



A Call for Papers:

## **Female Expression through Craft and Design in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries**

**A conference inspired by the conservation, outreach and interpretation project at A la Ronde, Devon**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024 - Reed Hall, Exeter University, and online**



Above left: 'The Ladies Waldegrave' – Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1790. Above right: The Shell Gallery, A la Ronde

**The National Trust is delighted to announce plans for an upcoming Symposium held at the University of Exeter on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2024. The purpose of the Symposium is to forge new bonds with researchers and academic professionals, find synergies with similar projects and properties, and to share stories and discoveries from our recent conservation work in a broader context. The Symposium will be delivered in a hybrid way, with presentations both in-person and online. We are hoping to hear from a wide range of external voices to bring context and new perspectives to our work. We welcome both returning and new contacts to add their voices to the conversation.**

**The Symposium will be delivered as part of the 'A la Ronde: Conserving the Past, Creating the Future' Project.**

### **Papers are welcomed on the following topics:**

- Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century material histories and material culture, including female-designed domestic spaces
- Decorative historic interiors, furniture and surfaces of the Georgian period embellished with natural materials such as shellwork, featherwork, coral, crystal, pine cones, moss, mirror, ceramics, paper, watercolours, glass or other natural materials
- Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century follies, grottoes, gallery spaces and architecture within contemporary imagination, including ontological interpretations
- The role and agency of women in commissioning, designing, or creating decorative interiors (A la Ronde as a female-designed non-conformist space, and the role of the Parminsters in its design and intention)
- Conservation/research projects that relate to the care, interpretation or understanding of decorative interiors of this period
- Other proposals that relate to the above may be considered – please contact the organisers for an initial discussion

### **Papers will also be presented on:**

- How recent conservation work has enriched our understanding of A la Ronde, its context, and the intention of its creators– processes, investigations and findings from our 2023 major conservation project
- Similar conservation projects from other places across the National Trust, how they have been approached, and what new perspectives they bring

Presentations may be delivered in person at Exeter University or online via virtual presentation (platform TBC). Full guidelines for formatting and length will be provided to accepted speakers.

### **How to Take Part:**

Please email abstracts of up to 300 words for papers of 15-20 minutes, and a short biography of 50-150 words, to Harriet Squire [Harriet.Squire@NationalTrust.org.uk](mailto:Harriet.Squire@NationalTrust.org.uk).

Please ensure you have a paper title, include the names and email addresses of main / corresponding authors, and confirm that you are available on July 11th.

The call for papers will close on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April, and decisions on proposals will be made by panel convenors in early May 2024. The selection of speakers will be announced shortly afterwards.

### **Contact us and find out more:**

#### **For more information on the Symposium and call for papers**

- Contact Harriet Squire on [Harriet.Squire@NationalTrust.org.uk](mailto:Harriet.Squire@NationalTrust.org.uk)
- Visit our Project Webpage: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/devon/a-la-ronde/journey-with-a-la-ronde>

## About A la Ronde

This 16-sided house in Lymington, Devon was built, and probably designed, by cousins Mary and Jane Parmenter in 1796, following their return from a Grand Tour of Europe. The house is now owned by the National Trust and contains the extraordinary survival of the decorative interiors designed by the Parmenters. These include over 27 meters of friezes formed from feathers in the drawing room, patterned wall paintings in the central Octagon room, and a Shell Gallery sitting at the top of the house encrusted with over 26,000 individual components, accessed by a narrow Grotto Staircase from below. The wider estate also originally contained an all-female community with a chapel, school, self-sufficient farm, and housing for four unmarried women, all designed and managed by the Parmenters. Recent archaeological work also suggests the grounds contained features such as a decorated external Shellery, a fountain, and other decorative features.

The Shell Gallery, Grotto Staircase, Drawing Room feather frieze, and Octagon have been recently conserved as part of a two-year multi-strand project, 'A la Ronde – Conserving the past, Creating the Future' which will culminate in 2024. The project and Symposium are supported and funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the Wolfson Foundation, to disseminate the processes, investigations, and findings from the conservation.

If you would like to find out more about A la Ronde, visit: [A la Ronde | Devon | National Trust](#)

A la Ronde is currently closed for the winter season, but will reopen for public visitors in March 2024, for more information please visit: [A la Ronde | Devon | National Trust](#)

Please follow this link of a 360 tour of the Shell Gallery: [360 degree interactive panorama of The Shell Gallery, A La Ronde, Devon. \(nationaltrust.org.uk\)](#)



Made possible with

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