

## Mary Bouquet – Abstract

### The Interim Museum: Putting Objects in a Fresh Light

Mega-renovations have been identified as one of the globalising trends in contemporary museums: the Louvre and the British Museum and, more recently, the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, are among the institutions that have undergone such renewal. The decision to renovate architect Pierre Cuypers' 1885 building was taken in the late 1990s. The museum was closed in December 2003, when the building was emptied and demolition work began on the constructions that had completely filled Cuypers' inner courts over the years. The explicit aim was to create a new vision of architecture and cultural heritage – a move supported by the government (as one of its architectural *grands projets*) and with a budget of €375m. Renovation involves long-term closure; therefore it is pertinent to ask what becomes of such a major national institution when it is closed. How does this renovation process correspond with Clifford's prescient remarks about the de-centering of established museums – so that they become 'sites of passage' – resulting from new collaborations and alliances? The paper will examine some of the spaces of cultural encounter created in the interim museum, and evaluate the process of renovation as a form of museal involution.