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Cooper, E. (2021) Victorian Artists' Autograph Replicas: Auras, Aesthetics, Patronage, and the Art Market edited by Julie Codell; pp. 298. Routledge, 2020. \$160.75 cloth. *Victorian Review*, 47(1), pp. 153-156. (doi: [10.1353/vcr.2021.0017](https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2021.0017))[Book Review]

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<https://doi.org/10.1353/vcr.2021.0017>

<https://eprints.gla.ac.uk/307248/>

Deposited on 25 September 2023

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Victorian Artists' Autograph Replicas: Auras, Aesthetics, Patronage, and the Art Market, edited by Julie Codell; pp.298. Routledge, 2020. \$160.75 cloth.

Victorian Artists' Autograph Replicas is a collection of essays by art historians exploring the multiple facets of “autograph replicas” in Victorian painting: painters’ repetitions of their own paintings in oils or watercolours. Displacing “the usual view” of a painting as “a one-off, unique, singular production,” the collection is premised on the view that autograph replicas were different from other types of reproduction common in the nineteenth century, e.g. reproductive engraving and forgery (3-4).

The importance of this volume for scholars of Victorian Studies lies, first, with the centrality of autograph replicas to nineteenth-century visual culture: as “prolific” and “vigorously consumed,” rather than a “marginal activity” (3). Secondly, while the essays offer “new ways to understand art and art history” (5), the volume’s breadth of approach draws on and speaks to scholars of many other disciplines and of Victorian Studies more generally. The autograph replica was an important part of the “culture of replication,” affecting “all aspects of nineteenth-century Victorian life – literature, art, manufacturing, science and media” (4). Accordingly, autograph replicas are placed in a larger context, including the nineteenth-century culture of the copy, gallery and display practices, relationships between patrons and artists, the art market, gender, and copyright history.

This broad scope is well illustrated by the first group of chapters (Part 2), which rather than privileging the artist as maker of artistic meaning, instead explores “Location as Meaning.” Jo Briggs discusses the American replica, referring to the high status afforded to autograph replicas in US art collections, like the founding collection of the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, as works of “national or public significance” (27). Autograph replicas were a means of bringing “prestigious artworks to America,” and as such paintings were seen

as embodying “timeless ideals” (27), a painting’s status as replica was “immaterial” (33). Andrea Korda considers the relationship of the two versions of *Newgate* by Frank Holl. Far from just “dead copies” that always refer back to the original work, replicas “also exist as distinct and unique objects with their own originating moments and subsequent histories” (38), and her essay charts the dynamic understandings of the *Newgate* replica as it moved “from private to public space, and consequently from personal object to cultural icon” (49).

Part 3, comprising essays by Richard Green and Robyn Asleson, provides a detailed case study of the work of the artist Albert Moore who pursued the Aesthetic Movement’s principle of “art for art’s sake.” Green argues that replicas involved Moore striking a “delicate balance” between aesthetic beauty and the need to earn a living (62). Robyn Asleson shows that Moore’s replicas indicate his “open-ended approach to creativity” (64) in exploring beauty’s myriad expressions and countering “the simplistic notion of replicas as merely repetitive or mechanical” (67). She also draws attention to the ways in which copyright law – both understandings of who owned copyright and also the debate of proposals restricting the right to make replicas – had a direct bearing on Moore’s artistic practice.

In Part 4, “Replicas and Artists’ Agency,” Julie Codell explains Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s “prolific” production of replicas and uncovers his relationship with certain patrons, suggesting Rossetti’s multiple versions of pictures “reveal aesthetic and patronage values” (91). Rossetti’s contemporaries argued over the value of his replicas, reflecting the “Victorians’ conflicted assessment of autograph replicas” (79) more generally: there was an “uneasiness about replication” even though artists made autograph replicas “regularly and often” (81). Colin Trodd links Ford Madox Brown’s replicas to Brown’s vision of creative labour as free, his view of artistic work as within the artist’s ownership and his “wider project of generating activist art” (104). As Trodd concludes, “the conflation of replication with the

control of production” enabled Brown “to imagine the circumstances for improving the operational framework of the art world and to assert the rights of expressive labour *over* the power of capital” (104). Sally Woodcock argues that William Powell Frith’s “commercial approach” to painting meant that he had “no reservations” about painting replicas (108), and she reflects on his artistic process, drawing on the archival records of Frith’s colourman Charles Roberson & Co. For instance, Frith’s purchase of transfer and tracing paper at the same time as canvases, suggests that full-sized replicas of Frith’s largest pictures, produced decades after the originals, were probably based on full-sized sketches retained by Frith (112).

