

## Preface

Despite the continuing global pandemic and the imposition of new conditions for teaching and research, there have been some upsides to what can only be described as the end of the academic world as we knew it. Working via Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Cisco Webex platforms has become part of the daily routine, and what once seemed to be a rather sterile and uninspiring interface has become a useful way of collapsing time zones and meeting colleagues from all corners of the globe. There have been some really excellent and enjoyable online decadence events, including a series of *Zooming Decadence* seminars hosted by the Centre of Victorian Studies at Exeter University (UK), 'Jeudis' on Oscar Wilde and on Vernon Lee (run by the British Association of Decadence Studies), a NAVSA roundtable on *Decolonising Decadence* in spring 2021, and a series of ground-breaking seminars on contemporary decadent live art and performance as part of the AHRC-funded [Staging Decadence: Decadent theatre in the long twentieth century](#) project at Goldsmiths, University of London, not to mention a smorgasbord of single online events on topics as various as Djuna Barnes' mushrooms, Salomé on Sunset Boulevard, Emilia Pardo Bazán's Anglophilia, and 'aesthetic' theatre costume in the long nineteenth century. Leaning back on our office chairs waiting for the host to start the meeting, sipping a Dirty Mabel, perhaps, or a Long Blue Shadow, courtesy of Melanie Hawthorne's [Renée Vivien Cocktail Hour](#), we have been able to travel without actually going anywhere at all.

This issue of *Volupté* captures the increasingly internationalist flavour of decadence studies bringing different material, theories, and perspectives to bear on a field that not too long ago was a subsidiary of late-Victorian and fin-de-siècle literary-historical studies. Literary history remains the principal driver of decadence studies, but the field is shifting and expanding with new research that cuts across disciplines and subjects, languages and cultures. As the presentations at the *Decolonising Decadence* roundtable demonstrated, this is the moment, perhaps, for reflecting on a more 'diffusionist model' of decadence studies, one that de-centres the European origin story, stimulating multiple origin stories that explore decadence in terms of networks, patterns, delineations, vectors, and influences that resonate across different geographical and temporal zones. Contributors to this issue invite us to see decadence in precisely those heterogeneous terms and from the comfort of our screens we travel from the colonial West Indies to the polar cold of the *Purple Cloud*, from Machen's occult, oriental London to the Antipodes. Ends of worlds indeed.

Our creative section (thanks to Jess Gossling for her initiative) is a fulsome bilingual celebration of a figure who will undoubtedly always remain at the heart of decadence studies, whether it moves along traditional literary-historical or emergent 'diffusionist-model' axes: Charles Baudelaire. We have gathered together thirty-one appreciations of his life and work, ranging from personal and pedagogical reflections by writers, artists, fellow-poets, and teachers, focused, critical ruminations on particular poems, themes, and uses of language, and creative responses, including André Naffis-Sahely's translation of Abdellatif Laâbi's *Casablanca Spleen*, and Adam Thorpe's short story 'Disturbance'. Our 'Baudelaire Appreciations' paint rich and complex portraits of the man, his work, and lasting influence.

Huge thanks to our contributors, to Sam Branton and Peter Coles for allowing us to reproduce their artworks, and to our Guest Editor, Ellis Hanson. Best wishes from the *Volupté* team to all our readers for a safe summer.

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Editor-in-Chief  
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