

John Gibson, designer: sculpture and reproductive media in the nineteenth century¹

Roberto C. Ferrari

The Welsh-born sculptor John Gibson (1790-1866) was one of the most popular British artists in Rome during the nineteenth century.² His studio on Via della Fontanella near the Piazza del Popolo was a mandatory stop for visitors on the Grand Tour.³ Ever the classicist, Gibson praised the sculptural achievements of the Greeks, declaring 'Whatever the Greeks did was right', and 'In the art of sculpture the Greeks were gods'.⁴ Best known today for his *Tinted Venus*, 1851-53, in which he reintroduced the ancient aesthetic of polychrome sculpture through wax-based pigments on marble, Gibson came to be derided by critics who considered this sculpture and his other coloured figures to be failed experiments.⁵ As a result, for

¹ The ideas presented in this article developed during research award periods at the Henry Moore Institute and the Yale Center for British Art, evolved into part of a paper presented at the College Art Association conference in 2012 on the rethinking of sculpture production, and became the basis of a chapter in my doctoral dissertation. I owe a debt of gratitude to a number of colleagues and friends for their feedback on these ideas over the years, but special thanks go out to Martina Droth, Greg Sullivan, and Richard Woodfield.

² The primary sources on Gibson's life and career are: Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, ed., *Life of John Gibson, R.A., sculptor*, London: Longmans, Green, 1870; and Thomas Matthews, ed., *The biography of John Gibson, R.A., sculptor, Rome*, London: W. Heinemann, 1911. An updated biographical entry by Emma Hardy includes a checklist of all his sculptures, although some of this information is now outdated because of new research. See Ingrid Roscoe, Emma Hardy, and M. G. Sullivan, *A biographical dictionary of sculptors in Britain 1660-1851*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009, 521-29. See also Roberto C. Ferrari, 'Beyond polychromy: John Gibson, the Roman school of sculpture, and the modern classical body', Ph.D. diss., Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2013; Roberto C. Ferrari, 'Before Rome: John Gibson and the British school of art', in Sarah Burnage and Jason Edwards, eds., *The British school of sculpture, c. 1768-1837*, Aldershot, England: Ashgate, forthcoming 2016; and Anna Sophie Frasca-Rath, 'John Gibson: die Canova Rezeption in der British Community in Rom (John Gibson: the reception of Canova in the British community of Rome)', Ph.D. diss., University of Vienna, 2015.

³ See Count Hawks Le Grice, *Walks through the studii of the sculptors at Rome with a brief historical and critical sketch of sculpture*, Rome: Crispino Puccinelli, 1841, 1:99-119, 2:140-57.

⁴ Eastlake, *Life*, 128, 184. See also Matthews, *Biography*, 161.

⁵ For a survey of Gibson's explorations into polychromy and the history of the *Tinted Venus*, see Andreas Blühm, ed., *The colour of sculpture, 1840-1910*, exh. cat., Zwolle, Waanders, 1996; Ferrari, 'Beyond polychromy', 120-44; and Michael Hatt, 'Tinted Venus', in Martina Droth, Jason Edwards, and Michael Hatt, eds., *Sculpture victorious: art in an age of invention, 1837-*

most of the twentieth century, much of his oeuvre was disregarded in the wake of abstract art and modernism, although compared to his contemporaries Gibson always was acknowledged as a leading figure in the Roman school of sculpture. What has been ignored by most scholars, however, is a closer study of other aspects of Gibson's work, including the reproduction and dissemination of his sculptural designs in various media, which is what this article explores.⁶

Gibson began his artistic career drawing pictures after prints he saw in a shop window in Liverpool. He apprenticed as a wood and stone carver and eventually made original sculptural works in a classical mode that gave him the opportunity to exhibit at the Liverpool Academy and meet his earliest patrons in this important mercantile city where he had been raised. He later resided in London for more than a year, where he learned about the art and business of sculpture production from Joseph Nollekens. Although he never officially attended the Royal Academy schools, he met and was influenced by the teachings of John Flaxman and Henry Fuseli, and he became an adherent of the concept of *disegno*, ultimately utilizing it to expand his sculptural body of work into other reproductive media so as to disseminate classical subjects around the world.

At the age of twenty-seven, Gibson arrived in Rome in 1817 and began studying under the master sculptor Antonio Canova, becoming his first official British pupil.⁷ Although it had been Gibson's intention to return to London, he

1901, exh. cat., New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2014, 184-88. Scholarly interest in the *Tinted Venus* has flurried in recent years, generating a number of essays and articles arguing for this sculpture's importance as a marker for nineteenth-century social-political ideas such as sado-masochism, misogyny, nudity, racism, and nationalism. See, respectively, Caroline Arscott, 'Venus as dominatrix: nineteenth-century artists and their creations', in Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott, eds., *Manifestations of Venus: art and sexuality*, Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2000, 109-25; Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the frame: feminism and visual culture, Britain 1850-1900*, London: Routledge, 2000, 105-19; Michael Hatt, 'Thoughts and things: sculpture and the Victorian nude', in Alison Smith, ed., *Exposed: the Victorian nude*, exh. cat., New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2002, 36-49; Charmaine A. Nelson, *The color of stone: sculpting the black female subject in nineteenth-century America*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007, 59-69; and Alison Yarrington, 'Made in Italy: sculpture and the staging of national identities at the International Exhibition of 1862', in Manfred Pfister and Ralf Hertel, eds., *Performing national identity: Anglo-Italian cultural transactions*, Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008, 75-99.

⁶ Over the past few decades, a number of scholars have written in depth about sculpture and reproduction, but Gibson heretofore has not been discussed. See also the essays in Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft, eds., *Sculpture and its reproductions*, London: Reaktion Books, 1997; and Rune Frederiksen and Eckhart Marchand, eds., *Plaster casts: making, collecting, and displaying from classical antiquity to the present*, Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 2010.

⁷ Sculpture historian Margaret Whinney had claimed that British artist Richard Westmacott studied with Canova when he was in Rome from 1793-97, but more recently Marie Busco has asserted that there is no evidence for anything more than a friendship and professional relationship between them. Margaret Dickens Whinney, *Sculpture in Britain, 1530-1830*,

remained in Rome the rest of his life, calling the city 'the very university of art, where it is the one thing talked about and thought about'.⁸ His election as an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1833 and a full member in 1836 gave him the cachet of an important sculptor among his countrymen.⁹ Gibson's earliest patrons in Rome were British aristocrats on tour, such as the Dukes of Devonshire and Northumberland, who commissioned for their country estates works in marble based on his drawings and plaster models. As his reputation grew, his patronage by royalty came to include Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, King Ludwig I of Bavaria, and Czar Alexander II. But his largest patron base was from the rising middle classes: men and women whose families had earned their fortunes through industry and were eager to rise socially and culturally with their new-found wealth. Conscious of the aesthetic importance of classically-inspired art, Gibson accommodated the needs of his patrons through regular commissions of works in marble that his large studio crafted; however, he also encouraged the dissemination of his designs in other less-expensive media, such as statuettes, cameos, and prints. The international dissemination of his works in various reproductive media thus reinforced his reputation as one of the most important sculptors of the nineteenth century.

By mid-century, as Gibson's studio in Rome grew from being exclusively a production warehouse to increasingly a social space catering to middle-class visitors, so too did his role as a sculptor change. With his fame rising and his works more commonly known in Great Britain and globally, Gibson by age fifty fashioned himself a gentleman artist, not a labouring craftsman. While he certainly was not the only sculptor in history to redefine himself in this manner, for Gibson this meant also modifying his self-definition from 'sculptor' to 'designer' of sculptural works of art, a refashioning that related to his roots as a draftsman. This personal transformation culminated in the showcasing of works in his name in plaster, marble, cameo, and porcelain at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and immediately thereafter with the publication of a selection of his designs as facsimile prints. Indeed, Gibson was the only sculptor who displayed work at the Great Exhibition to identify himself in the official published catalogue as a 'Designer', not a 'Sculptor', an important distinction which will be discussed in more detail below.¹⁰

Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964, 211; Marie Busco, *Sir Richard Westmacott, sculptor*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 10.

⁸ Eastlake, *Life*, 58; Matthews, *Biography*, 55-56.

⁹ Because he did not have a permanent home in Britain, Gibson's election as an ARA was met with challenges because he did not fulfill the residency requirements. However, this was overlooked, likely because of the influence of his friend Charles Eastlake. There were no issues regarding residency with his election as RA a few years later. For more on this, see Ferrari, 'Beyond polychromy', 78-83.

¹⁰ Authority of the Royal Commission, *Great Exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, 1851: the official descriptive and illustrated catalogue*, London: Spicer Brothers, 1851, 2:845.

In the context of technological changes during the nineteenth century, Gibson the designer was able to re-establish his lifelong interest in academic draftsmanship and seemingly assert his presence, at least for a time, as the Flaxman of the Victorian age. Flaxman, at the turn of the previous century, similarly had worked in ceramics as well as marble, but he became world famous for prints after his drawings from the *Iliad* and other Greco-Roman epics.¹¹ This alternative model for the dissemination of classical imagery to the middle classes clearly impacted Gibson in his decision to produce his designs as statuettes, cameos, and engravings. What was significant about these particular media was that sculpting was still intrinsic to the manufacturing process of each, i.e. modelling for Parian statuettes, carving for cameos, and incising plates for engravings.¹² Through different reproductive means, Gibson asserted the importance of classicism with his designs and disseminated these works to a rising bourgeois audience using technologies that were part of their modern world.

Sculpture and reproduction

In order to contextualize Gibson's successful use of reproductive media in the nineteenth century, it is important to acknowledge that the making of sculpture is by its nature an art form based on the concept of the multiple. Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft have noted: 'All practitioners, curators and art historians know [that] facilities for reproducing three-dimensional objects predate by several millennia any ability to make pictures [i.e. prints and photographs] that were "exactly repeatable"'.¹³ The well-known replication of Greek sculptures, from the time of the Roman Empire to Baroque Rome, exemplifies this. However, the rise in popularity of modern-classical sculpture by artists such as Canova, whose work was seen internationally as the model of excellence, inevitably generated a need for more skilled sculptors. This increase of interest in modern-classical sculpture, then, may have led in part to the publication in 1802 of what may be the first pedagogical manual for academic students of sculpture: *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della*

¹¹ For more on Flaxman and the engravings after his drawings, see David Bindman, 'Italian drawings, 1784-94', and Detlef W. Dörrbecker, 'A survey of engravings after Flaxman's outline compositions 1793-1845', in David Bindman, ed., *John Flaxman*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1979, 86-99, 184-85.

¹² Although later in his career Gibson did have an interest in photography, the most modern of nineteenth-century technologies, this essay excludes photography from the discussion so as to focus on other reproductive media where sculpting practices were still intrinsic to the creation of the works themselves.

¹³ Anthony Hughes and Erich Ranfft, 'Introduction', in Hughes and Ranfft, eds., *Sculpture*, 1. The authors' use of the phrase 'exactly repeatable' references William Mills Ivins, *Prints and visual communication*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1969.

scultura, written by Francesco Carradori with engravings by Carlo Lasinio.¹⁴ Carradori's text was arranged as a series of essays that addressed issues from the importance of proportion and anatomy to the layout of a sculptor's studio. The book is perhaps most useful today because it assists scholars in better understanding the sculpture-making process in Italy during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Many sculptors began with drawings, which could range from *primi pensieri* to finished presentation drawings. According to Carradori, a sculptor or his assistant would then create from these drawings a *bozzetto*, a small model in clay or wax, which gave the sculptor free reign to experiment with ideas, although they typically were left in rough, unfinished states.¹⁵ Using the *bozzetto* as a guide, studio workers would make a full-sized metal-and-wood skeletal structure that was then packed with clay and modelled by the sculptor. Most of these larger models were destroyed in the next step, the creation of the plaster mould. Layers of plaster were applied in stages to the large model, which sometimes itself could be divided for ease of making the plaster mould. Once the plaster mould was solid, it was removed in pieces, then reassembled so that fresh plaster could be poured inside sections. When the plaster cast was hard, the mould was removed, individual pieces were fit together, then the cast was filed down or touched up with fresh plaster.¹⁶

¹⁴ Francesco Carradori, *Elementary instructions for students of sculpture [Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura]*, trans. Matti Kalevi Auvinen, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002. Carradori taught sculpture and Lasinio printmaking at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence.

¹⁵ More finished versions of these clay models could be fired and preserved as terracotta statuettes. A market for terracottas developed in France during the mid-eighteenth century, but this tradition long had flourished in Italy since the 1600s, and Canova was among those who made a number of terracotta works for himself and for collectors. By the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, terracottas largely had fallen out of favor. For more on terracottas, see James David Draper and Guilhem Scherf, *Playing with fire: European terracotta models, 1740-1840*, exh. cat., New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2004.

¹⁶ According to Johannes Myssok, the use of large clay models for the creation of life-size plaster molds and casts was a new sculptural procedure created by Canova after 1783, when he received the commission for the tomb of Pope Clement XIV and had few studio workers to accomplish the job. This new process enabled Canova to work with a same-size plaster model and thus more easily transfer the subject to marble utilizing the same figure, rather than rely on a smaller model that had to be scaled up in size. 'Modern sculpture in the making: Antonio Canova and plaster casts', in Frederiksen and Marchand, eds., *Plaster casts*, 269-88. Based on Myssok's argument, then, Carradori's text and Lasinio's engravings were likely also the result of this new technological innovation in sculpture production. However, not all sculptors used plaster casts the same way; see, for instance, the complex ways they were used as 'original models' by Francis Chantrey in Matthew Greg Sullivan's essay 'Chantrey and the original models', in Frederiksen and Marchand, eds., *Plaster casts*, 289-306.

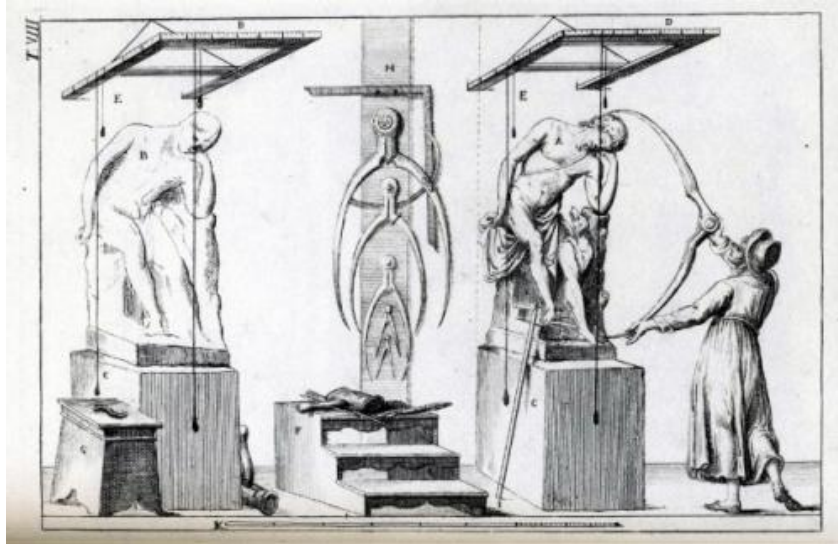


Figure 1 'Rules for locating and transferring the measurements of any sculpture', plate VIII from *Istruzione elementare per gli studiosi della scultura*, 1802, by Francesco Carradori and engraved by Carlo Lasinio. Photo: author.

