Graphic Intersections: *Erga*, *Parerga* and *Pro-Erga*

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Abstract
The place where design and art intersect is drawing with its elastic capability of functioning as the whole, the preparatory and the supplementary work. Drawing doesn't only occur at the level of individual practice but can be part of wider "graphic events" where concerted acts of recording, performing, inventing and disseminating link diverse visual practices across time. Two such discursive events are discussed as paradigms: the accidental finding of the Villa Aurea in the 1480s in Rome and Alois Senefelder's lithographic publication of the illustrated *Book of Hours of Emperor Maximilian I* in 1808. Both were stylistically influential through the popularising of 'grotesque' configurations that unify heterogeneity through linearity.

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Introduction

[1] The place where design and art practice meet and where methodologies become momentarily indistinguishable is that of drawing. It is therefore suggested in this paper – very much a research project in the making – that fruitful meetings between art and design history occur most readily along the shared lines and fissures of graphic events and discourses. I will therefore discuss two selected groups of works from across the historical spectrum of European art history that embrace, encompass and unify difference as key sites for such intersections. The relationship between drawing and printmaking (that is sketch and formalised process) is as much implicated within this argument as the linkages between drawing and works of art or design. Indeed the sequential, organised and logical processes of print production are not unrelated to the graphic practices of design/architecture, if not necessarily reflected in the more haphazard preliminary stages of painting or sculpture.

[2] Within the traditional academic designation of Fine Art from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries (pertaining to painting, architecture and sculpture) a clear distinction is usually made between the finished (whole) work and its auxiliary decoration or embellishment. "*The work*", in whatever medium, is therefore designated in a hierarchical relation to "*the everything else*" of its design and decoration, which constitutes the supplement or by-work *(parergon)*. In this context I would like to propose

that drawing could be designated *pro*-ergon, that is, the *pre*-work that constitutes preparatory research for *ergon* and *parergon* alike, outside of traditional hierarchies and constituting an interstitial and linking discourse.

[3] Drawing as *pro-ergon* that subsumes both making and thinking is common to all forms of visual practice that are generated through sequences of inventive first sketches followed by detailed observational study or developmental drawings, as source and resource material to be combined into new unities. Developmental drawings that elaborate first ideas can follow any trajectory from informal compositional trials to formal technical drawings and are brought to completion via full-scale cartoons, or presentation drawings for clients or patrons, often in colour, before the work is constructed in the final designated medium. Three-dimensional works, like their counterparts in painting, often also have a graphic extension in prints, photographs or other media for a public after-life.

[4] These interwoven processes belong within a multi-dimensional space that is value and period specific, but also leaks beyond the confines of temporality and medium specificity. That is to say, works of visual culture that are undoubtedly specific are united by a communal methodological graphic infrastructure relating to conceptual and developmental processes and the critical judgement that moderates them.

[5] My arguments for "graphic intersections" have been shaped around two significant European *graphic events* that served to reinforce links between art and design practice of the past, present and future at two different historical periods. My intention is not to relate huge art and design consequences to strategic narratives nor to try to disrupt the complex histories in which they are embedded, but to illustrate the shared importance of drawing by highlighting emblematic events that operate in similar ways. Both these events elevated "grotesque" decorative systems not just as *parerga*, secondary by-works or the amplifications of "non-essential things", but as significant graphic linkages between different species or taxonomic groupings.

[6] The first of these graphic events dates from the 1480s when the discovery of Nero's villa, the *Domus Aurea* (hereafter referred to as the Villa Aurea) in Rome inspired an enthusiastic group of artists to descend into the caves or grottos below the baths of Trajan to draw the Roman architectural wall decorations. The wide and speedy dissemination of these drawings and subsequent prints meant that these *grottesche* had a considerable impact on pan-European art and design over a long period. The second event is datable to 1808 when Alois Senefelder (1771-1834), the inventor of the revolutionary technique of lithography, published a wordless edition of the hand-drawn illustrations by Albrecht Dürer and a number of his contemporaries to the *Book of Hours* of Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519) originally published in Augsburg in 1513. The illustrations were redrawn "on stone" by Johann Nepomuk Strixner (1782-1835). These recouped coloured-line illustrations constituted figurative elements interlinked with

grotesque border decorations and sparked off a widespread German and pan-European vogue in illustration and the graphic arts, with subsequent impact on many other forms of art and design.

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Golden grotesques

[7]   When, by chance, the Villa Aurea was discovered below the often-visited ruins on the Oppian hill, Filippino Lippi, Bernardino Pinturicchio, Raffaellino del Garbo Giovanni da Udine, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Martin van Heemskerk – Vasari even puts Raphael at the scene – hurried to draw the room decorations by candle or rush-light, descending into the "grottos" or primal caves. (Grotesque designs inspired by antiquity were already known to artists before the much-published act of discovery of Nero's villa.) There is no doubt that artists actually drew within the underground chambers, as evidenced from names such as that of Nicoletto da Modena, scratched into the stuccowork and from recognisable motifs that can be traced in extant sketches by various artists, including Filippino Lippi, discussed below. The speed with which the "new" grotesque decorations were drawn, named, disseminated through graphic means and incorporated into new schemes was truly remarkable.

