation Whose Heritage?', 9.
8. Jane Rendell, Email to the Author, 15 June 2021.
9. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodied and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 4.

be used positively and pro-actively, not only to record the past life of a place, but to influence its future.

Illustrations

Figure 16: James Stephanoff, *Viewing at Dulwich Picture Gallery* (1830, pencil and watercolour on paper) © Dulwich Picture Gallery.

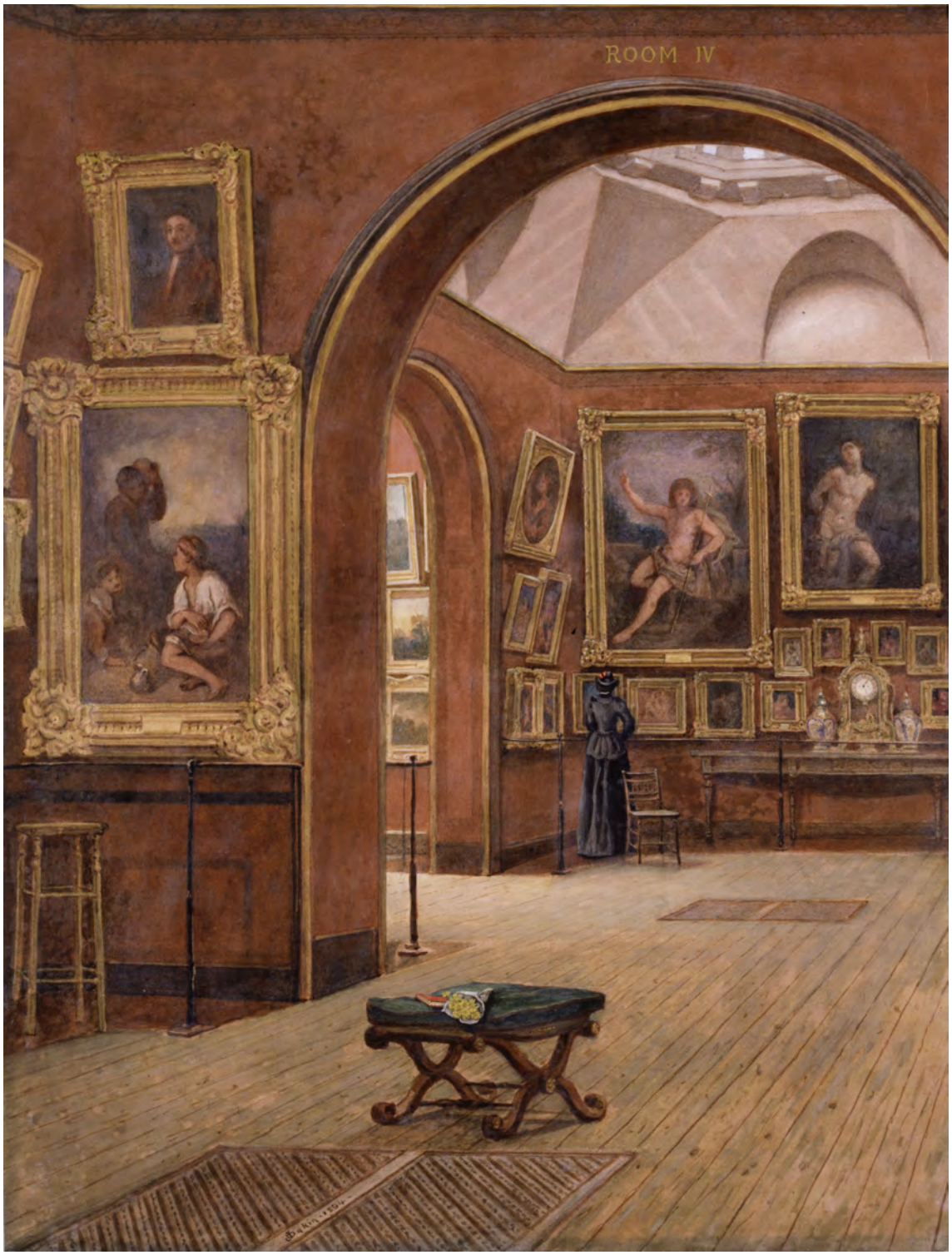

Figure 17: Joseph Dakin, *Viewing at Dulwich Picture Gallery* (1894, watercolour on paper) © Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Figure 18: James Northcote, *Noel Joseph Desenfans* (1796, Oil on canvas) © Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Figure 19: After Joshua Reynolds, *Margaret Desenfans* (1930, Oil on canvas)) © Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Figure 20: Sir Peter Francis Bourgeois, *Self-Portrait after Beechey* (1790-1811, Oil on canvas) © Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Figure 21: *Bomb Damage to the Mausoleum and West façade* (20 July 1944, photograph) © Dulwich College.