To go from the original plaster to the marble sculpture required a complex series of measurements using calipers and a number of drills and other tools (Fig. 1). This was often complicated, labour-intensive, and time-consuming work as *practiciens* whittled down the block of marble. As measurements were taken, very small holes were drilled into the plaster model and lead pencil points inserted or scratched into the holes. Carradori noted in his manual that although the adding of lead points was a relatively simple procedure, it was in fact one of the more important parts of measurement, as it ensured consistency in the making of the first marble version and later replicas and reductions.¹⁷ Because these continuous measurements were necessary, the carving of marble subjects frequently took months if not years. It was also not uncommon for sculptors to discover flaws in their blocks of marble, such as veins, holes, or cracks. In those instances, new blocks of marble had to be selected from a quarry, although those rejected blocks might be recycled for use in smaller marble commissions such as busts.

Italian studio workers who had developed the trade of marble carving over the centuries were responsible for most of the work described above. The master sculptor typically finished the detailed carving work, but there was no assurance of this regularly taking place. Carradori's text and Lasinio's plates provide us today with a better sense of what the standard and complex practice was in the making of sculpture, a tradition that Gibson, as a student of Canova, practiced in his large studio. More importantly for the discussion presented here was how the proliferation of a particular work as a drawing, *bozzetto*, plaster cast, and marble figure all existed as part of the same work of art, contiguously or simultaneously. Furthermore, there were multiples of these pieces frequently on-site, often in

¹⁷ Carradori, *Elementary*, 37.

different sizes, with some works displayed as new commissions and others presented on spec for potential buyers. Sculptors' studios in Rome essentially became a marketplace for the production and sale of copies and repetitions of works in the master's name.

An unidentified visitor to Gibson's studio in the mid-1850s astutely noted: 'It is evident that any number of copies may be made equally well from one clay-model; and in the studios, frequent repetitions of the same subject are seen'.¹⁸ What is noteworthy about this quote is that the unidentified author mentions 'copies' and 'repetitions' as separate ideas. In the nineteenth century, numerous artists regularly made exact copies or replicas of works they themselves prized, to display them in their studios for possible future commissions. Artists also made repetitions, or variations, of works, sometimes for patrons who wanted their own version of a particular subject, but also to continue to perfect a work over time. Details in repetitions could vary, making each one unique, but overall the subject was unchanged.¹⁹ Copies/replicas and repetitions/variations were common in the nineteenth century, not just in sculpture but also in painting. One of the most noteworthy artists whose career and studio practice were based on repetitions was that of Gibson's French contemporary J.-A.-D. Ingres, who often made paintings with the same subject, but with differences in backgrounds or layouts, and in a variety of sizes.²⁰ Thus, a sculptor's studio in nineteenth-century Rome, such as Gibson's, was akin to a 'reproductive continuum', to quote sculpture historian Malcolm Baker, with works in multiple sizes in clay, plaster (models and casts), and marble on display, not to mention potential crossover into other media, such as drawings, prints, statuettes in porcelain and bronze, and photographs (after 1840).²¹

Modernist art critics who long have emphasized authorial origin and control have been challenged by this idea of reproduction and, by extension,

¹⁸ 'A morning with the sculptors at Rome', *Chambers's journal of popular literature, science and arts*, 155, 20 December 1856, 386.

¹⁹ My definitions for copies/replicas and repetitions/variations, as they were understood in the nineteenth century, derive from Patricia Mainardi, 'Copies, variations, replicas: nineteenth-century studio practice', *Visual resources*, 15:2, 1999, 123-47. Mainardi explores these concepts in association with painting, but they are applicable to sculpture as well.

²⁰ On Ingres's reproductive art practice, see Patricia Condon, ed., *In pursuit of perfection: the art of J.-A.-D. Ingres*, exh. cat., Louisville, KY: J. B. Speed Art Museum; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

²¹ Malcolm Baker uses the term 'reproductive continuum' to refer to the intentional mode of replication—e.g. plaster casts, electrotypes, photographs, etc.—developed to educate audiences about the history of art and the canonization of masterpieces with the rise of public museums and increased large-scale international exhibition spaces. 'The reproductive continuum: plaster casts, paper mosaics and photographs as complementary modes of reproduction in the nineteenth-century museum', in Frederiksen and Marchand, eds., *Plaster casts*, 485-500. My use of the term here is to suggest that artistic production by sculptors in Rome such as Gibson served a similar purpose, i.e. to disseminate classical designs as the height of aesthetic achievement to an international audience.

classicism/academicism, because these traditional practices derive from the Academy's acceptance and propagation of imitation of masterworks from the past. Patricia Mainardi has argued: 'The question of duplication has proved most troublesome for modernists ... because modernism holds chronological priority as the key to authenticity. The first manifestation of a style or theme assumes the quality of originality while subsequent renditions need to be explained and justified to be valorized'.²² In Gibson's day, modernist originality was understood differently. As a Winckelmannian classicist in Rome, Gibson emphasized the importance of imitating the past, and thus he understood that the artistic legacy of ancient Greece and Rome was based on the practice of imitation.²³

For many nineteenth-century Grand Tourists, there was likely little concern that they owned a copy or repetition of a work of art, possibly because once home they were removed geographically from its aesthetic (Greek) and creative (Roman) source. Indeed, for those who could not afford to commission new works or wait for independent subjects, the option of shipping home replicas (made on spec), reductions, or copies in other media ultimately benefited patrons and sculptor. It was more important just to own a manifestation of a work by the sculptor. As a result of this interest and need, Gibson eagerly made copies, reduced-size replicas, and repetitions of his statues and reliefs for patrons who visited his Roman studio.²⁴ With some of these, Gibson made repetitions with minor changes. For instance, the three extant repetitions in marble of *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, first modeled in 1818, each show changes, including the position and size of the shepherd's staff, hat, and cloak, the style of his hair, and the presence or absence of a lizard on the tree trunk. In general, however, the basic form of the shepherd is the same and thus easily recognizable to those who know Gibson's work.²⁵

²² Mainardi, 'Copies', 123.

²³ Polykleitos, Praxiteles, and other Athenian sculptors were known to have made repetitions of their own works of art. For instance, there was more than one *Doryphoros*. Furthermore, these subjects were so popular that studios centuries later continued to recreate these masterpieces or their appearance as historicized modern sculptures, as in the case of the numerous repetitions of the Praxitelean *Apollo Sauroktonos*. For more on the Greco-Roman practice of reproduction and historicism, see Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical art: from Greece to Rome*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, chapter 2, especially 102; and J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic age*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, chapter 8, 164-84. On later copies and reproductions of works from antiquity, see Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the antique: the lure of classical sculpture, 1500-1900*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.

²⁴ Eastlake noted that Gibson rarely kept finished marble replicas in his studio because he was not worried about financial matters. *Life*, 7-8. The number of repetitions that his studio produced, however, clearly suggests otherwise. A contemporaneous review of her book criticized her for this, noting that her own inclusion of a list of his subjects with repetitions proved the opposite. 'Fine arts', *Athenaeum*, 2205, 29 January 1870, 165.

²⁵ These noted changes are my own observations. For more on the history of *The Sleeping Shepherd Boy*, see Timothy Stevens, 'John Gibson's "The Sleeping Shepherd Boy"', in



Figure 2 John Gibson, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, modeled c. 1830, commissioned 1834. Marble, H. 129.5 cm. New Haven: Yale Center for British Art. Photo: YCBA.

Of all the sculptures in Gibson's oeuvre, however, *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (Fig. 2) arguably serves as the best example of artistic reproduction within the sculptor's studio. This work was his most popular subject, with at least nine versions commissioned in marble by patrons. Gibson first began working on the subject around 1830, and it was his belief that he had created a new interpretation of the god of love, although the figure was inspired by classical and

Penelope Curtis, ed., *Patronage & practice: sculpture on Merseyside*, Liverpool: Tate Gallery, 1989, 57-59. With regard to Gibson's *Tinted Venus*, it is worth noting that this too was produced in multiple forms. There were two life-size versions of the statue, the first commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Preston and the second by the Marquess of Sligo, and these were repetitions of his earlier, untinted *Venus Verticordia* for Joseph Neeld. A later untinted repetition of *Venus* was made for M. Uzzielli, and a reduced-size, tinted version was made for the Prince of Wales. A polychrome Parian statuette also was produced after the 1862 International Exhibition.

Renaissance sources.²⁶ The subject merges classicism with the contemporary taste for sentimentality, and also conveys a sense of theatricality as the god wears a costume to hide his identity. The statue was inspired by the pastoral comedy *Aminta* (1573) by the Italian poet Torquato Tasso. In this poem the god of love appears disguised as a shepherd so that he can use his arrows to play with the hearts of the nymph Silvia and the youth Aminta. In his memoirs, Gibson recorded in Italian the opening passage of the poem:

Who wou'd believe, that under an human Form, and under these pastoral Spoils, should be conceal'd a God? and that not one of the Sylvan Deities, or of the vulgar Ranks of Gods; but amongst the Superiour, and the Heavenly Ones the most Powerful: who often causes the bloody Sword to fall from the hand of *Mars*, and from *Neptune*, the Shaker of the Earth, the great Trident, and the eternal Thunders from Supreme *Jove*. In this Disguise, certainly, and in these Cloaths, *Venus*, my Mother, won't so easily know me to be her son *Cupid*.²⁷

Dressed in a shepherd's hat and cloak, the tips of his wings slightly visible below the mantle, Cupid wears a kind grin but it masks his precocious nature. A drawing (Fig. 3) suggests that early on Gibson wanted the figure to appear in motion, having shot an arrow and now rushing to hide his bow and quiver. By choosing instead to depict him upright and still, Gibson reverted to a study of idealized beauty. Each repetition measures approximately 51 inches, making the

²⁶ Matthews, *Biography*, 78.

²⁷ Torquato Tasso, *L'Aminta di Torquato Tasso, favola boscherecchia; Tasso's Aminta, a pastoral comedy, in Italian and English*, trans. P. B. Du-Bois, Oxford: L. Lichfield, 1726, n.p. Gibson recorded the text in Italian as follows:

Chi crederà che sotto umane forme
E sotto queste pastorali spoglie
Fosse nascosto un Dio! non mica un Dio
Selvaggio, o della plebe degli Dei,
Ma tra grandi Celesti il più possente
Che fa spesso cader di mano a Marte
La sanguinosa spada, ed a Nettuno,
Scotitor della terra, il gran tridente,
E le folgori eterne al sommo Giove.
In quest'aspetto, certo, e in questi panni,
Non riconoscerà sì di leggiere
Venere madre me, suo figlio Amore.

See Eastlake, *Life*, 75; and Matthews, *Biography*, 75.



Figure 3 John Gibson, Study for *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, undated, before 1837. Pen and ink and wash on paper, 7.2 x 5.7 cm. London: Royal Academy of Arts. Photo: RA.

god the height of an adolescent. He hides in his left hand behind him his 'heart-piercing dart' and his bow, the bottom portion of which rests against his calf.²⁸ Four of the known repetitions of the statue show his right hand reaching outward, the fingers slightly curved as if to take someone's hand, inspiring 'confidence' yet assuming 'that air of modesty and timidity to conceal the more his cunning designs', as Gibson described it.²⁹ However, in the two earliest repetitions of the statue, he is shown holding a rose in his right hand, which may have been intended to enhance his flirtatious nature. No documentation has yet explained this change in the outstretched hand.

What follows is, for the first time, a published compendium of heretofore known information that documents the production and history of the nine known marble repetitions of this sculpture, as well as marble reductions and plaster variants.³⁰

- The earliest commission of this work was from Sir Robert Peel; this repetition entered the collection of the Yale Center for British Art in 2013

²⁸ Matthews, *Biography*, 75. See also Eastlake, *Life*, 75.

²⁹ Matthews, *Biography*, 75. See also Eastlake, *Life*, 75.

³⁰ To date I have examined in person the Peel, Appleton, Alison, and Farnum repetitions, and I have consulted images and both published and archival information about the Johnstone and Alexander versions. My thanks to the following for their assistance and feedback in viewing the four repetitions over the years: Cassandra Albinson, Marietta Cambareri, Danielle Carrabino, Tara Cerretani, Martina Droth, Courtney Harris, and Laura MacCulloch.

(Fig. 2). There has been some uncertainty as to whether this or the Johnstone repetition (see below) was the first commissioned in marble, but there are definitive reasons why Peel's should be seen as the first. His commission of this subject is the best documented by Gibson in his account books. This documentation is reinforced by the fact that Gibson and Peel had a friendly relationship, Gibson even once staying as a guest at his country estate, Drayton Manor in Staffordshire, where the statue eventually was displayed.³¹ Also, the inscription on the right side of the base—OPVS IOANNIS GIBSON ROMAE—differs from the others, suggesting that its wording may have been intentionally unique.³² Peel commissioned *Cupid* during the politician's trip to Rome in Fall 1834, the same season in which he was elected Prime Minister.³³ Gibson's account books show that Peel paid £250 for the commission, but the sculpture cost Gibson £154 7s 9d, earning him a profit of just under £100.³⁴ His *praticien* Felice Bains carved the marble figure over the course of fifty-four days, for which he was paid £65 4s.³⁵ Gibson's other expenses went toward unnamed individuals responsible for pointing, drilling, and polishing, and another unnamed specialist who carved the hair and wings. This work is one of the two known versions in which Cupid holds a rose in his right hand.³⁶

- The second commission of this work was from Sir John Vanden Bempde Johnstone, 2nd Baronet, M.P., whose country estate was Hackness Hall in Yorkshire, and today is in a private collection.³⁷ An exact date for this commission is unknown, but it seems likely to have been ordered soon after Peel's. The sculpture includes the rose in Cupid's right hand, but it is inscribed on the base I. GIBSON FECIT ROMAE. The work was finished

³¹ Peel also owned a copy of Andrew Geddes's portrait of Gibson, which hung in the portrait gallery of Drayton Manor. Gibson stayed with Peel in October 1847. See John Gibson to Mrs. Rose Lawrence, 16 and 17 October 1847, typed transcription, Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool. Gibson later received the government commission for Peel's memorial in Westminster Abbey, which was installed in Fall 1853.

³² A more detailed study of the inscriptions on all of Gibson's extant sculptures is needed and may help provide clarity on the chronology of many more of his works.

³³ Matthews, *Biography*, 84.

³⁴ Personal Account Book 1822-1859, GI/6/2, John Gibson, RA, Papers, Royal Academy of Arts Archive, London (hereafter cited as Gibson Papers).

