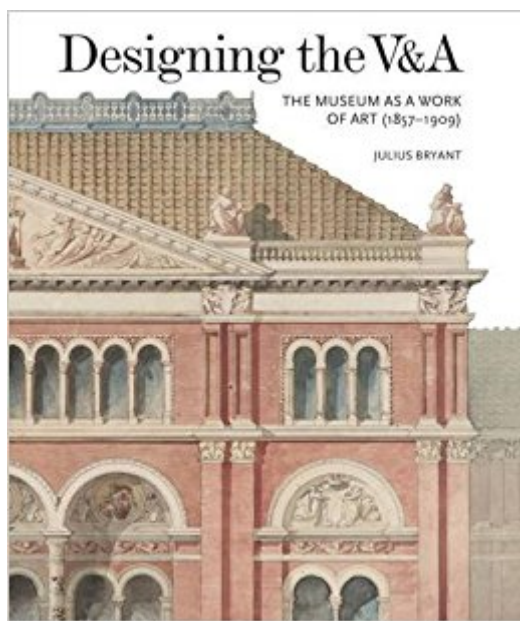


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Designing The V&A



Synopsis

The building of the Victoria and Albert Museum, begun in 1857, is the most elaborately designed and decorated museum in Britain. This book is the first to consider the V&A as a work of art in itself, presenting drawings, watercolors and historic photographs relating to the Museum's 19th-century interiors. Much of this visual material is previously unpublished and is outside the canon of Victorian art and design. The V&A's first Director, Henry Cole, conceived the Museum's building as a showcase for leading Victorian artists to design and decorate. This book reveals for the first time the ways in which Cole's expressed policy to 'assemble a splendid collection of objects representing the application of Fine Arts to manufacture' was applied to the fabric of the building, as he engaged leading painters such as Frederic Leighton, G.F. Watts and Edward Burne-Jones, as well as specialists in decoration such as Owen Jones and Morris and Company, to decorate and design for a building raised by engineers using innovative materials and techniques. It represents a fascinating, untold chapter in the history of British 19th-century art, design, architecture and museums, and an essential backdrop to understanding the evolution of the Museum's early collections and identity.

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Julius Bryant is Keeper of Word and Image at the V&A, responsible for the National Art Library, and for Prints, Drawings, Paintings and Photographs. He is author of *Alec Cobbe: Designs for Historic Interiors* (V&A, 2014) and co-editor of *Word & Image: Art, Books and Design* from the National Art

Library (V&A, 2015).

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