Chapter 3

THE SPLENDOUR OF COLOUR, LIGHT AND DARKNESS PERTAINING TO ROMANTIC ART EXPRESSION

"He has filled them with skill to do every kind of work done by an artisan or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen, or by a weaver—by any sort of artisan or skilled designer."

Exodus 35:35 (NRSV)

1. INTRODUCTION

In every culture, people reacts emotionally to colours and most of the times without realising it. Psychologists have come to the conclusion that "warm" colours (red, yellow and orange) stimulate, while "cold" colours (blue, indigo and violet) soothe and relax. Interpretations about these conclusions may vary from culture to culture, but colour symbolism is universal.

1.1 HISTORY OF ART IN THREE COLOURS

For every human being, colour has a deep and significant meaning. Three colours stand out above all the other colours and in the hand of artists, these colours, stir our emotions, change the way we behave and it can even alter the course of History.

Fig. 401: Gold Bars

1.1.1 GOLD

1.1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Gold is the most attracting and captivating colour of all. Throughout the millennia, gold were used for the things we held most sacred and reflected in our works of art. From the fine arts of Icon painting to the dark arts of Alchemy. Gold, brilliant warm radiant yellowness.

1.1.1.2 ANCIENT EGYPTIANS

The desire to honour the sun like gold is as old as civilization itself. The ancient Egyptians were unique. They were one civilization that honoured gold like no other. According to the Egyptian hieroglyphs, dwarfs were depicted as gold smiths, they were believed to have magical powers. Christian artists through millennia used gold to bring themselves closer to gods. In the Renaissance, heaven seems to loose its monopoly on gold and gold become a potent force in more worldly affairs.

Fig.402: Hieroglyphs, depicting Dwarfs as goldsmiths.

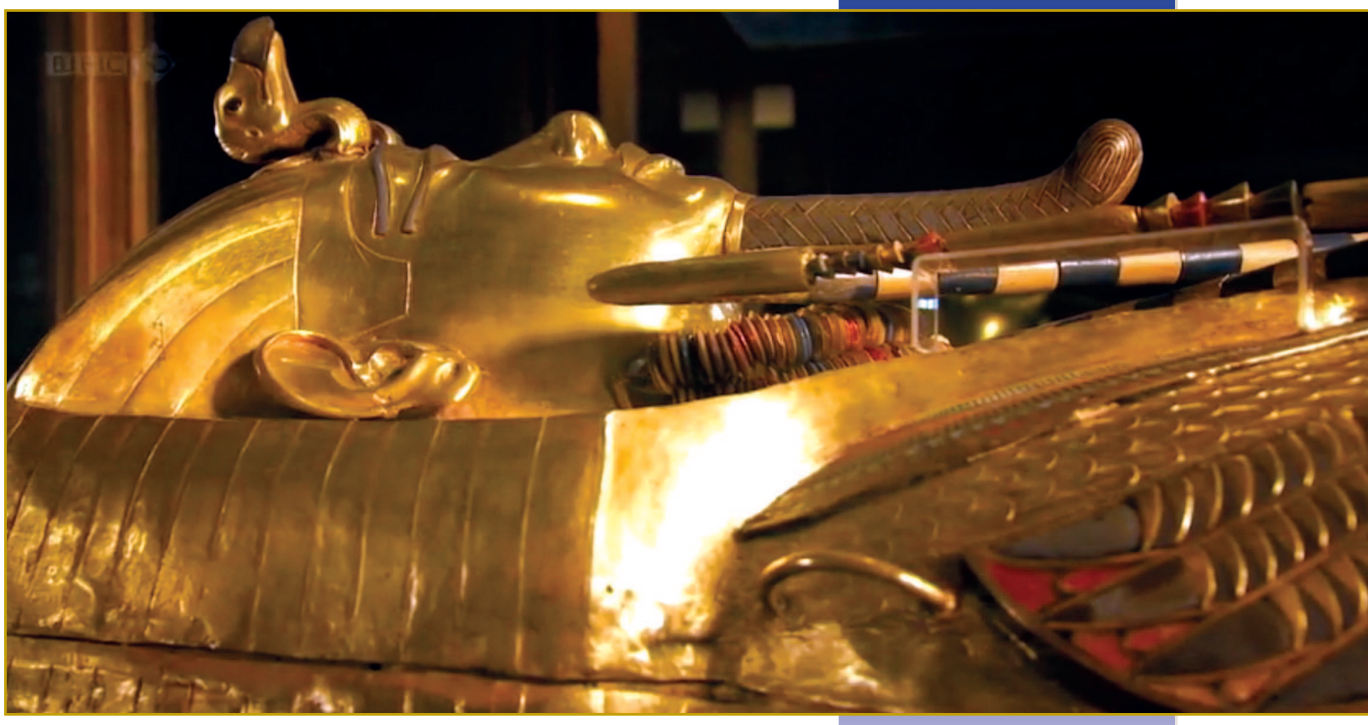


Fig. 403: Tuthankhamun's Sarcophagus.

Fig. 404: Detail of Tuthankhamun's death mask.

In the 20th Century an Archeologist, Howard Carter, had the vision to bring the hidden and forgotten treasure that were lost for millennia, back to light. He came to Egypt to search for gold and made the biggest discovery of all time. In 1922, he broke into the tomb of Tutankhamun.

"So gorgeous was the sight that met our eyes, everywhere were the glint of gold."

The golden treasures of Tutankhamun was never meant to be seen by human eyes. Carter removed them from their resting place and took them to the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. It contained Tutankhamun's throne, jewellery of every sort, golden slippers and the huge Sarcophagus, the largest gold object ever found in Egypt.

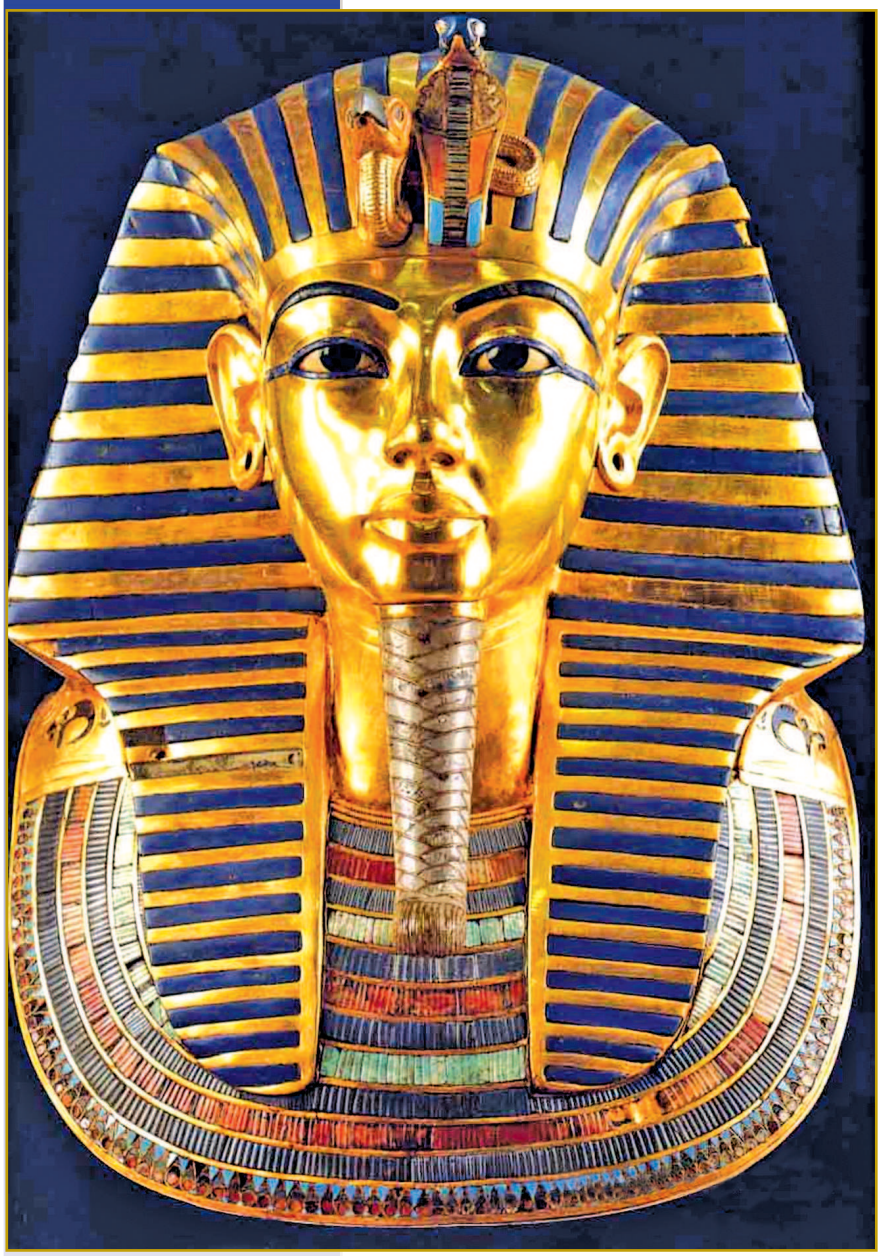


Fig. 405: Tuthankhamun's death mask.

The most amazing object made by the Egyptians is the death mask of Tutankhamun, made of 11kg of solid gold and it was to sit right on the face of the dead Pharaoh. The craftsmanship is exquisite, the gold is inlaid with precious stones, with lapis, feldspar and canelia.

Fig. 406: Bull's head found on musical instrument, harp. This Bull's head is out of solid gold.

The eyes modelled with obsidian and quarts. The question asked, is why was everything in gold? Tutankhamun believed, just as his contemporaries, that gold had magical powers. Here is a material that had the same colour as the powerful sun, it never tarnishes, never corrupt, never rust and always shines for eternity. The desire to worship the sun god had pushed the Egyptians to the greatest heights of craftsmanship. The Civilizations that followed, still used gold to reveal the divine.

Rome was the sight for the Revolution, when all Pagan gods were banished, and replaced with a single Creator. It was 312 AD, Roman Emperor Constantine, saw the light. For a rich and powerful ruler, his change-over to Christianity, was a miracle in the happening, because his new religion spoke directly to the poor and the needy. Christianity had its distaste for wealth, for extravagance, for grandiose display. Passage after passage in the Bible condemns those who are seduced by worldly luxuries like gold. *(see Conclusion of the thesis)*

> ***You have seen their detestable things, the filthy idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold, that were among them.***
> ***the Lord will be unwilling to pardon them, for the Lord's anger and passion will smoke against them. All the curses written in this book will descend on them, and the Lord will blot out their names from under heaven.***
>
> ***Deuteronomy 29:17 & 20***

Fig. 407: Pages 336 & 337: The detail of the backrest of an Egyptian gold-plated wooden throne. (overleaf)

Fig. 408.

Fig. 408 & 409:
Top and bottom.
Christ is shown as the first poor God in History.

Fig. 409.

In the earliest Christian Art, Christ is shown as the first poor God in History, a modest and humble Shepherd. But within a few centuries, something strange started to happen.

1.1.1.3 BYZANTINE ICON

Across the Christian world, a new art form emerged that showed how early Christians, who once rejected gold, now, could not resists its attraction. Looking at a Byzantine icon, produced as early as the 5th Century, it is surprising to see how much gold was used.

Fig. 410: Byzantine Icon

Why would this artist use so much gold in this painting in a time that the Christians were continuously renounced from admiring material goods? A possible explanation is that the gold in this painting was not used to portray material things but it is actually to portray immaterial things. It's perhaps the most immaterial thing of them all. No other colour, no other substance, responded and reflected the light quite like gold. So, for the Christians **gold became the colour of the light of God**. The golden light of icon paintings was intoxicating and the Christians were desperate for more of it. They yearned to be fully emerged in the divine light of Heaven.

Fig. 410a: Detail from Icon.

Fig.411: Abbot Menas with Christ, an example of Coptic art

Fig. 412: Basilica of St Vitali in Revenna, Italy

1.1.1.4 BASILICA OF SAINT VITALI

The Basilica of Saint Vitali in Revenna was built by the Byzantine Emperor, Justinian, in the 6th Century AD, is a masterpiece of early Christian Art. Inside, the walls are covered with gold. This gold is applied with one of the great inventions of the Byzantine Age. They used tesserae with gold leaf, in which case the glass pieces were flatter, with two glass pieces sandwiching the gold. Tens of thousands of gold tesserae's is placed all across the walls and it is amazing what they do. They trap all of the light of this church and the glass like a kind of a lense amplifies that light.

It's not the monotonous, unchanging, unblinding light of electricity. The light sparkles, it glistens and glitters. The people must have felt as if they were looking right into the Kingdom of Heaven. They have used the colour ingeniously to bring themselves closer to their God. For millennia, Christian artists used gold to feel His presence. But in the Renaissance, Heaven seems to loose its monopoly in gold, and gold became a potent force in worldly affairs.

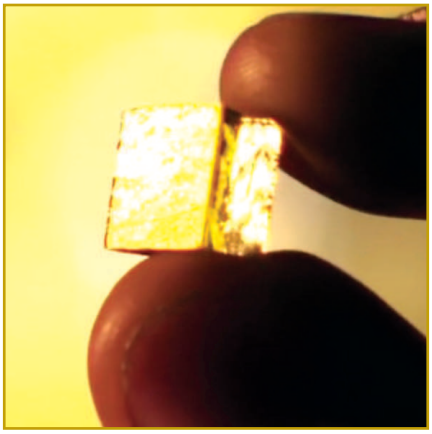


Fig. 413: The Byzantines used tesserae with gold leaf, in which case the glass pieces were flatter, with two glass pieces sandwiching the gold. This produced a golden reflection emanating from in between the tesserae as well as their front, causing a far richer and more luminous effect than even plain gold leaf would create.

Fig 414: Basilica of St Vitali Detail of mosaic.

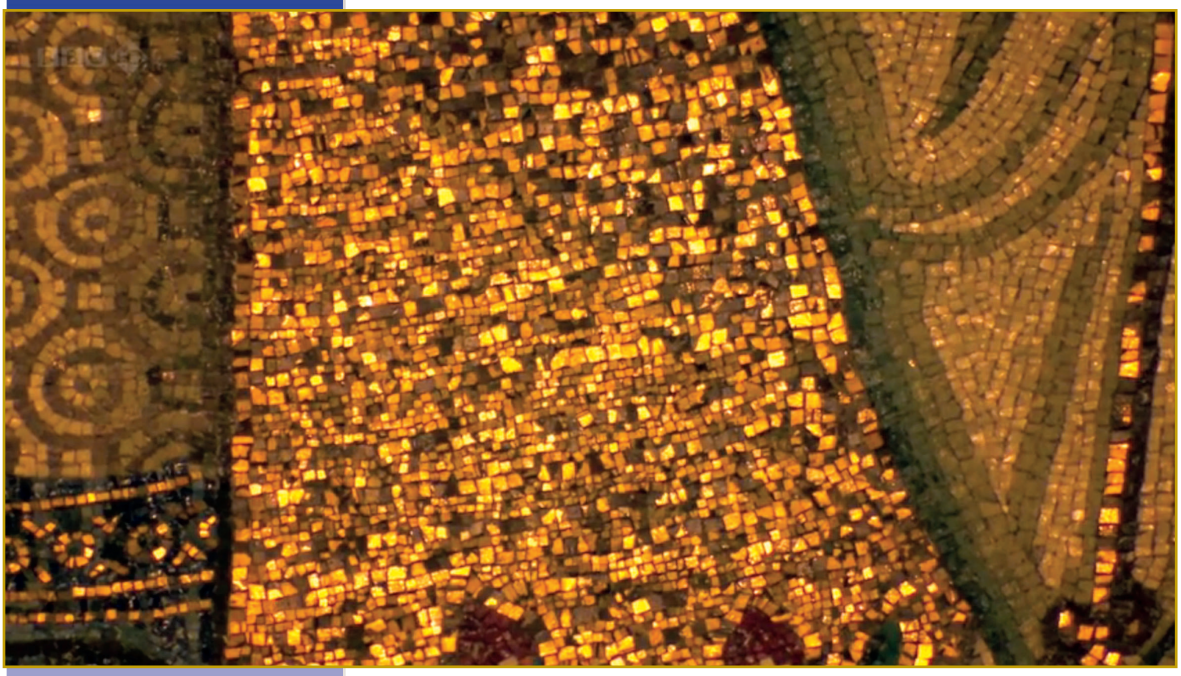


Fig 415a: Basilica of St Vitali Detail of mosaic.

Fig. 415b: Interior of the Basilica of St Vitali in Revenna, Italy

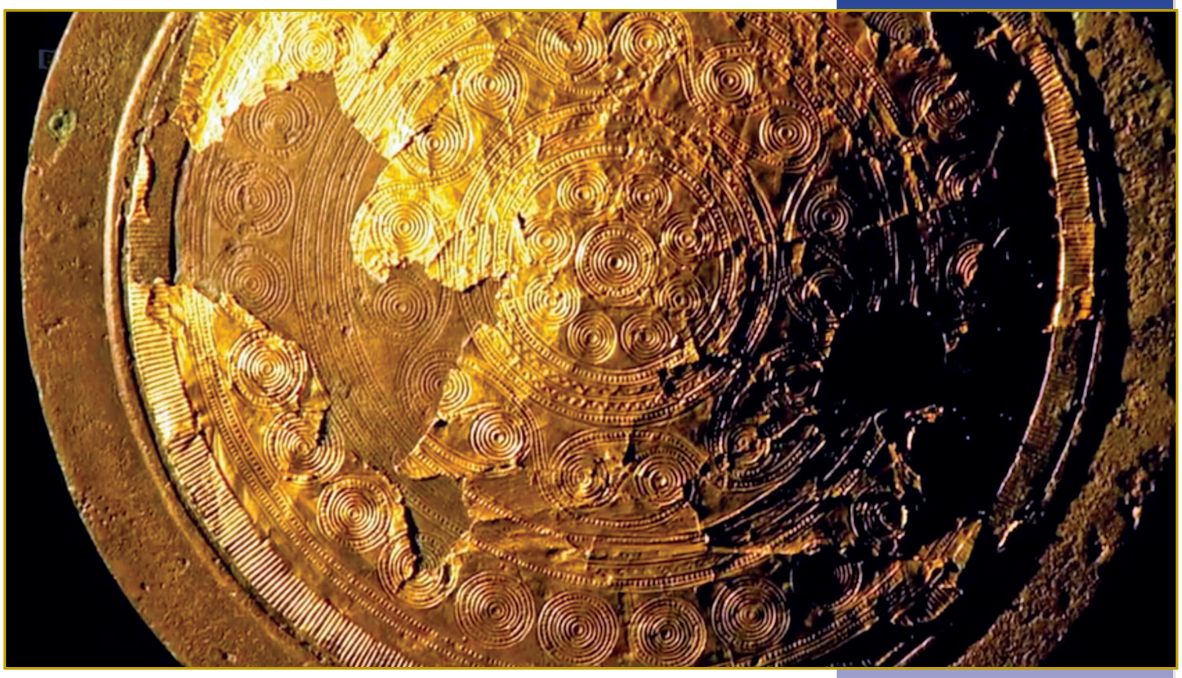


Fig 416a: Detail of disc.

Fig. 416b: Bronze Horse, dragging the disc behind him. The disc resembles the sun.

Fig. 417: The Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore, main church of Florence, Italy. Il Duomo di Firenze, as it is ordinarily called, was begun in 1296 in the Gothic style to the design of Arnolfo di Cambio

1.1.1.5 BENVENUTO CELLINI

Cellini worked two years on the salt set he had to design for King Frances II. All the different techniques that can be applied in goldsmith work was used for this piece of artwork. The piece was perfect.