[8]   The most iconic of the early projects stemming directly from this event were Raphael's decorative schemata for the various unfinished Vatican loggie designed by Donato Bramante on which he worked with his pupils. Of these assistants, Perino del Vaga (Pietro Bonaccorsi) would successfully go on to decorate the Castel Palazzo Doria in Genoa with grotesque designs between 1528 and about 1533 and Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome in 1545. The main Vatican loggia, often referred to as "Raphael's Bible", with fifty-two narrative scenes in the vaults was completed by Raphael's assistants in 1519; the grotesque decorations on the architectural members were mainly supplied by Giovanni da Udine. The loggie were praised and valued in succeeding years above the Vatican Stanze, although they have been out-of-bounds for visitors for most of the past two centuries. A "replica" of the project was even commissioned by Catherine II for the Hermitage in the eighteenth century, with fifty-two biblical scenes painted on canvas and a rich assemblage of neo-grotesque decorations in a series of enclosed galleries. Giovanni Battista Armenini writes in *De' veri precetti della pittura*, 1586 that everything in Raphael's "Old Testament" loggia in the Vatican "was drawn and colored on paper with red lead [sic] in the proper way by the most skilful young men who were in Rome in my time, and I was one of them." He notes that commissioned drawn copies were sent to the banking family of Fuggers (who bankrolled, a.o., the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I) and to Philip II in Spain (who would be involved with the construction of the Escorial between the 1560s and 1580s).[1]

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[1] Giovanni Battista Armenini, *De' veri precetti della pittura*, Bologna 1587, trans. Edward J. Olszewski, *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*, New York 1977, 246-247.
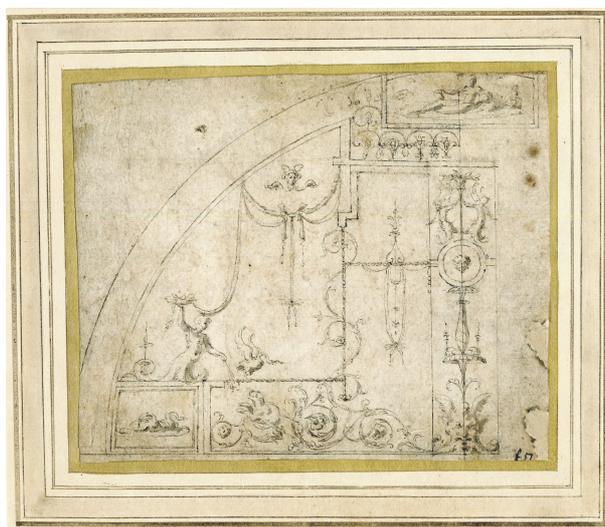
1 Perino del Vaga, *Design for an ornament panel*,
c.1546, pen and brown ink and grey wash, 25.6 x
15.4cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

[9]   Perino del Vaga's decorative frescoes in Castel Sant-Angelo on which he worked with his pupils (favourably commented upon by Armenini as "grotesques with partitions and backgrounds of several colors and bases simulated in bronze"), are referenced in a small body of drawings in the British Museum.[2] A pen and ink drawing in brown ink by Perino del Vaga dating from about 1546 with the arms of Mario Ruffini, Bishop of Samo who became Castellan of Castel Sant'Angelo in 1544 (fig. 1) is understood to be a study for the panel on the door to the Corridoio della Cagliostra, although the arms appear in various other chambers decorated by his team.[3] The drawing is thought to be by Perino because of its typically lively pen work, with a characteristic range of flicked-up curls and knots, delicately elastic lines and the rhythmic emphases of freshly-dipped strokes. It is given depth, volume and plasticity by the addition of a swift grey/brown ink wash. This serves to render the oval centre of the coats of arms as a boldly projecting convex surface, while the negative spaces between the chimeric creatures beneath the coat of arms curve into an enfolded concavity, and the cursory lines of humanoid winged figures and *putti* of various scales project a lively plasticity. Significantly, the enframing margins on three sides of this drawing are used for colour notes pertaining to the decorative

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[2] Armenini, *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*, 254. Related works in other collections include The Royal Collection, Windsor Castle.

[3] The drawing is ascribed to Perino by P. Pouncy and J. A. Gere, *Italian Drawing in the British Museum, Raphael and his Circle*, London 1962, Vol. 1, pl. 153, but was attributed to Luzio Romano in the exhibition catalogue, F. M. Alberti Gaudioso and E. Gaudioso, *Gli affreschi di Paolo III a Castel Sant'Angelo*, Rome, Castel Sant'Angelo 1981-1982.

schema ("*roso*" and "*azuro*") plus an inscription on the left-hand edge "*questo comela[l]tri spazi elavoro camppo*" and a similar inscription on the lower edge. The relationship between an enframing border that can easily be elaborated as a faux architectural member rich in sculptural relief, and the containing imagery between such borders is discussed in greater detail below.

2 Luzio Romano (?), *Design for a semi-circular grotesque ornament panel*, c.1544-1545, pen and brown ink with grey-brown wash, 14.5 x 17.7cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

[10]   Perino's stylistic repertoire is different from the more formal lateral geometries of the design for a curved decorative area for the Sala di Apollo (fig. 2) possibly by the painter and *stuccatore* Luzio Romano (1528-1575). He was also known as Luzio da Todi and was mentioned as Perino's *garzone* by Vasari: he is recorded as having been paid for his work on the Sant'Angelo decorations. Luzio's more austere hand shows evidence of geometrical aids as well as hints of a mathematical infrastructure in the manner in which the vertical grotesque elements are disposed symmetrically about a central axis and the firmness of the volutes and palmette motifs that would constitute a frieze, but have been indicated here in a "shorthand" convention – the visual equivalent of an "etc." – but not laboriously laid out in repetitive detail.