The four chapters that comprise Part 5 are entitled “Multiple Motivations.” Here, Judith Bronkhurst reflects on the “uncertain status” of William Holman Hunt’s oil replicas (125). While noting Hunt’s unease with replicas, she argues too that smaller versions of exhibited works were also a useful source of income. Yet there were also instances when Hunt enjoyed painting replicas, as he could play with “variations on an original theme” (136). Barbara Bryant’s chapter presents an “anatomy of a version”: the last of five finished oils of George Frederic Watt’s *Hope*, which was half the size of the original and on panel rather than canvas. She explains the particular patronage context – the commission of a Richard Budgett who wished to memorialise his late wife Ann Budgett – which led to the “specific emotional impetus” (147) for the final replica, and explains the addition of a “circular, rainbow like aura” enveloping the figure, which is distinctive to this version (138). Nicholas Tromans considers the replica practice of Richard Dadd, a painter who was detained as a criminal lunatic and therefore removed from the art market. Repetition was rare in Dadd’s practice, and Tromans presents his work as a “control” for the other chapters in the volume: the replica practice of an artist whose work was not part of “any public conversation” (164). Finally, Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz and Briony Llewellyn explore the architectural paintings of David

Roberts, drawing on manuscript volumes kept by Roberts. Around one sixth of Roberts' paintings were replicas, and the authors attribute Roberts' great reputation as an architectural painter at the point of his death, in part, to the success of his replicas (178).

The final part, "Creativity, Reputation and the Market," encompasses five chapters, beginning with Pamela Fletcher's consideration of the replicas of Abraham Solomon, which focusses on his pair of modern life paintings *First Class* and *Second Class*. Drawing on a reference to the latter in contemporary parliamentary debates about copyright, she provides a new interpretation of these pictures, concluding that "for Victorian artists the replica could be an opportunity for revision, a form of reception that takes into account data about press reviews and sales, the rapidly changing political and artistic context of the immediate present, the artist's ambitions and the dealer's perceptiveness about the market" (192). Briony Llewellyn's chapter examines the "creative, aesthetic and commercial dialogue" underpinning the replicas of John Frederick Lewis. Lewis regularly repeated his pictures in both oils and watercolour "to achieve both artistic status and commercial success" (195), yet his contribution to legal debates about copyright law, also left him with underlying insecurities about repetitions. The following chapter, by Fiona Mann, considers the large output of replicas by Edward Coley Burne-Jones, amounting to more than 40 autograph replicas. While financial considerations were of major importance to Burne-Jones, there were also other reasons for replicas including artistic experimentation with composition, scale and/or colour and accidental damage to originals. In a chapter about Elizabeth Butler, Dorothy Nott asks whether her output represents "a gendered story of replication" (237). Nott explains Butler's "relatively slight output" of replicas by reference to gender, choice of subject (military but an "absence of flag-waving") and her residence in rural Ireland; "unlike her male contemporaries" she was "unable to call on regular patrons" with the result that "the prospect of sales of replicas was negligible" (237). By contrast, replicas were a frequent part

of the output of James Tissot, a French painter who lived in London 1871-1882, and whose work is examined in the final chapter by Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz, drawing on a recently uncovered notebook in which Tissot recorded sales.

Each of these chapters is illustrated by three or four black and white illustrations which appear alongside the text. The book's Appendix contains a detailed table of replicas produced by a number of artists (Edward Burne-Jones, Frank Holl, Ford Madox Brown, John Frederick Lewis and William Powell Frith) giving the reader details of size, medium and also the purchasers of replicas.

Taken altogether, the essays in this volume uncover a complex and nuanced picture of Victorian autograph replicas, not just artists' studio practices but also the "often implicit or subterranean" relationship of artistic practice to its wider context, including the art market, patrons and the art consuming public (Codell 5). Impressive both in the depth of art historical analysis, the breadth of its overall framework and its openness to interdisciplinary connections, this volume should become an important reference point for scholars of Victorian Studies.