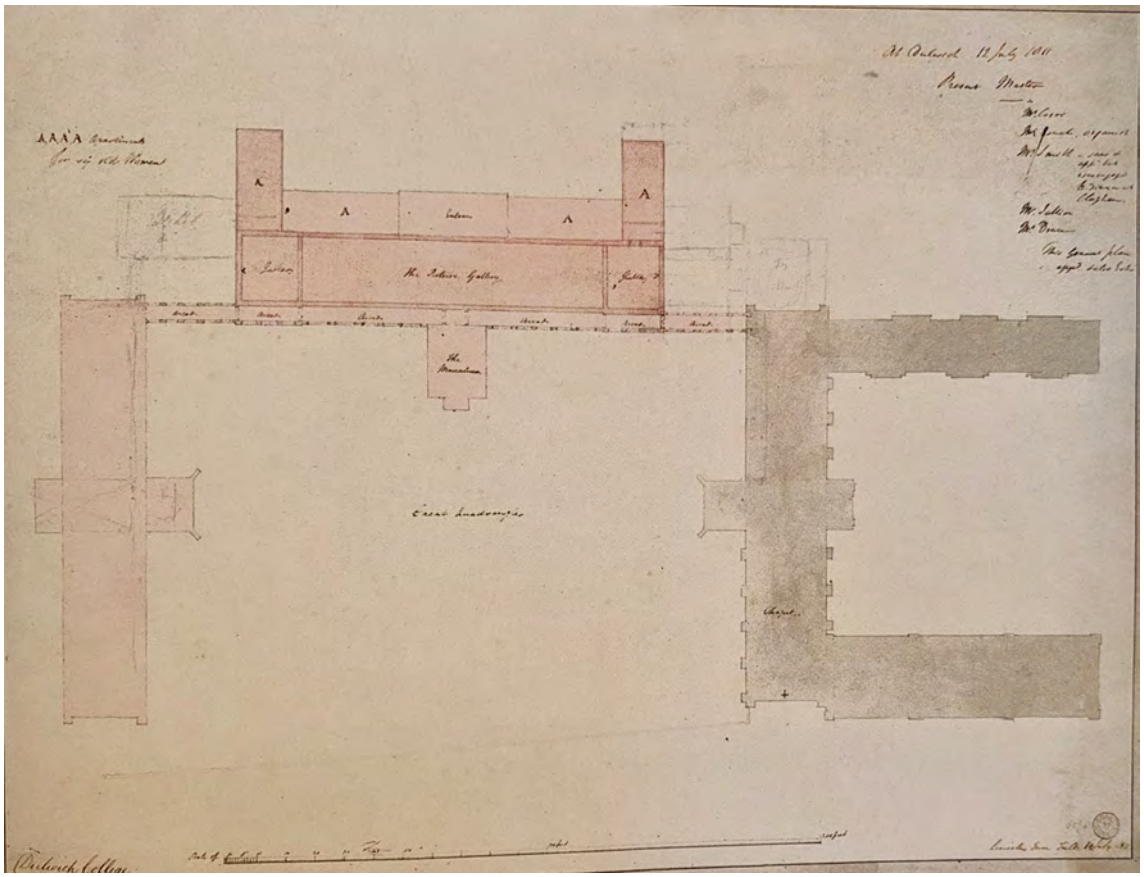

Figure 22: G Bailey or J Buxton, *Plan of the Gallery and College Buildings* (10 July 1811) © Sir John Soane's Museum.

Figure 23: *Royal Academy Lecture Drawing: The West façade of the Gallery Under Construction*, Office of Sir John Soane (1815) © Sir John Soane's Museum.

Figure 24: *Desenfans Mausoleum Charlotte Street* (1807, Pen and washes) © Sir John Soane's Museum.