³⁵ For more on Bains, see Ferrari, 'Beyond polychromy', 112-13.

³⁶ For more on this version of *Cupid*, see Martina Droth, 'Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy', in Droth, Edwards, and Hatt, *Sculpture*, 178-81.

³⁷ Johnstone's version of this statue remained with the family until it was sold at Sotheby's London on 10 December 2002 for £22,705. It was last put up for auction by Sotheby's New York on 14 April 2008, but went unsold and presumably still remains in the collection of Lionel Hastings.

by early 1837, as Gibson submitted this repetition to the Royal Academy exhibition with the title *A Statue, in Marble, Representing Love Disguised as a Shepherd* (no. 1169). In the catalogue the title was accompanied by the first three lines of Tasso's poem in Italian.³⁸ Gibson claimed that his Cupid was not received well by critics, but not every review was negative. The editors of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* claimed they 'were very much struck' with the statue.³⁹ A reviewer for the *Athenaeum* was generous in his comments: 'We are anxious to come to Mr. Gibson's *Love disguised as a Shepherd* (1169), one of the most poetical things in the Exhibition: Mr. Gibson well knows how to hint the mischievous nature of the archer boy, even through his Arcadian disguise. Wo be to the next Silvia or Dorinda whom he approaches!'⁴⁰ Johnstone paid £150 for his commission. This price seems surprisingly low when compared to the £250 Peel paid for his about the same time. Indeed, the prices for all of the repetitions of this statue ranged from £150 to £300, with Gibson providing little explanation in his account books as to why he charged different amounts.

- In March/April 1836 the American artist and writer Thomas Gold Appleton visited Rome with his father and siblings, and their family commissioned from various sculptors works for their home in Boston, including a repetition of *Cupid*. Appleton paid £150 for his repetition. Later that year, Gibson's brother Benjamin wrote in a letter that this repetition was 'for an American gentleman – it is going to Boston'.⁴¹ This work is inscribed on the right of the base I. GIBSON FECIT ROMAEE, and it is the first to show Cupid's right hand reaching outward, not holding a rose. It was bequeathed by Appleton to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in 1884.

³⁸ This was Gibson's first work shown in London after being elected a Royal Academician in February 1836. He exhibited two other works with *Cupid*: the first was *A Monumental Statue* (no. 1164), which to date has not been identified; the second was *A Group in Marble, Representing Hylas Surprised by the Naiades* (no. 1178), which is now in the Tate collection.

³⁹ 'Exhibitions—the Royal Academy', *Blackwood's Edinburgh magazine*, 42:263, September 1837, 341.

⁴⁰ 'Fine arts. Royal Academy', *Athenaeum*, 499, 20 May 1837, 371.

⁴¹ Benjamin Gibson also noted in the same letter that *Cupid* originally 'was for Sir Robert Peel'. This mention of Peel reinforces my belief that his was first. Benjamin Gibson to John B. Crouchley, 14 December 1836, MS4914D-40, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, transcribed by Eric Forster, curatorial file: 84.271, Art of Europe, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Appleton had first visited Rome in 1834, touring Gibson's studio on 26 February. He noted that while he was there 'a boy came in with two snow-white pigeon-wings, to be modeled for Cupid!' Susan Hale, *Life and Letters of Thomas Gold Appleton*, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1885, 197. There is no evidence that Appleton commissioned the sculpture in 1834, but mention of this boy suggests the plaster model was soon completed and seen by Peel when he visited in Fall 1834 and commissioned the first replica in marble.

- In early January 1839, Hereditary Grand Duke Alexander of Russia (later Czar Alexander II) commissioned a repetition during his tour of Rome, paying £300 for his *Cupid*, which Gibson reported took three years to complete. This repetition is reportedly inscribed IOANNIS GIBSON ME FECIT ROMAE on the tree stump. The sculpture is now in the collection of the Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg.⁴²
- In the early 1840s, a fifth version of the subject was commissioned by Richard Alison, a merchant from Woolton Hayes near Liverpool.⁴³ Gibson does not record in his account books the amount Alison paid for this commission, but it seems safe to assume it was in the same price range. This repetition is inscribed I. GIBSON FECIT ROMAE on the top of the tree stump. In 1873 Alison donated the statue to the Walker Art Gallery and it is now part of the collections of the National Museums Liverpool.
- In 1850 a dry-goods merchant from Philadelphia named Henry Farnum paid £150 for his repetition of *Cupid*. A letter from Gibson to Farnum explains that the price of the statue normally would be £300; however, he had another version nearly complete, although it was marred with a black line running through the middle of the marble.⁴⁴ He was willing to sell that version at half the price and included a sketch of the statue (Fig. 4)

⁴² Matthews reported that this commission took place in 1842, but Gibson wrote to the *Art-Union* about the Hereditary Grand Duke's visit in 1839. The work thus was presumably completed in 1842. Matthews made the mistake of misidentifying this individual as Czar Nicholas I, but it was in fact his son, who later became Czar Alexander II. On this same visit, the Grand Duke also commissioned a repetition of Gibson's *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* and a nymph by Richard James Wyatt. Matthews, *Biography*, 110-11; 'Foreign art', *Art-Union*, 15 March 1839, 23. See also Larissa Dukelskaya, ed., *The Hermitage. English art sixteenth to nineteenth century: paintings, sculpture, prints and drawings minor arts*, Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers; London: Collet's, 1979, pl. 328-29.

⁴³ Alison also commissioned a companion statue of *Flora* at the same time, and an extant letter from 1844 acknowledges receipt of the female statue and asks for its companion, *Cupid*, to be completed and shipped soon. Richard Alison to John Gibson, 16 February 1844, GI/1/4, Gibson Papers.

⁴⁴ John Gibson to Henry Farnum, 9 January 1850, 1977.382.14, Drawings and Prints Department, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



Figure 4 John Gibson, Sketch of *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, detail from a letter from John Gibson to Henry Farnum, c/o John Udny, Livorno, 9 January 1850. Pen and black ink on paper. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo: MMA.

highlighting the flaw. Farnum purchased this repetition, as the flaw can be seen running at a slight downward angle from the right arm, through the torso, into the left arm. In 1883 this sculpture was loaned by Farnum's widow to The Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁴⁵ In 1940 the sculpture was returned to the family and donated by Leopold Opdycke and Mary Ellis de Witt Peltz, great-grandchildren of the Farnums, to the Fogg Museum/Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts.⁴⁶ An

⁴⁵ In the early 1890s the sculpture was installed in the south entrance hall as one of numerous examples of modern sculpture, and by 1918 was placed in front of a trellis by the foot of the stairs of the recently-renovated Restaurant. *Catalogue of sculpture 1741-1907*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1908, 23; A. G. Radcliffe, *Schools and masters of sculpture*, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1894, 539; 'Notes. the restaurant redecorated', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art bulletin* 13:10, October 1918, 227-28.

⁴⁶ Preston Remington to Mrs. John de Witt Peltz, 2 October 1939, Bell, Edward R., 1883, 1939-1940, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives. My thanks to Melissa Bowling for her assistance with the Met's archives. See also related correspondence in the curatorial file for 1940.50, Department of European and American Art, Harvard Art Museums.

inscription on this repetition is not recorded, and there is no evidence of one on the sides of the base or top of the tree trunk.⁴⁷

- Three other undated repetitions of *Cupid* were commissioned from Gibson. One was from a Mr. Collins Wood (or Collinwood) for £250. Another was from Lord Hungerford Crewe, 3rd Baron Crewe, for £300. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, in her edition of Gibson's memoirs, also identified a version owned by a Mr. Abel Bulkley, Jr.⁴⁸ The current locations of these repetitions are unknown.
- In addition to the works listed above, at least four reductions of the sculpture were made by Benjamin Gibson working in his brother's studio in Rome. The patrons for these works have been identified as: Mr. W. Jackson of Birkenhead; Dr. Cot; a solicitor named Mr. Griffiths of Shropshire; and the daughters of J. A. Yates of Liverpool.⁴⁹ The current locations of these reductions are uncertain.

⁴⁷ When I inspected this version of the sculpture, it was crated on three sides and I was unable to see the back, so the inscription for now remains unknown. Close examination of the sculpture revealed faint traces of black outline around the eyes, eyebrows, and lips, as well as ochre in the folds of the mantle near the button in the center of the chest. Closer scientific analysis might determine the source of these colored markings, but they could suggest that the sculpture once was tinted. The date of this repetition from the early 1850s would time well with Gibson's early explorations into polychromy, having added color to his statues of Queen Victoria, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1847, and his *Tinted Venus* from 1851 on. The only other Cupid statue Gibson colored was a repetition of *Love Tormenting the Soul*, which he exhibited with the *Tinted Venus* and *Pandora* at the 1862 International Exhibition. However, in his memoirs, Gibson linked *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* with polychromy. Uncertain if the god of love would be believable as a shepherd, Gibson daydreamed that he sought the god's approval of his subject:

"Oh Eros, canst thou disguise thy celestial countenance, or conceal thy ambrosial locks which wave luxuriantly round thy feminine shoulders? Thy little hands are too delicate for a shepherd, and so are those lovely limbs – will not thy god-like steps betray thee? Tell me, God of Beauty and Love, is this image, this humble mortal effort, in some degree tolerable in thy sight?" "I approve," said the God, "but do not leave it white, it chills me! ... When Praxiteles finished my statue in marble[,] the one with gold wings which he gave to his beautiful Phryne, and which she dedicated at Thespiae, he called Nicias to give it the last finish, that is, my own complexion, not that of a mortal, ... therefore give me my celestial glow, warm, pale, and pure".

Matthews, *Biography*, 76. My thanks to Tony Sigel, conservator, Harvard Art Museums, for discussing with me the possibility of polychromy on this repetition of the sculpture. As noted, scientific analysis is needed.

⁴⁸ Eastlake, *Life*, 250.

⁴⁹ Eric Forster to Marietta Cambareri, 28 July 2004, curatorial file: 84.271, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The names of these patrons come from letters deposited at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. 'Dr. Cot' may be the same individual as 'Mr. Cox', to whom Benjamin wrote about his completed commission. Benjamin Gibson to [Mr. Cox], c. 1849, GI/3/20, Gibson Papers. See also 'Art in continental states', *Art-Union*, 1 February 1848, 50,

Nine repetitions and four reductions, all in marble, clearly demonstrate that *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* was a popular work, and these versions do not include full-size plaster editions of the subject, at least one of which would have been in his studio, while another was exhibited in the Court of Modern Sculpture at the reconstituted Crystal Palace in Sydenham Park. Anna Jameson's guide to this Court cited Gibson as 'the first of our English sculptors' because of the 'number and beauty of his works', and indeed no other living sculptor had more works on display than Gibson.⁵⁰ Jameson described the plaster replica of Cupid as 'charming for its elegance, archness, and simplicity ... classical, with a touch of modern sentiment'.⁵¹

In order to contextualize the popularity of this subject, then, it is worth considering it with another important statue produced at this time, the *Greek Slave*, modelled by Hiram Powers around 1843. The Florence-based American sculptor produced six life-size and two two-thirds-life-size repetitions of the subject.⁵² Based on the number of repetitions, Gibson's *Cupid*, almost a decade older in its design, actually surpassed Powers's work in terms of quantifiable popularity. This is not to say that quantitative popularity tacitly argues for a more important aesthetic and/or social historical value of one subject over the other. Rather, what is important in the

which noted that Benjamin was completing a half-life-size repetition of this subject after his brother's work. Gibson's two brothers, Solomon Gibson (c. 1796-1866) and Benjamin Gibson (c. 1811-1851), each worked in his Roman studio for a time, but neither had successful careers as sculptors. Benjamin came to be known for his reductions and statuettes, as well as his classical and archaeological scholarship. On Benjamin and Solomon Gibson, see Emma Hardy and Eric Forster's biographical entries in Roscoe, Hardy, and Sullivan, *Biographical dictionary*, 520-21, 529-31. For more on Benjamin, see Ferrari, 'Beyond polychromy', 113-15.

⁵⁰ Anna Jameson, *A hand-book to the courts of modern sculpture*, London: Crystal Palace Library; Bradbury & Evans, 1854, 19.

⁵¹ Jameson, *Hand-book*, 20. According to John Kenworthy-Browne, Matthew Digby Wyatt and Owen Jones, in charge of securing plaster casts for the Crystal Palace, worked primarily with Emil Braun, the main dealer in casts in Rome at that time. Through Braun they acquired at least three known works by Gibson (and likely others, heretofore undocumented): *Psyche borne by the Zephyrs* (£18 15s); *Hylas and the Nymphs* (£20 16s 8d); and *Venus and Cupid* (price unknown). Kenworthy-Browne also cites another work named *Psyche* which could relate to Gibson's bas relief *Cupid and Psyche*, but this is uncertain as no other single-figure subject of Psyche was cited by Jameson in her description of Gibson's works on display, and likely refers to the aforementioned *Psyche borne by the Zephyrs*. Regardless if these casts were made in Gibson's studio or not, this production and display of casts of his works further reinforces his interest in the dissemination of his classical designs in different media, which will be further elucidated in this essay. John Kenworthy-Browne, 'Plaster casts for the Crystal Palace, Sydenham', *Sculpture journal*, 15:2, 2006, 173-99.

⁵² While some of these were replicas, others were repetitions in that Powers made changes such as replacing the slave's shackles with linked chains. For more on the *Greek Slave*, see Richard P. Wunder, *Hiram Powers: Vermont sculptor, 1805-1873*, Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1991, 1:207-74, 2:157-68.

context of this essay is that Gibson's studio reproduced this figure for patrons more times than Powers and, like the American sculptor, also disseminated it globally to the same geographical regions: England, America, and Russia. Furthermore, in no way did the reproduction and international marketing of this statue lessen its perceived quality, nor did its multiple forms create a sense that any of the later repetitions were less important than the first. This is because it was Gibson's design, and not his specific handcrafting, that appealed to his patrons and enabled him to make numerous versions of a popular subject. The next section will explore, then, how Gibson emphasized the role of design in his studio practice.

Design and reproduction

The production of sculpture in Rome during the nineteenth century, as discussed above, was not exclusively about the carving of marble. Production involved numerous other media and techniques, including draftsmanship, clay modeling, and plaster models and casts. These related works frequently are seen in what Baker has called 'sequential ordering', meaning that all drawings, models, casts, and marble works are done in regimented stages.⁵³ But, as Baker notes, this was not always the case. As he aptly demonstrates with Nollekens and others, there are numerous instances in which these works were done out of sequence, or in fact served no specific related purpose at all and thus should be seen as independent works.⁵⁴ For instance, in the case of Gibson, while the aforementioned drawing of Cupid hiding his bow and arrow (Fig. 3) was discussed as a study for *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, it is undated, so there is no reason to assume that it actually came before the first marble repetition. As a result it is perhaps more appropriate to argue that related sketches, clay models (small and large), and plaster casts associated with finished marble/bronze statues should all be seen as repetitions of *disegno*, the artist's idea as much as his drawing. From this revised perspective, sculpture production can be seen to embrace fully the nineteenth-century understanding and application of reproduction as the norm for art.