Fig. 418: Benvenuto Cellini

In Renaissance Florence, the Ponte Vecchio, was the great centre of gold work. The finest goldsmiths would line up along this narrow street. From here they sell their exquisite gold wear to Kings and Queens and all that is wealthy in the world. When they arrived here, most wanted to get their hands on the work of Benvenuto Cellini. He was the greatest goldsmith of them all and the only goldsmith of whom a statue was made.

"Working with gold, shaping it to make a unique piece, is always an intense emotional process. It's almost like forging a bond between the metal, the artist and the person who receives the piece. As a Florentine, Cellini left behind a great legacy and the duty to continue the tradition of working with gold, with the passion and perseverance of the great Florentine artistic tradition."

Fig. 419:
Below: Detail of salt set

Fig. 420: Augustus the Strong

1.1.1.6 AUGUSTUS THE STRONG

In the dark forest of Eastern Europe, lived a Ruler which obsession for gold, would turn him from the fine art of the goldsmith, to the dark art of Alchemy. He was Augustus the Strong, and in 1694 he was made Elector of Saxony. In Dresden, the capitol of his Kingdom is an Equestrian Statue of Augustus himself and they called it The Golden Rider. He wanted to be seen as the greatest ruler of the great rulers of European History and he knew that the secret to achieve his ambition was gold. In Dresden there is more of his relics in gold.

Johann Melchior Dinglinger was one of Europe's greatest goldsmiths, whose major works for the elector of Saxony, Augustus the Strong, survived in the Grünes Gewölbe (the "Green Vaults"), Dresden. Dinglinger was the last goldsmith to work on the grand scale of Benvenuto Cellini and Wenzel Jamnitzer, of the last few of whose large-scale works in precious materials have survived. His work carries on in a Mannerist tradition into the "Age of Rococo". It took Dinglinger 7 years to build *The Royal Household at Delhi* (1701-1708). This piece was the closest Augustus could come to real splendour. Augustus, however would hatch a plan a dark plot to fill his coffers with unlimited amounts of gold.

Fig. 421: Royal Household at Delhi (1701-1708

Fig. 421a

Fig. 421b

Fig. 421a-d: Jewellery detail taken from The Royal Household of Delhi by Dinglinger.

Fig. 421c

Fig. 421d

In 1701 he was told of a teenager, deep in Prussia, who has achieved something that nobody has ever achieved before and which will eventually bring Augustus's dream of unlimited gold into reality. In 1701 he rescued the young alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger, who had fled from the court of the king of Prussia, Fredrick I, Augustus expected Böttger to produce gold for him as he had boasted he could. Augustus imprisoned Böttger and tried to force him to reveal the secret of manufacturing gold. He performed the miracle of transmutation, turning lesser metals into glittering gold. Augustus wasn't sure to believe it or not and to be on the safe side, he had Böttger kidnapped and threw him into the darkest dungeons beneath his castle. Böttger had to manufacture day and night to bring about the gold that Augustus wanted.

After 12 years of imprisonment, Böttger, failed to conjure up a single speck of gold. Augustus had one golden object, that capture the failure of his grand ambitions. It's a sunmask that he liked wearing at his many balls and pageants. Dinglinger modelled it exactly according to Augusts's features, showing exactly what Augustus looked like. The mask becomes so powerful and revealing that it expresses that desperate desire to enter the Pantheon of the great gods and the great kings.

Fig. 422: Augustus's copper sun mask with a thin layer of gold plating.

The truth is underneath that glowing mask, he wasn't rich enough or powerful enough to be one of them. That is why this mask is made of copper with a little bit of gold on top of it. Augustus's vision of unlimited gold had failed to materialize but in little over a hundred years, the alchemist's dream would come true and this miraculous discovery took place in Burmingham. In the 19th Century, Birmingham was by far the most inventive place on the planet. The most important invention during this time is the promise to bring gold to everyone.

Fig. 423: Elkington's electroplating "Fools" gold, Treasures.

1.1.1.7 GEORGE RICHARDS ELKINGTON

This brainchild was the invention of George Richards Elkington. George Richards Elkington was a manufacturer from Birmingham, England. He patented the first commercial electroplating process. He was a typical product of **Industrial Burmingham**. He was, inventive, productive and obsessed. Elkington's "Fools" gold had the Victorian public enchanted, because now they do not have to just look but they can now own a little bit of gold for the very first time. This was the most revolutionary technology and what it did, democratised gold into ordinary people's homes and Elkington's ingenious technology allowed him to make perfect and exquisite treasures.

As his electroplating empire expanded, one city was hooked on Elkington's golden wares. In 1844, he was visited by Prince Albert who heard about Elkington's achievements. He was very impressed and took the rose that Elkington electroplated for him home to Buckingham Palace.

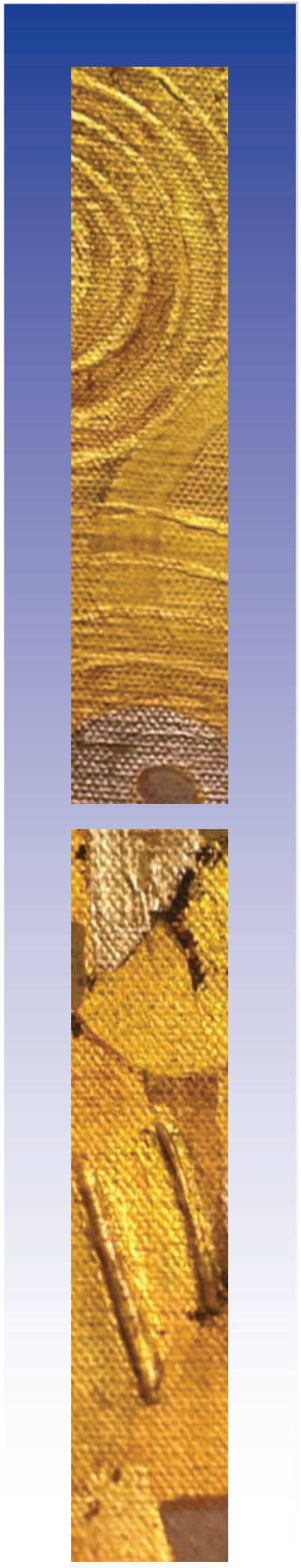
The dawn of the 20th Century was Vienna's gilded age. Even as the Austrian Empire crumbled, their lust for gold remains but here lived an artist determined to make gold sacred once again.

Fig. 424: Prince Alfred (Alfred Ernest Albert) (1844-1900) Duke of Edinburgh, United Kingdom.

1.1.1.8 GUSTAV KLIMT

Gustav Klimt produced a series of glittering paintings, but one of them shines brighter than all the rest, “The Kiss”, known as the last word on love. This painting tells us just as much about gold. He has thrown on any golden substance he could find onto one canvas and in fact there is more than eight different kinds of gold leaf on this picture and every single thing is applied in a different way. He has put some gold leaf down flat and other times he put gold onto bits of plaster to get jewel like textures. It’s almost if you are opening a bag of jewels and look inside to see what treasures are inside.

Fig. 425: Gustav Klimt, The Kiss.



He looked back at the great Egyptian sun gods. The great Byzantine mosaics. He had been to Revenna, he had seen the fantastic mosaics. He is drawing on decorative gold work of the Renaissance, like Chellini. Why is Klimt doing this? Why so much gold, so many ways, so many references and meanings? It is part of his desperate attempt to bring back gold from the brink, because he has lived through a period where gold has become debased, its become cheap, its become tacky and he tries to say, gold is the most precious thing we have. Klimt believed that gold must be devoted to the most important thing – love. The idea was beautiful, but today Klimt's grand ambition has been undone by the popularity of his work. Endlessly reproduced, "The Kiss" has become just another golden idol of our consumer century.

Now, most of us can have a little bit of gold in our lives and our obsession with it remains intent. The reason why we are so obsessed with gold, gold reflects the things that every society holds most sacred. For the Egyptians it was the sun and the after life, for the Christians it was the light of God and for the Renaissance Kings it was power and status and for Gustav Klimt it was love and sex. The gold underneath the Bank of England, suggests that for us, the most sacred thing is money. When this beautiful substance is locked away, seen only as a number, as a price, as a statistic on a spread sheet, we can't help feeling that somehow gold has lost its shine.[1]

1 BBC Experimental Colour Transmission – A History of Art in Three Colours – Part 1

Fig. 426: Elgin Greek Head, in original colour.

1.1.2 WHITE

1.1.2.1 INTRODUCTION

White was once the honourable colour of ancient marbles. Today white is seen as a colour of integrity, cleanliness and innocence. In the History of Art, white isn't so pure as we think. The white may just be the darkest colour of them all. In this thesis the story of how the purest colour became corrupted will be portrayed. From the defined colour of the Elgin Marbles to the pristine pots of Josiah Wedgwood, we will reveal how white became to symbolize the Enlightened world. In this modern age this once virtuous colour is used by artists, architects and sculptors, to divide, to control and finally to conquer.

Fig. 427: Elgin Greek Head, stripped from colour.

Fig. 428: Elgin Greek Head, in original colour.

Elgin Marbles were a set of Ancient Greek sculptures that was once part of the Parthenon in Athens and they were widely seen as the bedrock of Western Art. Dr James Fox begins his exploration of white with an act of vandalism that took place at the British Museum in 1938. Like many ancient sculptures, the Elgin Marbles were once painted in rich colours, which over the Millennia, had washed away. Yet at one point we became convinced that these sculptures have always been white, and now they were made whiter than they have ever been before.

Fig. 429: Joseph Devine

1.1.2.2 JOSEPH DEVINE

The Museum Director put a stop to the unauthorised cleaning immediately and lodge an enquiry. The Culprit was a man called Joseph Devine, an influential art dealer who had recently funded a new exhibition space for the marbles. Fortunately they were caught before they could vandalise them all, but their efforts can still be seen to this day. So why was Devine so adamant that these sculptures should be white? “The whitewashing of Antiquity.” That responsibility lies with J.J. Winkleman.

1.1.2.3 J.J. WINKLEMAN

J.J. Winkleman was born during the 18th Century in rural Germany and was the son of a cobbler. But he had bigger dreams and at the age of 30 headed off to start a new life in Dresden. One day he stumbled across a store room full of ancient white statues; he fell instantly in love, and spent years searching for more statues and writing essays in praise of them. In 1755 he was employed as the ‘Keeper of Antiquities’ at the Vatican and one day he found the most perfect example of ancient sculpture: Apollo Belvedere (300BCE). This title they gave to him was Raphael’s title before. To Winkleman, this statue was the embodiment of perfection, and it was also pure white. For Winkleman white represented beauty, health, simplicity and **reason**, and he believed that if society could take on these ideas it would become a more successful society.

Fig. 430: JJ Winkleman

How sophisticated the ancient Greeks were can be seen in this sculpture of Belvedere. The white of the statue speak to man intellectually and aesthetically. The writings of Winkleman led to the worshipping of antiquity that still continues today. Everywhere around mankind, buildings are being built in the classical style, with pillars and porticos, and largely they are white. Of course what Winkleman didn't know and we now do is that Roman sculpture and buildings used to be painted in bright colours; most had just faded by the time he got round to seeing them. Our respect of white antiquity is based on a myth dreamt up by one man – quite a legacy. Winkleman's whiteness of ancient art may have been idiosyncractic, but hugely influential.

Fig. 431: A group of white Elgin Marbles.

Fig. 432: Apollo Belvedere

1.1.2.4 JOSIAH WEDGWOOD

According to Prof. David Walten of Cambridge University, antique sculpture,architecture and law are hugely indebted to Winkleman. An avid disciple of JJ Winkleman was Josiah Wedgwood – he was a philanthropist and educator and he brought ideas and the philosophy of Winkleman into the heart of the enlightenment. Wedwood were an Antiquarian and Scientist – a supported inventor of the French Revolution and American Independance. A predecessor of Darwin for the abolition of slavery. English pottery in the 18th century was coarse and awkward in earthy colours and Wedgwood thought it was horrific. He wanted to push his idea of good taste into the public consciousness.

Fig. 433: Josiah Wedgwood

Fig. 434: Wedgwood produced a series of white portrait medallions

Fig. 435: Scenes from Antiquity in flawless white.

Wedgwood wanted every person to have a piece of antiquity in their home by owning a piece of his classical style white pottery. The secret to perfect white pottery remained a mistery, eluding almost everyone except the Chinese. Yet Josiah Wedgwood was not discouraged. He slaved for years, conducted over 5000 experiments. All of them were recorded in his experiment book. In 1761 he got his breakthrough. Experiment 411, were the perfect white – a good white glaze. This was the first perfect white glaze in the history of the pottery world. It took 250 years for the breakthrough. He calls this sparkling new range, Queens Ware. There was a huge variety. All Neo-classical, with the fluting resembling the columns of the Antique Greek pillars. It was flawless, immaculate whiteness. Wedgwood took this idea of the simplicity of taste and beauty to everyone. White had conquered Europe – thanks to Wedgwood and Winkleman. It gave taste and unity to the people.

Fig. 436: The first perfect white pottery in Europe.

Fig. 437: The sparkling new range, called Queens Ware.

Fig. 438: Neo-classical style with fluting, resembllng the columns of the Antique Greek pillars.

1.1.2.5 JAMES ABBOT McNEILL WHISTLER

During the mid 19th Century, one man took it upon himself to change the way people looked at white. In 1859, a young man arrived in London to make it as an artist. He was an American from Massachusetts and his name was James McNeill Whistler. He was a snob from a wealthy family and with more money than motivation, Whistler decided upon a career in Art. He was well known for his paintings of the Thames Embankment. According to him, the people in Europe dressed ghastly and eat unmannered and they showed bad taste in art. The Victorian public was hooked on paintings of scenes from stories of myths and legends of Britains past and Tales of courtly love.

Fig. 439: The Thames Embankment

To Whistler, this was repulsive art. He wanted to set himself apart from this and bring in new ideas. He found inspiration in a novel that was published the same year of his arrival in London, "*The Woman in White*", by Wilkie Collins. This book was the sensation of the day. It had spin-offs in all sectors of the public. A popular novel of the time, *The Woman in White* was the catalyst for his exhibition of paintings presenting women in white dresses.

Fig. 440: James McNeill Whistler

The Victorians visited the show expecting to see their realised image of their fantasy woman in white, but what they found confused them.

Fig. 441 & 442: The Victorian public was hooked on paintings of scenes from stories of myths and legends of Britains past and Tales of courtly love.

Fig. 443: Part of the Woman in White Series.

Why is the woman standing on a bear?, What is it with the woman staring in the mirror? Is she sad, is she thinking? Then there is the two woman in white. The left figure is the same woman which were painted in the staring mirror painting. She is unwind on a sofa that is also painted in white. Some were thinking the painting should be about a wedding – if it is a wedding, where is the husband, or was there no wedding at all? Are the two girls representing two ancient Greek goddesses or are they simply two prostitutes in night dresses? The public was desperate to know the answer. Whistler won't give it to them. All he gave them was the title. Each painting was entitled *Symphony in White*, they were simply about different kind of whiteness put together and mix together on a canvas. For that reason it was an elitist painting to divide the Victorian public. To divide between those who don't understand the painting and those who do. Those who didn't understand the painting were pretty much everyone – the working class, the middle class, the establishments. Those who did understand the painting was Whistler and his small group of intellectuals, elite based in Chelsea. **White became the colour of the elitism.**

Fig. 444: Part of the Woman in White Series.

Whistler enjoyed this so much, that white became his signature. He wore white trouser, white waste coats, white jackets and he even had a white curly lock on the front of his hair. He walked white Pomeranians dogs down the street. When he build his own home, he called it surprisingly, “The White House”. But Whistler was not finish, he despised the public so much that confusing them was not enough. He wanted to banish them from the Art scene altogether. Whistler had used white to mock the public: only his close circle of friends understood the meaning of the paintings; **white became the colour of elitism**.

Fig. 445: Woman in White. – No III, 1867

Fig. 446: Exhibition: Venice paintings

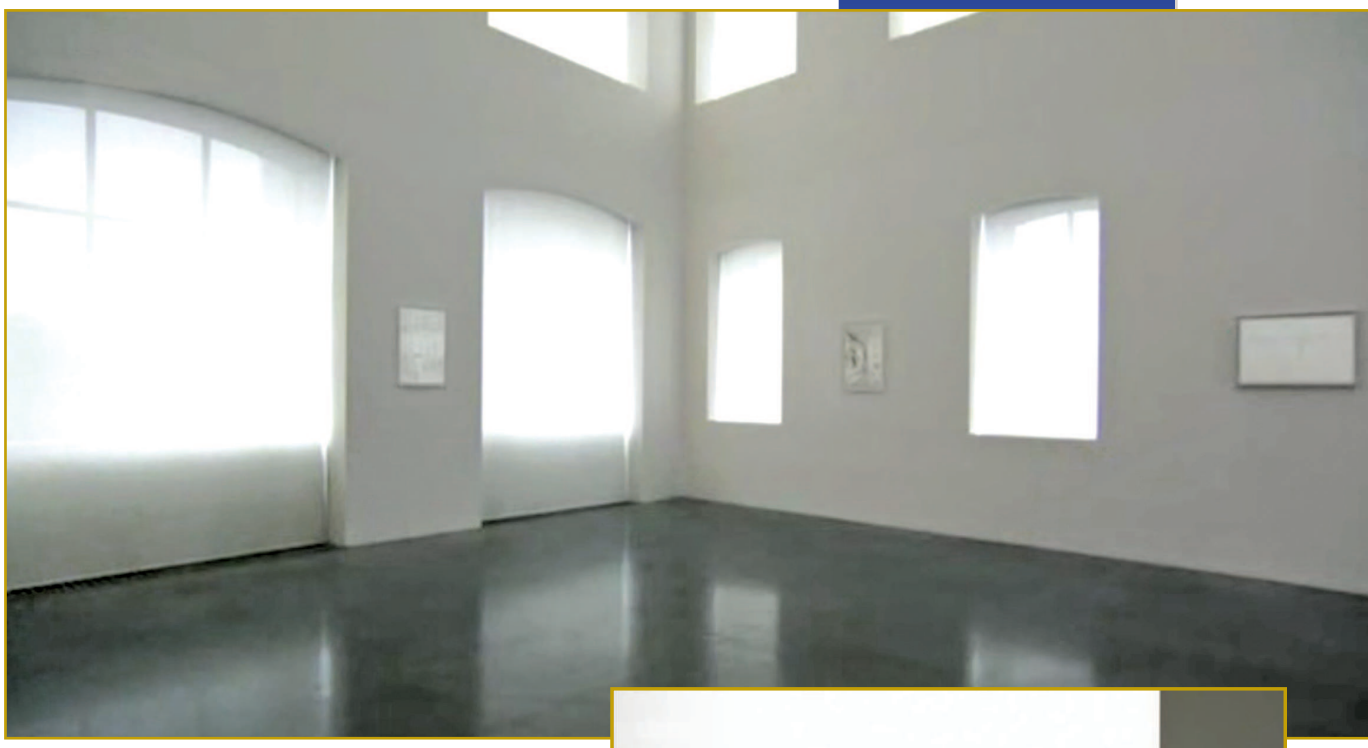


Fig. 447: Chairs to enhance the exhibition space.

In 1883 Whistler took his white obsession further, he opened an exhibition of paintings he had done on a trip to Venice. It wasn't the paintings that were attracting attention but the way he displayed them. The walls were white, the picture frames were white and the artworks were monochrome and he hung them so far apart that the Gallery felt almost empty. But Whistler didn't stop here, he was determined to control the look of his exhibition. He dressed his Gallery attendant in white and the unfortunate man became known as the "poached egg man". For the people who came to this exhibition it must have been a strange and alienated uncomfortable experience. This was exactly what Whistler wanted. The exhibition was entitled, *A Masterpiece of Mischief*.

Fig. 448: 20th Century modern art piece inspired by Whistler's white trend.

