

VERONICA BAILEY



HOURS OF DEVOTION

IN 2006 COUTTS & CO, ONE OF THE OLDEST, MOST PRESTIGIOUS BANKING FIRMS IN LONDON, COMMISSIONED VERONICA BAILEY TO EXPLORE ITS REMARKABLE ARCHIVE, THE PHYSICAL RESIDUE OF THE BANK'S CONTINUOUS ACTIVITY IN THE FINANCIAL MARKETS SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1692, WITH THE PURPOSE OF INSPIRING A NEW BODY OF WORK WHICH BOTH "CREATES A COUTTS NARRATIVE, AS WELL AS VISUAL INTRIGUE". UNLIKE BAILEY'S PREVIOUS WORK, WHICH TENDED TO FOCUS ON THE INTIMACIES WITHIN A RELATIONSHIP AS REVEALED BY VISUAL ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTATION LEFT BEHIND, THE SERIES HOURS OF DEVOTION OFFERS AN ALTOGETHER BROADER PANORAMA, SPECIFICALLY THAT OF LONDON - AND ITS INHABITANTS - IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, THE ZENITH OF ITS WEALTH AND IMPERIAL POWER. ON ONE OF HER EARLIEST VISITS TO THE COUTTS HEADQUARTERS AT 440 STRAND, BAILEY FIRST ENCOUNTERED A DISPLAY OF OVER A THOUSAND LARGELY LEATHER-BOUND BOOKS LOCKED IN GLASS CABINETS ON THE 4TH FLOOR. KNOWN AS THE OLD STAFF LIBRARY, THE COLLECTION WAS INITIATED IN THE 1850S BY ANGELA BURDETT-COUTTS (1814-1906). BY ANY MEASURE, SHE WAS, AS THE FUTURE EDWARD VII OBSERVED, "AFTER MY MOTHER, THE MOST REMARKABLE WOMAN IN ENGLAND". IN 1837, AGED JUST 23, SHE INHERITED HER GRANDFATHER THOMAS COUTTS' FORTUNE IN THE BANK AND THEN DEVOTED MUCH OF THE REST OF HER LIFE TO PHILANTHROPIC CAUSES. ALTHOUGH HER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE BANK WAS STRICTLY NON- EXECUTIVE, SHE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY SEEN AS ITS FIGUREHEAD AND WAS KEENLY AWARE OF THE WELFARE OF ITS EMPLOYEES. TO THIS END, NOT ONLY DID SHE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE SALARY STRUCTURES AND WORKING HOURS, BUT INTRODUCED (AND PAID FOR) FREE LUNCHEES AND EVEN SET UP A LIBRARY AND READING ROOM ON SITE ESPECIALLY FOR THE STAFF.

THE LIBRARY CONSISTS LARGELY OF NINETEENTH CENTURY WORKS COVERING A PLETHORA OF SUBJECT MATTER AS BEFITTED THE NATURAL CURIOSITY OF AN AGE DEVOTED TO PROGRESS, MANY IN FINE TOOLED LEATHER BINDINGS WITH LUSCIOUS MARBLED OR GILDED PAGE EDGES. ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO SURVIVING INVENTORY, THERE ARE BOOK LABELS BEARING CATALOGUE NUMBERS INDICATING A SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AT SOME POINT. THE LABELS THEMSELVES VARY ACCORDING TO THE ADDRESS OF THE LIBRARY AT THE TIME, GIVING ONLY A VAGUE INDICATION AS TO WHEN A PARTICULAR BOOK ENTERED THE COLLECTION. IT IS CLEAR THAT ANGELA HERSELF DONATED A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF HER OWN BOOKS, PERHAPS AT ITS INCEPTION, AS EVERY NOW AND AGAIN, THE BOOKPLATE IS THAT OF ANGELA'S OWN PERSONAL COLLECTION. INDEED THE SERIES TITLE, HOURS OF DEVOTION, IS DERIVED FROM ONE SUCH VOLUME PUBLISHED IN 1838, A VERY LOOSE TRANSLATION BY THE REV E.I. BURROW OF THE ENORMOUSLY POPULAR WORKS OF THE HAMBURG PASTOR, CHRISTOPHER CHRISTIAN STURM, OFFERING THE GENTLE READER "A GUIDE IN DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES OF THE HEART".