Although Rosalind Krauss has proposed a similar idea in association with the sculpture of Auguste Rodin, her argument is grounded on the foundation of the avant-garde and thus elides the original in favour of the proliferation of original replicas, what she calls 'a system of reproductions without an original'.⁵⁵ While this model may seem valid for early twentieth-century art, it does not hold true for sculpture production in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly in Rome. For Gibson, there was clearly an origin: his design inspired by the Greeks.

⁵³ Malcolm Baker, *Figured in marble: the making and viewing of eighteenth-century sculpture*, London: V&A Publications; Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000, 40.

⁵⁴ For more, see Baker, *Figured*, 34-49.

⁵⁵ Rosalind Krauss, 'The originality of the avant-garde: a postmodernist repetition', *October*, 18, August 1981, 58.

And from this design there was always a product, whether it was a plaster or marble statue made in his studio, or a porcelain statuette, a cameo, or a print made by others taken from his design. Some of Gibson's designs, such as *The Birth of Venus* (Fig. 5), were executed as a drawing, print, plaster cast, and cameo, but not in marble, and the lack of this 'final' version did not diminish the importance of his design.



Figure 5 John Gibson, *The Birth of Venus*, c. 1840. Plaster, 59 x 67.3 cm. London: Royal Academy of Arts. Photo: RA/Paul Highnam.

For Gibson this emphasis on *disegno* and its application in various media was clear. As his career advanced and his popularity grew, his role as a designer—a worker of ideas—came to the forefront of his artistic sensibility. This does not mean he stopped working hands-on in his studio, but it does suggest that he saw himself more and more as the creator of ideas, not a craftsman. Flaxman himself had acted similarly half a century earlier. His designs for Wedgwood porcelains and his illustrations for the *Iliad* placed a greater emphasis on his role as a designer of sculptural projects. In the years he was Professor of Sculpture at the Royal Academy, Flaxman worked on a relatively small number of sculptures, almost all of them bas-relief funerary monuments, but as it has been argued it was well-known that Flaxman 'was less adept with the chisel and he worked very little on the final marbles'.⁵⁶

Following Flaxman's example, and thus positioning himself as a Flaxman of the Victorian age, around 1840 Gibson began emphasizing in his art the importance of design, rather than the hands-on craft of sculpture. In doing so, he arguably was

⁵⁶ Mary Webster, 'Flaxman as sculptor', in Bindman, *Flaxman*, 101.

conscious of Leonardo da Vinci's *Paragone*, in which the Renaissance artist described the sculptor as one whose 'face is pasted and smeared all over with marble powder, making him look like a baker, and he is covered with minute chips as if emerging from a snowstorm, and his dwelling is dirty and filled with dust and chips of stone'.⁵⁷ None of the accounts in which Gibson appears in his studio describe him this way. Indeed, contemporaneous sources rarely, if ever, record Gibson physically working on marble at all. The American painter Rembrandt Peale noted that Gibson had told him 'he never touched his marble' works, and the writer/engraver duo Henry Noel Humphreys and William Bernard Cooke reported that 'sculpture, to [Gibson,] who has won his way to fame, is now by no means a laborious profession, particularly at Rome', because he had not touched the marble figures they saw in his studio.⁵⁸

Rather, Gibson presented himself, and was seen by others, as a gentleman artist of the Victorian age, a designer rather than a labourer, one whose drawings were transformed into marble and other media by craftsmen who did all the 'dirty' work.⁵⁹ Gibson also began to act regularly as a *cicerone* or tour guide for visitors, taking them not only to the Vatican and Capitoline Museums but also to his and

⁵⁷ Leonardo's text in Italian reads: 'Con la faccia impastata e tutto infarinato di polvere di marmo, che pare un fornaio, et coperto di minute scaglie, che pare gli sia fioccato addosso; e l'abitazione imbrattata e piena di scaglie e di polvere di pietre'. *Paragone* 37, in *Paragone: a comparison of the arts by Leonardo da Vinci*, trans. Irma A. Richter, London: Oxford University Press, 1949, 95. The long, complex publication history and dissemination of Leonardo's *Treatise on Painting (Codex Urbanus Latinus 1270)* is beyond the scope of this article, but Gibson likely would have known this text through published Italian editions, as the earliest English translations of sections are not recorded until later in the nineteenth century. Certainly Gibson would have been familiar with Leonardo's ideas from Canova and through his interactions with other painters and sculptors based in Rome.

⁵⁸ Rembrandt Peale, 'Reminiscences. painters and sculptors', *Crayon*, 1:11, 14 March 1855, 162; William Bernard Cooke and Henry Noel Humphreys, *Rome and its surrounding scenery*, London: Charles Tilt, 1840, 154. These examples are to argue that Gibson did not chisel rough stone. Other individuals and sources do describe him modeling clay and finishing marble statues, which falls in line with the Canova/Carradori mode of production described earlier.

⁵⁹ It is worth noting that a similar transition apparently took place for architects in Britain over the course of the eighteenth century, in which education and training created a 'division between the role of the designer-architect and the executant ... *inventio* and *executio*'. This system also gradually encouraged sculptors to break away from these architects so as to invent their own designs for monuments and tombs. M. G. Sullivan, 'Stuart and the changing relationship between architects and sculptors in eighteenth-century Britain', in Susan Weber Soros, ed., *James 'Athenian' Stuart, 1713-1788: the rediscovery of antiquity*, exh. cat., New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006, 386. The increase of a classical education, as instilled by the Royal Academy, also reinforced this independent spirit for sculptors. For Gibson, the return to *disegno* arguably can be seen as an evolution in this self-definition beyond the craftsman of the past.

other sculptors' studios throughout Rome. For a man with a basic education hailing from a working-class family in northern Wales, this aggrandizement to a gentleman artist who gave tours was clearly an elevation in his social status. He encouraged the dissemination of his classical designs through multiple media, and succeeded in balancing his traditional sculptural medium and reproductive technologies with his self-presentiment as a classicist and fine artist. This culminated in the redefining of himself as a 'designer' and not a 'sculptor' when showcasing works in plaster, marble, cameo, and porcelain at the Great Exhibition of 1851, and immediately afterwards as facsimile engravings, which is discussed in more detail below.⁶⁰

Gibson knew that *disegno* reached back to the ancients, to the myth of the Corinthian maiden drawing her lover's shadow on the wall, reinforcing the idea that the Greeks emphasized contour. This tale inspired numerous 'true style' artists who appreciated the art of line over that of colour.⁶¹ Rooted in classicism, *disegno* was a critical part of the academic education and training of artists from the Renaissance on. Texts such as Cennino Cennini's *Il libro dell' arte* and Leon Battista Alberti's *Della pittura* asserted first in practice, then in theory, the fundamental importance of *disegno*, but it was in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* where *disegno* was presented not only as the hands-on practice of drawing but the manifestation of the artist's idea for the three major branches of art.

In that *disegno*, father of our three arts, Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, proceeding from the intellect, derives from many individual things a universal judgment, it is similar to a form or rather idea of all the things of nature, which is most singular in its measure. ... And seeing that from this knowledge is born a certain conception and judgment, so that there is formed in the mind that something which then expressed with the hands is called *disegno*, one can conclude that this *disegno* is none other than a visible expression and declaration of the inner conception that one has and of that which others have imagined in the mind and given form to idea.⁶²

⁶⁰ Authority, *Great Exhibition*, 2:845.

⁶¹ The art-historical style/movement now known as Neoclassicism was not named until later in the nineteenth century as a pejorative term used by artists and critics looking for sources of inspiration from modern-day life, not antiquity. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term used instead was the 'true style'. This term applied not just to sculpture but to painting, architecture, and the decorative arts, and it described an art form that had its origins in simple, idealistic works from ancient Greece. For more see Hugh Honour, *Neo-classicism*, rev. ed., New York: Penguin, 1981, 14.

⁶² Vasari's text in Italian reads:

Perchè il disegno, padre delle tre arti nostre, Architettura, Scultura e Pittura, procedendo dall'intelletto, cava di molte cose un giudizio universale; simile a una forma ovvero idea di tutte le cose della natura, la quale è singolarissima nelle sue misure; ... E perchè da questa cognizione nasce un certo concetto e giudizio, che si forma nella mente quella tal cosa che pio espressa con le mani si chiama disegno; si può conchiudere con esso

The principle of *disegno* as both drawing and idea was instrumental in the foundation of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, the first fine-arts academy, established in Florence in 1563, and continued to influence the formation of similar academies throughout Europe, including those in Paris and London.⁶³ Reinforcing this foundation, Michael Baxandall noted that the art of *disegno* moved to Britain during the English Renaissance and its primary meaning was understood from the beginning to be 'intention, purpose' and 'plan, scheme', with its secondary meaning referring to the actual practice of drawing or, as it came to be called in British English, 'draughtsmanship'.⁶⁴

Although Gibson had been apprenticed in Liverpool learning the carving of wood and stone, his childhood instinct was to draw and he had had hopes of apprenticing in a painter's studio, but his parents could not afford the expenses to support this career. Gibson learned early on the art of *disegno* thanks to the intercession of three men during his formative years in Liverpool: a print seller named Tourmeau; his first patron in Liverpool, William Roscoe, with his vast drawings and prints collection; and a physician named Dr. Vose, who allowed him to study cadavers. From them he learned *disegno*, first through copying, then with life studies, and finally with his own ideas.

disegno altro non sia che una apparente espressione e dichiarazione del concetto che si ha nell'animo, e di quello che altri si è nella mente immaginato e fabbricato nell'idea. *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori et scultori italiani*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi, Firenze: Sansoni, 1981, 1:168, translated/quoted by David Rosand, *Drawing acts: studies in graphic expression and representation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 56.

⁶³ For more on *disegno*, academies, and Florentine, Roman, and Venetian Renaissance traditions, see Rosand, *Drawing*, 24-60; and David Rosand, *Painting in sixteenth-century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*, rev. ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 10-25.

⁶⁴ Michael Baxandall, 'English *disegno*', in Edward Chaney and Peter Mack, eds., *England and the continental Renaissance: essays in honour of J. B. Trapp*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, England; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 1990, 204.



Figure 6 John Gibson, *Venus and Cupid*, no date. Pen and ink with white gouache on paper, 15 x 9.5 cm. London: Royal Academy of Arts. Photo: RA.

Some of Gibson's friends remarked in their memoirs about his talents in draftsmanship, most notably with studies for bas-reliefs. For instance, the Scottish-born scientist and mathematician Mary Fairfax Greig Somerville, who first met Gibson during a tour of Rome in the mid-1830s, noted of his draftsmanship: 'His drawings for bas-reliefs were most beautiful. He drew very slowly, but a line once drawn was never changed. He ignored India-rubber or bread-crumbs, so perfect was his knowledge of anatomy, and so decided the character and expression he meant to give'.⁶⁵ The writer Susan Horner wrote admiringly in her journal that, upon visiting his studio, 'he showed a beautiful drawing he is making, ... very well executed', and afterward, when she visited the Vatican with him, he became 'occupied making a drawing for a bas relief of Hyppolitus', studying closely sea monsters in a Greco-Roman mosaic floor.⁶⁶ The majority of Gibson's drawings remaining in his Roman studio were bequeathed to the Royal Academy and these

⁶⁵ Mary Fairfax Greig Somerville, *Personal recollections, from early life to old age, of Mary Somerville: with selections from her correspondence*, ed. Martha Somerville, London: John Murray, 1873, 251.

⁶⁶ This visit took place on 10 April 1848. *Susan Horner collection: journal of a tour in France and Italy, 1847-1848, extracted from my letters home, and notebooks*, British Institution, Florence, fol. 51-52, available online: *The grand tour* (Adam Matthew Digital), <http://www.amdigital.co.uk/m-collections/collection/the-grand-tour/> (accessed 8 December 2011).

works show that, like other trained artists, he was skilled in different modes of draftsmanship depending on the drawing's purpose (Fig. 6). They include *primi pensieri* and studies from life in pencil, pen, or charcoal, and finished presentation drawings that use wash and/or white heightening to create volume in the subject. Others focus exclusively on contour, recalling the line engravings published after Flaxman's drawings.

Gibson's contemporaries also understood the importance of *disegno* for one's artistic career. The Victorian sculptor Matthew Digby Wyatt wrote that in order to be successful, a sculptor needed to ensure he did not become merely a skilled craftsman: 'For his work to be of value, [his] hand should be constantly guided by a highly cultivated imagination'.⁶⁷ His idea of a 'cultivated imagination' was a long-standing belief shared by academicians in particular, and explains why the Royal Academy and other academies rarely taught the craft of sculpture but always emphasized draftsmanship. The principle of *disegno* was seen as the most important part of being an artist, regardless of the medium in which one worked. The American sculptor Harriet Hosmer, Gibson's pupil, understood this as well. In the 1860s when she was forced to defend herself against allegations that she had not made her statue of *Zenobia*, she responded by stating that the sculptor was first and foremost a creator of a concept. She pointed to famous painters such as Raphael and sculptors such as Thorvaldsen whose studio workers carried out the designs of these artists. In emphasizing that the job of the sculptor was to think and the job of the craftsman was to carve, she concluded:

Those who look upon sculpture as an intellectual art, requiring the exercise of taste, imagination, and delicate feeling, will never identify the artist who conceives, composes, and completes the design with the workman who simply relieves him from great physical labor, however delicate some portion of that labor may be. ... It is time that some distinction should be made between the labor of the hand and the labor of the brain.⁶⁸

In denoting the difference between the labor of the brain and the hand, Hosmer was conveying the long-standing principle of *disegno* that she would have learned from her working relationship with Gibson in his studio.

Sculpture historian Martina Droth has argued that this concept transformed later in the nineteenth century when, influenced by the Arts and Crafts Movement, artists began to focus more on the technique of making sculpture rather than its

⁶⁷ Matthew Digby Wyatt, *Fine art. a sketch of its history, theory, practice, and application to industry: being a course of lectures delivered at Cambridge in 1870*, London; New York: Macmillan, 1870, 176.

⁶⁸ Harriet Hosmer, 'The process of sculpture', *Atlantic monthly*, 114:86, December 1864, 734-37, reprinted in Cornelia Carr, ed., *Harriet Hosmer: letters and memories*, New York: Moffat, Yard and Co., 1912, 375.

design. For the sculptor working in the classical/academic tradition, however, a consciousness about separating idea from craft remained:

The idea that sculptural beauty should transcend its material reality underpinned both its actual procedures and the ways in which it was presented to the world. Sculptors kept a certain distance from the physical activities required to make statues, articulating the material implications of their work only insofar as they were embedded etymologically in the overall classicizing framework by which sculpture was defined.⁶⁹

By mid-century, Droth notes that 'this determined separateness was visibly unravelling'.⁷⁰ Industrial manufacturers had begun to make so-called 'art' available commercially for the middle-class home through retailers and stores and no longer required the presence of the artist himself. This was most apparent with the long-standing statuette market that often produced poor quality imitations in bisque or plaster. This consumerism challenged the academic principle of design, and 'commerce, with its worldly connotation of materialistic desire, disrupted notions of intellectual and moral purity'. By emphasizing his role as a designer, Gibson was in fact ensuring the 'intellectual and moral purity' of his art.