[11]   These two drawings differ considerably from a sumptuously rendered coloured panel of grotesque decoration (fig. 3) that has been variously attributed at different times to a whole range of artists who worked with Raphael on the Vatican *loggie*, including Giovanni da Udine, Luzio Romano and to Perino del Vago himself. I have included it here, not to make any careful argued association with the Castel Sant'Angelo decorative schema but as a superb example of a presentation drawing of a decorative scheme of the early sixteenth century produced either before or after a project for a client. With a great freshness of palette, it lays out the limited spatial illusionism of the fashionable grotesque style of the period with its curiously empty, laterally moving, symmetrical and *spatially*

constituted gateway and lattice elements against white backgrounds that were such an impressive aspect of the stylised Villa Aurea frescoes. Decoration here depends on architectural transparency and structural short-hand, on limited perspectives (the crossed trabeate beams in the supper register project forwards as a linear canopy above the chariot horses crowning the stepped "shrines" in the second register) and a non-conflictual relationship co-existing between abstract linearity and figurative elements. Armenini discusses such works of the ancients as "compartments in relief divided into niches" with their marble borders as deliberate imitations of dimensional decoration that "would in no way obstruct the diverse household goods that were continually changed and moved through the house."[4] His pragmatic explanation is an attempt to explain why pictorial perspectives are calibrated as projecting "into" the space of the transparent wall so that the frontal plane remains sacrosanct.
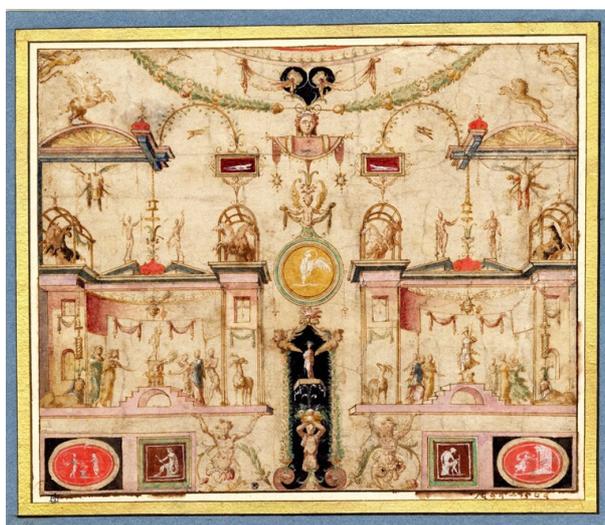
3 Attributed to Perino del Vaga, *A panel of grotesque decoration*,
c.1545, pen and brown ink with watercolour and bodycolour,
heightened with white, 18.9 x 22.9cm. © The Trustees of the
British Museum, London

[12]   The variations in these three drawings pertain to the stylistic differences of the artists involved and are the stuff of traditional drawing connoisseurship but I have discussed them at some length in order to make the point that they represent different and accumulative aspects of workshop practice *qua* drawing in so far as it relates to decorative architectural schemata. The drawing with the crest in Perino's flowing hand seems to represent a first-thought laying down of the central motif by the experienced lead artist for his team to interpret and elaborate upon and serves as one form of *pro-ergon*. The stricter if rather dull diagram by Luzio on the other hand contains useful information about the spatial *intervals* (of great significance in fifteenth and sixteenth century grotesque decorative designs) as well as the truncated constructional codes intended for the *execution* of the scheme. In other words, it is a sketchy working

[4] Armenini, *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*, 252.

drawing. The elegantly executed coloured drawing constitutes the template for *the work*, *ergon* and I would suggest that its stylistic anonymity is part of its intentionality as a presentation drawing for a client or patron.

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From source to fictive embodiment: Filippino Lippi

4 Filippino Lippi, *Circular ornament with a satyr and candelabrum*, recto, c.1488-1493, pen and brown ink, 10.5 x 8.2cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

[13]　A roughly shaped sketch by Filippino Lippi (c.1457-1504) in the British Museum is drawn with his characteristic nervous and rhythmic graphic style, with the pen darting about the paper at speed (fig. 4). This sheet, drawn on both recto and verso, is closely related to drawings that Lippi made within the underground Villa Aurea, which are preserved in the Uffizi, although the wide date of circa 1488-1493 assigned to the British Museum drawings suggests a relationship with Filippino's Roman period when he decorated the Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome with his assistant Raffaellino del Garbo.[5] The painted pilasters that divide the narrative frescoes in the Carafa Chapel are decorated with grotesque stucco bas-reliefs against a dark blue ground that clearly draw on these sketches. Although the motifs in the British Museum drawing appear to have been invented and not copied, Lippi captures the very essence of grotesque design: that is the linkage between disparate and unrelated elements in growth patterns that themselves are somewhere between geometry and biomorphics. In his effort to establish a curvilinear confluence between the left leg of the satyr and the elaborate profile of the upright candelabrum motif, he has constructed a rather crude perspectively-drawn base. This awkward extension overbalances the normal slim planarity of the Roman exemplar –

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[5] The related drawings within the Uffizi are 1637E, 1255E. For a discussion of the dating of the drawings and their relationship to antique sources see George R. Goldner and Carmen C. Bambach, *The Drawings of Filippino Lippi and His Circle*, exh. cat. New York 1997, 30-32 and 225.

and indeed of his application of candelabra motifs in the painted pilasters of the Carafa Chapel – and could account for the "throw-away" aspect of the little sketch.