This proofed to be his lasting legacy, a defining story in the legacy of Art. The exhibition was hugely influential because what it did was basically pioneer the white gallery space, the white cube that all seems compulsory in today's art world.

It was a powerful legacy, also a divisive legacy, because white gallery spaces like this might be beautiful and elegant but the whiteness here is also cold and sterile and austere. Quite frankly it is completely unhospitable. In Whistler's hands, white had become the cold and exclusive colour of our artistic elite.The modern artist of the 20th Century continue the trend, making white works of art, few but themselves could understand.

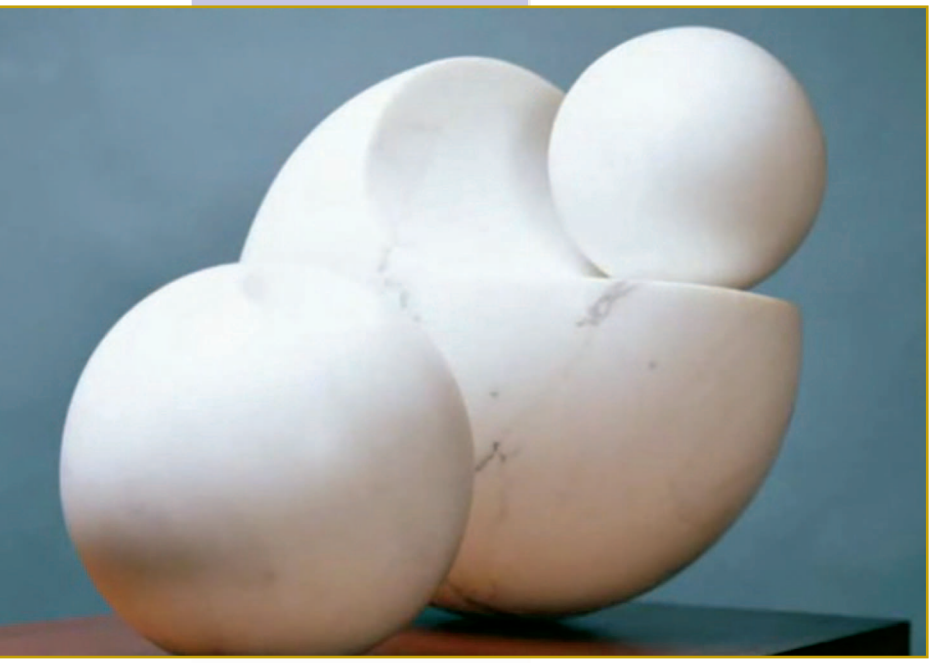


Fig. 449: 20th Century modern art piece inspired by Whistler's white trend.

1.1.2.6 MARCEL DUCHAMP

This fashion for impenetrable art was continued into the 20th Century, by Marcel Duchamp and his infamous Fountain of 1917. In this documentary Dr James Fox comments that when most art critics assess Fountain, they always seem to miss one key aspect of the piece: its whiteness. The fact that the upside down urinal is white, is central to understanding Duchamp's motives. It is supposed to remind us of the marble busts of antiquity, of Wedgwood's porcelain, and it reminds us to mock them. Marcel Duchamp wanted us to question our concept of 'good taste' that has been imposed upon us for centuries. What Duchamp didn't know was how imposed ideology would be vital in the years to come.

Fig. 450: The infamous Fountain by Marcel Duchamp, 1917.

Fig. 451: Le Corbusier whitewashing of architecture.

Fig. 452: Le Corbusier 's 'Law of Ripolin'

1.1.2.7 CHARLES-ÉDOUARD JEANNERET-GRIS

Fig. 453: Le Corbusier

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, better known as Le Corbusier, was an Architect, Designer, Painter, Urban planner, Writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now called modern Architecture. Le Corbusier was a Swiss-born Architect; in 1925 he wrote the purist manifesto *Towards a New Architecture*. The manifesto contained within it the blueprints for a new world and central to Corbusier's plan was the whitewashing of Architecture. He called it the 'Law of Ripolin': "Every citizen is required to replace his hangings, his damasks, his wall-papers, his stencils, with a plain coat of white Ripolin. His home is made clean". Le Corbusier believed that by eradicating all forms of decoration and reminders of the past the citizens would achieve "inner cleanness". Many of Le Corbusier's designs were carried out on apartment blocks and civic buildings. It came as no surprise that in 1934 Mussolini invited Le Corbusier to Rome to talk about this 'new Architecture'.

1.1.2.8 BENITO MUSSOLINI

Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini was an Italian politician, journalist and leader of the National Fascist Party, ruling the country as Prime Minister 1922 to his ousting in 1943. Mussolini wanted to create a new Roman empire, to rip down the ancient monuments and start afresh; he took Le Corbusier's ideas, but never employed him, wanted to take the credit for himself. Mussolini didn't rip down the ancient monuments, but he did create a new city, filled with imposing white stone buildings called Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR). In the spirit of his predecessors, Mussolini also had a massive white marble obelisk erected.

Fig. 454: Carrera Marble used by Mussolini

It was made form a single block of pure Carrera marble – the best in the world – and was transported the old-fashioned way: pulled by hundreds of donkeys on rolling logs. The power trip continued as Mussolini constructed 'The Stadium of the Marbles', a sporting arena surrounded by marble statues of athletes, each one representing an Italian town, each one white.

Fig. 455:
Mussolini's Marble Obelisk

Hitler may have pioneered the obsession with the perfect Aryan race, but Mussolini was quick on the uptake; his marble statues represented an Italy united in perfection, united in fascism, united in racism, with no room for the individual.

Once the colour white represented the quest to enlighten, inspire and improve, but the modern world converted it into a tool to divide, exclude and control. Dr Fox concludes that: "we still think of white as a clean, blank canvas, but it is forever tainted by our impurities." We have all been complicit in the whitewashing of Art history.[2]

2 BBC Experimental Colour Transmission – A History of Art in Three Colours – Part 2

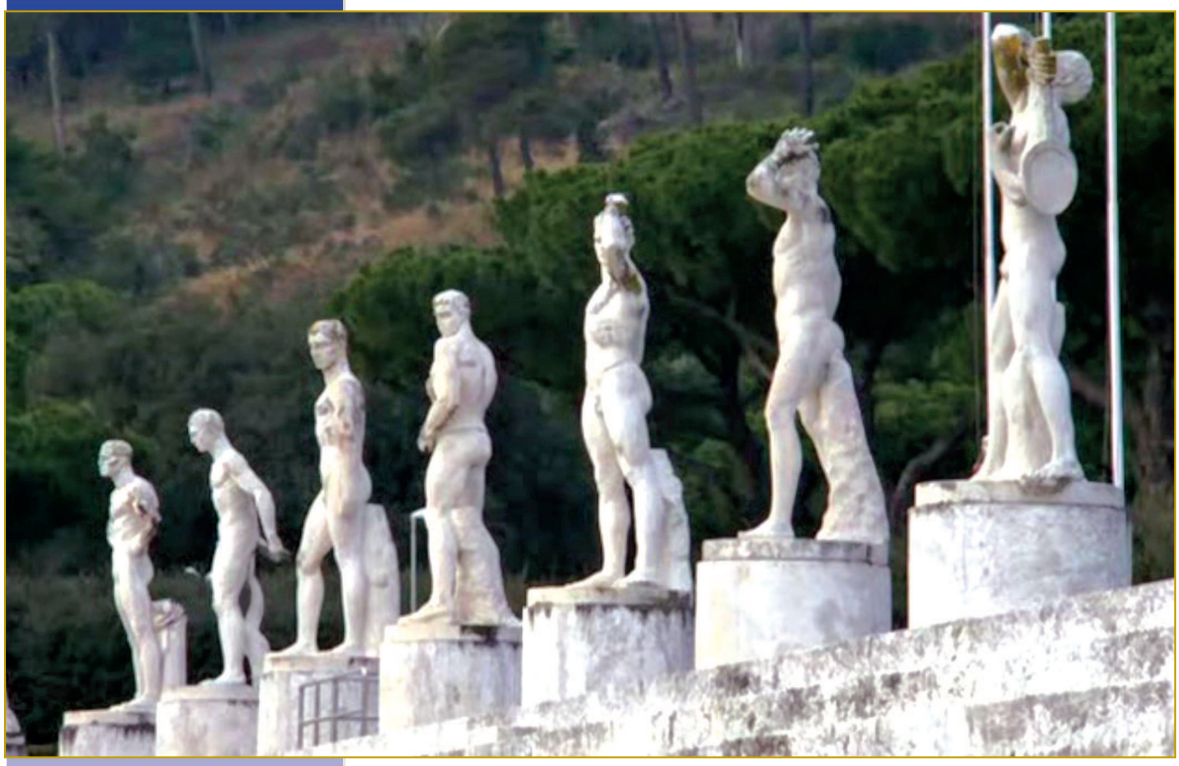


Fig. 456: Mussolini's The Stadium of the Marbles

Fig. 457: Mussolini's Esposizione Universale Roma (EUR)

Fig. 458: Lapis Lazuli

1.1.3 BLUE.

1.1.3.1 INTRODUCTION.

The arrival of **lapis lazuli** from the east, made blue the colour of our dreams. A colour that's transported us to a world beyond our horizons. Can only be found in a mine in Afghanistan. It will change art in dramatic ways. It looks like a fragment of the sky that has fallen down to earth. Blue hardly existed in the history of Western Art and is nowhere to be found among the earthy colours of prehistoric cave paintings. The Greeks didn't even had a word for it and the Romans had little time for blue in their wall paintings in Pompeï. Even in the Middle Ages the blues they had were feeble and pallet and so the artists of Medieval Venice could not wait to get their hands on the wondrous blue lapis lazuli.

Fig. 459: Blue paint mixed from Lapis Lazuli

1.1.3.2 LAPIS LAZULI.

Its called ultramarine after being released from the stone after weeks of tortuous labour. The hard stone of lapis lazuli has been transformed. Today we are surrounded by bright blue things but the people of the Late Middle Ages, this colour was a revelation. It was brighter and purer and stronger than any blue they had ever seen.

Within just a few decades after this remarkable discovery blue began to seep into Western Art. It crept across the pages of illuminated manuscripts, it wrapped itself around their sacred words and it slipped into the background of Biblical scenes. But blue would soon become more than a decorative flourish.

Fig. 460: Telephone Booths in the blue theme.

1.1.3.3 GIOTTO DI BONDONE

In Padua a pioneering artist would indulge in blue like no never before. Elevating this once lonely colour to divine status. In 1303, Giotto, often called the father of the Renaissance, set to work at this Grevenni Chappel. While it looks austere from the outside, inside, Giotto had created a masterpiece. This might be one of the three most important rooms in Western Art, for every inch is covered by a painting by Giotto with the life of Christ and the life of the Virgin Mary. We see the Last Supper, the washing of the feet and most probably the most famous one, Judas leaning in to kiss Christ.

The paintings was done 700 years ago and still the suspense is unbearable, and this is the brilliance of Giotto. He painted the scenes as if it was part of everyday life. These paintings are dramatic and real. Giotto's striking invention is not on the walls alone, it's on the ceiling. Above us we have the most beautiful, the most brilliant deep blue vault dusted with hundreds of golden stars. One might think that is the sky, but it's not the sky but this blue ceiling is actually a depiction of heaven.

Fig. 461: Grevenni Chapel in Padua

Fig. 462: The life of Christ and the life of the Virgin Mary as portrayed by Giotto inside the Grevenni Chapel

This is how Giotto imagined heaven. **For Giotto, heaven is blue and if you don't believe it, look up** and you will see the Virgin Mary and Jesus and various other Prophets peeping out of the blue heaven and looking down on us.

This is just amazing because just a few years before this Chapel was painted, blue was a really minor colour in the History of Western Art and didn't had a big role to play. Here, just a few years after that recipe for the Ultramarine blue had been mastered,

Fig. 463: The Last Supper

Fig. 464: Christ washing the feet of the Disciples.

Fig. 465: The ceiling of the Chapel, painted blue.

Fig. 466: Madonna and Child .

Fig. 467: In the eyes of the church, only the mother of God herself, was allowed to be woved in blue.

Giotto takes the colour blue and he turns it into the colour that is the most beautiful, the most powerful, the most sacred of them all. The colour of Paradise itself. In the eyes of the church, who was now the most sanctified of colours. Blue seems to be a divine colour, blue is a veil that hides a great mystery … it hides what lies beyond it, beyond the stars.

This is the great mystery that God hints at … through the colour blue. But blue was now so divine that the Church greedily sought to control it. They restricted its supply and inflated its price and before long blue became even more expensive than gold. In the 1300s laws were surpassed that bans citizens from wearing the colour. Only one person it seemed is been woved in blue, the mother of God herself.

Fig. 468: Madonna and child in Italy 1420

Fig. 469: The Visitation 1445, Flemish

Fig. 470: Madonna and child , German, 1490

In this Madonna and child in Italy 1420. *The Visitation* 1445, Flemish and German, 1490. But it was in Venice, the spiritual home of blue that the colour would be liberated from the suffocating grip from the Church.

Fig. 471: Venice, Italy

1.1.3.4 TIZIANO VECELLIO

One painter who dare to do it, Titian. Titian was born around the foothills of the Alps in 1490, but as a young man he was soon to be drawn to Venice. When Titian arrived here Venice was the undisputed leader in colour. They had the raw materials they had the clientèle and they had the know how.

Every pigment known to man was available along this canal. Titian was a colour addict and when it came to blue he wore his heart on his sleeve. For him the Churches control over colour must have been deeply frustrating.

Looking at the Peserouw Altarpiece and Titian start this in 1519 when he was still a young man. He put just about every colour bit of pigment he could find in Venice on that painting. He has done something here that no artist has done before, he has put the Virgin Mary to the side of the painting and throughout history the Virgin Mary has always been in the centre. And taking her place at the heart of the picture is a rich suave of ultramarine blue with a very lucky St Peter underneath it.

Fig. 472: Titian

But Titian's obsession with blue would only be fully understood when one of his greatest paintings began to fall apart. I have been looking at this picture for over twenty years and see it deteriorates very slowly, Bacchus and Ariadne, famous scene from Roman Mythology.

Fig. 473: The Madonna and Child woven in blue.

Fig. 474: Bacchus and Ariadne

Mr Lucas's restoration of the painting shocked everyone. No one realised how colourful Titian's paintings could be. The most dramatic part of this painting is the blue. Almost half of this painting is in blue and must have cost Titian a fortune. Blue was used here for fun, it was stripped from its conventional use. After strict control by the church over blue, Titian seemed to blow that away and would use blue wherever he liked.

Germany at the end of the 18th Century – Blue turned into the colour of our deepest emotions. The Golden Age – The Romantic Age. Brooding heroes and wandering poets.

Fig. 475: Detail from Bacchus and Ariadne

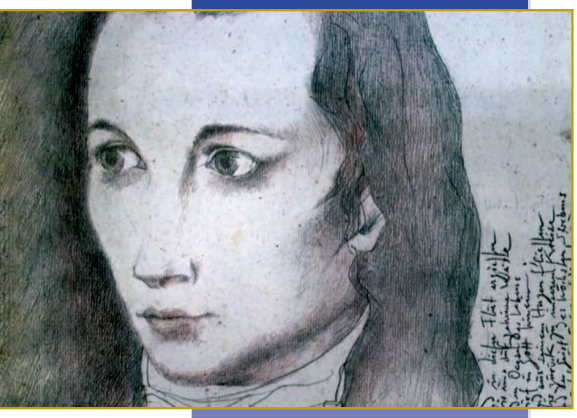


Fig. 476: Novalis

1.1.3.5 GEORG PHILIPP FRIEDRICH FREIHERR VON HARDENBERG

In 1799, a German Romantic Writer by the name of Novalis began work on an epic novel. He was yearning for a small blue flower. The novel proofed to be a sensation. Throughout Europe it captivated the hearts and minds of those who read it.

The blue flower quickly lodged itself in the romantic imagination and it profoundly transformed the meaning of the colour blue, for it was that story more than anything else that made blue the colour of our deepest feelings. Today, Novalis's book is mostly forgotten but its legacy proceeded through the 1800s and the artists tap into their deepest feelings, they repeatedly called on blue. In the dances in the dreams of Gauguin's son, it haunts the starry night of Van Gogh's troubled soul and it embraces the private passions of Edvard Munch lovers. But as the 19th Century drew to a close, one artist would harness the powers of blue like no other.

Fig. 477: Novalis's blue flower in his novel

Fig. 478: Gauguin's son

Fig. 479: Van Gogh's Starry Night

Fig. 480: Edvard Munch's Lovers

Fig. 481: Self-portrait of Picasso

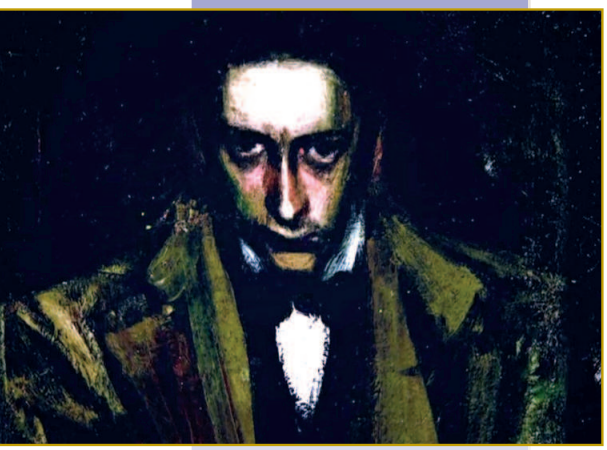


Fig. 482: Portrait of Picasso's friend, Casgemas

1.1.3.6 PABLO RUIZ PICASSO

Pablo Picasso, today, is remembered as a brave abstractionist. As a young man he made his debut with an astonishing series of paintings. The works of Picasso's blue period are known across the world, but few know the real story behind them. A story of suicide, despair and a search for redemption. Picasso was born in Spain in 1881 and like many young men, he felt the urge to leave home. In October 1900, just 19 years old, Picasso decided to leave Spain.

He would not make the journey alone. Next to him was his best friend Carlos Casagemas. Both wanted to make their names on the International stage. For them there was only one place to go – Paris. They stepped into the centre of the world. All Nations have converged to the universal exhibition to showcase their new ideas, new Architecture and new Inventions. Thomas Edison was there with his pioneering moving camera. Picasso kept his faith for succeeding but Casagemas was full of frustration. He began to loose his grip on sanity with disastrous consequences. In February 1901, he pulled a gun on his lover, she fell down to hide under the table, he thought that she was dead and shot himself in the head.

Picasso was horrified when he heard of his best friend's suicide and he struggled to come to terms with his death.

Picasso was so bereaved, he started to behave strangely, taking over his best friend's identity. He started producing paintings that compulsively and self destructively visited the tragedy. He repeatedly painted Casagemas, blue in his coffin, the bullet wound still raw. A mythical re-inactment of the funeral soon followed where prostitutes and faceless mourners are engulfed in a blue haze.