Droth cites Gibson as one of the few examples of classical sculptors who 'exploited commercial avenues', although she notes that sculptors such as he 'for their artistic credibility [had] to uphold, at least publicly, an image of traditional practice'.⁷¹ In order to do this, a conscientious approach to denying profit from commercial ventures was essential. As will be discussed below, Gibson explored and participated in a number of commercial ventures, but little documentation survives to suggest what (if any) profit he may have received from these activities. It is noteworthy that in one collaboration with printmaking he rejected the option of receiving a profit from the sale of engravings after his work. Other research suggests that he probably turned down profits from these commercial explorations, and thus arguably could be seen as a leader among Victorian sculptors who balanced fine art with commercial projects. As such, Droth uses the Great Exhibition of 1851 to argue that Gibson successfully navigated this divide between art and commerce and maintained his artistic credibility. To this I would add that Gibson's self-identified role as a designer at the international fair, which celebrated the finest achievements in craft and technology, enabled him to strike a balance between his traditional sculptural medium and other reproductive technologies while preserving his role as a classicist and artist.

⁶⁹ Martina Droth, 'The ethics of making: craft and English sculptural aesthetics c. 1851-1900', *Journal of design history*, 17:3, 2004, 223.

⁷⁰ Droth, 'Ethics', 225.

⁷¹ Droth, 'Ethics', 225.



Figure 7 John Gibson, *The Hours and the Horses of the Sun*, 1847-48. Plaster, 100 x 216.2 cm. London: Royal Academy of Arts. Photo: RA/Paul Highnam.

There were two works of sculpture on display in the Sculpture Court of the Crystal Palace to which Gibson's name was assigned. The first was a bas-relief in plaster of *The Hours and the Horses of the Sun* (no. 64; Fig. 7), the marble version of which he had recently completed for the Earl of Fitzwilliam and exhibited at the 1849 Royal Academy, where it was praised for its 'exquisitely classical feeling' in that the movements of the animals and figures 'form a composition in the purest feeling of the antique'.⁷² A large work measuring 7 ft. in length, the bas-relief had been highly touted in the press from its creation in Rome a few years earlier.⁷³ It was with this plaster that he identified himself as 'designer'. His second work was the marble statue of *The Hunter and His Dog* (no. 80; Fig. 8), but this was a submission by its owner, the Earl of Yarborough, and not Gibson. Of these two works, his statue of the *Hunter* earned him greater acclaim, including the distinction of being named for the Council Medal, the highest award possible.⁷⁴ This association of Gibson's name with a plaster cast (as designer) and a marble statue (as sculptor, even though he did not literally carve it) becomes even more important when seen in the context of the Great Exhibition itself. At an international fair that

⁷² 'The Royal Academy', *Art journal*, 1 June 1849, 176.

⁷³ 'Art in continental states', *Art-Union*, 1 February 1848, 50.

⁷⁴ Gibson turned down the award because he was a juror for the Fine Arts group.

Ultimately, though, he was lauded both for the statue and his rejection of the award in the reports of the findings of the jurors. See *Exhibition of the works of industry of all nations, 1851: reports by the juries on the subjects of the thirty classes into which the exhibition was divided*, London: William Clowes & Sons, 1852, 684, 692.



Figure 8 John Gibson, *The Hunter and His Dog*, modeled 1840-41, commissioned 1847. Marble, H. 119.7 cm. Lincoln: Usher Gallery. Photo: author.

celebrated the craft of sculpture as technological innovation, it was ultimately equated to a form of the industrial arts and not a fine art. Thus, for Gibson to have identified himself exclusively as a 'sculptor' would in his mind have limited the appreciation of his art. In choosing to call himself a 'designer', Gibson was able to exploit other forms of craftsmanship beyond that of sculpture's plaster casts and marble. These included Parian ware statuettes and cameos based on his designs, which were on display elsewhere in the Crystal Palace.

Statuettes

Figure 9 *Narcissus*, modeled by Edward Bowring Stephens after design by John Gibson, manufactured by Copeland and Garrett, 1846. Parian ware porcelain, 30.2 x 24.2 cm. London: Victoria and Albert Museum. Photo: V&A.

Gibson's Royal Academy diploma work, *Narcissus*, was the model for one of the earliest and most popular mass-produced statuettes made in Parian ware (Fig. 9). Multiple statuettes of *Narcissus* were issued in three editions (in 1846, 1849, and 1850) by its manufacturer Copeland and Garrett. Their other Gibson designs included Parian statuettes of *Venus* (1849; reissued in a polychrome version after 1862), *Venus and Cupid* (1858 and 1860), and *Nymph at the Bath* (1859, issued with details decorated in gilt). First developed in the 1840s, Parian ware was considered at the time to be one of the greatest innovations in the production of porcelain for the statuette market because it had the appearance and texture of marble. It was marketed as 'Statuary Porcelain' by Copeland and Garrett, but it was called Parian ware by Minton in honor of marble from the Greek island of Paros. By the time of the Great Exhibition this had become its preferred name.

Its popularity by mid-century led a number of individuals and companies to declare themselves its inventor and first manufacturer. Of these, Copeland and Garrett, based in Stoke-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, and Thomas Battam, the manager of their art department, are considered today to have been the first to develop Parian ware in 1842.⁷⁵ Its origins were bisque/biscuit, a form of unglazed porcelain

⁷⁵ Other individuals who had worked at the company, including the modelers John Mountford and Spencer Garrett (son of the owner), later claimed it was their invention. At

developed in the eighteenth century for figurative statuettes and sold by companies such as Sèvres, Wedgwood, and Minton. Despite its ubiquity, bisque was susceptible to chemical and environmental changes and could not be cleaned, so manufacturers actively sought out ways to improve upon it.

According to an 1846 article published in the *Art-Union*, what made Copeland and Garrett's Statuary Porcelain 'one of the greatest additions to the bounds of artistic production' was its 'lustrous transparency' comparable to alabaster, its 'purest white' colouring, and 'if soiled, it is restored to its original purity by simple soap and water'.⁷⁶ The mixture of clays and the firing temperature enabled it to maintain its uniformity in shape, which was another improvement over bisque and other ceramics. A liquid form of clay that was poured into moulds, Parian ware was fired in segments, assembled, and then refired.⁷⁷ Its application to the mass production of fine art was immediately apparent:

Messrs. Copeland & Garrett have already copied some of the finest pieces of sculpture in this exquisite material; and we have little doubt that, in the progress of their art, they will give us imitations, or rather new creations, of every great piece of sculpture which bears on itself the impress of being predestined to immortality.⁷⁸

The *Art journal*, or more specifically its editor Samuel Carter Hall, took credit for being responsible for introducing Gibson to Parian ware, noting in particular that Gibson first saw it in 'our presence', although it was noted that the process then was in its infancy and had since undergone numerous improvements.⁷⁹ This event must have taken place in 1844 during Gibson's first trip back to England since his departure for Rome in 1817, as his next trip did not take place until 1847 and the Parian version of his *Narcissus* was released the year before. It was also reported that the Duchess of Sutherland had introduced Gibson to Parian ware, but it is

the Great Exhibition of 1851, the jury determined no one officially could be credited or awarded with the invention of Parian ware because there were too many making that claim. See Maureen Batkin and Paul Atterbury, 'The origin and development of Parian', in Paul Atterbury, ed., *The Parian phenomenon: a survey of Victorian Parian porcelain statuary and busts*, Shepton Beauchamp, Somerset, England: Richard Dennis, 1989, 9-10; and Robert Copeland, *Parian: Copeland's statuary porcelain*, Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007, 23-37.

⁷⁶ 'Illustrated tour in the manufacturing districts. Stoke-upon-Trent. the works of Copeland and Garrett', *Art-Union*, 1 November 1846, 298.

⁷⁷ For more on the details on how Parian ware was made, see Robert Hunt, 'On the applications of science to the fine and useful arts. artificial stone—statuary porcelain', *Art journal*, January 1849, 17-18; and Batkin and Atterbury, quoting the *Staffordshire advertiser* in 1851, in Atterbury, *Parian*, 18.

⁷⁸ 'Illustrated tour', 298.

⁷⁹ 'Illustrated tour', 298.

unknown if this is true. Since Copeland and Garrett developed their earliest Parian experiments using statues from the collection of the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, this may explain the report of her involvement.⁸⁰

More importantly for Copeland and Garret, Gibson was reported to have declared the new process 'decidedly the next best material to marble'.⁸¹ No other sculptors were quoted as to its potential success for the production of statuettes; thus, a quote from Gibson clearly was seen as a powerful statement, one which the *Art journal* and other publications used as a public endorsement of Copeland and Garrett's process.⁸² In fact, Copeland and Garrett needed the cachet of a major sculptor to support their new product. Their first experiment had been with a figure after a statue by Richard James Wyatt, but Wyatt lacked the international reputation or Royal Academician status that Gibson had. The *Art journal* reported that Gibson was 'extremely anxious that one of his works should be produced in it'.⁸³ This feat soon was accomplished when his *Narcissus* was the first Parian ware statuette to be mass produced by Copeland and Garrett and distributed in a series of fifty through the Art Union of London as a lottery prize to its members. As Benedict Read has noted: 'The combination of Gibson as sculptor, his demonstration "pièce de résistance" (which is what an R.A. Diploma Work should amount to) as object, and the London Art Union as commissioner and propagator, amounted to a major salvo in favour of this type of work'.⁸⁴

Maureen Batkin and Paul Atterbury claim that Gibson 'was only prepared to allow *Narcissus* to be reproduced because he was confident of the high quality of the material and the skill of the manufacturer, as well as the accuracy of the reproduction', presumably referencing the aforementioned quotation by Gibson.⁸⁵ They continue: 'Of course, he also received a reproduction fee or royalty, a feature of Parian reproduction that encouraged artists to allow their works to be used'. While it is certainly possible that some of the artists did receive a royalty from Copeland, no definitive evidence has been published documenting that Gibson ever received such a payment.⁸⁶ As will be discussed below with regard to prints after

⁸⁰ On the Duchess and Gibson, see Tallis's *history and description of the Crystal Palace, and the exhibition of the world's industry in 1851; illustrated by beautiful steel engravings, from original drawings and daguerreotypes, by Beard, Mayall, etc., etc.*, London; New York: John Tallis and Co., [n.d.], 2:154; and 'The Great Exhibition', *Times*, 4 October 1851, 8.

⁸¹ 'Illustrated tour', 298; Hunt, 'On the applications', 17.

⁸² See, for instance, 'The Birmingham exhibition of manufactures and art', *Art journal*, October 1849, 298; Tallis's, 2:154; and 'Great Exhibition', *Times*, 8. Copeland and Garrett also quoted Gibson on the title page of their catalogues; see Batkin and Atterbury, in Atterbury, *Parian*, 19.

⁸³ 'Illustrated tour', 298.

⁸⁴ Benedict Read, 'Parian & sculpture', in Atterbury, *Parian*, 40.

⁸⁵ Batkin and Atterbury, in Atterbury, *Parian*, 19.

⁸⁶ My thanks to Paul Atterbury for his emailed thoughts and responses to me on this topic. Copeland does not discuss royalties or payments to sculptors in his text, *Parian* (see note 75).

his designs, Gibson actually turned down a royalty, suggesting he was more interested in the dissemination of his designs over commercial achievement. Regardless of whether he was or was not paid, the fact that his work was the first they mass-produced, and his supporting quote, suggests Gibson's validation of this venture because of its association with marble and the dissemination of art to the masses using reproductive technology.

Certainly he was aware of a potential market for sculpture in reduced size. He would have seen and known of the market for bisque statuettes, but he probably was discouraged by their dissimilarity to marble and their problems with dirt and aging. Bronze statuettes were also available, but this was not Gibson's primary sculptural medium. Perhaps more noteworthy was that his brother Benjamin was at this time working in Rome on reduced-sized marble statues, both after Gibson's own designs and with his own original subjects, reinforcing Gibson's awareness of a need for reductions for middle-class patrons who could not afford to commission large-scale marble statues. It was also about this time that sculpture-reduction machines invented by men such as Benjamin Cheverton and Achille Collas were being patented and marketed as technological innovations.⁸⁷ There is no evidence that Gibson showed any interest in these machines or their works, and arguably this process did not appeal to him because of the reliance on a machine and not the human hand to produce the sculpture, a practice that would extend to his interest in the carving of cameos and engraving plates. The Art Union considered using Cheverton's machine to make their Parian statuette, and in fact the machine was used to make reductions produced by Minton, but ultimately Gibson's *Narcissus* was modelled by the sculptor Edward Bowring Stephens, who studied in Rome from 1839 to 1842 and likely worked with Gibson.⁸⁸

Hall and the *Art journal* took credit for proposing to the Art Union of London the distribution of Gibson's *Narcissus* as their first Parian ware lottery prize.⁸⁹ The Art Unions were city-based organizations throughout Great Britain that existed for the purpose of disseminating art to the masses so as to 'improve the minds, morals and taste of all those who looked upon them'.⁹⁰ The Art Union of

⁸⁷ On sculpture reduction machines and other related technologies see Michele Bogart, 'In art the ends just don't always justify means', *Smithsonian*, 10, June 1979, 104-11; Meredith Shedd, 'A mania for statuettes: Achille Collas and other pioneers in the mechanical reproduction of sculpture', *Gazette des beaux-arts*, July/August 1992, 36-48; and Robert A. Sobieszek, 'Sculpture as the sum of its profiles: François Willème and photosculpture in France, 1859-1868', *Art bulletin*, 62:4, December 1980, 617-30.

⁸⁸ The minutes of the committee meetings of the Art Union of London regarding the potential use of Cheverton's machine and other related aspects of this project are quoted in Roger Smith, 'The Art Unions', in Atterbury, *Parian*, 29. Stephens is misidentified as J. B. Stephens by the authors in Atterbury's text. On Stephens, see Emma Hardy's essay in Roscoe, Hardy, and Sullivan, *Biographical dictionary*, 1193-96.

⁸⁹ 'Illustrated tour', 299.

⁹⁰ Smith, in Atterbury, *Parian*, 28.

London was established in 1837 and was the most popular. With annual membership costing one guinea, this organization was geared toward the middle classes, not the working classes. For this annual fee, subscribers received a print after a British painting, and an annual lottery gave subscribers the opportunity to win an additional art prize each year. Initially these also were prints, but in 1842 they began distributing bronze statuettes as prizes, the first of which was Edward Wyon's reduced-sized copy of *Michael and Satan* by Flaxman, in addition to medallions and plaster figurines.⁹¹ This association between Flaxman and Gibson seems prescient based on the other ways Gibson's designs would be disseminated over time.