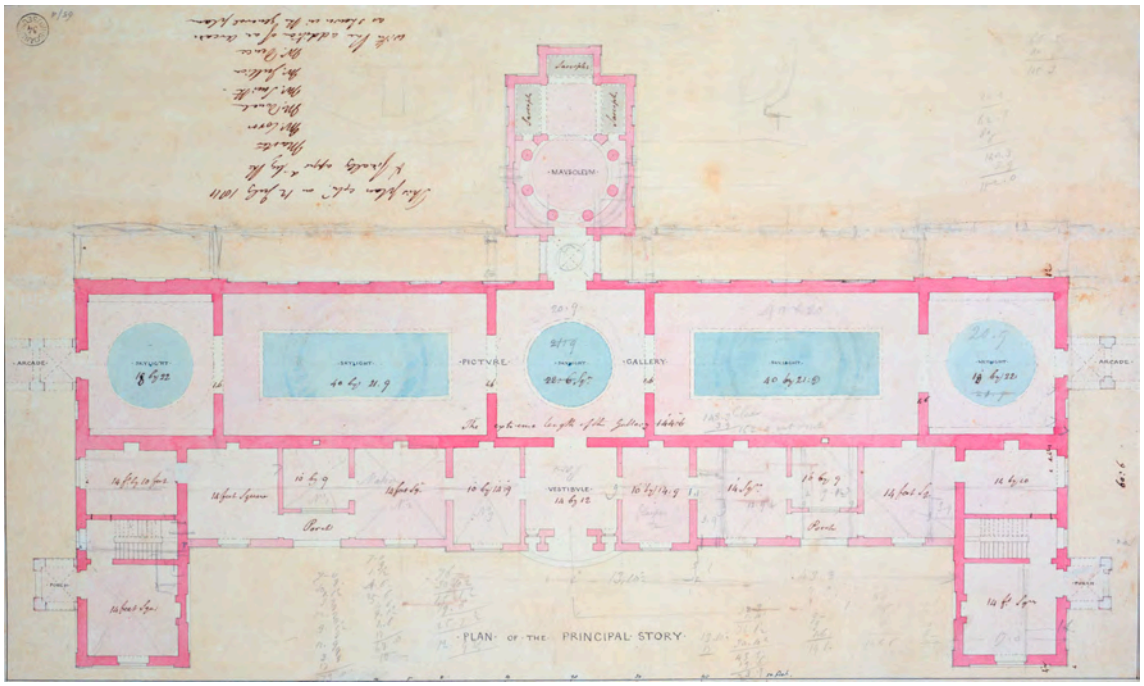

Figure 25: G Bailey or J Buxton *Plan of the Gallery* (10 July 1811) © Sir John Soane's Museum.

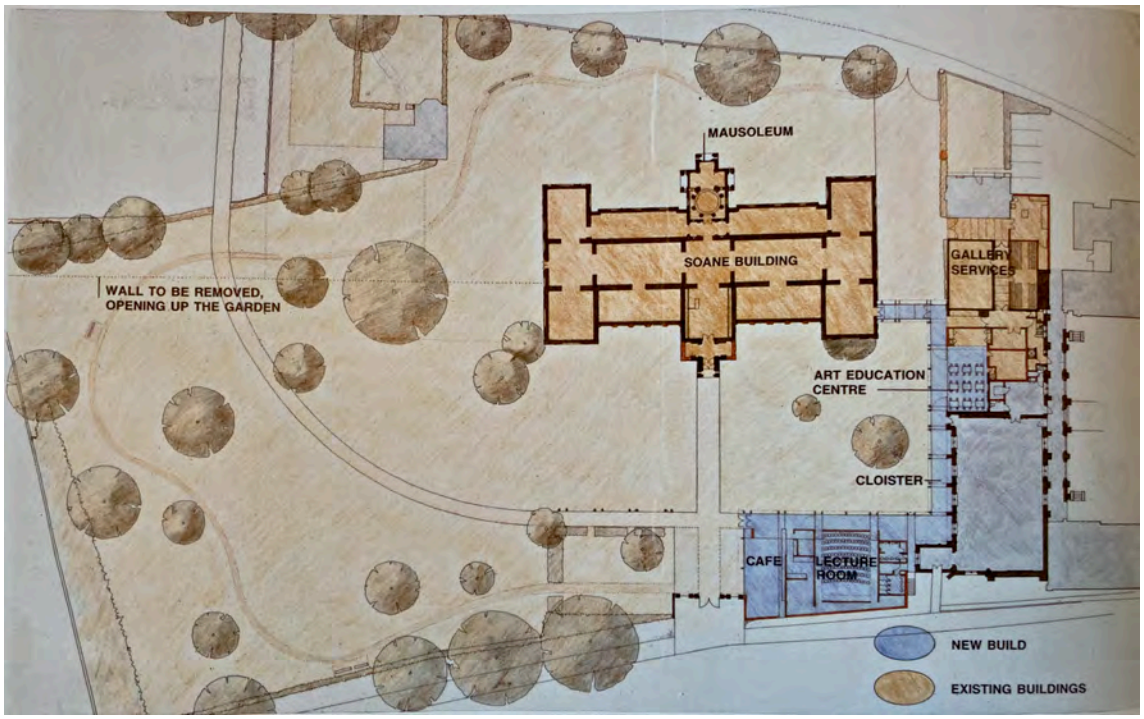

Figure 26: *Proposed Ground Plan*, Rick Mather Architects (1996).

Figure 27: Joseph Gandy, *Preliminary design in perspective* (c1812, pen and watercolour) © Sir John Soane's Museum.

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Box H12. Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.

Box H3 Francis Bourgeois. Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.

Box H4 Impressions of the Gallery. Dulwich Picture Gallery Archive, London, UK.

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