[14] The verso of drawing 1255E in the Uffizi has sketches directly copied from the Villa Aurea: the *Departure of Hippolytus for the Hunt*, taken from the early effaced decoration of the Volta Dorata and a *Harpy* and the *Decorative Frieze* that is recognisably from the Cryptoporticus.[6] The usage of this sheet for sketches in contrary directions indicates that the space and orientation of the paper was not of importance to the artist who was copying separate motifs *in situ*, probably turning the paper on a board support. In such situations the paper would be regarded as elastic and unbounded in response to the images or ideas that were being speedily configured upon it. Such sheets function as conceptual spaces of transformation and invention that for the artist have nothing to do with the edges, orientation or actual measurement of the page nor with the proportions of the captured images or abstracted ideas being played out on them.

[15] The "skinny" and widely-spaced elements of the Roman decorative system as typified in his sketches, become weightier and fuller in the frescoes as Lippi moves towards volumetric representation in the framing elements of his painted religious cycles. We see this very clearly by comparing his adaptation of the harpy motif as a central doubled element within a fictive stone frieze underneath the fresco of the Martyrdom of St Philip on the east wall of the Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence (1487-1502). Low relief elements here are punctuated with gilding, and two infant harpies holding a cloth between them with one hand below a golden urn, while clinging with the opposite hand to candelabra crowned with gilded flames. The most casual of copy sketches or *pro-erga* have moved towards a consolidation as carefully considered as anything within the actual scene of the Martyrdom depicted above the "stone" frieze support.

[16] The same thing happens in all the elaborations of faux structural (that is painted) architectural members in Lippi's mural schemes. Representations of architraves, brackets, plinths, columns, pilasters, vaults and coffers adorned with grotesque decorations assume a compacted, weighty, chiaroscuro format "as if" fulfilling real structural needs. For example, the two sections of mural to the left and right of the actual window of the altar wall in Lippi's Strozzi Chapel ensemble offer playful and imprecise information about what could or should be a built framework and what is not (fig. 5). The lively group of Caritas nurturing her infants in the plinth panel is in such high relief that it is difficult to distinguish between its status as sculpture and the figure of Parthenice in flying draperies with blue-winged putti playing pipes above, who might or might not be the "real" population of the fictional niches. Vasari described it as follows in his *Life of Filippino Lippi*:

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[6] Filippino Lippi, *Decorative Frieze from Domus Aurea and Departure of Hippolytus for the Hunt,* verso, pen and brown ink, glued strip of paper at centre, 25.2 x 20.4cm, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence, 1255E; Filippino Lippi, *Motifs from the Domus Aurea*, verso, pen and brown ink, 25.5 x 19.3cm, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, Florence.

> The Chapel of the Strozzi […] was executed so well, and with so much art and design, that it causes all who see it to marvel, by reason of the novelty and variety of the bizarre things that are seen therein armed men, temples, vases, helmet crests, armor, trophies, spears, banners, garments, buskins, headdresses, sacerdotal vestments, and other things […].

5 Filippino Lippi, Detail of section on side of window of the altar wall, Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, begun 1487, completed 1502 (source: Wikimedia Commons)

6 William Young Ottley after Luca Signorelli, *The Fall of Antichrist*, entrance wall of San Brizio Chapel, Orvieto, 1793, brush and grey wash with pen and grey ink. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

[17]   It is interesting to compare Lippi's schemes of religious cycles framed and inter-connected by mock-architectural panels of grotesque decoration with a drawn redaction of the Luca Signorelli frescoes in the San Brizio Chapel in the Cathedral of Orvieto (1499-

1504). In a careful ink-wash copy by William Young Ottley (1771-1836) in the British Museum we see part of the extraordinary scene of *The Fall of Antichrist*, with fiery rays destroying the figures spilling out into a dramatic and fictive front plane above the actual entrance door into the chapel. The grisaille decorative elements within the vaults of this representational scheme and the pilasters with relief stucco-decoration and internal rosettes that frame the actual entrance to the chapel are also accurately depicted (fig. 6). This is not just a copy from another century that serves to prolong the life of an artwork through alternative forms of dissemination. The strategies of analysis involved in its sober recording and translation into line act as a graphic supplement to the original concept. William Young Ottley visited Orvieto with his friend John Flaxman in 1793 and the notebook drawing was partly used for *A Series of Plates … of the Most Eminent Masters of the Early Florence School*, 1826.

[18]   Extant drawings by Signorelli contain many lively figures in black chalk, such as the Hercules and Antaeus drawing of about 1500 from the Royal Collection, Windsor that clearly relate to the figural decoration in the grotesque mock-relief panels and arches of the San Brizio Chapel, rather than the figures contained within the main frescoes.[7] Following a long academic and museological tradition, art historians tend to regard figure drawings as important preliminary studies for *istorie* only and find it difficult to conceive that an artist could have paid as much attention to nude figures intended as secondary or decorative "by-works" for a mock-architectural schema, putting them very clearly into a hierarchical order. Yet, in the cases of Filippino Lippi and Perino del Vaga it would appear from the drawings discussed above that as much care and intensity was spent on preparation for works in all compositional sectors of their fresco ensembles, and the same can be said for other artists of the time. Giovanni da Udine was praised by both Vasari and Armenini for his skills in representing natural forms as well as his "scientific" spirit in researching exactly how Roman stucco reliefs were made and employed. He was responsible for the highly coloured and realistically detailed frescoed swags dividing the decorative scheme of *Cupid and Psyche* and the *Triumph of Galatea* in the Raphael loggia at the Villa Farnesina, Rome as well as work on the Vatican loggie. Many finely observed naturalistic drawings of birds, small animals, fruit and flowers have been assigned to him in major drawings collections. Grotesque decoration did not only depend on knowledge of classical sources or an understanding of infrastructural principles, but was considered worthy of the application of the most highly developed observational drawing skills.