Although Gibson supported Copeland and Garrett and the Art Union of London in this collaborative venture, the Royal Academy refused permission to take measurements of Gibson's statue without his written permission. Gibson apparently did write to give his permission, but this letter has not been traced. The Royal Academy then decided that a cast could not be taken from the marble statue, but they did authorize that a reduced copy of it could be modelled, which Stephens did and then made into plaster, submitting it to Copeland and Garrett by mid-November 1845. It is worth noting that this reduction was taken from the marble statue, which according to the idea of 'sequential ordering' should be the 'finished' product and not another derivative work. This mode of production, then, demonstrates further the complications involved in the making of sculpture and the dissemination of Gibson's designs during the nineteenth century.

Despite setbacks on the manufacturer's part, by the end of November 1845 Copeland and Garrett told the Art Union of London they had produced a final design. However, the Art Union responded with dismay that the *Narcissus* was nude and requested a fig leaf be added. Although Stephens refused, presumably to support Gibson's original design, the Art Union clearly won this debate, as most extant copies and photographic reproductions of the statuette show a fig leaf. Fifty statuettes were issued in 1846.⁹² *Gentleman's magazine* reported on these statuettes in June of that year, noting in particular that the collaboration was 'assisting the efforts now being made to bring fine art to aid that important branch of manufacture', i.e. blurring the distinction between the fine and decorative arts through mass production and lottery dissemination.⁹³

The Art Union of London worked with Copeland and Garrett for many years distributing Parian ware statuettes. Among other contemporary sculptors whose works were issued in this format were William Calder Marshall, John Henry

⁹¹ On bronzes and the Art Unions, see Charles Avery and Madeleine Marsh, 'The bronze statuettes of the Art Union of London: the rise and decline of Victorian taste in sculpture', *Apollo*, 121, May 1985, 328-37.

⁹² An additional fifty were issued and distributed by the Art Union of London both in 1849 and 1850.

⁹³ 'Fine arts', *Gentleman's magazine*, June 1846, 629.

Foley, and John Lawlor, and copies after ancient works were distributed as well. Although Gibson's *Narcissus* was not produced again after 1850, it was still being distributed by the Art Union as a lottery prize as late as 1911. In addition, the Art Union also issued the Parian statuette of *Venus and Cupid*, taken from Gibson's statue exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1833. Forty were issued in 1858 with an additional thirty issued two years later.

A rival art union, the Crystal Palace Art Union, was founded in 1858 by Battam, the credited inventor of Parian ware, who was then overseeing the Ceramics Court at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham Park. The success of this art union was based on different levels of membership fees, each with increased benefits, so that a subscriber had a choice of works that were issued rather than being forced to accept what was offered that year. In 1859 one of the new Parian statuettes was Gibson's *Nymph at the Bath*. Queen Victoria herself was a subscriber to the Crystal Palace Art Union and owned this particular work in Parian ware by Gibson, as well as one of the three editions of the *Narcissus* by the Art Union of London.

At the Great Exhibition of 1851, the display for Copeland (the partnership with Garrett having been dissolved in 1847) included a number of Parian ware statuettes taken from modern sculptors. Among these were two after Gibson's design: the *Narcissus* as executed for the Art Union; and *Venus*, manufactured in 1849 and taken from his *Venus Verticordia*, first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1839, and later to be reexhibited as the *Tinted Venus*.⁹⁴ Copeland won a prize medal for 'statuary porcelain (general excellence)' in the category of Ceramics at the 1851 Great Exhibition.⁹⁵ His Parian ware figures were credited in particular for their 'great beauty ... several of which are eminently successful, and show complete mastery over this material in its best and most legitimate application'.⁹⁶ Although Copeland by this time was now successfully manufacturing Parian ware figures after a number of modern sculptors, Gibson was clearly the most popular of these sculptors. In the context of the Great Exhibition, the Gibson-Copeland-Art Union collaboration demonstrated the value of new reproductive technologies integrated with artistic design, allowing a derivative of fine art to be more readily available in the homes of the middle classes. Related to this were Gibson's collaborations with the Saulini family, makers of high-quality cameos, who produced and disseminated works using his designs, which they also displayed at the Great Exhibition.

⁹⁴ Authority, *Great Exhibition*, 2:711. Following the exhibition of the *Tinted Venus* at the 1862 International Exhibition, Copeland issued a polychrome Parian ware version of the same statue. As Batkin and Atterbury note, this was just one of a number of works by this date in which Parian ware began to appear in polychrome format, mirroring the overall interest in polychrome sculpture as exhibited by Gibson and his contemporaries, most notably Owen Jones in the ancient Greece pavilion at the Crystal Palace. Batkin and Atterbury, in Atterbury, *Parian*, 19-20.

⁹⁵ *Exhibition of the works*, cvi. Copeland also won a medal at the 1862 International Exhibition.

⁹⁶ *Exhibition of the works*, 540.

Cameos

Gibson's published memoirs make only one reference to the Saulini family, in which he describes his design for a bas-relief depicting the goddess Minerva bringing to Bellerophon the winged horse Pegasus, for which Saulini 'made a fine cameo from my small model of it'.⁹⁷ This passing reference might lead the reader to think this was a single incident, but in fact this was one of many works in which the Saulini family worked from Gibson's designs to make cameo jewellery. As such, they were no different from Copeland in the manufacturing of Parian statuettes after Gibson's work, with Gibson acting as the academically-trained designer whose works were reproduced in another sculptural medium. More significantly, from the perspective of sculpture, the Saulini cameos transformed some of Gibson's three-dimensional figures into two-dimensional reliefs, although it is unclear whether Gibson or the Saulinis were responsible for the designs in these instances.

As Charlotte Gere and Judy Rudoe have noted, nineteenth-century cameo production in Rome continued a trade that had been established in the late eighteenth century with the use of portraits and ancient classical sculpture, but to this was added 'the new use of contemporary sculpture ... both historic and modern', resulting in 'close relationships ... between sculptors and the cameo-cutters and jewellers working in Rome'.⁹⁸ Cameos came to be seen in Victorian society as not just jewelry but also signifiers of cultured taste.

Cameos occupied a special place in Victorian culture, crossing the boundaries of art and personal ornament. The cameo-set brooch is a classic Victorian jewellery type, owned across many levels of society. ... One of the many attractions of cameos for the Victorians was their value as souvenirs of travel, but they had wider connotations—not least of connoisseurship, taste and classical learning—in the jewellery culture of the age. Their connection with sculpture was important; sculpture held a key position in Victorian art, admired for itself and as a decorative element in architecture.⁹⁹

The Saulini family ran one of the leading cameo manufacturers in nineteenth-century Rome, first established by Tommaso Saulini and then run by his son Luigi.¹⁰⁰ Both father and son received artistic training in Thorvaldsen's studio.

⁹⁷ Matthews, *Biography*, 223.

⁹⁸ Charlotte Gere and Judy Rudoe, *Jewellery in the age of Queen Victoria: a mirror to the world*, London: British Museum, 2010, 466.

⁹⁹ Gere and Rudoe, *Jewellery*, 467.

¹⁰⁰ For more on the Saulinis, see Malcolm Stuart Carr, 'Tommaso and Luigi Saulini', *Connoisseur*, 190, November 1975, 170-81; and Micaela Dickmann de Petra and Francesca Barberini, *Tommaso e Luigi Saulini: incisori di cammei nella Roma dell'ottocento*, Rome: Gangemi Editori, 2006.

It is not known exactly when Tommaso began to make cameos, but he had a studio at 8 and 9 Via del Croce from the late 1830s, and in 1857 Luigi moved their studio to 96 Via del Babuino, not far from Gibson's own studio on Via della Fontanella.

Count Hawks Le Grice's 1841 guide to the studios of Rome is one of the earliest published sources in English to discuss the Saulini family, and he notes by that date that they had made cameos from their own original subjects and after the designs of the sculptors Thorvaldsen, Gibson, R. J. Wyatt, and Emil Wolff.¹⁰¹

It is unknown when Gibson began working with Saulini, but Le Grice's guide records that Gibson's bas-relief of *Venus and Cupid* was available as a Saulini cameo, suggesting his designs may have been used by the Saulinis at least by the end of the 1830s.¹⁰² Because little research has been published on the sources for Saulini cameos, and because few are aware of Gibson's designs, there has been little appreciation of how significant this collaboration was. After thorough research through published and unpublished archival sources, I have identified, some for the first time, fourteen original designs by Gibson that were made into shell or onyx cameos by the Saulinis. Although Gibson wrote that the cameo for *Bellerophon Receiving Pegasus from Minerva* was taken from his clay *bozzetto*, it seems more likely that most of these cameos were taken from Gibson's original drawings. For instance, *Zephyr and Psyche* is not known to have ever been made into a model, so the cameos must derive from Gibson's extant drawings of these subjects now in the Royal Academy. In his article on the Saulinis, Malcolm Stuart Carr noted the important distinction that the cameo for *Cupid Pursuing Psyche* was based on Gibson's drawing and not the bas-relief because of the added feature of a butterfly in Psyche's hand, a detail which does not appear in the bas-relief itself.¹⁰³

It is unknown how many copies of each design listed below were made by the Saulinis, but as commercial jewelry for sale they probably were reproduced in numbers. Images of many of these are not available, but Gibson's design (and/or the relief or statue) on which the cameo is based is known. The subjects, arranged approximately in the order when the cameo would have been available, are as follows:

¹⁰¹ Le Grice, *Walks*, 2:269. The earliest recorded instance of a Saulini cameo taken from British sculpture seems to date from 1831, when the sculptor Joseph Gott wrote from Rome to his family in England and mentions having ordered cameos after the busts of family members which he had sent back previously. A surviving cameo from one of these busts has Saulini's signature. Carr, 'Saulini', 173.

¹⁰² Le Grice, *Walks*, 2:157. Before working with Saulini, Gibson apparently first worked with another Roman cameo manufacturer, known only as Dies, who made cameos from busts of his recently modeled statues *Flora* and *Nymph at Her Bath*. See John Gibson to Edward Rogers, 4 April 1832, Add. 37951 G. f. 79, British Library, London.

¹⁰³ 'The cameo differs from the relief in one detail, the butterfly in Psyche's right hand. Among Gibson's drawings in the Royal Academy is a pen and ink wash, which includes the butterfly. ... Thus we may assume that Tommaso used this or another such drawing given him by Gibson'. Carr, 'Saulini', 175.

1. *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*. The date of this shell cameo is unknown. Its design derived from Gibson's statue from the early 1820s, commissioned in marble by Sir George Beaumont, Czar Alexander II, and Prince Torlonia. A replica of this cameo is reportedly located in the Massimo Carafa Jacobini collection.¹⁰⁴
2. *The Birth of Venus, or Venus Rising from the Sea, Received by Celestial Love and Crowned by Persuasion*. This shell cameo dates from 1840-41. It was based on Gibson's bas-relief design from 1840, but never commissioned in marble. This cameo was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition, and at least one is located in the Saulini family collection.¹⁰⁵
3. *Celestial and Terrestrial Love Contending for the Soul, or Eros and Anteros Contending for the Soul*. This shell cameo dates from ca. 1840-51. It was based on Gibson's bas-relief design from 1839 and commissioned in marble by Lady Jane Davy. This cameo was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Its current location is unknown.
4. *Venus and Cupid*. This shell cameo was made by 1841 and was based on Gibson's bas-relief design from the 1830s. Its current location is unknown.
5. *Aurora*. This shell cameo dates was made after 1842 and was based on the statue design and model from 1841-42, commissioned in marble by the Sandbachs 1843-47 and afterward exhibited at the 1848 Royal Academy. One cameo is located in the Saulini family collection.¹⁰⁶
6. *Hope: Monument to Edward and Margaret Roscoe*. This shell cameo dates from 1843. It was based on Gibson's funerary monument bas-relief design from 1839, the plaster model from 1840-41, and the marble version made in 1841-42, all commissioned by the Sandbachs. There are two extant cameos in the Saulini family collection.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Dickmann de Petra and Barberini did not recognize this cameo as a Gibson design and called it *Scena mitologica*; *Saulini*, 88, fig. 42. In his review of their book, James David Draper correctly identified the cameo as taken from Gibson's statue. See *Burlington magazine*, 149, June 2007, 420.

¹⁰⁵ Until now, this cameo has not been identified as a Gibson design and was given by Dickmann de Petra and Barberini the generic name *Scena mitologica* despite the obvious imagery; *Saulini*, 87, fig. 36. Gibson wrote about Saulini's interest in making a cameo from this new design. John Gibson to Margaret Sandbach, 19 September 1840, MS 20566-7E, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

¹⁰⁶ Until now, this cameo has not been identified as a Gibson design. Dickmann de Petra and Barberini gave it the title *La Temperanza*; *Saulini*, 101, fig. 99.

¹⁰⁷ Until now, this cameo has not been identified as a Gibson design, but it was entitled *La Speranza* by Dickmann de Petra and Barberini because of the iconographic anchor at the bottom of the design; *Saulini*, 101, figs. 97 and 98. The Sandbachs apparently purchased a cameo based on the design of the funerary monument, for which Saulini charged them 20

7. *Queen Victoria*. This shell cameo dates from 1844-45 and is based on Gibson's portrait bust modeled in 1844 for a planned statue of the queen. A cameo is located in the Royal Collection.¹⁰⁸
8. *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche*. This shell cameo dates from ca. 1844-51 and is based on Gibson's bas-relief design from ca. 1844-46, commissioned in marble by Queen Victoria. This cameo was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Its current location is unknown.
9. *Cupid Pursuing Psyche*. There were two versions of this cameo: one in shell, and one in onyx in a diamond mount. They date from between the years 1844-62, and are based on Gibson's popular bas-relief design from the 1840s, commissioned in marble by the Sandbachs and others. The shell cameo was exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition as *Cupid and Psyche*. An onyx cameo was formerly in the Hancocks and Co. collection.
10. *The Hours Bringing the Horses to the Chariot of the Sun*. This shell cameo dates from 1846-51. It was based on Gibson's bas-relief design from 1846-47, as well as the bas-relief in marble commissioned in marble by Earl Fitzwilliam and afterward exhibited at the 1849 Royal Academy, and a bas-relief in plaster exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. This cameo also was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Its current location is unknown.
11. *Bellerophon Receiving Pegasus from Minerva*. This shell cameo dates from 1848-51, based on Gibson's bas-relief design and model from 1847-48, commissioned in marble by Mr. C. S. Dickins. This cameo was exhibited at the 1851 Great Exhibition. Its current location is unknown.
12. *Phaeton Driving the Chariot of the Sun* (Fig. 10). There were two versions of this cameo: one in shell, and one in onyx. They date from 1850-62, and are based on Gibson's bas-relief design from 1850, the original drawing (signed and dated) for which is in the Royal Collection.¹⁰⁹ The work

crowns. See John Gibson to Margaret Sandbach, 1 January 1844 and 30 March 1844, MS 20566-7E, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

¹⁰⁸ Extant correspondence with George E. Anson, Prince Albert's secretary, shows that Gibson ordered the Saulini cameo taken from his bust of Queen Victoria and presented it as a gift to Albert, perhaps as a gesture to show how the bust itself was progressing. John Gibson to G. E. Anson, 22 January 1845, GI/1/6, and 24 March 1845, GI/1/7, Gibson Papers.

