
About the Cover



Piazza Trilussa, Roma 2004

Cover image © William Wylie; photograph courtesy of the artist.

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Umberto Eco loved fakes: fake manuscripts, fake histories, fake works of art. When it comes to art, he avowed, authenticity is overrated, and the ‘amalgamation of fake and authentic’ will often result from catastrophe, apocalypse, barbarism – or overly awkward juxtapositions of past and present:

But what would happen to the visitor who, a thousand years hence, visited these mementoes, ignorant of a Europe long since vanished? Something like what happens to the visitor in today’s Rome when he walks from the great insurance company’s Palazzo in Piazza Venezia, past the Victor Emmanuel monument, down Mussolini’s Via dei Fori Imperiali, to the Colosseum and then to the patches of the Servian walls trapped inside the Termini railroad station. (Eco, 1986, 36)

It is just such an imaginative glimpse of the trans-temporalized city that inspires our selection of a cover image for this special issue of *postmedieval*. American



photographer William Wylie's *Piazza Trilussa, Roma (2004)*, from a series of black and white images of the Roman streetscape, captures the famous seventeenth-century fountain in the piazza from the side, emphasizing pitted bricks and stones wet with rain or spill-off rather than the imposing elevation of the fountain's monumental façade, visible from the Ponte Sisto over the Tiber. The skewed view of the grand Borghese fountain connects the edifice instead to the narrow medieval streets of surrounding Trastevere, an urban district alive with the kinds of polyphonic historical resonances that have long appealed to writers of historical fiction, before and after Eco.

Reference

Eco, U. 1986. *Travels in Hyperreality*. New York: Harcourt.

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