[19]   In Chapter XII, Book 3 of the *Precepts*, Armenini describes "chimera" (using this term rather than "grotesques") as follows:

> [The ancients] employ[ed] them as […] intermediate forms that could be harmoniously used between painted and unpainted sections of walls and between

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[7] Luca Signorelli, *Hercules and Anteaus*, c.1500, black chalk on paper, 28.3 x 16.3cm, Royal Collection, Windsor 12805.

things that are flat and those in relief. They were executed, therefore, in such a way that they would not detract from sculptures because of strong relief, or from paintings because of abundant colours.[8]

[20] Armenini therefore applies aesthetic criteria to the appropriate functioning of enframing grotesques, bringing to mind Immanuel Kant's later discussion of *parerga* in *The Critique of Judgement*, 1790, as a development of his initial distinction between "aesthetical" and "mere mechanical" arts:

> Even what we call ornaments [parerga] i.e. those things which do not belong to the complete representation of the object internally as elements but externally as complements and which augment the satisfaction of taste, do so only by their form; as for example the frames of pictures or the draperies of statues or the colonnades of palaces. But if the ornament does not itself consist in beautiful form, and if it is used as a golden frame is used, merely to recommend the painting by its *charm*, it is then called *finery* and injures genuine beauty.[9]

[21] Derrida's long meditation on Kant's thinking about the *parergon* in *The Truth in Painting* is of relevance here:

> *Parerga* have a thickness, a surface which separates them not only (as Kant would have it) from the integral inside, from the body proper of the *ergon,* but also from the outside, from the wall on which the painting is hung, from the space in which statue or column is erected […] the *parergon* is a form which has as its traditional determination not that it stands out but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy.

[22] Derrida goes on to note that Kant himself indulges in a "violence" of enframings, enclosing "the theory of the aesthetic in a theory of the beautiful, the latter in a theory of taste and the theory of taste in a theory of judgment."[10]

[23] The grisaille schemes and grotesque decorations in these late quattrocento and early cinquecento works problematise such intrinsic and extrinsic issues. The employment of an imagery that acknowledges no taxonomies, no hierarchies, no boundaries of genus, but slips between nature and artifice, vegetal and mineral, human and bestial, living and inanimate, whole form and detail, means that grotesque decoration defies classification and systematisation but is sufficiently rooted within the verities of "nature" and "the real world" so as to establish a scale of contrast as well as similitude. In this relation, the *parergon* is privileged over the *ergon.*

[24] It is interesting to compare the faux architectural enframing in these mural schemes with the pen and ink borders employed by Giorgio Vasari in his *Libro de' disegni*. A good

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[8] Armenini, *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*, 262. He distinguishes between stucco chimera and the subjects suitable for architectural friezes in Chapter X, Book 3, 256 and 253: "[T]he essence of ornamentation for our rooms lies in pictures" he proclaims, and "good artists" fill friezes with "things which in themselves have some subject, like *storie,* myths, prospects, emblems, provinces, mottoes and maxims."

[9] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment,* trans. J. H. Bernard, New York 2000, 76.

[10] Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, Chicago and London 1987, 61 and 69.

example is the page from the *Libro de' disegni* comprising mounted drawings in different media attributed to Filippino Lippi, Botticelli and Raffaellino del Garbo, National Gallery of Art, Washington (fig. 7). Vasari does not employ bizarre or grotesque imagery in the mock frames, but he simultaneously unifies and underpins difference of mode, colour and scale by means of a drawn architectural schema. In this sheet the drawings, which take on the status of finished paintings by the act of enframing, appear to have been inserted into a stucco-panelled wall organisation, with varying degrees of relief. By employing the same medium of drawing as the appropriated and reassembled works Vasari could be said to *pacify* heterogeneity more than the comparable strategy of framing works in an actual three-dimensional assemblage, which exacerbates distinctions of media and materials, architectonics and pictorialism.

7 Giorgio Vasari, page from *Libro de' disegni* with drawings by Filippino Lippi, Botticelli and Raffaellino del Garbo; sheets probably 1480-1504, mounting and framework after 1524, various media with decoration in pen and brown ink, brown and grey wash on light buff paper, 56.7 x 45.7cm. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington

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Grotesque models in print

[25] Grotesque decoration was disseminated by means of print: a significant extension of the unique hand drawings that recorded the discovery of the decorations of the Villa Aurea and were the sites of invention for new applications. An engraved sheet by Nicoletto (Rossi) da Modena dated between 1500 and 1512 in the British Museum (fig. 8) differs considerably from the drawings of grotesque elements cited earlier. Nicoletto was known to be in Rome in 1507, although other information about him is vague. In this crowded ornamental panel, which includes his initials N.O., the spaciousness, symmetry and

proportional ratio of figure to background of the Roman prototypes have been elaborated into extremes of complexity and compositional density. The figural elements show much caricatural invention, including the bound slaves underneath the assemblage of armour at the top of the panel. Below the central winged figure with a birdcage on her head are tethered a male and female figure, she seemingly a young witch, he a helmeted soldier, who interact playfully with the bearded chimerae below. These sorts of inventions were often ascribed to "*Fiammingi*", the anonymous Northern artists credited with many grotesque ceilings of the period. The uninflected, that is, evenly-engraved lines serve to promote a tendency towards confluence and elaboration that devours the spacious backgrounds of the emptier Roman prototypes.