¹⁰⁹ For more on this drawing, see Delia Millar, *The Victorian watercolours and drawings in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, London: Philip Wilson, 1995, 1:352-53. This cameo previously had been misdated to ca. 1840 and misidentified as the goddess Aurora by the British Museum, and thus not associated with Gibson. See Hugh Tait, ed., *The art of the jeweller. a catalogue of the Hull Grundy gift to the British Museum: jewellery, engraved gems and goldsmiths' work*, London: British Museum, 1984, 1:137, cat. 912. Dickmann de Petra and Barberini refer to the subject as Apollo and thus also fail to attribute it to Gibson; *Saulini*, 77, fig. 8, and 85, fig. 30.



Figure 10 *Phaeton Driving the Horses of the Sun*, carved by Tommaso Saulini after design by John Gibson, after 1850. Shell cameo, 10 x 5 cm. London: British Museum. Photo: BM.

was commissioned in marble by Earl Fitzwilliam. The shell cameo was exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition. Two surviving shell cameos are located in the British Museum and Saulini family collection. Gere and Rudoe have suggested that this cameo would have been worn in a diadem or comb mount because of its weight.¹¹⁰

13. *Zephyr and Psyche*. This shell cameo dates from about 1851-62. Unlike the other cameos that relate to designs for sculptural works, this cameo is based on a design and the title page image for *Gibson's Designs*, a collection of prints published by Joseph Hogarth in 1851.¹¹¹ This cameo was exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition. Its current location is unknown.

14. *Nymph and Cupid*. This shell cameo dates to after 1858. It was based on Gibson's statue design from 1858-59, commissioned in marble by the Prince of Wales, Mr. J. Malcolm, and the Sandbachs, and afterward exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition. This cameo also was exhibited at the 1862 International Exhibition. Its current location is unknown.

¹¹⁰ Gere and Rudoe, *Jewellery*, 475. The British Museum has since corrected the attribution of this work after Gibson's design based on Gere and Rudoe correctly identifying it as such.

¹¹¹ The subject of this cameo differs from the earlier *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* in that it shows a single Zephyr carrying Psyche over his shoulder. No plaster or marble versions are known to exist.



Figure 11 *The Toilet of Nausicaa*, diadem mount made by Castellani and cameo carved by Saulini, after designs attributed to John Gibson, mid-19th century. Onyx and gold, cameo: 4.7 x 7.8 cm. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo: MMA.

In addition to these fourteen Saulini cameos based on Gibson's designs, a tiara with a cameo showing *The Toilet of Nausicaa* (Fig. 11) has been attributed to Gibson. According to an unsubstantiated oral tradition, Gibson designed both the cameo and the mount, with the cameo carved by Luigi Saulini and the mount made in gold by the Rome-based jeweller Castellani.¹¹² James David Draper, however, has rejected this claim, arguing that Castellani was not known for the high-quality 'sharp-focus foliage' apparent in this mount, and that the cameo design 'is not strongly reminiscent of Gibson'.¹¹³ To date, no Gibson drawing has surfaced showing this subject, so it remains unclear if Gibson ever designed original work for the Saulinis. Gibson also occasionally acted as an agent for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert commissioning works from other sculptors and artists in Rome, and he commissioned on her behalf from Saulini a number of double-cameo portraits of Albert and herself following the Prince's death. These double-portrait cameos were used by the Queen thereafter as badges for prizes and given as gifts.¹¹⁴

As discussed above with the Parian statuettes, Saulini exhibited cameos taken from Gibson's designs at the 1851 Great Exhibition. In the jury report on Saulini's contribution, it was noted: 'The greater part of these are copied from the

¹¹² Ernst Kris, *Catalogue of postclassical cameos in the Milton Weil collection*, Vienna: Anton Schroll & Co., 1932, 45, fig. 117; Carr, 'Saulini', 177.

¹¹³ Draper, Review, 420. For more on the cameo tiara and its accompanying brooch and necklace, see James David Draper, *Cameo appearances*, in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art bulletin*, 65:4, Spring 2008, 46-47.

¹¹⁴ Michael Hatt, 'First Class Badge of the Royal Order of Victoria and Albert' in Droth, Edwards, and Hatt, *Sculpture*, 76-78. For more on Gibson's role in the commissioning of these cameos, see Carr, 'Saulini', 176-77; and Jonathan Marsden, ed., *Victoria & Albert: art & love*, London: Royal Collection, 2010, 332-33. See also the following extant correspondence: John Gibson to Katherine M. Bruce, 6 May 1864, GI/1/37; Katherine M. Bruce to John Gibson, 22 September [1864], GI/1/42/1; and Sir Charles Beaumont Phipps to John Gibson, 21 November 1864, GI/1/279, all Gibson Papers.

most attractive works of the celebrated English sculptor Gibson'.¹¹⁵ This was not an accurate statement, but it reflected the personal bias of the jury in recognizing their own nationalist sculptor, Gibson, for having his designs produced by Saulini. The cameo manufacturer displayed twelve cameos. Five of these were Gibson designs, five were after Thorvaldsen, one after Raphael, and one was from the antique.¹¹⁶ While Copeland was awarded a prize medal, Saulini was given an honourable mention.

Of the five Gibson designs exhibited by Saulini, *The Hours Bringing the Horses to the Chariot of the Sun* is arguably the most important, as Gibson displayed in the Sculpture Court at the Great Exhibition the plaster bas-relief of the same subject, as discussed above. Unlike *The Hunter and His Dog*, which officially had been submitted by the Earl of Yarborough, *The Hours* was Gibson's own contribution, and it was with this work that he designated himself the designer, not the sculptor. Considering that Saulini was displaying a cameo with the same subject for which Gibson was the designer, it cannot be coincidental that Gibson chose to name himself as designer in the official catalogue with both the bas-relief and cameo on display.

It is possible that Gibson was still aware of this connection eleven years later when he and Saulini exhibited additional works at the 1862 International Exhibition in London. Although his three polychrome statues of the *Tinted Venus*, *Love Tormenting the Soul*, and *Pandora* have dominated scholarship about his contributions to this international fair, Gibson also had other works on display. These were portrait busts of the Duchess of Wellington and an Italian model named Grazia, his statue of *Nymph at the Bath* for the Earl of Yarborough, and a new statue in marble, *Nymph Playing with Cupid*. Saulini exhibited at this fair twenty cameos, for which this time he received a medal. In addition to three cameos showing different stages of carving, his exhibit included: two original designs by Saulini; five after the antique; two after Thorvaldsen; one after Gibson's former pupil Benjamin Spence; and four after Gibson's designs.¹¹⁷ The four Gibson designs as shell cameos included one entitled *Nymph and Cupid*, which was taken from Gibson's statue on display in the British Paintings section of the hall, thus once again reinforcing Gibson's presence as a designer.

Thus, the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the International Exhibition of 1862 can be seen as pivotal moments for Gibson and the dissemination of his designs in other forms of modern reproductive media. These expositions showcased his important sculptures in plaster and marble, as well as the reproductive complements of these works in Parian statuette form by Copeland and cameos by Saulini, all directly taken from Gibson's designs. It was only at these expositions,

¹¹⁵ *Exhibition of the works*, 704.

¹¹⁶ Authority, *Great Exhibition*, 3:1286-87.

¹¹⁷ *International Exhibition 1862: official catalogue of the fine art department*, London: Truscott, Son, & Simmons, [1862], 271.

international arenas that celebrated advancements in the dissemination of modern technology, as it applied in this case to sculpture, where the connections between fine art and commercial dissemination came together for Gibson. This emphasis on his role as a designer was reinforced soon after the Great Exhibition of 1851 closed. This was when the printseller Hogarth released a series of forty engravings appropriately entitled *Gibson's designs*.

Prints

The print series *Gibson's designs* was issued in London in four parts by the print seller and framer Hogarth of 5 Haymarket. The first part, with ten imperial folio engravings, was released on 1 December 1851, with another set of ten prints released each subsequent month through March, thus providing a full portfolio of forty engravings after Gibson's designs. Hogarth charged £2 2s for proofs on India paper, and £1 1s for prints.¹¹⁸ In one set of the first two parts, owned by the Yale Center for British Art, each has a cover page showing a vignette of Gibson's drawing *Psyche Carried by Zephyrus* and textual information identifying the part number, title, and publisher in a classical-style block font. However, other versions of this series appeared in book format. An edition at the Royal Academy has thirty-nine prints after Gibson's drawings, as well as a title page with a publication date of 1852.¹¹⁹ This oblong book edition, measuring 15 x 21 1/2 in. (38 x 54.5 cm), suggests that Hogarth likely also offered the series in bound format after it was completed.¹²⁰ The plates themselves were engraved by Giovanni Wenzel and Lodovico Prosseda, two engravers based in Rome whom Gibson knew, although more specific information detailing their association with one another has yet to be discovered. In an 1848 letter to Lady Jane Davy, Gibson wrote: 'All my works are engraving [*sic*] & will be published in London in the course of a year'.¹²¹ This suggests that Wenzel and Prosseda had begun working on the engravings by 1848, but a few more years would pass before the actual prints were sold by Hogarth.

¹¹⁸ '[Advertisement for *Gibson's designs* published by Hogarth]', *Publishers' circular*, 15 November 1851, 372. For reviews of the print series, see 'Gibson's designs', *Literary gazette*, 1818, 22 November 1851, 802; and 'Gibson's designs', *Art journal*, 1 February 1853, 63-64.

¹¹⁹ *Imitations of drawings by John Gibson R.A. sculptor. engraved by G. Wenzel and L. Prosseda Rome 1852*, London: J. Hogarth, 1852.

¹²⁰ The British Museum and the Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool, own individual prints from this series, suggesting they either were cut from a copy of the book or sold individually by Hogarth.

¹²¹ John Gibson to Lady Jane Davy, [21 October 1848], Misc. Ray 196635, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York. The writer Susan Horner wrote in her journal in April 1848 that Gibson showed her some engravings after his designs, but these may relate to prints made earlier, as will be discussed in this section; *Susan Horner collection*, fol. 51-52.

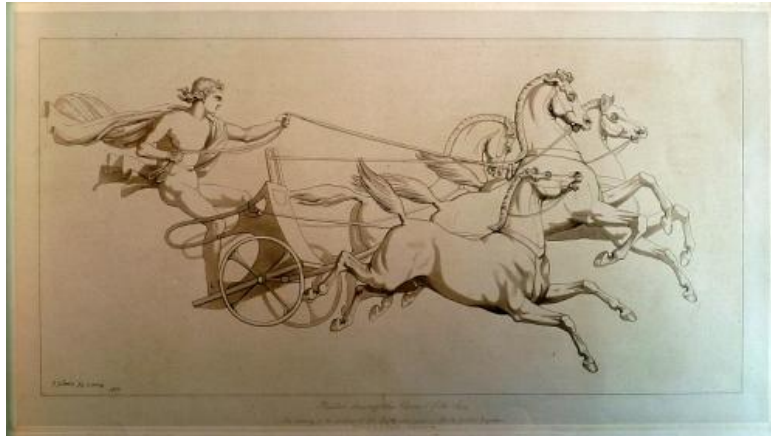


Figure 12 *Phaeton Driving the Horses of the Sun*, from *Gibson's designs*, 1851, engraved by Giovanni Wenzel and Lodovico Prosseda after John Gibson. London: Hogarth. Photo: author.

Each print sheet is the same size and landscape-style in orientation (Fig. 12). The original layout of the drawings on which they are based appear the same way on the sheet, hence some drawings that might have fit better portrait-style in fact also are represented in landscape format. Although the prints have the addition of the names of the engravers and publisher, titles of the works, and impressed plate marks, the similarity in appearance between Gibson's original drawings and the prints often make them indistinguishable, with the print itself frequently appearing like an exact duplicate of the drawing. The actual printmaking technique is unknown. Although many may have been aquatints, a closer examination of the prints shows they were not all made the same way and that it is possible photographic printing technology was incorporated as well.¹²² Indeed, the fact that the original drawings themselves still survive for many, if not all, of these prints suggests the engravers could have used daguerreotype photography to ensure an accurate representation of Gibson's drawings without destroying the original source, but this is mere speculation. However these engravings were made, the insistence on the images appearing as if they actually were Gibson's drawings shows that they were not meant to be interpretations by Wenzel and Prosseda, but facsimiles of Gibson's actual designs.

One might assume that Gibson sought to earn a profit from the sale of these prints, but in fact this seems to have been of little interest to him, as a letter to Hogarth suggests:

What I said to you verbally the other day I now repeat here, that I renounce all claims of sharing in the profits that may arrive from the sale of the engraved work from my drawings done at Rome, published by you. Therefore you are at liberty to sell that work entirely for your own profit

¹²² My thanks to Elisabeth Fairman and Gillian Forrester at the Yale Center for British Art for their insights into how these engravings may have been made.

without sending me any account. But I wish to say to you that I claim a copy, now & then, to present to a friend.¹²³

This letter shows that Gibson was aware of his potential right to earn money from the sale of prints after his drawings as, presumably, he did not sign over copyright with the making of the engravings. The practice of selling copyright was not uncommon in the nineteenth century. The Pre-Raphaelite painter William Holman Hunt around this time earned a tremendous profit by selling copyright with his painting *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1854-55, to Ernest Gambart for the then record-breaking sum of 5500 guineas, enabling the art dealer to sell prints of the painting for an even larger profit over the ensuing decades.¹²⁴ In contrast, then, it seems clear that Gibson was more interested in the dissemination of his designs utilizing printmaking technology to mass-produce his art. In this way he may have been unique among Victorian sculptors in how he strove to maintain artistic integrity while still exploiting commercial reproductive technology.

But this series was not the first time Gibson's designs appeared as prints. Prior to the Hogarth print series, Gibson also provided illustrations for an essay and lyrical poem written by Elizabeth Strutt on the myth of Psyche.¹²⁵ Measuring 20 1/2 x 14 3/4 in. (52 x 37.5 cm), the book was intended to be a fine art publication for wealthy collectors, not a pocket-sized book of poetry. Although some of Gibson's illustrations were based on works which he had also made as sculpture, there were also a number of original drawings designed to accompany Strutt's poem. All of these drawings were published as line engravings, reflecting Flaxman's influence. Like his predecessor's images for the *Iliad* and other Greek epics, Gibson's illustrations are full-page engravings, appearing between individual cantos of the poem. However, other engravings appear as vignettes at the beginning or end of

¹²³ John Gibson to Joseph Hogarth, 20 September 1853, Misc. Ray 196637, Department of Literary and Historical Manuscripts, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York. Gibson goes on to ask him to send a copy to the painter William Boxall and another to Gibson himself at the London home of Mrs. William Huskisson, with whom he was then staying on a visit to London.