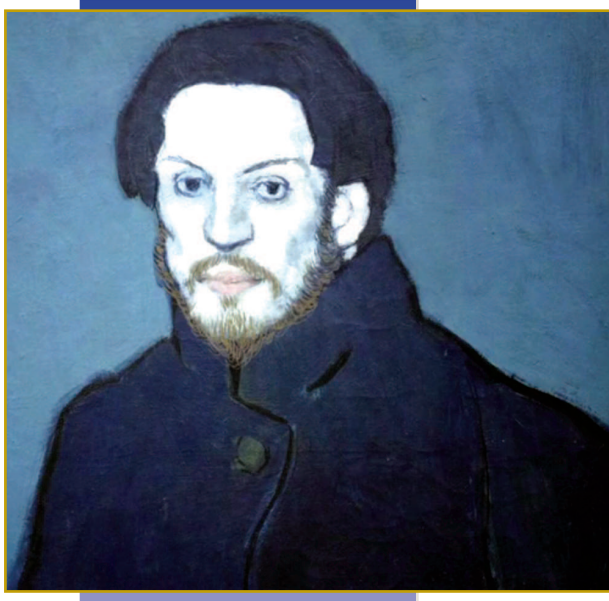


Fig. 483: Portrait of person who resembles someone with possible schizophrenia – according to Jung

Such bizarre paintings could not escape the eyes of a man who has made it his business to proof the most intimate parts of the human mind. Carl Jung was one of the most celebrated psycho-analysts of his day. When Jung discovered this work, he was immediately impressed, immediately struck, immediately touched by Picasso's work. And what he was struck by was the blue. Jung asked himself: "What kind of blue was it?" His answer was: "a night blue". That was of great interest to Jung. He thought specifically of the blue that symbolises Hell in Egyptian tradition. That means Death, the passage to Death is emerging. The question that arises: "What are we going to find?, What are we going to meet?, What are we going to come upon?" The infernal path that Picasso walked was littered with heroin figures veiled in blue. A skeleton musician is hunched over his guitar, a woman is lost in melancholy. A blind actress, La Celestina, stares blankly out from the canvas. An artist can't choose what he is going to do. Blue just appeared in his work.

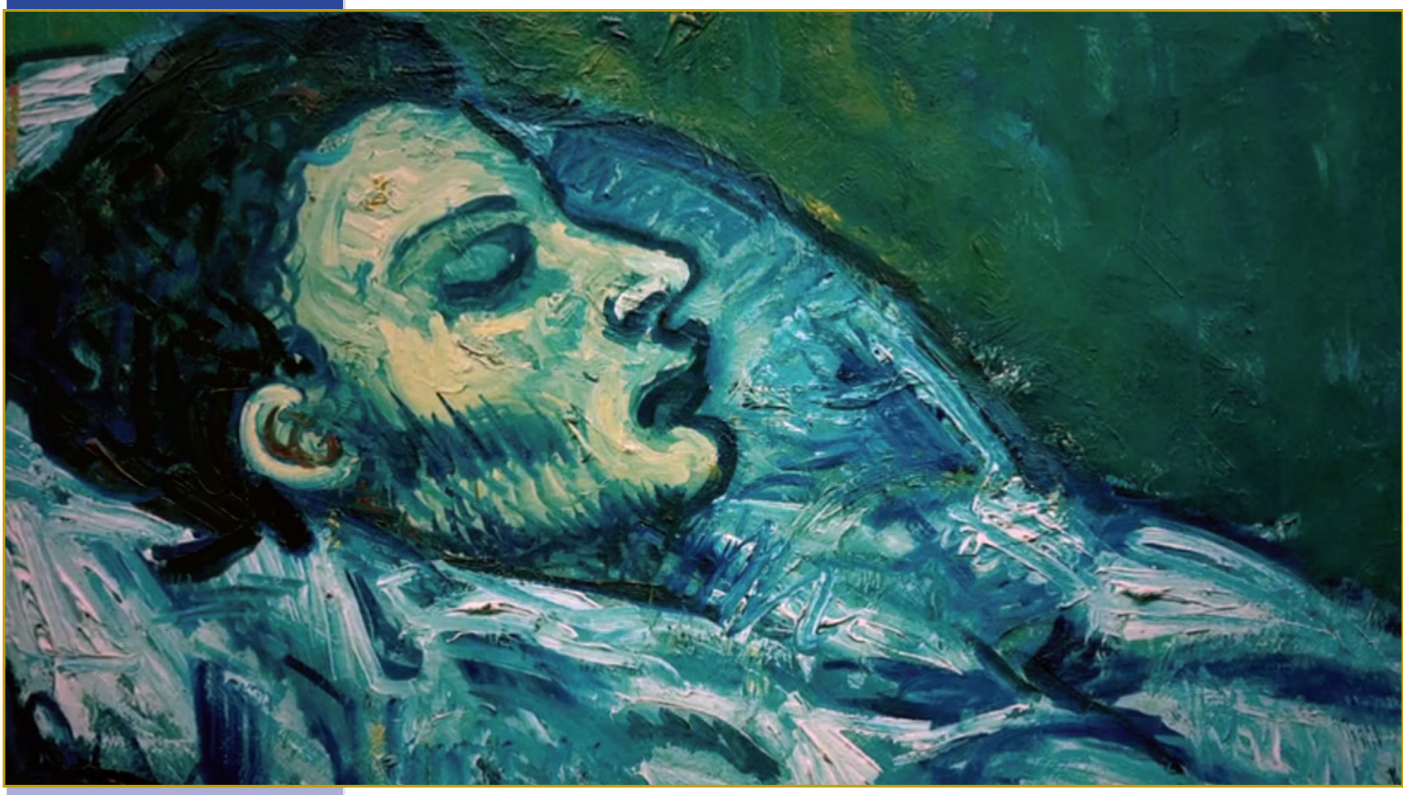


Fig. 484: Painting of Picasso's friend, Casgemas after suicide – Picasso

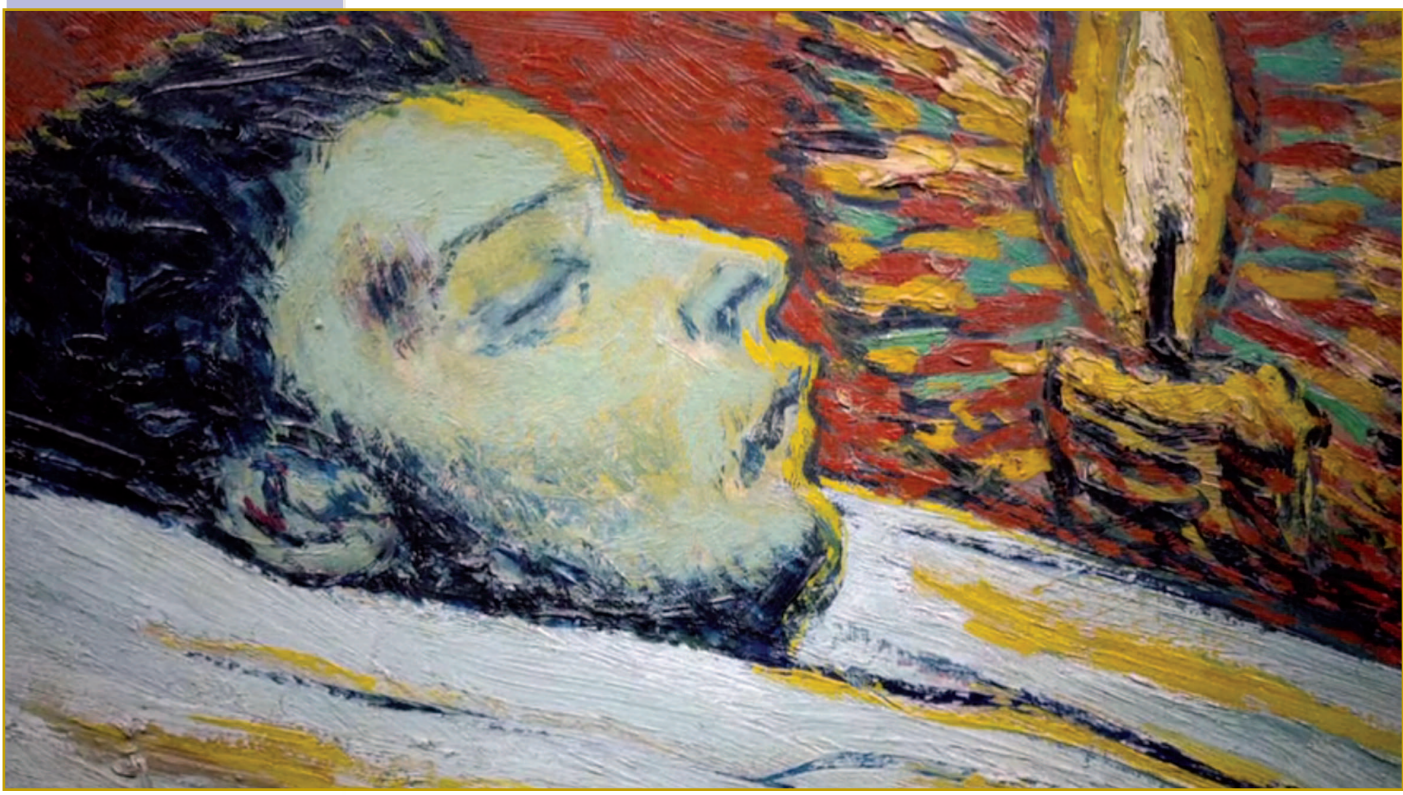


Fig. 485: Painting of Picasso's friend, Casgemas after suicide – Picasso

Fig. 486: Painting of the Funeral – Picasso

Fig. 487: Painting of Prostitutes and faceless Mourners – Picasso

Fig. 488: Skeleton Guitarist – Musician – Picasso

Fig. 489: Painting of Blue period – Picasso

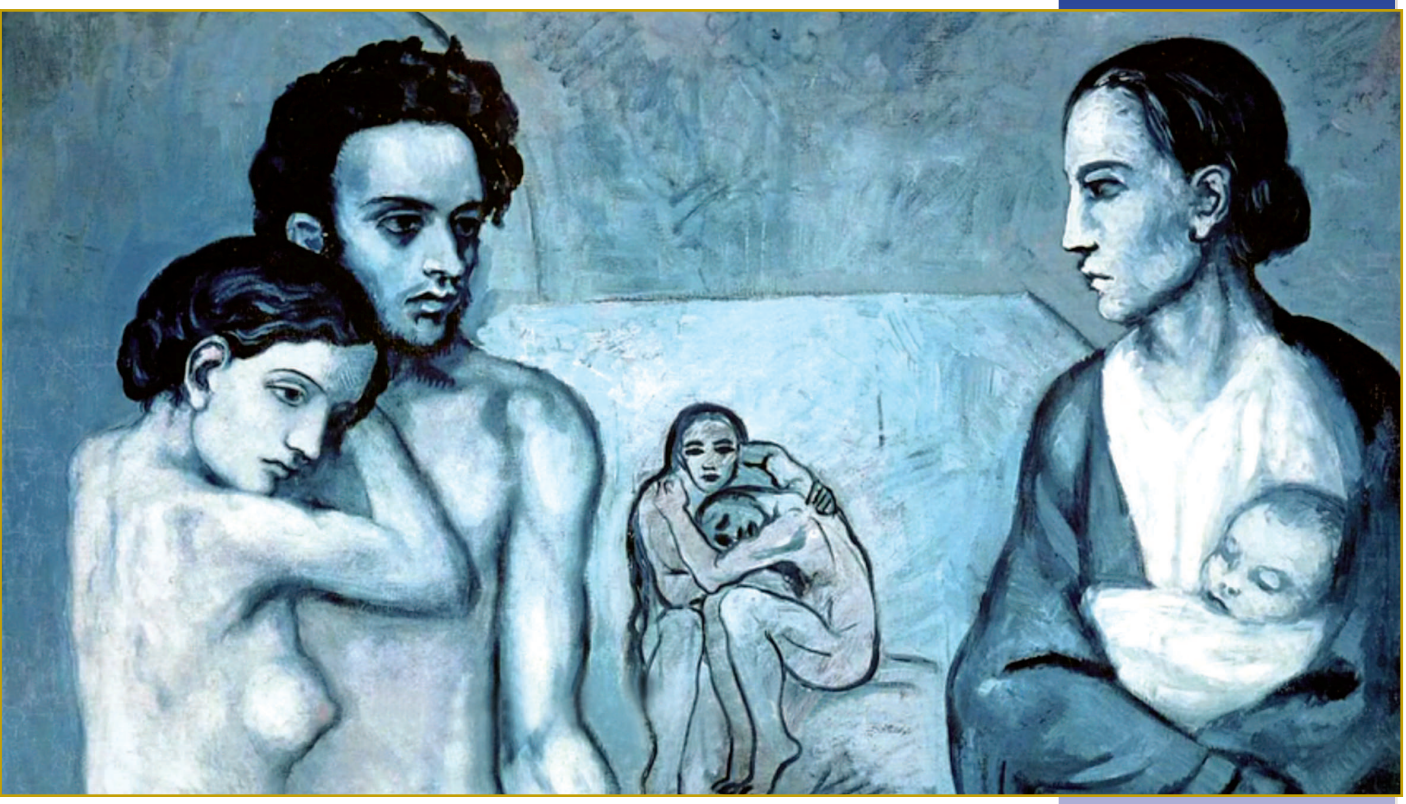


Fig. 490: Painting of Blue period – Picasso

Fig. 491: Painting of Blue period – Picasso

Fig. 492: Painting of Blue period – Picasso

From Night Blue that descends into Hell towards difficult encounters, towards the threat of breakdown, towards a black melancholy, perhaps more than Night Blue, perhaps Black Blue. That's perhaps what worried Jung or he even feared the threat of a breakdown that leads to chaos – an alarming breakdown that characterises schizophrenia.

For Jung the blue in Picasso's work descends into schizo-phrenia. It could be that blue did even more than that. What we see here is that wonderfully porcelain-like girl in this white chemise, surrounded with this huge blue background, almost as if she is drowning in a dirty ocean and yet she got this wonderful evocative mysterious wry smile on her face as she stares out to the distance.

Picasso painted this picture in 1904/05 so right at the very end of his blue period and it is still smothered in that dark haunting colour. The passage on the right is not the lush rich blue of ultramarine, these are the rancid tones of the new synthetic blues that have just been invented and they give this whole painting a really cheap, seedy, cadaverous quality and it wont have this quality in any other colour. Imagine it being painted in orange, or purple or red or yellow. It would not be near as unsettling as it is now. But, look closer at this painting and you can see new colours coming out of the blue smoke, the colours of life. The flesh tones, the incredibly white linens and that stunning luscious pink that he puts on the girl's lips. This is a sign that finally after three difficult years,

Fig. 493: Painting done towards the end of the Blue period – Picasso

Picasso is painting his way out of that ordeal. Picasso finally left his trauma behind and find his path to become the macho modernist we know today. As can be seen in this small section pertaining to the person and Art of Pablo Ruiz Picasso – this hypothesis, that Art does not lie, deems utterly true.

1.1.3.7 YVES KLEIN

Yves Klein invented his own blue and he believed it could change the world. His story begins with the dazzling blues of the Côte d'Azur. Yves Klein was born in Nice in 1928. He lost himself as an artist in making paintings, each of just a single block of colour – red, slightly less red and yellow, but the colour that captivated him most was the colour of the sky. Yves Klein never forgot that blue sky of his childhood in Nice and for him it was a great symbol of escape from the worldly concerns, the consumerism, the materialism of the world around him. It was in his late twenties that he decided that the best way to escape from those concerns was to create a new colour. A new blue that was as deep and rich and open and liberating as the sky itself. He went to Paris. He knew that in Paris lived a legendary colour maker. He was trusted by Picasso and other artists to mix their colours. Yves joined the Atelier of Édouard Adam in Paris. What interested him was the blue of the sea and the blue of the sky. Blue … and infinity. He was passionate about infinity. Here at the studio Yves explained the problem. The original oil that's been used to change blue pigment to paint, always adulterated the colour. So to achieve the pure luminous colour of the sky, Édouard **invented a secret ingredient** and he called it cryptically, *The Medium*.

The Medium is completely colourless, so when you mix the pigment with this medium you keep virtually the same intensity and colour of the original pigment. So right in front of his eyes, Yves dream of a new blue, turned into reality. What was interesting, was the look on his face – he was like a child. He was jubilant at what he had seen. He was extremely pleased and effectively that was the blue. That's all it was – yet it was also everything. He was a mystic mystificator.

Fig. 494: The blue paint, mixed for Yves by Édouard Adam

Yves christened his paint International Klein Blue. He was so pleased that he wanted to cast his spell over the whole world. He inaugurated a blue revolution that everyone can share in the joy of his new colour. He released a thousand blue balloons in the sky above Paris. He planned to make Cleopatra's needle blue. In this revolution anything that took his fancy was treated in his new blue. Undeterred Yves continue to fill the world with his blue art.

Fig. 495: Yves Klein

Fig. 496: The Blue Room.

Fig. 497: The Côte d'Azur. – Nice

Fig. 498: Yves blue road sign.

The favourite part of Yves's blue revolution was a series of paintings all identical and each a devotion to nothing but **International Klein Blue**. Yves was meticulous about his choice of canvas. Here he selected a very thin weaved cotton scrim and then he has coated that cotton scrim with a kind of milk, he painstakingly rolled the paint on as evenly as possible, so it can be as uniform as possible. When one look closely, the textures are just fantastic. It actually looks like one's looking down at a very blue sea, from a plain, to see the waves and the ripples and the light. This is one of the best blues ever seen, even better than Titian's. It is just perfect, it is not too dark and not too light and it does this amazing thing it almost seems to be moving, one second it perceives into the distance and the next second it comes towards you and drowns you like the ocean. What does it mean? Yves didn't want it to mean something, he just want us to experience and enjoy it. He called these pictures, Open Windows to Freedom.

Fig. 499: Abstract painting in blue – Yves Klein

Fig. 500: The painted canvas – Yves Klein

But Yves would go one step further in escaping to the great blue beyond.

In 1960 he travelled to the most **mundane** suburb of Paris that he could find, and it is there that he would perform his most audacious leap of escapology. He went one Sunday morning, slipped into an apartment building, made his way upstairs, open the window and leapt out. **Yves artwork became known as a leap into the void.** The black and white photograph he took that day reveals more about his ambitions than any of his other works.

Throughout his whole life he wanted to leave this world behind him and to voyage into this Utopian world above. Looking at his eyes in the photograph, one can see that his eyes are locked on the blue sky above him. This was a desperate image too, because Yves never really leapt into the void, he fell down to earth and he had a group of Judo friends that could catch him. In the early 1960s Yves was becoming one of the most exciting artists of his generation but then disaster struck.