8 Nicoletto da Modena, *Ornamental panel*, c.1500-1510, engraving, 26 x 13.2cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

[26]   Nicoletto da Modena's sheets are single, but fuller publications were soon available all over Europe, such as Jacques Androuet du Cerceau's *Petites Grotesques* etchings of 1550. Although these plates confirm the symmetricality of Villa Aurea-influenced grotesques, they are curiously mechanistic, stylised, heavy handed and crowded. Grotesque decoration continued to be disseminated through prints in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the impact of engraving styles upon the putative authenticity of these source books was considerable. In general they depend on over-elaboration of the printed sheet and promote notions of *horror vacui.* Their relationship to the confident sparsity of the original Roman designs becomes more and more tenuous over time.

The Publication of Dürer's *Christian Mythological Drawings*, Munich, 1808

[27]   Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor, was deeply interested in print and amongst a programme for more than one hundred illustrated publications, some autobiographical, was a project for a book of hours, conceived around 1508, which was

> not a prayer book but […] a collection of hymns, psalms and excerpts from the scriptures, selected, edited and partly written by the Emperor himself.[11]

[28]   Ten copies of the book were printed on vellum in moveable type in the style of a handwritten illuminated manuscript and one set was dismembered and sent to the leading German artists Albrecht Dürer, Hans Burgkmair the Elder, Lucas Cranach the Elder, Hans Baldung (called "Grien"), Jörg Breu and Albrecht Altdorfer (illustrations are believed to come from both the artist and his workshop) to be decorated in the margins, possibly for a special woodcut edition that never emerged.[12] Dürer provided illustrations for 45 pages, and his decorations are included in a proof copy, lacking a title page of sixty-two folios, previously in the Bavarian Royal Collection and now in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. The other illustrations comprise a volume of forty-seven folios in the Bibliotèque Municipale in Besançon. Joachim von Sandrart, unaware, in 1675 that half of this unique manuscript was out of Germany, wrote of

> a breviary in quarto […] decorated by Albrecht Dürer with pen and black ink, green ink, and in other colours, the text augmented by pictures, grotesques and leafwork, is drawn in so clever and diligent a fashion, as nowhere to be seen.[13]

[29]   Probably Dürer set the tone for the hand illuminations, but certainly all the artists concerned, including Baldung and Cranach, whose illustrations bear very little attention to the text, follow a related format. This features intensely drawn figural passages, for example *Christ in Majesty*, *Death Fighting a Knight*, *George and the Dragon*, *King David with his Harp* or more general scenes of carousing or battle in the wider margin, tied vertically or horizontally in some way to grotesque decorations, including hybrid plants, animals, human figures, grimacing heads, objects and so on. Very often there is a plant or vertical motif helping to enframe the text, and the more compressed grotesque decorations trail off into open linear curlicues, as if unravelling in the wider spaces of the page. All the drawings are line-based in light black ink or various delicate colours, without blocks of tone, so that they maintain a strictly graphic, enframing and parergic status on the page around

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[11] Walter L. Strauss, ed., *The Book of Hours of the Emperor Maximilian the First, decorated by Albrecht Dürer, Hans Baldung Grien, Hans Burgkmair the Elder, Jörg Breu, Albrecht Altdorfer and other Artists printed by 1513 by Johannes Schoensperger at Augsburg*, New York 1974, 321.

[12] Antwerp born Jost de Negker (c.1485-1544) had moved to Augsburg in about 1510 to work for Maximilian's new press and together with Hans Burgkmair the Elder developed techniques of two-block chiaroscuro woodcuts and printing in gold and silver on blue paper that simulated the rich effects of illuminations.

[13] Joachim von Sandrart, entry in *Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau- Bild- und Mahlerey-Künste*, quoted in Strauss, *The Book of Hours,* 322.

the dominant passages of heavy-type text. Erwin Panofsky described the "decorative style" of the original drawings in his classic text about Dürer in 1943 as hummingbirds:

> [T]hey skim and flutter around [the letter-press] so that the beholder enjoys a contrast between different qualities instead of witnessing a conflict between unequal forces.[14]

[30] The decision to publish the infinitely valuable compilation of Dürer illustrations in the Royal Collection in Munich as *Albrecht Dürers christlich-mythologische Handzeichnungen* (*Albrecht Dürer's Christian Mythological Drawings*) by the Senefelder Press (Nuremberg and Munich) was evidently promoted by the Keeper of the Royal Library and the Director of the Royal Gallery of Pictures. It was also an important step for Senefelder and his patron and partner Baron Aretin in demonstrating that the new medium of lithography was uniquely well suited to reproducing hand drawings. We know from the autobiographical sketch of his trials and tribulations as inventor of lithography and "chemical printing" in *Vollständiges Lehrbuch der Steindruckerey*, Munich, 1818, that Senefelder was fighting for pre-eminence against a number of other lithography presses established at about the same time in Munich, including that of Messrs Strixner and Pilotti [or Piloty].[15] The Senefelder edition of the prayer book included a self-portrait of Dürer of 1500 as frontispiece and forty-four lithographs drawn by Strixner after the originals, in which the texts have been omitted so that the decorations surround a ruled blank space.[16] The Strixner illustrations were "copied" as early as 1st September 1817 in London by R. Ackermann's Lithographic Press, *Albert Durers* [sic] *Designs of the Prayer Book* from the version "published by Strixner and Piloty". Ackermann includes a page of missing text courtesy of Mr. Scherer, Librarian to his Majesty the King of Bavaria to make up for a "loss that renders the drawings obscure":

> I trust that this *fac simile* of a very valuable graphic monument, though hitherto but little known, now submitted to the Public as the first production of my Lithography Press, will experience such approbation as to encourage me to persevere in my efforts for the improvement of this infant art […].[17]

[31] Senefelder had obtained an English patent for his invention of the late 1790s in 1801, and in the same year Benjamin West, president of the Royal Academy drew the first "artistic" lithograph in tusche on stone that so closely resembled an original chalk or crayon drawing that "it could barely be distinguished from an original." [18]

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[14] Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton 1971, 183.