¹²⁴ Thomas M. Bayer and John R. Page, *The development of the art market in England: money as muse, 1730-1900*, London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011, 120.

¹²⁵ Elizabeth Strutt, *The story of Psyche with classical enquiry into the signification and origin of the fable with designs in outline by John Gibson Esq. R.A.*, [n.d.]. No publication year appears in the book, and Matthews noted that it was first published in 1852, with a second edition published in 1857; Matthews, *Life*, 247. However, advertisements for a first edition began appearing in the *Roman advertiser* on 6 November 1846 and appeared in each subsequent issue for five months until 17 April 1847. Strutt's husband and son were painters who lived and worked at 52 Via del Babuino, close to Gibson's studio, so they all knew one another. The advertisement noted that buyers could purchase the book for two guineas from the Strutts' studio.

specific cantos, reflecting newer techniques in illustrated book publishing that had been developed by Thomas Bewick and his followers.¹²⁶



Figure 13 *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy*, from *Engravings from original compositions ... by John Gibson*, 1861, engraved by Oswald Ufer after John Gibson. London: Colnaghi. Photo: author.

Following *Gibson's designs*, the London-based art and print dealer Colnaghi, then managed by Dominic Charles Colnaghi and his nephew John Anthony Scott, published in 1861 a book of engravings after Gibson's sculptures.¹²⁷ Like the prints after his drawings and Strutt's *Story of Psyche*, this book was intended for wealthy collectors. One edition housed at the Royal Academy is a large vertical-format book measuring 23 1/2 x 16 1/2 in. (59.5 x 42 cm), with seventy-seven pages of engravings, mostly of Gibson's classical subjects such as *Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy* (Fig. 13), but also of his funerary monuments and memorial statues. Significantly, the prints here also were line engravings, once again continuing the perception of Gibson as the Victorian Flaxman. Gibson dedicated the book to his friend Sir Charles Eastlake, who in a subsequent letter thanked him for the book and its

¹²⁶ Bewick's vignette is now seen in art history as a mark of the contemporary Romantic movement in illustrated works of literature. See Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, 'The romantic vignette and Thomas Bewick', in their *Romanticism and realism: the mythology of nineteenth-century art*, New York: Viking, 1984, 71-96.

¹²⁷ *Engravings from original compositions executed in marble at Rome by John Gibson, R.A.*, London: P. & D. Colnaghi, Scott & Co., 1861. The book received a surprisingly negative review in the *Athenaeum*, 1781, 14 December 1861, 800-01.

dedication, and noted how his designs elevated the sculptor's status in the world of British art.

It is a noble monument to yr fame, executed in the best taste & without any ostentation, the endless beauty of some of the figures & compositions contrasts well with the plain titles. ... One outstanding quality in this fine series is its variety, & I really should be puzzled to say which class of subjects exhibits your powers & feeling to the best advantage. ... In short, I repeat, it would not be easy to say what subjects you have undertaken most 'con amore'. The plain truth I believe is that you have put your soul into everything & have never failed to do your best.¹²⁸

The title page for this collection of engravings identifies the individual artists who worked on the project. The drawings after Gibson's statues were made by Pablo Guglielmi, a Spanish-born artist who worked for a time in Rome, although like Wenzel and Prosseda no evidence has surfaced about his working relationship with Gibson. The engraving plates were made under the direction of Ludwig (Lewis) Gruner. His print studio was based in Dresden, where two engravers, Theodor Langer and Oswald Ufer, worked on the plates for this project. A third engraver named Siedentopf, who may have been related to the printsellers Siedentopf und Sohn in Frankfurt am Main, also engraved plates for this project. This complex collaboration with Guglielmi as draftsman, Gruner/Langer/Ufer/Siedentopf as engravers, and Colnaghi/Scott as publishers arguably mirrors that of a sculptor's studio practice, where numerous assistants worked together to produce a single object that began with Gibson's design. Gibson was first and foremost the conceptual artist, the creator of the designs that were carved in marble by others, and incised into plates to make engravings by others. In that sense, the prints, like all other forms of reproductive media, were the natural continuation of the dissemination of Gibson's ideas, as was the case for the statuettes and cameos.

This was not the first time Gibson's sculptures had been engraved, however. Prints after his sculptures had appeared as early as 1835 in the first volume of the Italian serial *L'ape italiana delle belle arti giornale dedicato ai loro cultori ed amatori*. Published in Rome, with members of the Academies in Rome and other cities as its intended audience, this fine-art journal was published annually until 1840. It honored artists past and present whose works were made or could be seen in Rome. Modern works were published under the direction of and approved by the artist himself. Each print was a copper-plate line engraving and was accompanied by an essay written in Italian about the subject. Gibson's monumental statue of the Liverpool politician William Huskisson, the first version of which recently had been installed in that city's cemetery, was the first of his works to be engraved. The

¹²⁸ Sir Charles Eastlake to John Gibson, [n.d.], GI/1/106, Gibson Papers.

figure was drawn by Franco Pagliuolo and the essay was written by Giuseppe Melchiori.¹²⁹ In the next issue, Gibson's *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs* (*Psiche trasportata dai Zefiri*) appeared. This was followed annually by: *Love Tormenting the Soul* (*Amore*) in 1837; *The Guardian Angel* (*La protezione angelica*) in 1838; and *Wounded Amazon* (*Amazzone ferita*) in 1839.¹³⁰ All four of these subsequent prints were a collaboration as well, with the drawing done by Guglielmi and the engraving by Wenzel, each of whom respectively would later be involved in the other engraving projects of Gibson's designs (1851) and sculptures (1861). What is perhaps most significant is that of the first five issues published, Gibson was the only modern sculptor to appear in all five.¹³¹

Outside of Gibson's direct purview, engravings after Gibson's work also began to appear in the *Illustrated London news*. This newspaper first began production as a weekly serial in 1842, its unique feature being the appearance of wood engravings, which provided for the first time the opportunity for illiterate Londoners the opportunity to understand current events from pictures if not from words.¹³² The first work by Gibson to be reproduced in this newspaper had been his statue of Queen Victoria in July 1847.¹³³ The line engraving provided the viewer with an idea of how the statue looked, which at that time had just arrived at the Royal Academy exhibition. It reflected current events not only because it represented the monarch, but also because it was the first time Gibson exhibited in London a tinted statue.¹³⁴ But the mass production of the newspaper itself prevented the image from ever being perceived as a fine-art print.

¹²⁹ *L'ape italiana delle belle arti giornale dedicato ai loro cultori ed amatori*, 1, 1835, 40-42, plate 26.

¹³⁰ *L'ape italiana*, 2, 1836, 20-25, plate 15; 3, 1837, 28-29, plate 15; 4, 1838, 12-15, plate 9; 5, 1839, 11-12, plate 10. The publication of these prints in Rome easily could have led to further commissions for Gibson. For instance, in 1836 Prince Torlonia may have seen the engraving of *Psyche Carried by the Zephyrs*, a statue originally designed in the 1820s, as this is when he commissioned a repetition of it.

¹³¹ I have been unable to find a complete copy of the sixth and final issue from 1840 to determine if Gibson was included in that issue, but this does not change the fact that Gibson was the only modern sculptor to appear in the majority of the issues of this serial.

¹³² Following Gibson's death in 1866, a number of newspapers published obituaries and detailed information about his funeral, but this publication was the only one to illustrate Gibson's obituary and article about his funeral with images of his cortege, childhood home, and one of the last subjects his studio was then completing, *Theseus and the Robber*. See 'The funeral of John Gibson, R.A.', *Illustrated London news*, 10 February 1866, 136-37; and 'John Gibson, R.A.', *Illustrated London news*, 17 February 1866, 159-61.

¹³³ 'Gibson's statue of the Queen', *Illustrated London news*, 17 July 1847, 48.

¹³⁴ The statue of the queen was a royal commission, but Gibson decided to color aspects of it, tinting yellow, red, and blue various sections, but leaving the remainder of the body as polished marble. None of the original tinting remains on the statue today. For more on the history and reception of this statue, see Elisabeth S. Darby, 'John Gibson, Queen Victoria, and the idea of sculptural polychromy', *Art history*, 4:1, March 1981, 37-53; and Ferrari, 'Beyond polychromy', 126-30.

The first British journal to provide engravings as fine-art prints was the *Art journal*, a serial intended for the educated. Issued monthly, the *Art journal* (originally the *Art-Union*, changing its name in mid-1848) at first utilized less expensive wood engravings for mass production, but soon began producing fine-art engravings of works of art by printing on high-quality paper and only on one side so that the print did not bleed through. In issuing these prints as detachable or loose with the issue itself, the *Art journal* not only helped elevate its status as the leading British journal for the study of art, but also elevated the status of the artists whose works it reproduced and thus marketed, giving images of their paintings and sculptures to readers with removable, high-quality prints that were suitable for framing.

Gibson's name first appeared in this journal in 1839 when it published his letter to the editor about the recent departure from Rome of Hereditary Grand Duke Alexander of Russia and the commissions that Gibson and other British artists had received from him.¹³⁵ Ten years later, the *Art journal* published its first high-quality Gibson engraving with the subject of *Aurora*, the goddess of the dawn (Fig. 14). The statue was owned by Margaret Sandbach and had been shown at the 1848 Royal Academy exhibition. The subject was drawn by Guglielmi in Rome and engraved by William Callio Roffe, a British engraver who frequently worked on prints of sculptures and was regularly employed by the *Art journal* for that purpose. In the accompanying article about the sculpture, the unidentified author described its place in Sandbach's home: 'It is placed in a niche, which is coloured a deep soft ultramarine blue: this helps to carry out the sentiment of the beautiful statue, and likewise relieves the marble, preserving all the clearness of the outlines, and harmonising well with the delicate colouring of the drapery; the niche is finished by a simple border of dead gold'.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ 'Foreign art', 23.

¹³⁶ 'Aurora. from the statue by J. Gibson, R.A.', *Art journal*, September 1849, 288.



Figure 14 *Aurora*, from the *Art journal*, September 1849, engraved by William Roffe after John Gibson. Photo: author.

This description allowed the viewer the possibility of imagining the sculpture in a domestic interior, but it also suggested how one could frame the print and hang it on a wall with a similar background color and gold frame to enhance the experience of what the sculpture itself must look like in person. Considering Gibson's rising interest in polychrome sculpture by this time, the emphasis in this article on the harmonizing of white marble in the decorative interior seems prescient. Having a work engraved as a fine-art print by the *Art journal*, however, did not necessarily exempt the artist or the subject from critique. In the same text, the author criticized Gibson for his failed attempt at successfully managing in stone what was clearly an otherworldly subject.

There must always be great difficulty in giving to a subject that expression of ethereal motion which is essential to carry out the idea: nor has the sculptor quite succeeded here in his attempt, though there is lightness in the attitude of the figure and in the disposition of the limbs, as well as movement in the flowing lines of the drapery. But the absence of the quality most desired is perhaps not so much to be imputed to the conception itself, nor to the treatment, but rather to the necessity of introducing a *support* to the marble by means of the mass of material seen between the feet, which encumbers the figure and deprives it of its aerial nature. Mind and matter here do not quite harmonise.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ 'Aurora', 288.

Nevertheless, Gibson was seemingly unfazed by the criticism. His works continued to be engraved by the *Art journal* and he appreciated the promotion of his art in the form of prints. After the journal published an engraving of his bas-relief *Cupid and Psyche*, Gibson wrote a letter to the editor Hall thanking him for a copy of the print: 'It certainly does the greatest credit to Mr Roffe[;] a more beautiful engraving I have never seen from sculpture—it is executed "con amore"¹³⁸. Despite this satisfaction, Gibson had to mention his one concern: 'The line under this beautiful engraving shocked me horribly—"From the statue"[.] The nose of the Cupid would be more perfect if less aquiline & it could be done—so', to which he added a drawing of the figure's corrected nose. This suggests that although the drawing was based on his sculpture, it was a relief and not a statue. Furthermore, the drawing and engraving plate were not exact replicas of Gibson's work but interpretations of them and thus reflected the potential for errors in design, which clearly distressed him as it impacted what the public might think of his original design.

Hall apparently had extended to Gibson the offer of receiving a few copies of the print, and in this same letter he welcomed them, adding that Hall might consider sending copies to Queen Victoria and the Duke of Northumberland, both of whom owned repetitions of the relief itself. Gibson went on to suggest to Hall that he consider engraving another of his reliefs, also done for Northumberland, of 'Cupid & Psyche flying in the air. It is the soul pursued by desire. Every year they sell many cameos of it. If you would like to engrave it in your work I would have a perfect drawing made by Sigr. Gulielmi [*sic*], that is, if you were to give it to Mr. Roffe'. This letter addresses, then, some understanding of the working relationship Gibson had with Guglielmi. More importantly, though, the mention here of the cameos produced by the Saulinis after Gibson's design links the prints and sculpture with jewellery production.

Conclusion

Gibson's consciousness of how these media all related to one another as different forms of the same design shows that he had fewer apprehensions about the individual uniqueness of his works, but more concerns about how his design was disseminated. Reproduction was key to how Gibson worked, whether it was overseeing his own studio practice in creating drawings, plaster casts, and marble statues, or allowing for statuettes, cameos, and engravings to be made after his own designs. As such, he actively contributed to a world of art consumption in which buyers were encouraged to own multiple versions of the same subject in different media. Thus, Queen Victoria herself could, and in fact did, own Gibson drawings, bas-reliefs and statues, porcelain statuettes, cameos, and prints, all with similar

¹³⁸ John Gibson to Samuel Carter Hall, 17 December 1855, MSL/1941/421, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

subjects and/or designs, none of which suffered from a sense that there was a lack of originality to any of these reproductions. On the contrary, multiple versions in various media simply reinforced for someone like the Queen the primacy of Gibson's designs.

This is not to say that every Victorian acquired work by Gibson in multiple media. Likely, most acquired a selection of works in only one or two media they could afford, such as statuettes. Nevertheless, this wider dissemination of Gibson's designs in a variety of media meant that people from the middle classes, as well as possibly the working classes, could afford art work by this master sculptor, and as such emulate the role of taste propagated by the wealthy and their Queen. Through reproduction Gibson maintained his standing in the art world as a leading artist of the day, and his designs allowed him to spread his love of the Greeks to art consumers worldwide using contemporaneous reproductive technologies.

Roberto C. Ferrari is the Curator of Art Properties at Columbia University in the City of New York, where he oversees the University's art collection. He received his Ph.D. from the CUNY Graduate Center and wrote his dissertation on John Gibson. He is also a noted scholar on the Pre-Raphaelite painter Simeon Solomon. His essays and reviews have been published in journals such as *Art Documentation*, *Art Libraries Journal*, *The Gay & Lesbian Review*, *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies*, and *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide*. He is currently working on a book about Gibson and his pupil Harriet Hosmer.

rcf2123@columbia.edu



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)