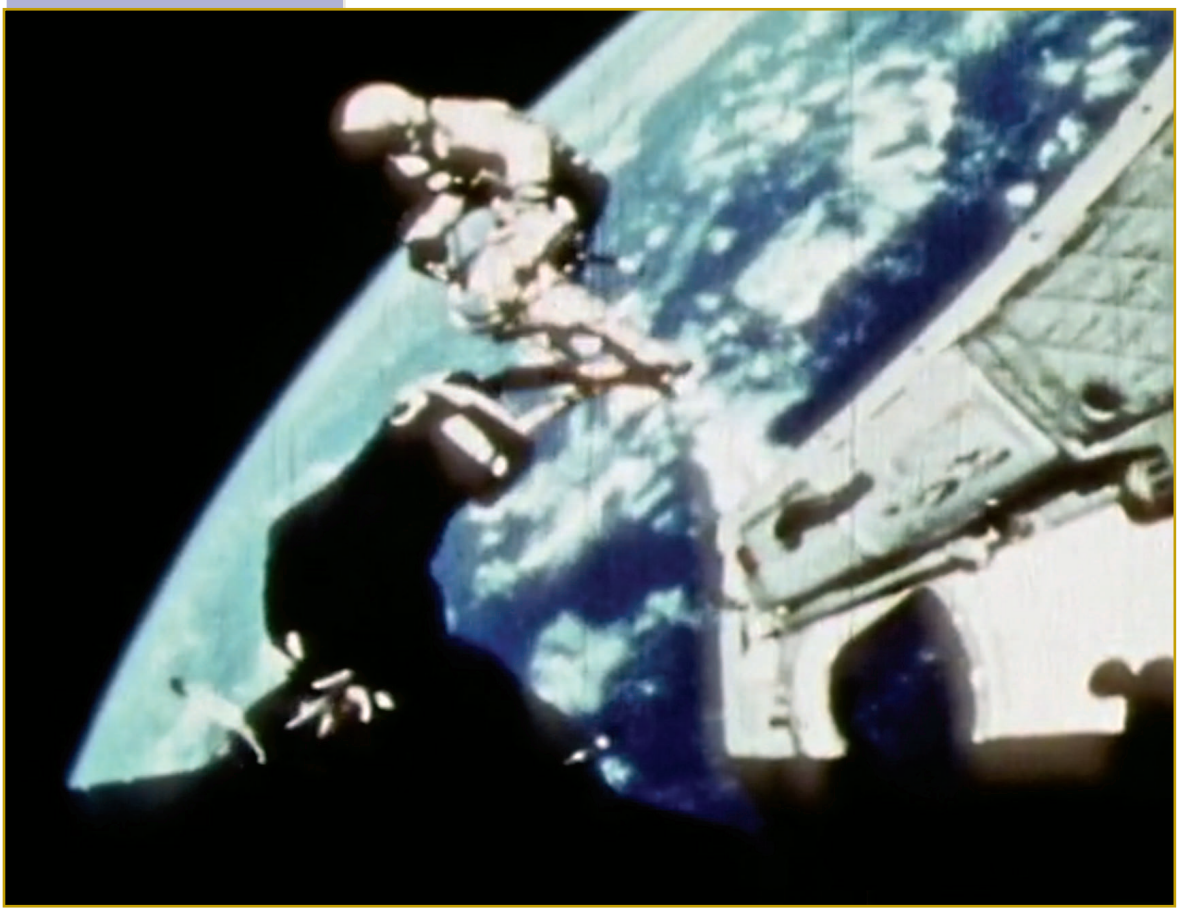
Fig. 501: Yves leap of escapology

Fig. 502: Abstract in Blue – Yves Klein

In 1962 he returned home to the South of France to attend the Canne Film Festival. During the Premiere of the film in which he stared, Yves suffered multiple heart attacks. He was dead at the age of 34. Yves Klein Blue Revolution has become one of the most beautiful moments in Modern Art. It was really fragile too and when he died it seemed that his great dream of his fantastic blue adventure that could liberate humanity would die with him too.

Fig. 503: Branches in Blue – Yves Klein

Fig. 504: & 505: Apollo 3



1.1.3.8 APOLLO AND THE BLUE EARTH

In America a new adventure was just beginning and it would change our relationship to blue in one astounding way. For centuries blue was used by artists to capture the great beyond, the forever unobtainable. As the space race between the United States and the Soviet Union reached its peak, one man created a single powerful image that brings our story to a close. His image will change the way that artists and all of us think about blue for good. But he wasn't an artist, he was an astronaut. It was 1967 when America was launching its most daring space flight yet.

Fig. 506: It was the first time the earth was seen from another world

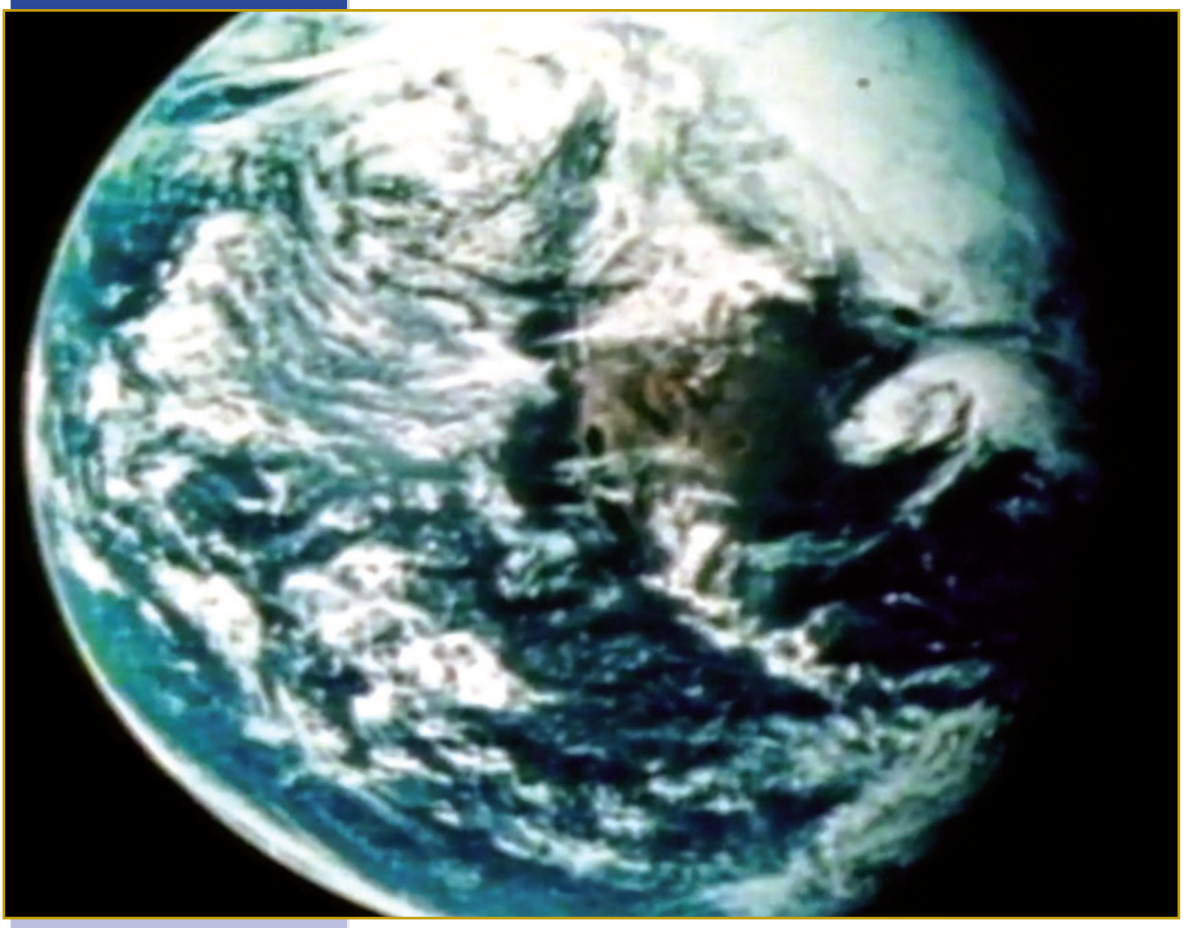


Fig. 507: The Earth

Fig. 508: Apollo 3

Three astronauts of Apollo 3, will circle the moon out of the earth's orbit for the very first time. Astronaut Bill Anders.

All the talk was of world peace but that fooled no one. This was the era of the cold war. Christmas eve 1968, they boarded the space aircraft. On the fourth orbit the team saw something breathtaking. Bill were taking pictures as they travelled and suddenly they all saw the earth coming up. He took as many pictures possible hoping that one will be usable. The picture selected was an artwork on its own and made the Apollo Mission worth while. This is one image that humans will come back to again and again and again. While staring at the "ugly" moon, suddenly out of the horizon came this beautiful blue.

Published around the globe it caught the imagination of everyone. It was the first time mankind saw the earth from another world and daunt on them that their's was more than anything, a blue planet. This image brings back a great irony, most of history blue was this colour of the beyond, it was the colour of the horizon, a colour of the things so many humans was aspiring to and hoping to escape to but in 1968, that dream finally came true, finally got beyond the horizon, to discover that blue was actually the colour of home.[3]

3 BBC Experimental Colour Transmission – A History of Art in Three Colours – Part 3

1.1.3.9 UNITING LINE, COLOUR AND COMPOSITION AS SEEN IN THE INFLUENTIAL ART OF TINTORETTO

This particular theme was painted numerous times and the different works of art done by Tintoretto displays a variety of influences. Tintoretto drew inspiration from diverse sources to create a personal style that combined overwhelming effects with closely observed detail. He lived and worked entirely in Venice, and his influence in art spread throughout Europe, and helped to shape the development of numerous baroque artists after his death.

Fig. 509: Jacopo Tintoretto – Christ Washing His Disciple's Feet (c1555-60)

Tintoretto's aim was to combine **"the drawing of Michelangelo and the colouring of Titian in art."** There were conflicting opinions at the time regarding the comparative qualities of **Florentine and Venetian** painting styles, represented respectively by Michelangelo and Titian. Tintoretto was stating his ambition to combine the best of both. His success extends beyond a blending of these two technical aspects of his art – however, his later style, though much influenced by the heroic splendour of Michelangelo's figures and compositions, upholds something of the realism of the Venetian tradition, represented by Titian.

In his extended career Tintoretto's primary theme and purpose was an examination of the meaning of the life of Christ. He was painting at a time when Protestant reformers were questioning the validity of holy images and the Catholic Church had to justify its appointment of Christian art. It is significant that even in his largest paintings, full of movement and interpretation, the central idea is sometimes presented by a simple human action portrayed without explanation.

Tintoretto's compositions were often unconventional in their organization of groups of figures in a confined space. He achieved such effects by building small architectural models in which he arranged the figures, and then tried out different light effects until he was satisfied with the result.

In *Christ Washing His Disciple's Feet*, the oblique angle of the work, focuses on the glowing fire, by the posture of the figure on the right, who is engaged in removing a sandal. The subject of *Christ Washing His Disciple's Feet* was one Tintoretto painted on a number of occasions.

It presented the chance to **explore the nature of Christ's character**, and His message. The act of humility astonishes the surrounding disciples, not least Saint Peter, whose feet are being cleansed. Nevertheless, the overwhelming event is shown taking place in a modest room, with others present warming themselves by the fire, seemingly unaware to the incident.[1]

1.1.3.10 GRAND ILLUSIONS AND IRIDESCENT COLOURS

Tiepolo's work is characterised by its luminosity and its cheerful, **rococo** style. He is a painter with numerous arrangements for church ceilings in Venice, he was heir to the traditions of both the Venetian High Renaissance Art and the inheritance of Baroque illusionistic painting.

Throughout his life Tiepolo worked energetically. Fresco was the medium in which he excelled, allowed little room for corrections or reworking, as it involved painting directly onto damp plaster. It required an imaginative freedom and decisiveness of execution from the artist.

1 World Artists, Tintoretto, p 404-405

Fig. 510: Left: Giovanni Battista Tiepolo – The Coronation of the Virgin (1754-55)

To work on such a grand scale required the help of assistants, and in his Venetian workshop Tiepolo employed two of his sons, as well as Girolamo Mengozzi Colonna, a specialist in perspective illusionism. Tiepolo was also highly gifted in this respect; hundreds of his drawings survive, displaying a deep knowledge of anatomy and an ability to represent the human figure from every conceivable angle The style of the drawings suggests a very rapid way of working, and much of this energy is retained in the larger finished works. Details and textures are sometimes conveyed by a few brisk strokes of the paintbrush. *The Coronation of the Virgin* is painted in oil on canvas rather than fresco, though it was intended to be part of a ceiling decoration. Tiepolo painted it for the church of Santa Maria della Visitazione (known as La Pieta) in Venice, and it was one of the last works of this kind that Tiepolo produced there.

The painting clearly shows his skill in placing large numbers of figures floating effortlessly, and convincingly in space. With this religious subject, as in similar schemes dealing with allegorical and mythological themes, Tiepolo shows how much he learned from the traditions of illusionism, put to such spectacular effect for church festivals and on the operatic stage.[2]

2 World Artists, Tiepolo, p 402-403

1.1.3.11 VISUAL HARMONIES

James Abbott McNeill Whistler painted portraits and landscapes, as well as creating dramatic interior design schemes. The musical titles of his works emphasize the importance to him of the carefully composed colour harmonies. Clearly reflected in his work is a cosmopolitan combination of French, British and American stylistic influences.

Fig. 511: Arrangement in Gray and Black No. I: The Artist's Mother (1871)

Arrangement in Gray and Black No. I: The Artist's Mother integrates several aspects of Whistler's career. A portrait of one of his favourite subjects, his mother, draws upon the main colours of his early realist palette: gray and black. Yet the title draws attention to the concept of an "arrangement," anticipating the idea of harmony that dominates his later portraits. Whistler often gave his paintings musical titles, like "symphony" or "nocturne," believing that his work created visual harmonies of colour or pattern that were analogous to the harmonies of a musical piece.

Whistler was living with his mother in the London district of Chelsea when this portrait was painted. He had initially planned a standing pose, but this proved too strenuous for his mother over the many sittings that her son required of her. He therefore decided to paint her in a seated pose derived from classical tradition.

In this work Whistler painted directly onto a canvas that had not been treated with glue, resulting in a matte surface and very dense colour. It was the last painting that Whistler exhibited at the Royal Academy and the first of his works to be purchased by a museum, the Musée de Luxembourg, an institution devoted to the work of contemporary artists.[3]

3 World Artists, Whistler, p 440-441

1.1.3.12 THE COLOUR OF LOVE PERTAINING TO THE INTERNATIONAL ARTIST CHAGALL OF THE MODERN PERIOD

Marc Chagall's long working life spans the 20th century. He was brought up in a provincial Russian Jewish community, and he became one of the leading **international artists of the modern period**. His colourful, lyrical works express a very personal vision, but at the same time embrace universal themes of love and of joy in life.

Many of Chagall's early paintings show scenes of Jewish and Russian life in Vitebsk. He returned to these themes throughout his life. *The Praying Jew* (Rabbi of Vitebsk), 1914, is one of his best-known works, showing a rabbi in black-and-white prayer shawl. Even in later works such as *The Event*, painted in 1978 when Chagall was over 90, he used images from his Vitebsk boyhood with freshness and vitality.

A love for life can clearly be felt in Chagall's work. He began by adopting the vibrant colours of postimpressionist artists such as Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh, together with folk art forms – an interest he shared with his Russian contemporaries Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova. He went on to experiment with many different types of compositions and media, ranging from oil paint and gouache (opaque watercolour paint), to stained glass, and printmaking.

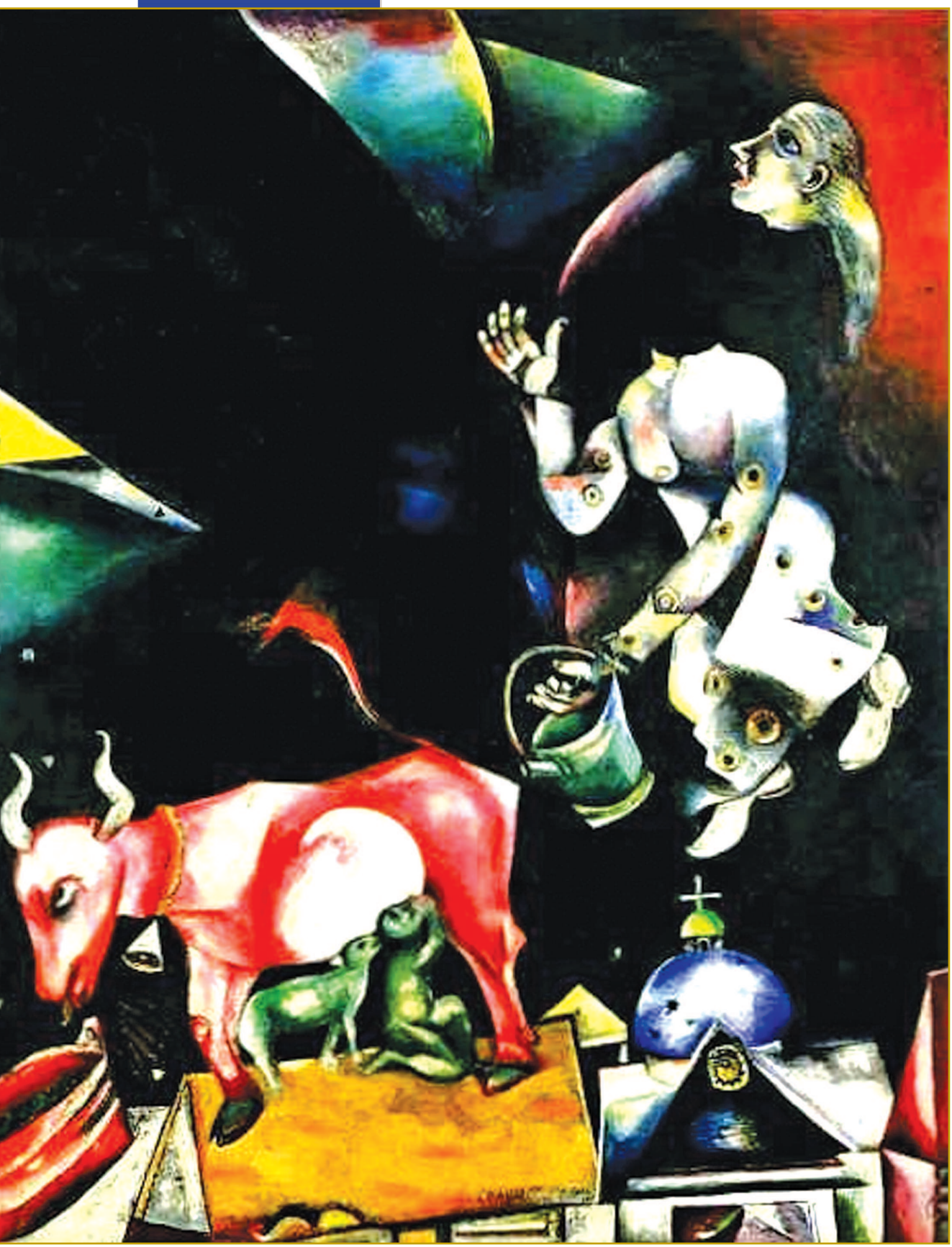


Fig. 512: Marc Chagall – To Russia, to Asses and Others (1911-12)

In Paris, Chagall was particularly attracted to the colour-based cubism of Robert Delaunay. This can be seen in the breaking-up of the forms in T*o Russia, to Asses and Others*, which at the same time evokes the traditional, folk-tale world of a Russian village. The title of this work was suggested by Chagall's friend, the poet Blaise Cendrars. The "asses" may refer to fellow artists, with whom Chagall had exhibited at the "*Ass Tail*" exhibition in Moscow, while the cow suckling a child may refer to folklore, or to ancient Roman or Egyptian images.

His celebrations of his relationship with his wife, Bella, are among his most tender and lyrical paintings. In *The Birthday* (1915), Bella's flowing black dress appears in rich contrast to the red floor and white walls of the room in which Chagall seems to float as he kisses her.

From the 1930s, his figures became softer and more idealized, with colour an even stronger element in the composition of his pictures. Chagall's religious images increasingly tended to be drawn from both Judaism and Christianity, as in the *Yellow Crucifixion* of 1943.

In his later career, Chagall enjoyed working on a monumental scale in different media, as shown by his set designs for the ballet *Aleko* (1942) for the American Ballet theatre, and his stained-glass windows.[4]

4 World Artists, Chagall, p 86-87

1.1.3.13 SYMBOLS OF LIFE AND DEATH

James Ensor depended almost entirely on his imagination for inspiration for his work, which depicted a macabre but strangely colourful world of masks and skeletons. His exaggeration and distortion of form and colour can be seen as expressionist before its time.

As Ensor became more withdrawn, he worked less often from human subjects and more from arrangements of the assortment of props and unusual objects that he kept in his studio. His descriptions of these recall the curios that his mother sold in her store, as well as his childhood recollection of the jumble in his grandmother's "dark and frightening attic." His works *Studio Props and Astonishment of the Wouse Mask* (both 1889) give us glimpses of this studio paraphernalia: exotic fabrics, costumes, vessels, and his collection of carnival masks and skulls.

The subject of death (and therefore images of death, such as skeletons) often present in symbolic art and literature. Yet Ensor's representations seem less a serious reference to the ultimate mystery and tran-sience of human life than a bitterly ironic commentary on existence in an etching of 1888, *My Portrait*, for example, he imagined himself as a skeleton.