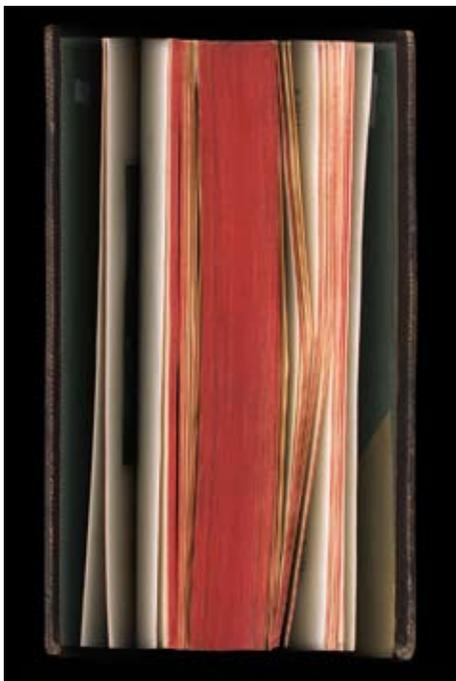
WHAT EMERGES FROM THIS SERIES IS A UNIQUE PORTRAIT OF THE CONCERNS AND ASPIRATIONS – LITERARY, POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS – OF A METROPOLITAN MIDDLE CLASS AT THE APOGEE OF ITS POWER AND SELF-ASSURANCE, UNCONSCIOUSLY REVEALED THROUGH AN APPARENTLY RANDOM SELECTION OF BOOKS. BUT UNLIKE THE MODERNIST, MORE ABSTRACT CROP SHE ADOPTED IN HER APPROACH TO THE LIBRARY OF ERNÖ GOLDFINGER IN 2 WILLOW ROAD (2003), BAILEY PRESENTS THE COUTTS BOOKS AS OPULENT NEO-GOTHIC MONUMENTS. SHE HERSELF STATES THAT: "ONCE BOOKS HAVE BEEN HANDLED, READ AND MADE PART OF A LIBRARY, THEY ASSUME AN AURA. I WANTED THESE PHOTOGRAPHS TO RETAIN SOMETHING OF THAT AURA, OF THE TIME, AS WELL AS OF THE PEOPLE THAT READ THROUGH THE PAGES OF THESE BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED BOOKS. THESE IMAGES WERE NOT TO BE CROPPED. THEY ARE OBJECTS WITHOUT ABSTRACTION." HOURS OF DEVOTION STANDS AS A BOLD VISUAL TESTAMENT TO THE ENDURING POWER OF THE BOOK AS A RESOURCE OF LEARNING, AS A CULTURAL MIRROR AND AS AN AESTHETIC ENTITY IN ITS OWN RIGHT.



