

## Preface

This issue is the second to be focused on a single figure. Our inaugural issue published in 2018 was dedicated to Arthur Symons and now, four years later, we are delighted to be able to devote the current issue to another prolific and versatile writer and critic, Vernon Lee (Violet Paget, 1856-1935). As Patricia Pulham and Sally Blackburn-Daniels acknowledge in their guest-editors' Introduction, scholarship on Lee has grown in leaps and bounds over the last twenty years and Lee is now accessible to 'a whole new generation of readers and students and prompting scholarship not only on her fiction but on other genres in which she wrote, as well as fictionalized versions of Lee in contemporary fiction' (p. ii).

Readers of *Volupté* will know that the facility to work across genres and disciplines, within and beyond traditional boundaries, and including critical and creative perspectives, is at the heart of the journal's mission. This issue is a Vernluptéan celebration of all these things, with critical contributions that serve to underline the dynamic and enriching complementarities in Lee's work, between music, musicology, and the essay form (Fraser Riddell, Michael Craske), dance, drama, and politics in *The Ballet of the Nations* (Sally Blackburn-Daniels, Marco Canani), and orientalism, politics, and nationhood (Patricia Pulham). In the creative section, Meta Witte offers a selection of reproductions of acrylic paintings depicting the fantastical world of Lee's fairy-tale 'Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady'. All of these contributions speak in different ways to the concept of 'interart aestheticism' that underpins Lee's work. A legacy of Pater's decadent aestheticism, 'interart aestheticism' glories in connections, influences, and relationships, and in Lee's work it presents *personally* as a 'bricolage constructed artfully from her influences, reading, recollections, knowledge, and experience' (p. v).

A round of applause for our BADS Essay Prize winners. We publish two essays this year, which were declared as 'exemplary in portraying the persistence of decadence'. In 'Hamlet and Decadent Reimagination', Conner Moore explores the ways in which Shakespeare's early modern revenge play can be reconceptualized within the imaginative framework of decadence. And in 'Screwball', E O Gill deploys the Hollywood notion of screwball comedy as a filmic methodology which brings together hyper-visual sexual play in everyday suburban environments. 'While "Hamlet and the Decadent Imagination" confirms the ever-present nature of decadence', our judges declared, 'especially as it is reimagined in the context of Shakespeare's classic, "Screwball", both the essay and installation, reminds one of the "aliveness" and experimental edge of decadence today.'

We also publish the winning translation of the BADS Translation Prize, an extract from Leopold Andrian's novella *The Garden of Knowledge* (1895), translated by Francesca Bugliani Knox. This was praised for the way in which it 'conveys the echoes of fairy-tale and captures a balance between archaism and archly modern tones that seems distinctive. It also manages a good tonal balance, rendering the strangeness of the original material and without becoming too stilted.' *The Garden of Knowledge* will be the inspiration and source text of an exciting new immersive production that premieres at the Austrian Cultural Forum in London in February 2023.

Finally, festive gratitude to our Guest Editors Patricia Pulham and Sally Blackburn-Daniels, and our BADS Essay Prize and Translation judges. The *Volupté* team wish all our readers unwholesome joy in 2023.

Jane Desmarais  
Editor-in-Chief  
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