Fig. 513: Opposite page: James Ensor – Skeletons Warming Themselves (1889)

A year later, in *Skeletons Warming Themselves*, he played with the ideas and stylistic forms that characterize his naturalistic work of the early 1880s. The theme and poverty of the setting is somewhat similar to his earlier work, *Tramps Trying to Get Warm* (1882). The thickly impasted paint, flickering luminosity, and intense colouring can also be found in his earlier paintings of domestic interiors.

Here, however, these elements are manipulated in order to draw out the paradoxical humour of the scene, rendering the potentially macabre subject matter pathetic. In the painting, figures emblematic of death and the coldness of the grave engage in simple human acts in the desire to be warm. One wears a top hat at a jaunty angle, while another grins on entering the room. Moreover all around are symbols of life and the animating power of art, including a lamp, a musical instrument, and a painter's palette.[5]

1.1.3.14 THE SPLENDOUR OF NATURAL LIGHT

Alfred Sisley was a leading member of the impressionist movement and was strongly influenced by his friend Claude Monet. His works were almost exclusively landscapes, painted in both northern France and southern England. Today they are admired for their delicate touch and richness of tone.

5 World Artists, James Ensor, p 192-193

Boat in a Flood (1876) is a perfect example of Sisley,s impressionism. In that year the area around the village of Port-Marly, just outside Paris, was extensively flooded when the Seine burst its banks. This dramatic event inspired Sisley to create a whole group of paintings of the village while it remained under water.

Fig. 514: Alfred Sisley Boat in a Flood (1876)

Whereas in several of the later versions he portrays the inconvenience and even potential dangers of the flooding, in *Boat in a Flood* he captures the initial excitement and sheer oddity of finding the village's streets turned into rivers. This is one of six works painted in 1876 in which Sisley portrays the effects of the flood from different view-points and at different times of day.

The painting is artfully constructed through four main motifs. The foreground is dominated by a road which has become a canal with its own makeshift ,"gondoliers." The wine shop on the left-hand side, recognisable by its painted board and suspended sign, is unchanged by the tumult raging beyond its doors. An avenue of chestnut trees in the distance on the right-hand side of the painting is the only remaining marker of the presence of an adjacent street, now completely lost to view.

Lastly, a glorious, sunlit sky unifies all these elements into a picturesque calm after the thunder storm. *Boat in a flood* marks a transition in Sisleys painting technique. In his early works he used an evenly applied, more uniform brush stroke, but in this painting he explores the expressive possibilities of using different sizes of brush stroke to create different textures and patterns. He also employs a wider range of colours than in previous paintings to create an intense effect of tone.

Typical of his impressionist technique is Sisley's application of paint in lively, hatched brush strokes which instantly draw attention to the surface of the painting, animating the canvas. His colours are vibrant, and seem to fill his paintings with a celebratory glow.

He became adept at the difficult art of capturing water on canvas, and among his favourite subjects were the riverbanks southwest of Paris.[6]

1.1.3.15 LIGHT AND SHADOW

Caravaggio is one of the most famous artists of all time, known almost as well for his wild and violent life story as for his art. His dramatic use of light and dark contrasts in his paintings made him well known throughout Europe, both in his lifetime and long after his death. His naturalistic style, even in religious paintings, makes his work all the more compelling. Caravaggio's painting *Supper at Emmaus* (1601) depicts a scene inside a roadside inn. The two disciples (the men seated on the left and right of the picture) have just recognized their mysterious companion as the risen Christ, as he; stretches his arm out in a gesture of blessing. An innkeeper looks on as the disciples express their amazement with; dramatic gestures. The episode is taken from the Bible text, Luke 24: 13-31.

6 World Artists, Sisley, p 404-405

This painting contains many of the elements that characterize Caravaggio's work as he moved from his earlier still lifes to his later religious subjects.

His interest in still life is shown by the objects on the. table, particularly the bowl of fruit, which also looks as if it might topple from the table top at any moment. This heightens the sense that the artist has captured a frozen moment, just before the disciples jump up and the basket falls.

Fig. 515: Caravaggio Supper at Emmaus (1601)

The elbow of the disciple closest to us; and the hand of the disciple on Christ's left seem to reach out of the picture into our space: these are examples of Caravaggio's theatrical use of foreshortening. We can also see that the elbow is poking out through a ripped sleeve. Caravaggio was often criticized for making his figures too realistic–he often pictured them with torn clothing, dirty fingernails, or dusty feet–as it was felt that this took away from the sacred nature of the subjects.

The faces of the disciples and the innkeeper are rough and unidealized; Caravaggio copied the faces of ordinary people to create his characters, rather than inventing more striking figures.

The use of light and shadow or chiaroscuro, in this painting is perhaps the most distinctive feature of Caravaggio's style. His works are often lit from the top left side, as if the light is coming from an outside window.

This creates areas of deep shade that make the figures seem more three dimensional. It also casts a slant of light across the plain background, which makes the composition more interesting. In this painting the light also provides shadows shaped like a halo and an angel's wing behind the seated figure of Christ.

We are persuaded to see the scene as naturalistic, but in reality the innkeeper would block the shaft of light, putting Christ's face in shadow.

Caravaggio emphasizes Christs divine nature by having the light shine directly onto his face.[7]

2. JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Britain experienced the most confusional disorder in its history, the Industrial Revolution, between Turner's birth in 1775 and his death in 1851. Fundamentally, Turner was born in the age of sail, and he died in the age of steam. It was the beginning of a new age, which was primarily driven by Science and Invention. Science gave man powers which could almost be called innovative. New elements were discovered by the chemist, Humphry Davy, among others. Michael Faraday investigated the power of electricity. Charles Babbage revealed plans for the world's first computer. This era was all about finding out about the matter of life that serves into technological change. New engines, new techniques, canals, tunnels, steamships and factories developed. It was an extraordinary period where Science and Technology and Industry all got together.

7 World Artists, Caravaggio, p 74-405

Turner was at the fore-front of these important events. He painted the Industrial Revolution as it developed, and during this course, produce a whole new kind of Art. He was aroused by the smoke of a running train. To be able to create something like this out of the mundanely, portrays his exceptional talent and separate Turner from other artists. Turner, more than any other painter, seize and hold the moment in order to portray what it felt like to be part of this new era.

Fig. 516: JMW Turner

Turner had an aggressive self-confidence, but when it came to performing in public, he was a disaster. Turner's cockney accent affected his lectures and emphasized that he was not a very good speaker. His contemporaries found this astonishing in an artist of his standing and name. His audience drifted away, the only person who remained there was his father. Turner's father was his closest supporter, he was leading his son and his best companion. His mother was a different story, she was a family secret. His mother was accused of having "an ungovernable temper". Turner's mother was committed to Bedlam Hospital. After Turner's mother was incarcerated, Turner left home and move to Harley Street, home to rich connoisseurs and patrons. His mother died in 1804 in Bedlam. This was not something that Turner was keen for people to know, as he was moving up the ladder in his profession.

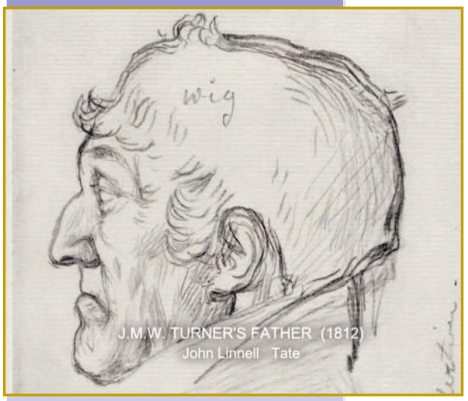


Fig. 517: JMW Turner's Father

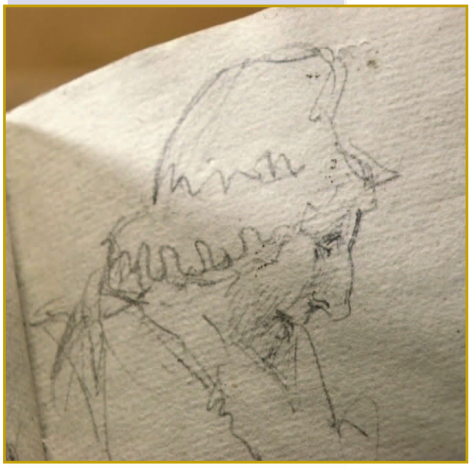


Fig. 518: JMW Turner's Mother

There is profile drawing of a woman in a mob cap in an early sketchbook. She is off guard, she is musing, she is looking down. This might be Turner's mother. With his mother gone, his father came to live with Turner and he mixes his paints among other things.

2.2 BACKGROUND

Turner was very well known by the artists in Margate – it is said that this Victorian artist came to Margate because of the beautiful sunsets. Turner's name is associated with images of dramatic skies, daunting crags and wild seas. But there is another side to Turner. Machines, technology, industry. The opposite of nature. Turner was much more than a painter of lyrical landscapes. He embraced the wonders of science and progress.

In 1807, Britain was in the middle of a scientific revolution. Gas lamps light up Pall Mall for the first time. Turner finds himself as a young painter at the beginning of the 19th century. He's fascinated by the visual manifestation of scientific discovery. These ideas were bubbling up around him. These ideas began to fire him up and it was Turner's love and interest in technology that got him going. This is what separate extraordinary talented artists from the rest, the fact that they can create something from the earth and everyday life and make it look special and different.

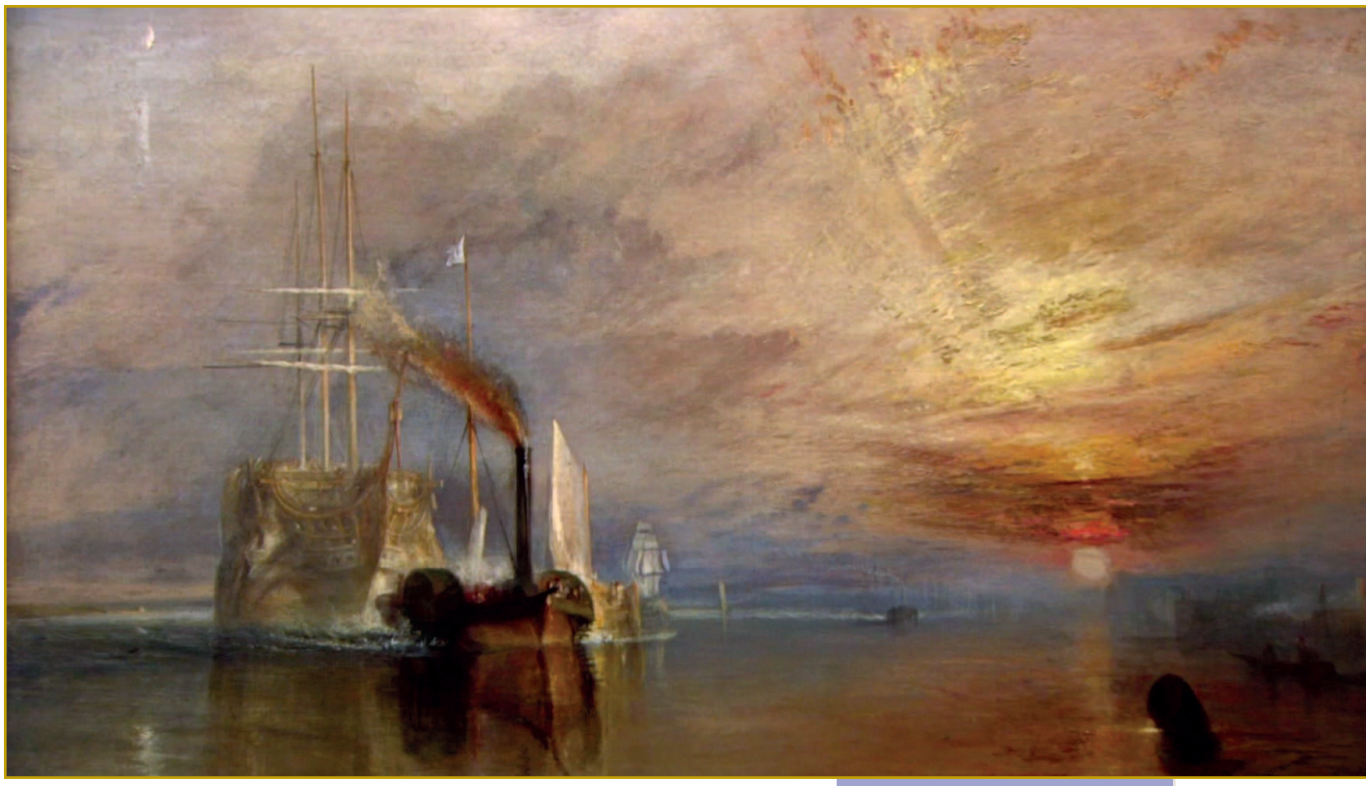


Fig. 519:a: The fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up (1839) – Turner

Fig. 519b: The fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up (1839) – Turner

2.3 THE TEMERAIRE

The fighting Temeraire, was one of the Nation's favourite paintings. It captures on canvas the age of sail being towed up the Thames into the heart of London by a steam tug. The moon is rising on one side of the ship, and on the far side of the steamer, the sun, in a big explosion of fiery red. The Temeraire was a ship that had symbolised the best and worst of Nelson's navy. She had been one of the bravest battleships in the British fleet. Her story began in 1802, not in glory but in disgrace. Many of the English sailors aboard her, they'd been fighting basically for nine years, and they just wanted to go home, and they weren't allowed to. They thought it was their right when, in fact, it wasn't. The mutineers were flogged, and they were all hanged. The Temeraire become a national treasure because of this, Trafalgar! The British attacked in two columns.

After the peace with France was declared, ships like that came to the end of their useful life until finally the Admiralty decided there was no further use for it and it needed to be broken up. What the painting show, is a tug boat owned by the ship-breaker Beatston, pulling the Temeraire up river towards its final destination at Rotherhithe. The Temeraire is coming to its last moment, it's being pulled by this tough little iron tug boat. The Temeraire was literally falling apart, but Turner paints her like she appeared in her glory days.

He's deliberately doing that to make a visible contrast between this steam tug that is pulling her along and the great sailing warships as they would have appeared in their glory. When studying the painting, one can feel the thrashing of the wheels going round in the water, the sound of the engines, the smoke coming out of the funnel, indicating everything of the industrial bustle a person can associate with the new technology. He called the painting, "*MY OLD DARLING*", he knew this was the painting that made people happy, because it did actually make them feel good about the fact they were not just relying and leaning on wonderful memories of faded glory.

The faded glory was being pulled on by an equally tough, glorious, solid, black, energised future.

Fig. 520a-e Trafalgar

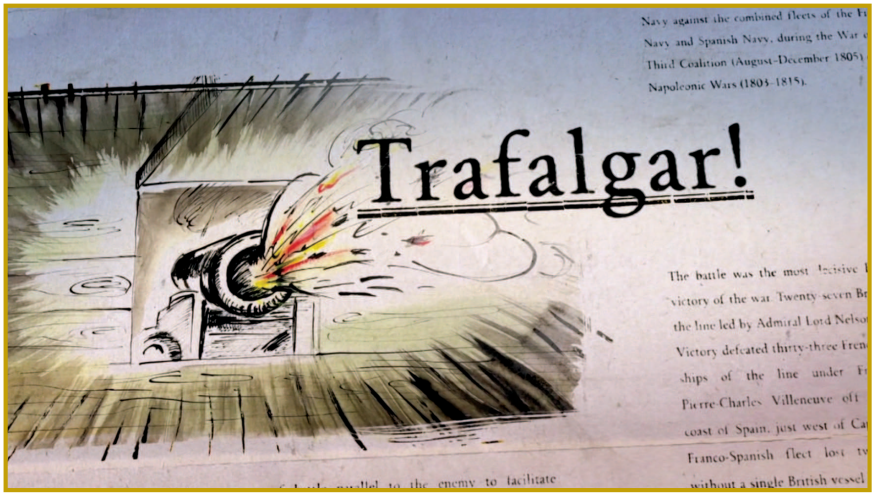


Fig. 520a.

Fig. 520b.

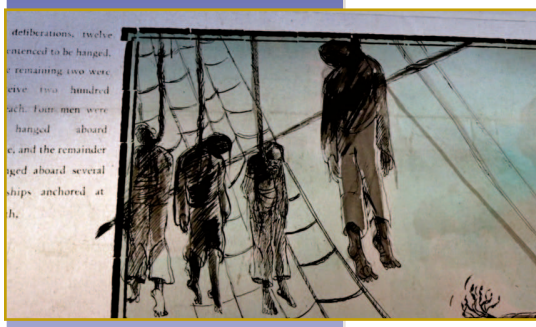


Fig. 520c..

Fig. 520d..

Fig. 520e.

2.4 STEAMSHIPS AND THE MODERN WORLD

Turner saw steamships as a symbol of the modern world. He really embraced the idea of steam. There are many wrecked sailing ships in Turner's art, but there are no wrecked steamships. Steamships are everywhere.

Turner's sketchbooks are really quite extraordinary.

This is a steamer just off a harbour and quite typically, Turner has added a couple of little colour notes for himself just to remind himself of the effect. Turner was a chronicler of his times, he was interested in everything that was going on around him, and this is what made him such a wonderful portrayer of the Britain of his day. In the 1820s, international steam travel arrived, and Turner was one of the first to record it. In Dover, a steamer chugs merrily out to sea while oarsmen puff and pant in the foreground.

2.5 TURNER AND THE ROYAL ACADEMY

The world into which Turner was born could not have been more different from this new industrial era. He came from the 18th century Georgian England.

His father was a barber and wig-maker who practised his trade in Covent Garden. Turner's dad was very ambitious for him. He was very keen that Turner should make money.

Fig. 521a-d: Steamships are everywhere in Turner's art. – Turner

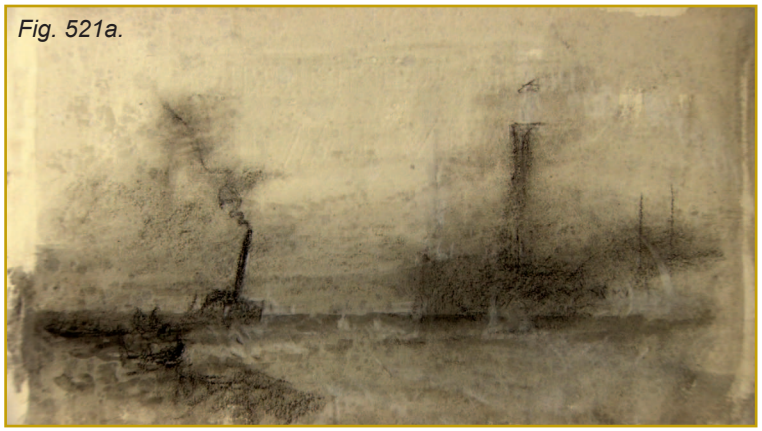


Fig. 521a.


Fig. 521b.

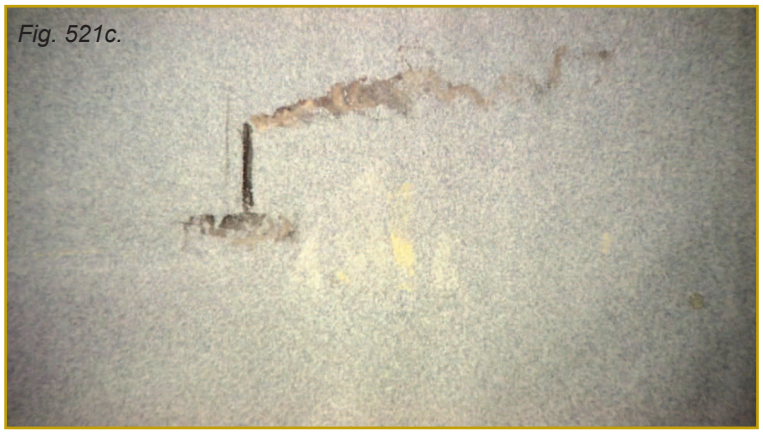


Fig. 521c.