LECTURES ON ART - WEEKES



ACTS OF PARLIAMENT



BURNET'S HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION



CYRANO DE BERGERAC - E. ROSTAND



CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE - DISRAELI



IMAGINATION AND FANCY - LEIGH HUNT



PLURALITY OF WORLDS



RUSSELL'S MODERN EUROPE



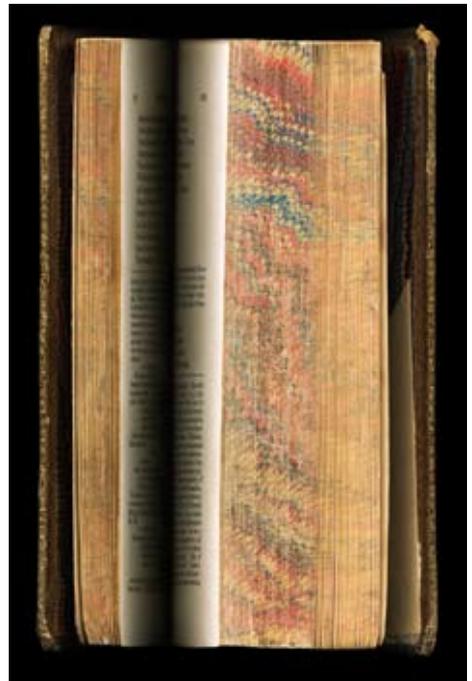
LIVES OF THE QUEENS OF ENGLAND



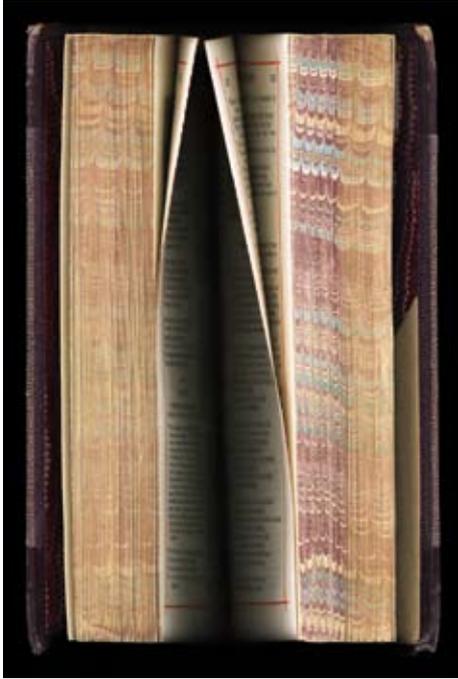
PEAKS, PASSES, AND GLACIERS



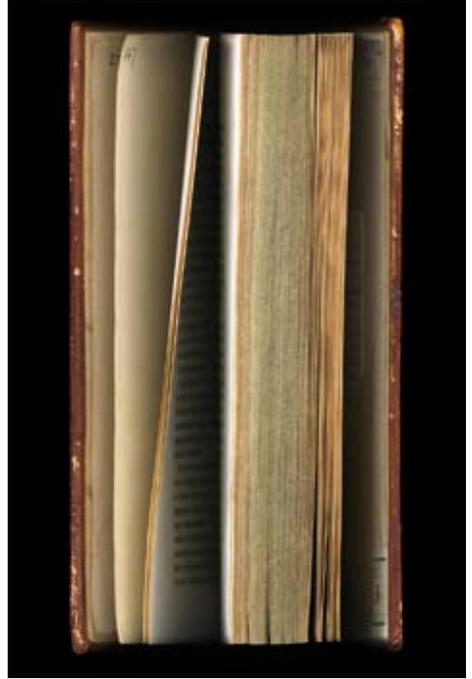
BYRON'S POETICAL WORKS - DON JUAN



DANTE - CARY



WORDSWORTH'S POETICAL WORKS



SMITH'S WEALTH OF NATIONS



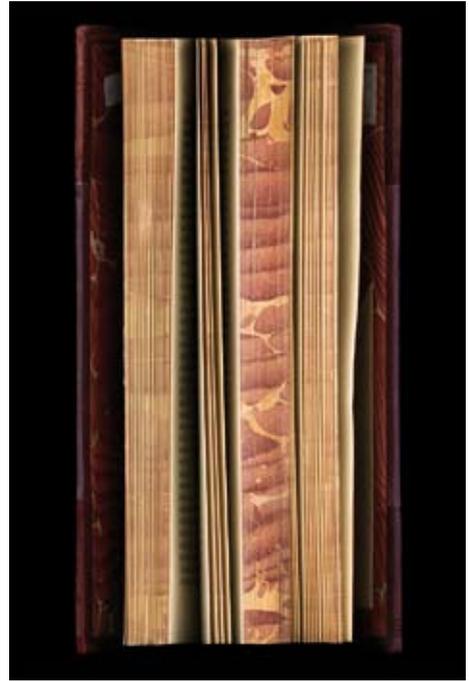
CAMPBELL'S CHIEF JUSTICES



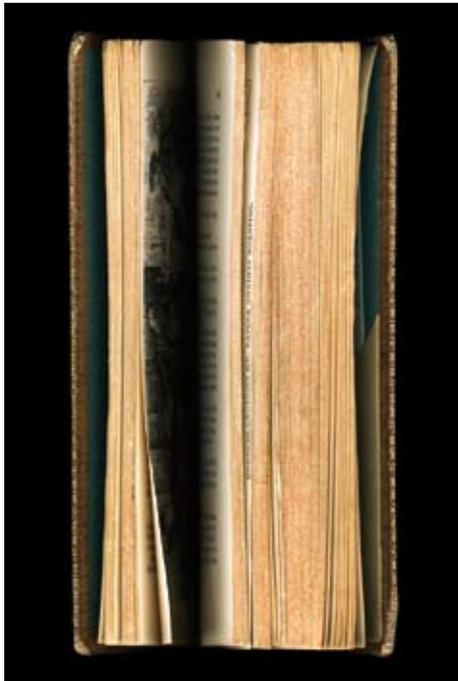
HISTORY OF NAPOLEON I - LANFREY



TRUTHS ILLUSTRATED



WORKS OF THACKERAY -
THE FOUR GEORGES - ENGLISH HUMOURISTS



DICKENS WORKS - EDWIN DROOD



OUTLINES OF ASTRONOMY - HERSCHEL

VERONICA BAILEY

HOURS OF DEVOTION

COLNAGHI
15 OLD BOND STREET, LONDON

FRIDAY 8TH MAY - SATURDAY 6TH JUNE 2009

HOURS OF DEVOTION
20 FUJI ARCHIVAL DURST LAMBDA PRINTS
EDITION 12 + 3 ARTIST PROOFS

PRINT SIZE: 89 X 59 CM. FRAMED SIZE: 92 X 63 CM
EDITION OF 8

PRINT SIZE: 181 X 121 CM. FRAMED SIZE: 186 X 126 CM
EDITION OF 4

WWW.VERONICABAILEY.CO.UK

BROCHURE PRODUCED FOR THE LONDON EXHIBITION OF
TWO NEW SERIES OF PHOTOGRAPHIC WORKS - HOURS OF
DEVOTION & SHELF LIFE - BY THE BRITISH ARTIST AND
JERWOOD PHOTOGRAPHIC PRIZE-WINNER VERONICA BAILEY -
A COLLABORATION BETWEEN BERNHEIMER FINE ART
PHOTOGRAPHY (FOR COLNAGHI) AND GBS FINE ART.

ESSAY - GILES BAKER-SMITH
DESIGN - JAMES STRAFFON PRINTING - LEYCOL
ISBN 978-3-9812982-0-8

COLNAGHI
ESTABLISHED 1760

Bernheimer
FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY

Colnaghi 15 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4AX T +44 [0]20 7491 7408 F + 44 [0]20 7491 8851 www.colnaghi.co.uk contact@colnaghi.co.uk

Bernheimer Fine Art Photography Briener Strasse 7, D-80333 München T +49 [0]89 226 672 F +49 [0]89 226 037 www.bernheimer.com contact@bernheimer.com

GBS Fine Art 35 Bruton Street, London W1J 6QY T +44 [0]7974 343 519 www.gbsfineart.com giles@gbsfineart.com