[15] *A Complete Course of Lithography by Alois Senefelder*, intro. by A. Hyatt Mayor, New York 1968, 62, 70.

[16] Antony Griffiths and Frances Carey, *German Printmaking in the Age of Goethe*, exh. cat. London 1994, 188-190; Joseph Leo Körner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, Chicago and London 1993, 224-236.

[17] *Albert Durers designs of the Prayer Book*, R. Ackermann's Lithographic Press, London 1817, 4, 5.

[18] Pat Gilmour, ed., *Lasting Impression: Lithography as Art*, London 1988, 25. West's drawing was published in the first issue of *Specimens of polyautography*, 1803, with this accolade.
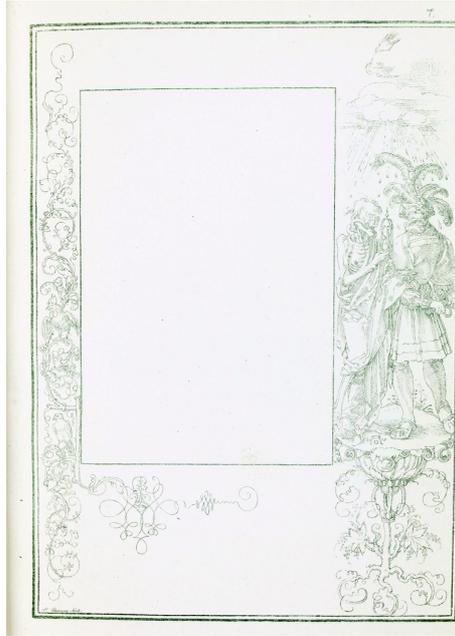
9 Plate 7 from *Albrecht Dürers christlich-mythologische Handzeichnungen*, Munich 1808, lithographs after Albrecht Dürer by Johann Nepomuk Strixner, 28.3 x 20cm each plate. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London
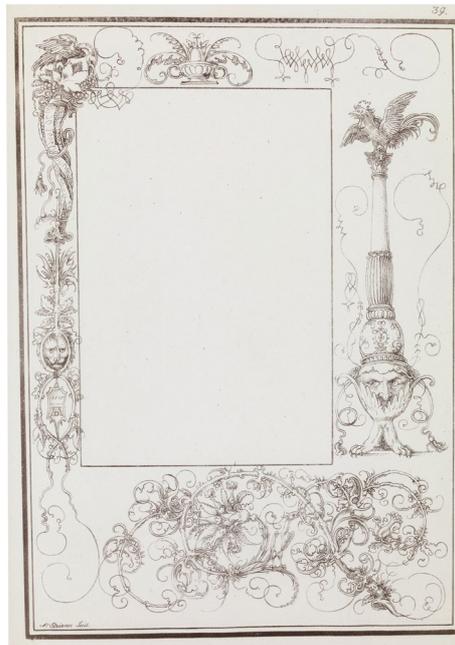
10 Plate 39 from *Albrecht Dürers christlich-mythologische Handzeichnungen*, Munich 1808, lithographs after Albrecht Dürer by Johann Nepomuk Strixner, 28.3 x 20cm each plate. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London

[32]   The legitimating importance of text is a tremendously powerful dynamic in hierarchical Academic theories that elevate *istorie* as the highest form of art over the lesser genres of portraiture, landscape, still-life and so on down to "mere" decorative art. Therefore the omission of text in this historic publication contributes to its pan-European significance as a highly significant "graphic event" that would influence practices across the board. Freed

from the heavy Gothic print by Senefelder/Strixner and therefore removed from the ideas and religious context that had inspired his illuminations, the relationship of Dürer's figurative motifs and interlinking floral and grotesque linear patterns is now of entirely another order: airy and arbitrary and freely open to appropriation in any conceivable context. Where in the original illustrated *Book of Hours* section Dürer employed an image of King David with his harp to introduce the first psalm *De profundis* or incorporated battling soldiers in support of psalms 92 and 35 to be recited in times of war, such connections have now been lost. Dürer himself, however, was only partly tied to such literal evocations. In between purely grotesque cartouches he freely employs apocalyptic imagery, with a preponderance of devils, witches and images of skeletal death (fig. 9) or introduces a richness of animal life ranging from exotic dromedaries to cart-horses, ducks and roosters. The marginal illustrations are very varied even within a single plate, with complex figural passages which set up contained spatial fields within which to operate dimensionally and other sequences devoted to grotesque transformations and abstract patterns that claim the frontality of the page and assert the significance of line *qua* line. The crowing cock on the top of the pedestal in brown ink in plate 39 to the right of the empty frame (fig. 10) is elaborated with light shadows like the intertwined rose cartouche below, but the lines trail off into entirely abstract pen flourishes in the top and bottom margins. The grotesque head contained within petals in the base of the pedestal bears a very strong resemblance to the so-called Mantegna "self-portrait", the grotesque head woven into wall decorations in the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua. It is usually claimed that Strixner's lithographic copies after Dürer are exact, but they do lack some of the elasticity and tension of the originals, or he weakens the incisiveness of contoured modelling, or the precise placing and finish of a calligraphic flourish.