Fig. 521d.

Fig. 521a & b Turner's sketch books.

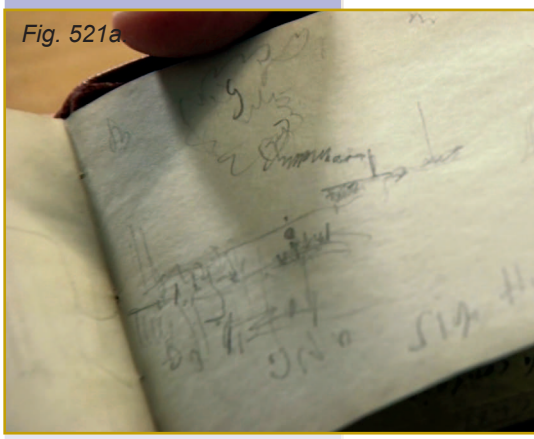


Fig. 521a.

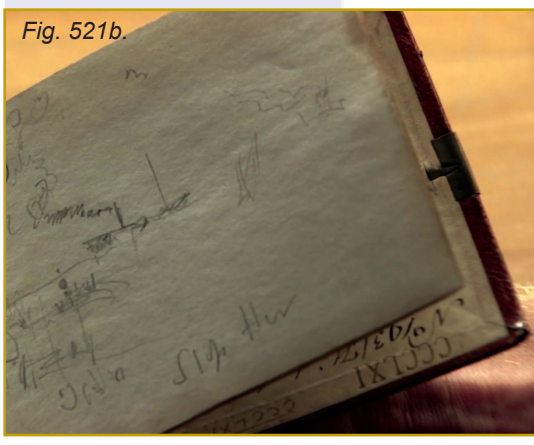


Fig. 521b.

Fig. 522: Dover (1825) – Turner

He said that his father never praised him for anything other than saving a ha'penny …

He introduced Turner to his clients … which seems to left its mark on Turner's character, because he became somewhat notoriously mean with money throughout his life. It was obvious from quite early on that Turner was very gifted. The good thing about his father having a barber's business was that lots of different sorts of people come in there to have their hair trimmed or their faces shaved, and we know that some of the people who came in got to see Turner's work. One person who is known to have frequented the barber's shop was Thomas Stothard, and he was actually a member of the Royal Academy.

He was a painter. And Turner's father once remarked to Thomas Stothard, the Royal Academician, that his son is going to be a painter. And he did, he joined the Royal Academy Schools at the age of 14.

The year is 1789. Joshua Reynolds was the first president of the Royal Academy. He was in charge and Turner absolutely admired Reynolds. The great end to all Art is to make an impression on the imagination and the feelings. The academy in those days wasn't like the Art schools at present. Scholars were not taught to paint at all, it was a drawing school, and they were very much on their own. Reynolds pointed out that success in Art depends entirely on the artist's own industry, and that industry, is not the industry of the **hands but of the mind.** Turner taught himself to paint in oils, and at the age of 21, in 1796, he exhibited his first oil painting at the Royal Academy, and it was called *Fishermen At Sea*.

It was an absolutely brilliant piece of painting, and it was as if Turner waited until he mastered oil painting and then demonstrated exactly what he could do. Other artists, like Constable, had to battle for years to get taken seriously compared to Turner, who came roaring onto the scene and continued to occupy the centre ground for the rest of his life.

Fig 523: The Royal Academy housed in Somerset House, London

Fig. 524: Above: Turner's Self Portrait (1790) – Turner

Fig. 525: Claude Lorrain

By the time he painted the self-portrait, Turner probably felt he had arrived because it is a very flattering self-portrait. Turner didn't like his own appearance, he was quite short, quite rough in his manners, strong Cockney accent, which he never got rid of. He was very pushy, very self-assertive, very ambitious, but he had the talent to go with it. Reynolds pointed Turner towards certain painters who he regarded were models of great painting. The 17th century French painter, Claude Lorrain, was recommended. Claude was regarded as the absolute master of light in landscape.

2.6 TURNER AND CLAUDE LORRAIN

Claude painted classical scenes of gods and nymphs dancing in nature. Claude, a painter of a mythical past, would inspire Turner to paint the industrial Britain of the 19th century. He planned how to apply the lessons of Claude's Art to something appropriate of his own age. This is Turner's version of a Claude. Young women bathe in pastoral setting. It looks in every way like a Claude, except this is not the mythical past.

It is Devon in 1815, and the Industrial Revolution is about to transform the landscape. By observing the painting very carefully, an enormous water wheel can be seen, the wheel for Gunnislake Old Mine, which was the biggest copper mine in the world at the time.

Turner paints this picture of the most Claudian scene he can find in England as though he, Turner, were a modern Claude, but, unlike Claude, he includes in the middle of his painting, a scene of modern industries. Ten years later, and Turner's hint of an industrial Britain becomes an onslaught, transformed into the fires and furnaces of modern Britain. It is the most resolutely industrial scene of coal being loaded on board a ship to be taken from the Northumbrian coalfields to the rest of Britain.

Fig. 526a: Detail: gods and nymphs dancing in nature

Fig. 526: Landscape with the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca (1648) – Turner

This is a moonlight scene, but this is modern industry on the Tyne. Industry never stops. It is a 24-hour productive effort, and this is about industrial might. These are the reasons that the England that Turner lives in has become that very place.

It is because industry is a transforming factor in the world, and his picture is a response to that. Turner was very excited by this kind of progress and also its potential for him as an artist to make pictures. Keelmen is a modern British equivalent of a classical Claude seaport.

Fig. 527: Crossing the Brook (1815)

Fig. 527a: Devon in 1815

Fig. 527b: Wheel for Gunnislake Old Mine as shown in main picture (Fig. 112)

Fig. 528: Keelmen heaving in coals by moonlight (1835)

Fig. 528a: Fires and Furnaces

Fig. 528b: Coal being loaded

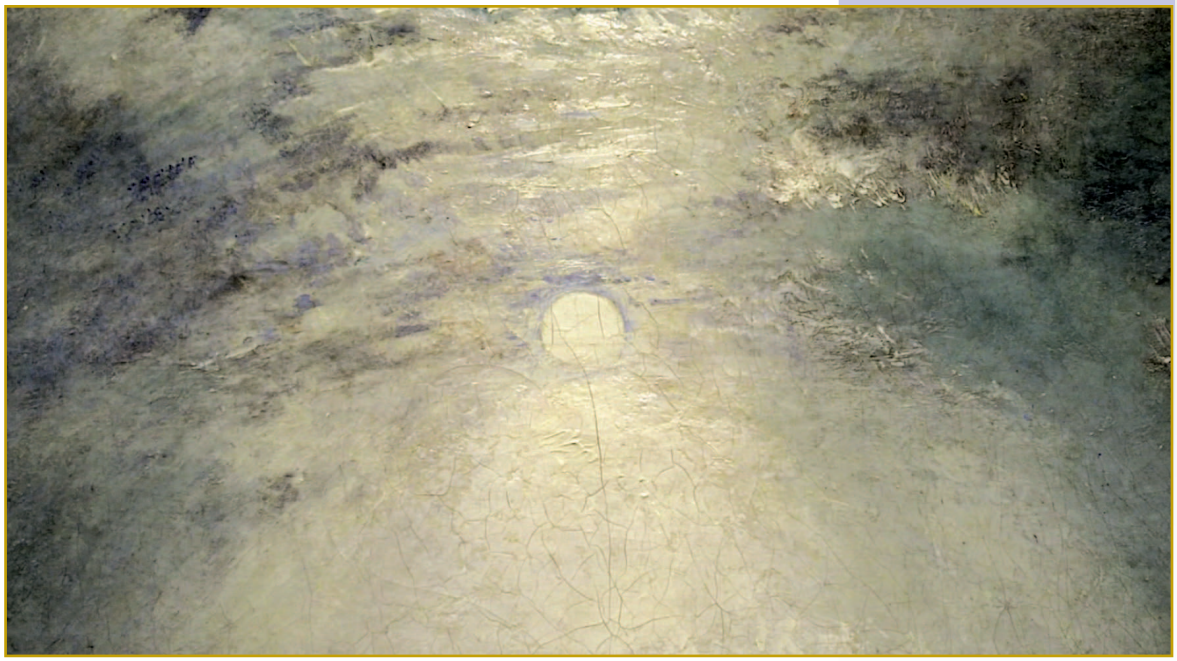


Fig. 528c: Moonlight scene

Fig. 528d: Industrial might

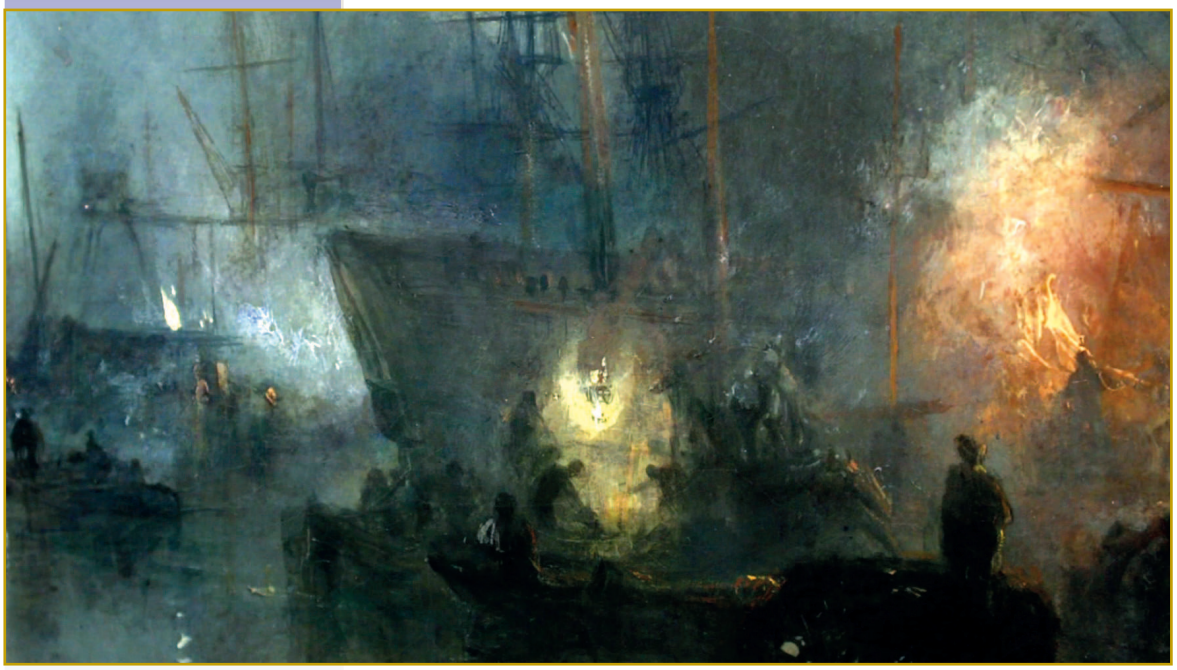


Fig. 528e: Industry is a transforming factor

It is a tradition bought up-to-date. Claude's seaport paintings were very distinctive, the source of light, is the sun, parallel lines are going off towards a vanishing point, and that was the way they were structured. The structure that he uses for this very modern subject is essentially a Claudian structure.

However, the Britain of the middle of the 19th century is no longer populated with nymphs and gods. It is people with industry and the people who work in it. This historic scene could never have existed without one pursuit that had dominated the age – Science.

Somerset House in London was home not just to the Royal Academy for artists but also the Royal Society for scientists. In the early 1800s, there was no great divide between Art and Science like there is today. They shared the **same building**.

The intellectual world was much smaller. In April 1801, just as Turner was hanging his next big seascape, on the other side of the wall at the Royal Society, legendary astronomer, William Herschel, was giving a lecture on the sun. In order to obtain as intimate a knowledge of the sun, it is obvious that the first step must be to become well acquainted with all the phenomena that appear on its surface.

Fig. 529: Seaport with the Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba (1648) – Lorrain

Openings, flats, ridges, nodules, crankles, shallows, dimples and punctures. It was at this point that Turner also began to look at the sun in a new way. Even here, in this most Claudian of landscapes, is hidden evidence of the latest scientific thinking. Young women dance around celebrating a new harvest. It looks like another Claude except for one thing – the sun. There are many examples in Turner throughout his life of new Science triggering ideas. In a sense, Herschel allows the way Turner paints the sun in the Macon. Without Herschel's observations, Turner might not have really thought about it. Observing the picture closely, it does seem to have incorporated ideas that were announced.

The way the paint is actually applied with a sort of ridge in it, seems to be taking Herschel's discovery and manifesting it in paint. Whereas Turner's great hero, Claude, would paint the sun as a yellow disc hanging in the sky, Turner paints slashes of little sharp lines. Turner is noted throughout his career for making the sun a very physical object, of using **impasto**, which is thick paint that sticks up. Looking at a canvas sideways, it would stick up like a boss of a shield, to bring the sun as a physical object very much closer to the spectator's attention.

Fig. 529a: Claude, would paint the sun as a yellow disc hanging in the sky

Fig. 529b: The structure that he uses for this very modern subject is essentially a Claudian structure – compare the painting of Claude Lorrain on the right hand side with Turner's painting on the left hand side.

For the first time in painting, Turner sees the sun as a real object, but something a person simply cannot look at without damaging the eyes. The onlooker are being blinded by that sun.

Turner quoted: “When I was a boy, I used to lie for hours on my back watching the skies and then go home and paint them, and there was a stall in Soho bazaar where they sold drawing materials, and they used to buy my skies”.

Fig. 530: Turner is using impasto, which is thick paint that sticks up

Fig. 531: The onlooker are being blinded by that sun

Fig. 532: The Festival upon the opening of the Vintage of Macon (1803) – Turner

Fig. 532b: Detail from original painting – Young women dance around celebrating a new harvest – Turner

They gave me one shilling sixpence for the small ones and three shillings sixpence for the larger ones."

2.7 UNDERSTANDING THE WEATHER

It was not just the heavens that were being analysed. Turner was absorbing developments in the understanding of the weather. In December 1802, a young Quaker called Luke Howard gave a lecture to a small group of scientists in London.

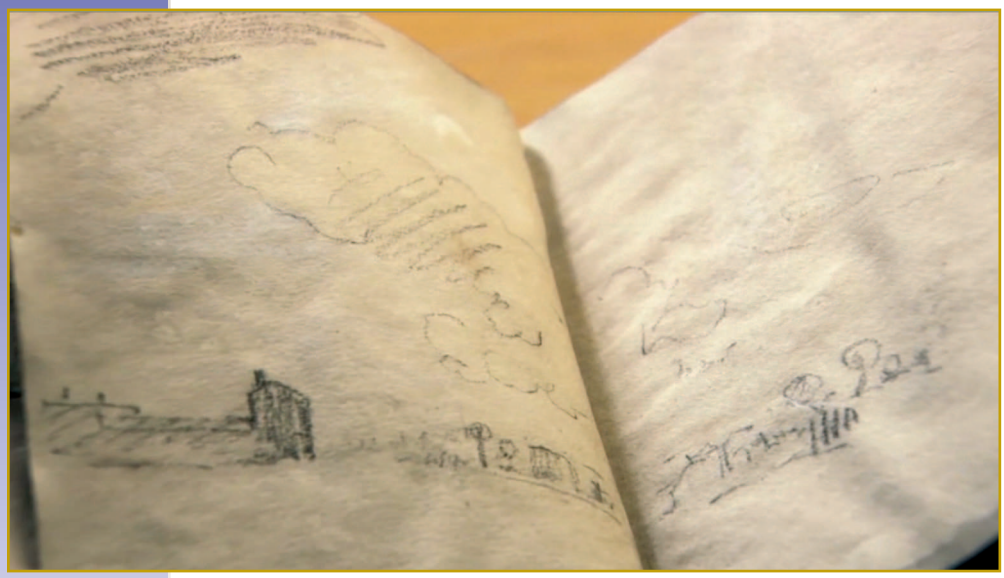


Fig. 533: Turner's sketchbook from 1804 contains a record of the stages of an eclipse.

Fig. 534: Landscape with the commencement of an eclipse (1804)

It would become a landmark moment in the creation of modern meteorology. It is concerned with the modification of clouds. Turner would have known of Howard's cloud classification, because everybody did, and it was used in artists' manuals already by the 1810s and 20s. What can be observed from Turner's paintings is a fascination with the weather, which is what everybody was feeling at that time. The root of that feeling is what philosophers called the Sublime … an obsession with the powerful forces of nature. It was the big idea for Turner and other Romantic painters in the early 1800s.

The Sublime was a category of Art, which represented nature at its most terrifying and intimidating. Turner was fascinated with those aspects of nature that showed how fragile human life was, and this was a common Romantic theme. The idea that humans are in awe of what the natural world can do, the volcanoes and hurricanes and floods and vast expanses, all of that. The category was defined in 1757 by the philosopher Edmund Burke, and he set out to explain why it was that a person should be fascinated by things in pictures that would terrify, when encountered in real life.

It's about being excited by high mountains, by a sense of scale and mystery in the world around us humans, and being taken to a point where a person are almost on the brink, perhaps, of being destroyed.

