

Nele Lüttmann

German architects in Britain and Ireland 1700-1750

Following an MA in British Art at the University of York and several years of employment in the arts and heritage sector, I was awarded the Irish Research Council Advanced Laureate Project Scholarship and am now a member of the CRAFTVALUE team. My PhD research project [“German architects in Britain and Ireland 1700–1750”](https://craftvalue.org/) will explore the work of James Gibbs’s draughtsman Johann Gottlieb Borlach in Britain and of the highly esteemed architect Richard Castle in Ireland. I am particularly interested in early eighteenth-century architectural drawing and the education of draughtsmen in Europe at that time as well as the international diplomatic and artistic networks which facilitated the migration of artists and building professionals from Germany to Britain in that century.

Summary

The working title of the thesis “German Architects in England and Ireland 1700-1750” reflects its focus on building specialists from the Continent, who travelled to England and Ireland and brought with them their skills, techniques and design conventions they had come to know in Europe. This led to a cultural connection and exchange of local and external material culture and arts. I will tell the story of the two Germans, Richard Castle († 1751) and Johann Gottlieb Borlach (* 1691), who came to the British Isles in the first half of the eighteenth century and became significant figures within the building industries of those countries. Castle’s Baroque-Palladian buildings with their highly decorative interior designs of Continental origin became social and political statements of power, wealth and authority for his Irish clients and were formative for the architecture of several generations. Details about his early life and training remain however largely unknown. The exact trajectory of Borlach, a Dresden trained joiner, later draughtsman for the prestigious British architect James Gibbs, is to a large extent still obscure, but it is beyond doubt that he produced a significant amount of the office’s architectural drawings.

<https://craftvalue.org/>

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