[33] The publication of *Albrecht Dürers christlich-mythologische Handzeichnungen* had an enormous influence on illustration in Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Artist Peter Cornelius for example produced a cycle of drawings in pen and ink in response to the publication of Goethe's *Faust* in 1808, some of which were sent to Goethe in Weimar, who advised Cornelius to look at Strixner's *Prayerbook of the Emperor Maximilian*. (Goethe was one of the first people to review the publication.)[19] Through the good offices of Cornelius, the Munich artist Eugen Napoleon Neureuther (1806-1882) illustrated a selection of Goethe's ballads and romances with marginal illustrations in the style of the decorative flourishes of the Prayerbook, published as lithographs between 1829 and 1830 by Goethe's own publisher J. G. Cotta.[20] The short-lived artist Philipp Otto Runge was

[19] "One could have given me as many gold ducats as required to cover these pages, but the money would not have given me as much *pleasure* as these works of art." Letter from Goethe to Jacobi dated March 7 (*Werke*, Weimar 1896, Sec. 4, Vol. 20, no. 5505), cited in Strauss, *The Book of Hours*, 323.

[20] Goethe wrote in a letter of 1831, "Nobody has gone so far as he [Neureuther] in marginal drawings: even the great talent of Albert Dürer has been to him less a pattern than an incitement." Cited in Griffiths and Carey, *German Printmaking*, 34.

equally entranced with systems of enframing and marginal decorations, albeit strictly symmetrical, in his heavily symbolic unfinished cycle of the four *Times of Day*. Moritz von Retzsch (1779-1857), who illustrated Goethe's *Faust* in 1816 and whose widely circulated *Outlines to Shakespeare* were republished regularly from 1828 into the 1840s ensured an influence on the emerging Pre-Raphaelite artists in Britain, including William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais who were much taken at the time with the new linearity.[21]

11 John Everett Millais, *Study for 'Ferdinand Lured by Ariel'*, 1848, pen and ink on paper, 28.4 x 20cm.
© National Museums Liverpool

[34]   Although the outline style of the Pre-Raphaelites is also strongly indebted to John Flaxman and European Neoclassicism, not to mention the geometrical drawing promoted by William Dyce for the Government Schools of Design, the Millais drawing of *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* operates within a frontal and lateral spatialism that is indebted to Retzsch, Philipp Otto Runge and ultimately Dürer (fig. 11). Millais is entranced with the frame of his fairy evocation, tying it into a palmette fence that recalls the manner in which Dürer re-inscribes the framework of text-boxes with growing plants or secondary decorative frames. The treatment of figures and plants within the frame is not differentiated from the manner of drawing the gateway surround, although Millais, like Retzsch, establishes a limited spatial scale by modelling the foremost figure with some shadow, while background figures are depicted purely in line. Although there is a ground for Ferdinand to stand on (just as Dürer's figures stand four squarely on well-balanced feet, with a little linear modelling to give them some solidity) the openness of the drawing page as container is closer to decorative cartouches than it is to narrative representation. This factor is particularly noticeable, if one compares this drawing with Millais's very solid

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[21] Colin Cruise, *Pre-Raphaelite Drawing*, exh. cat. Birmingham and London 2011, 48-56.

painting, *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel*, 1848 in the Makins Collection (USA) where Ariel is so mired in thick paint as to be almost indistinguishable from the cabbage-green background.

12 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Sir Launcelot in the Queen's Chamber*, 1857, black and brown pen and ink, 35.4 x 26.2cm. Courtesy Birmingham Museums Trust

[35]   The Pre-Raphaelites, especially Dante Gabriel Rosetti who had embraced this form of transparent linearity were to go on to exclude air, space and breath from later drawings. For example in an extremely complex, closely-packed and grotesque drawing *Sir Launcelot in the Queen's Chamber*, 1857 in Birmingham, Dante Gabriel Rossetti binds curiously posturing figures, perspectival *mise-en-scene* and an excess of textures into something resembling close-stitched medieval embroidery (fig. 12). The elision of spatial logic – Launcelot closes the door while standing on a platform removed from the steps that descend into an impossible narrowness where a ferocious plant grows – is repeated in the opening behind the crouching women on the right. This depicts a forest and asserts itself on the frontal plane in the same way as the suffocating elaboration of the contorted figures. The Rossetti drawing demonstrates again how a strict linearity of sparse outlines can so easily be coagulated into a very finished drawing marked by incredible textural and decorative complexity, just as earlier grotesque could be transformed in print or paint. Rossetti's drawing explores its own embellishment within a strictly graphic paradigm – everything is constructed from line, no matter how "thick" it appears – and it predates and prefigures the use of colour. Drawing as *pro-ergon* encompasses a huge range, from unfinish to finish and contains within itself the seeds of change, metamorphosis and embellishment just as it can pre-figure the transformations required by translation into other media.

[36]   The infinite elasticity, transparency and polymorphous capabilities of drawing as *pro-ergon* and *parergon* positions it at the heart of invention as well as establishing a

framework of interconnectivity for both the work, its conceptualization and its realisation. Although drawings can readily be fitted into elaborate typological or taxonomic systems, the medium itself has nothing to do with hierarchical value systems or epistemologies. Like the grotesque decorative system discussed in this essay as an extreme paradigm of graphic intersection, it unites difference, pacifies hybridity and promotes seamless change.