



Working with Glass: Strategies of Representation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Glass Factory Tourist Narratives

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This essay explores questions regarding the paradoxical nature of glass as a material that escapes (or exceeds) disciplinary expectations. These questions arose from a workshop led by Isobel Armstrong on 'Working with Glass', in which delegates to Birkbeck's 'The Verbal and the Visual' conference discussed a selection of mid-nineteenth-century glass-factory tourist narratives. They are filled with rich visual description, yet failures of description – evasions, hesitations, deferrals and silences - abound. Glass, the antithetical material, produces a paradoxical mode of description in which the collapse of ekphrasis is as significant as its articulation.

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