

# Contents

Preface · ix

Conventions · xi

Introduction · 1

*Whistler's career: an open question · 1 — A multi-modular methodology · 6*

## PART I – THE YOUNG ARTIST: EXPLORING THE ART FIELD IN THE 1860S

Chapter one: First steps as an artist · 27

*Statistics and figures, 1855–59 · 27 — ‘La vie bohème’ · 28 — The Twelve Etchings from Nature · 30  
‘Refused’: the exhibition of At the Piano, Courbet, and Whistler’s move to London · 33*

Chapter two: Efforts and frustrations in London and Paris · 37

*Statistics and figures, 1860–65 · 37 — The English art market of the 1860s · 38 — Whistler’s etchings:  
the empty pot of gold · 45 — Sold and unsold works, exhibitions and a refusal · 57 — For Art’s Sake?  
Aspects of commodification and Aestheticism · 81 — Conclusion: Whistler in the 1860s · 105*

Chapter three: Failures at the Salon and the Academy · 109

*Statistics and figures, 1866–73 · 109 — Not for the market: the seascapes from Valparaiso and  
Trouville · 113 — Whistler in Paris 1865–67 · 117 — James Whistler, R.A.: the dream that did not come  
true · 123 — Assessment of a trajectory · 142*

PART 2 – THE (IN)DEPENDENT ARTIST: THE EVOLUTION AND  
INTERRUPTION OF A NEW CAREER PATH IN THE 1870S

Chapter four: Between the market and patronage · 149

*Statistics and figures, 1870–79* · 149 — *Supply: Whistler's painting under market conditions* · 151  
*Distribution and visibility: Whistler's exhibitions in the 1870s* · 176 — *Demand: patrons and  
customers* · 203 — *Printmaking: commercial ploy in times of crisis?* · 229 — *Whistler and the artist's  
house in London* · 243 — *Conclusion: Whistler in the 1870s* · 247

Chapter five: *Whistler v. Ruskin* · 249

*Whistler at the 1877 Grosvenor Gallery exhibition* · 249 — *Ruskin's article in Fors Clavigera* · 252 —  
*Law and art in the proceedings* · 257 — *The economic sub-text of the trial* · 306 — *After the trial* · 333

PART 3 – THE MODERN ARTIST: WHISTLER'S RE-INVENTION OF DISTINCTIVE ART IN THE 1880S

Chapter six: Popularity and exclusivity: the 1880s · 341

*'Art is upon the Town!'* — *Beauty's 'bandwagon effect'* · 342 — *'A rebours' – distinction and Whistler's  
avant-garde claim* · 356 — *The paradoxical economy of art* · 373 — *Conclusion: Whistler's distinctive  
redefinition of art* · 379

Chapter seven: National and international markets · 381

*Statistics and figures, 1879–89* · 381 — *Whistler in London: dealers and institutions* · 385 —  
*Whistler's exhibitions in Paris* · 441 — *Whistler in New York and the American art market* · 458 —  
*The internationalisation of the art markets: a competition of nations* · 471 — *A cosmopolitan artist  
distinguishing the markets* · 486

## PART 4 – THE LIVING OLD MASTER: REPUTATION AND MARKET VALUE IN THE 1890S

## Chapter eight: Constructing a reputation for history · 491

*Official distinctions: instant reputation* · 492 — *Purchases for public collections* · 495 —  
*The retrospective exhibition at the London Goupil Gallery, 1892* · 502 — *The living old master and the art market of the 1890s* · 506 — *Collecting for art history: Whistler and Charles L. Freer* · 515 —  
*Conclusion: the breakthrough* · 520

## Chapter nine: Playing the market · 523

*Statistics and figures, 1886–1903* · 523 — *Reactions and interventions: Whistler in the market in the 1890s* · 526 — *Reproducing fame: Whistler's printing activities in the 1890s* · 566 — *Conclusion: Whistler's cultural capitalisation* · 589

## Conclusion: A modern career · 591

## Appendix: Exchange rates · 597

## Abbreviations · 598

## Notes · 599

## Bibliography · 712

## List of illustrations · 746

## Picture credits · 754

## Acknowledgements · 755

## Index · 757