

## Impassioned Britain: Familial and Divine Depictions of Feeling (1707 - 1907)

University of Liverpool, 15-17 July 2015

Bringing together historians, curators, literary critics, and creators of the largest online museum on the internet (ARC), this conference will explore familial and divine feelings in art, history, and literature. With reference to modern psychological and philosophical accounts of emotions, we invite scholars to discuss relevant topics. Contributors are invited to focus on and analyse historical renderings of affective vocabulary (emotion, feeling, sensation, sensibility, passion, affection, enthusiasm) with an emphasis on interpretative in/dependence or interchangeability. We aim to investigate particular works of art, historical records, and literary documents, promoting a return to excellence, connection, and distinction between the visual and verbal arts, demonstrating familial and divine relations to human communication and behaviour. The conference invites discussions of “impassioned Britain” not so much as a geographically bounded area of creativity and production, but rather as a historical currency of ideas exported and imported, collected and exhibited, inside and out of the country. In the light of increasing interdisciplinary exploration of emotions in the past decade, we look for corresponding ideas across several disciplines emerging through investigations of communicative teaching, originality, and influence of ideas by non-British history and art territories, the Celtic revival, otherness in British art and literature, adaptations of British literary creations, artworks, and so forth.

Poetic portraiture and historical iconography shape the major direction of our debates in this conference. Analytic takes on parallel and analogous works of emotive and metaphoric language are welcome. There are numerous examples whose thematic and structural comparisons, with specific reference to the philosophy of mind and art, stimulate a better understanding of affective boundaries. We are looking for works across genres, e.g. affective spectrum and the formation of adult feeling surging through Maria Edgeworth's and Richard Lovell Edgeworth's *Practical Education* (1798) compared with affective depictions in *The Parent's Assistant* (1796). Contributors may compare writers, painters, and sculptors, who tell similar/different emotional tales by means of a variety of media and creative models, e.g. familial representative art in *God's Acre* by Thomas Faed (1826-1900) compared with *God's Acre* by Emily Osborn (1834-1913). What emotional parallels do we find in these works and in Blanche Baughan's “God's Acre”? Beyond these and similar examples, how is “impassioned Britain” viewed in contemporary reading of the Enlightenment and the Romantic age.

Historical sources such as family memoirs, letter-writing conventions and epistolary manuscripts, family paintings and divine portraiture communicate both geography and genre of emotional manifestation. The conference seeks not only historical but also cultural sources of sentimental portraiture and familial correspondence, e.g. songs, iconic sculptures and funerary, medical treatise, and commonplace books. Presentations should engage with representation of “impassioned Britain” in text, context, and correspondence by demonstrating how such illustrations connected individuals - with one another or/and with the Divine - or left them isolated.

### **Participation:**

Abstracts of 250 words are invited for individual presentations of 20-25 minutes. Organisers consider panels, readings, and performance proposals. Abstract deadline: **25 December 2014**. Email your proposal to [painpara@liv.ac.uk](mailto:painpara@liv.ac.uk) at the University of Liverpool. For more information on keynote speakers, conference venue, proceedings, and future collaboration in this area, please visit *Embodiments Research Group* at the University of Liverpool <http://embodiments.liv.ac.uk> and follow us on twitter @Embodiments.