

Amy Woodson-Boulton

Professor of History at Loyola Marymount University

Los Angeles, CA, US

Bellarmino College of Liberal Arts

Biography

Amy Woodson-Boulton is professor of British and Irish history and past chair of the Department of History at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California. She holds a B.A. from UC Berkeley and an M.A. and Ph.D from UCLA. Her work concentrates on cultural reactions to industrialization in Britain, particularly the history of museums, the social role of art, and the changing status and meaning of art and nature in modern society. Published work includes articles and book chapters as well as her monograph *Transformative Beauty: Art Museums in Industrial Britain* (Stanford, 2012) and a volume that she coedited with Minsoo Kang, *Visions of the Industrial Age, 1830-1914: Modernity and the Anxiety of Representation* (Routledge, 2008). She is currently working on a book-length study of ideas about "primitive art" in anthropology and art criticism, tentatively titled *Explaining Art: Nature, Authentic Culture, and the Search for Origins in the Age of Empire*. She teaches courses on British, Irish, modern European, imperial, and global history, with a focus on museum studies and cultural, public, and environmental history. She has presented to numerous scholarly and community groups, including work on the history of art and anthropology museums, the legacy of John Ruskin, and the environmental crises of plastics and climate change.

Areas of Expertise

Environmental History, British History, Anthropology, Imperialism, Museum Studies, Art History, European History, History

Affiliations

North American Victorian Studies Association, Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies, North American Conference on British Studies, Advisory Board, Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States

Sample Talks

Ruskin and the Plastic Crisis, Or "Modern Manufacture and Design," 2022

Plastic is now evidence in the rock strata for the Anthropocene as a geological epoch and embodies multiple aspects of our current crises: our disposable economy, reliance on fossil fuels, rapidly changing climate, and the unevenly distributed toxic effects at all stages of plastic's production, use, and disposal. Now that microplastics are everywhere from the air to the ocean to human blood, Ruskin's sense of both "modern manufacture" and the "storm-cloud" of uncontrolled production and pollution has taken on new meaning. Thinking about Ruskin and plastic together can give us ideas and materials for thinking through the intertwined problems of systemic racism, mass production, hidden costs, art and design, and extractive economies. <https://youtu.be/hLsx9H6GqZ4>

Education

University of California at Los Angeles
Ph.D. History

University of California at Los Angeles
M.A. History

University of California at Berkeley
B.A History

Accomplishments

Elected Companion of the Guild of St. George

Driven by his deep faith in social justice, John Ruskin established the Guild of St George in the 1870s to right some of the social wrongs of the day and make England a happier and more beautiful place in which to live and work. More active than ever before, we continue to promote the value of art, craftsmanship and a sustainable rural economy, putting Ruskin's ideas into practice in the 21st century. <http://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/>

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