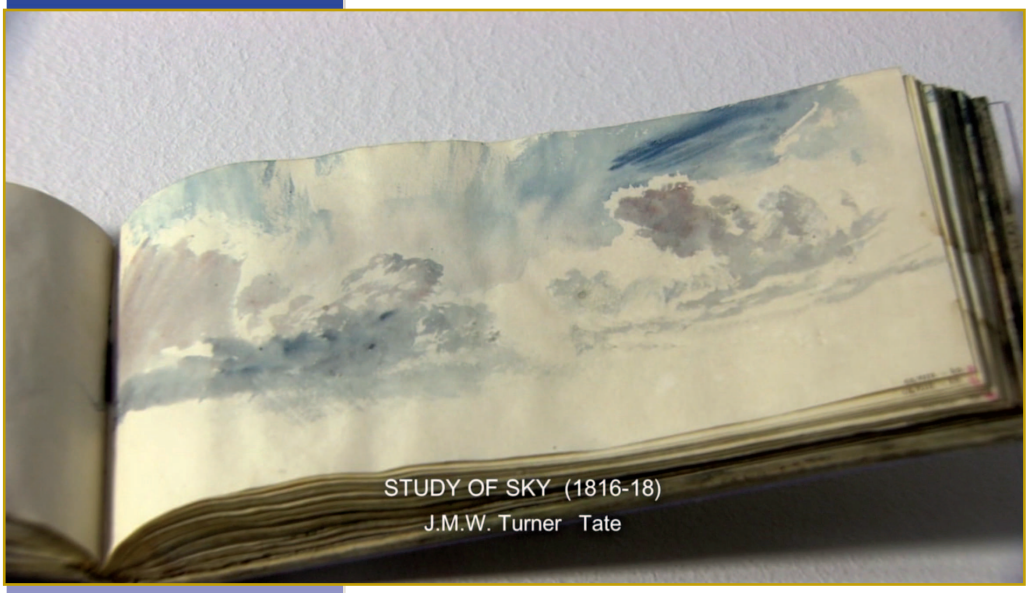


Fig. 535: Study of Sky (1816-18)

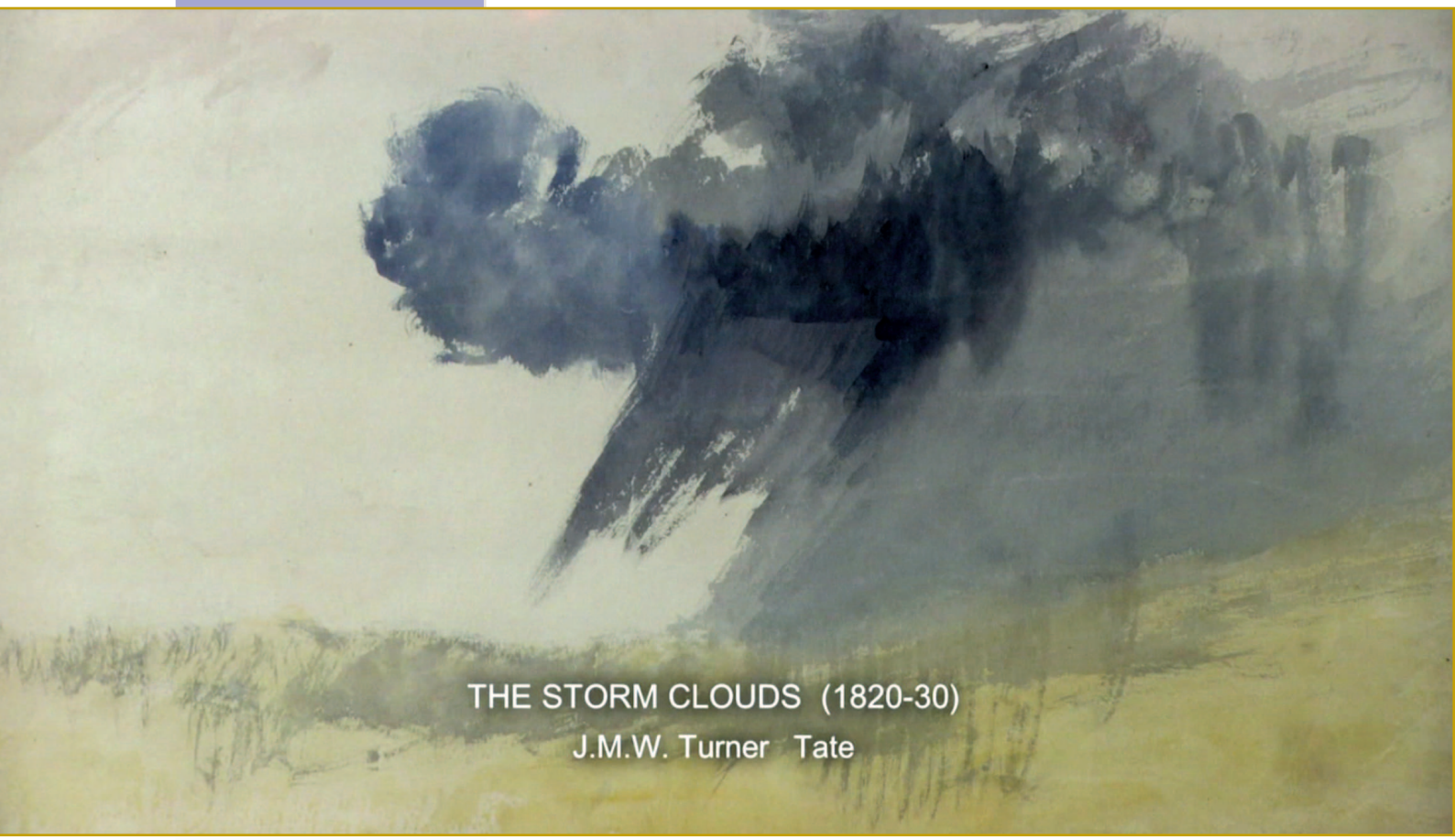


Fig. 536: The Storm Clouds (1820-30) – Turner

Fig. 537: Ship at Sea (1820-30) – Turner

Fig. 538: Twilight (1820-30) – Turner

Fig. 539: Trees in a Strong Breeze (1820-25) – Turner

Fig. 540: The Shipwreck (1805) – Turner

Certainly on the edge of being terrified. The Sublime, the terrible, is also beautiful. But Turner, unlike any other painter, would take the idea of the Sublime and re-cast it for the industrial age. This is his Bell Rock Lighthouse.

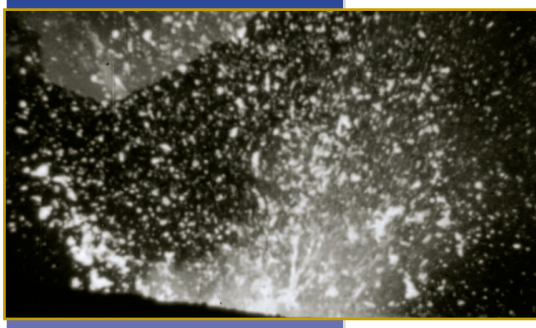


Fig. 541: Left: Aspects of nature

2.8 THE BELL ROCK LIGHTHOUSE

The sea is wild and dangerous. It is everything a picture of the Sublime should be, except for one thing. The light-house. Man is not submitting to the power of nature, but is challenging it with technology.

Fig. 542: The Eruption of the Soufriere Mountains in the Island of St Vincent (1812) – Turner

The lighthouse was built between 1807 and 1811 by the Scottish engineer Robert Stevenson, who commissioned Turner to paint it. In 1799, something like 70 ships were wrecked in the vicinity of the Bellrock lighthouse. Most of the boats at that time were wooden ships.

Fig. 543a: The Fall of an Avalanche in the Grisons (1810) – Turner

Fig. 543b: The Fall of an Avalanche in the Grisons (1810) – Turner

Fig. 544a & b: The Pass of St. Gotthard, Switzerland (1804) – Turner

Fig. 545: Buttermere Lake (1798) – Turner

Fig. 545a: Detail from Buttermere Lake (1798) – Turner

Fig. 546: Bell Rock Lighthouse (1819) – Turner

Stevenson wanted to built a lighthouse in an almost impossible situation. It was only at low tide you could actually get onto the rock, so the rock would totally disappear at high water. What made Stevenson's lighthouse special was not just its location, but also its revolutionary shape – a curved base calculated precisely to withstand forces of the sea. It's almost unbelievable that it was successful. Everything about this job was innovative. When Turner finished his watercolour, he send it to Stevenson to be engraved for the book. The waves that are breaking on the lighthouse come up and almost grip it like a hand and there is a bit of wreckage in the foreground.

Philosophiae Doctor

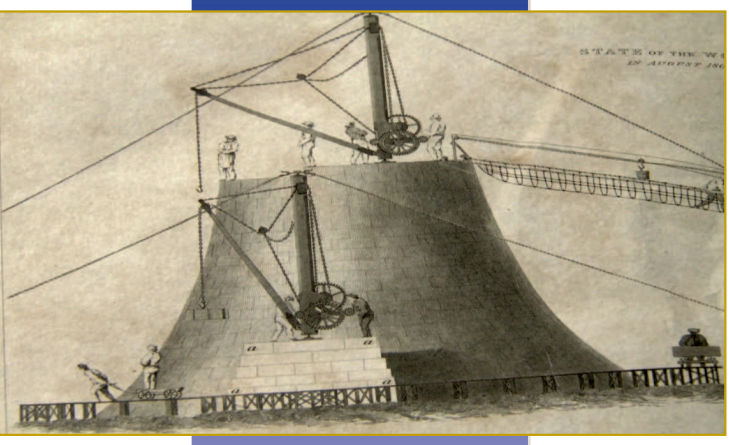


Fig. 547: Revolutionary shape – a curved base.

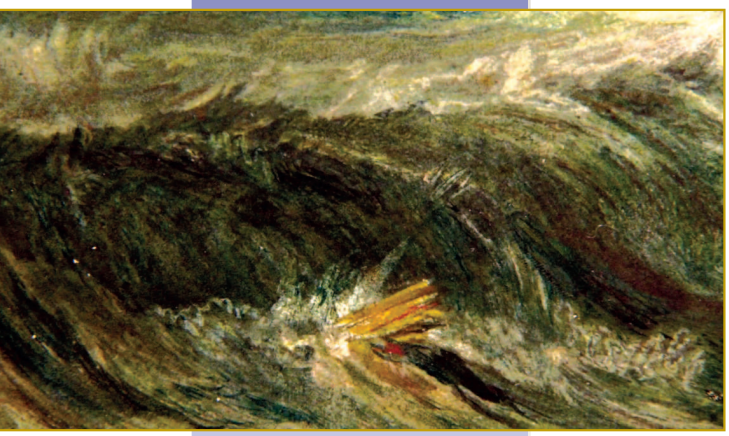


Fig. 548: Wreckage in the foreground.

Fig. 549: Ships in Turner's picture are not sinking, they are surviving.

These are indices of just how dangerous this spot actually is. But the ships in Turner's picture are not sinking, they are surviving. The lighthouse is protecting them. Turner understood precisely what these things stood for – that, built properly, they were going to save hundreds, and over years, thousands of lives. Here is something that is a demonstration of human ingenuity in the face of an untamed sea. This engineering marvel marks a turning point in Turner's art. From now on, the Sublime would not just be about the power of nature, it would also be about humanity's inventive ways of challenging it.

2.9 MANBY AND THE SHIPWRECK

This painting by Turner looks, at first glance, like a classic shipwreck. But again, Turner has incorporated new technology in an age-old scene. This painting depicts an invention by a man called George William Manby, and it shows here this puff of air which has fired a shot, which is attached to a rope out to a shipwreck, and the rescuers are going to pull that rope tight, and they are going to try to ferry people to shore from the shipwreck.

It was painted in 1831, the year that Manby was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society, and Turner always had his eyes on the newspapers. Manby was front page news, and that is why Turner's painted it. Turner met him through a patron, a Yarmouth patron called Dawson Turner, who was no relation, but Turner obviously admired this man, admired his work.

Fig. 550: Sunset at Sea, with a Lighthouse and distant Ship – Turner

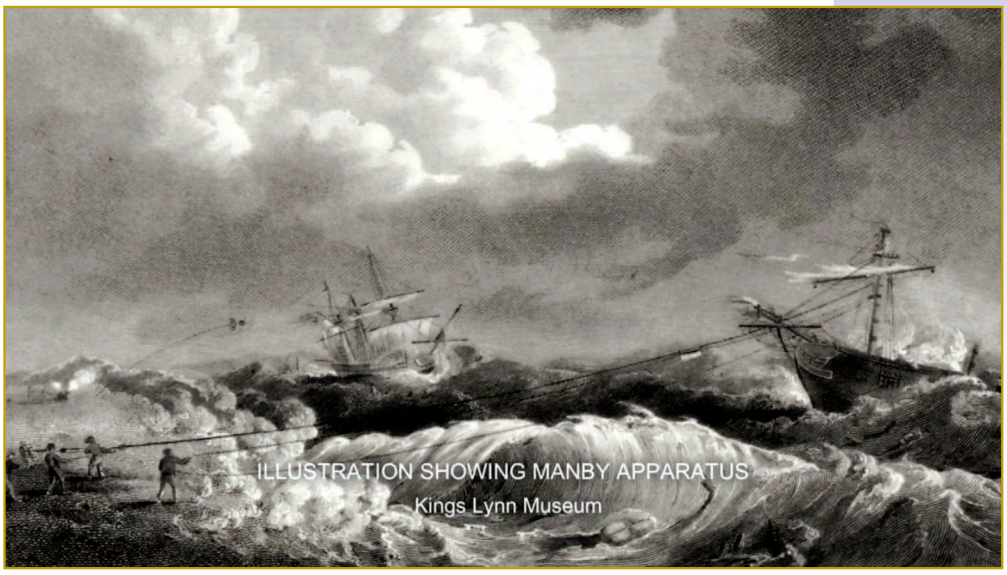


Fig. 551: Illustration Showing Manby Apparatus

Fig. 552: Life-boat and Manby Apparatus going off to a Stranded Vessel making signal (blue lights) of Distress (1831) – Turner

Fig. 552a: Detail of Shipwreck – Saving sailors with the help of Manby's device.

Fig. 553: George Manby (1813)

It's one of those paintings in which human ingenuity triumphs over the power of the sea. Manby was a barrack master at Yarmouth, and Yarmouth was renowned for being a very dangerous coast, and in 1807, Manby witnessed a ship, the Snipe, going aground on this sandbar. Manby was horrified by it, he could hear cries of these of the shipwrecked sailors. The next day he came down to the beach and there 144 corpses had been washed up. No-one could do anything to save those people, and Manby decided he was the man to solve this problem. A rope, so as to communicate in such circumstances with a ship, and a portable motor, to ensure a prompt and effective communication at a period when each successive instant was big with the fate of an entire ship's company.

Fig. 552b: Detail of Shipwreck – The Lifeboat.

Fig.554a.

Fig.554b.

Fig.554c.

Fig.554d.

Fig. 554a-e Snipe

This is all brilliant stuff that Turner loved. Everybody was talking about Manby and his rather crazy invention.

2.10 TURNER'S INDUSTRIAL ERA

Turner's embrace of new technology was not just there in the subject of his paintings, it was in the very paint itself. He discussed pigment recipes with the scientist Michael Faraday. New fiery reds and chrome yellows – the colours of industry. He was also interested in the geometric rules of Art. Since 1811, he had been giving a series of lectures at the Royal Academy on Perspective.

This is his picture of a factory in the West Midlands. For the Romantics, factories were the dark side of progress, but for Turner, they were a source of inspiration. He tempts the most exquisite, beautiful pictorial effect out of the blast furnaces of industrial Dudley.

Fig.554e.

Those people who visited Dudley, especially literary commentators, were often stunned by what they saw. Dickens was horrified by the Black country and the effects of industrialization. But what Turner is representing are not what Blake described as the Dark Satanic Mills. It is an image which certainly doesn't criticise the industrial revolution in any way. When Turner paints industry, he does paint it not in a judgemental way. If a person went into the valleys and into the industrial cities, this was the modern world.

2.11 ELECTRO-MAGNETISM – SNOW STORM

A steamboat in a vortex of rain and snow. Turner is doing something extraordinary. His painting has become loose, less figurative, more atmospheric, less solid. It's perhaps one of the most extreme pictures ever showed. One cannot tell where the sea ends and the air begins. It has no sides, no middle, nothing to hold onto. The only solid thing is the little steam boat. But this is not just a boat in a storm, there are forces at work in this painting. There is an order in the chaos, an order which has everything to do with the scientific discoveries that were changing our understanding of nature. It all begins with the scientist Michael Faraday. In 1821, he demonstrated the theory of magnetic rotation, with the world's first electric motor. A decade later, Faraday showed that an electric current could be generated through exposure to a magnetic field.

Fig. 555: Dudley (1832) – Turner

Fig. 556: Industrial Dudley – Turner

Fig. 557: Kirkstall Lock, on the River Aire (1824-25) – Turner

Fig. 558: An Industrial Town at Sunset (1830-32) – Turner

At the same time, Turner and Faraday's friend, the mathematician Mary Somerville, was introducing the idea of electro-magnetism to a wider public in a bestselling book. Turner and Mary Somerville were good friends.

Even a ship passing over the surface of the water in northern or southern latitudes ought to have electric currents running directly across the line of her motion. Curious electro-magnetic combinations probably exist which have never yet been noticed. Is this the visual manifestation of the invisible magnetic forces in nature? In the view of this thesis, the key point for Snowstorm, is the visual parallel that it creates between the sea as a vast, uncontrollable force, and the invisible powers of the earth's magnetism. Underneath the chaos, there is a real regularity. The waves have a sort of a hairy quality that gets very near around the bar magnet and how they gather around the bar magnet.

Whatever he has understood about magnetism and about Science, the key thing he has taken from it is an understanding of flux and of dynamism. By standing in front of the Snowstorm and look at that tilted horizon, and look at that vortex, a person can realise that yourself have been caught up in that same rhythm. By 1840, Turner, now in his 60s, was making regular trips to Margate, a seaside town on the Kent coast.

Fig. 559: Snow Storm – Steam-boat off a Harbour's Mouth (1842)

He had been visiting Margate since his childhood. Now, it was a second home. The thing about Margate, it is very gritty, and has really strange light and amazing sunsets, and it has got a lot of richness in the atmosphere.

2.12 THE WORLD OF MOTION

There are stories late in life that he was getting more reclusive. Turner loved to cultivate this air of mystery. In one part of mysterious proceedings, Turner, who worked almost entirely with his **pallet knife**, was observed to be rolling and spreading a lump of half transparent stuff over his picture.

Fig. 560: One cannot tell where the sea ends and the air begins.

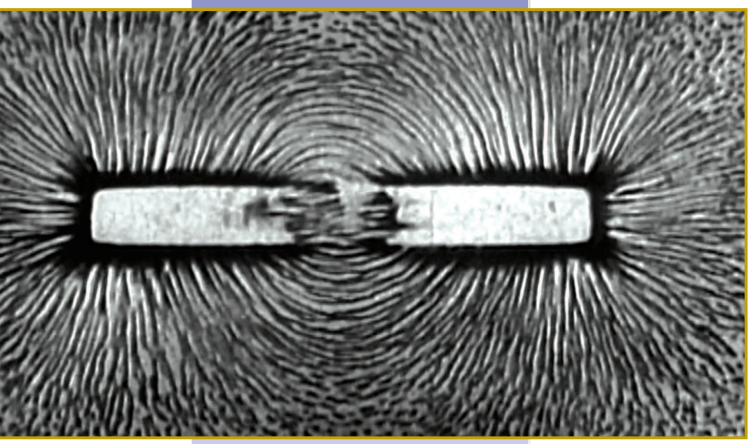


Fig. 561: Theory of magnetic rotation

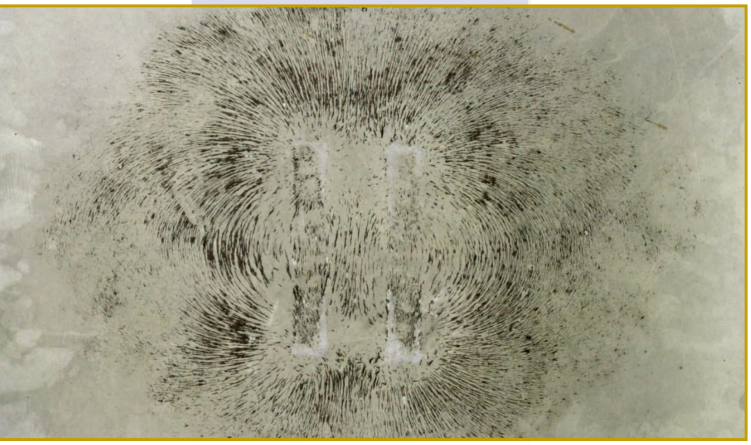


Fig. 562: Magnetic Experiment

This is how it was done in 1844, one of Turner's last great oil paintings. A train hurtling out of the canvas into the future. It's all there in this one extraordinary picture. The scientific discoveries, the engineering breakthroughs, the industrial upheavals come together in Turner's vision of the new Britain.

It's about atmosphere – a train crossing a bridge puffing out smoke and soot on a rather wet, misty day in the Thames Valley. The title: *Rain, Steam and Speed*. Everything pouring, its exciting. It's hitting the same note as Temeraire. The world of old motion drifting along in that little boat, The fire box has almost eaten through the casing of the engine chassis as it roars towards you. This is the Great Western Railway. This is Brunel's fantastic engineering achievement. It's the jewel in the crown of the railway system.

So it is a tribue to one of the defining figures of Victorian Britain. When this picture was painted, mankind were about a decade-and-a-half into the history of the railways.

Fig. 563a.

Fig. 563b.

Fig. 563c.

Fig. 563a-c: The key point for Snowstorm, is the visual parallel that it creates between the sea as a vast, uncontrollable force, and the invisible powers of the earth's magnetism.

Fig. 563d: Turner had found a new way of painting, he created a visual language to express nature's hidden forces.

Fig. 564: Margate from the Sea (1835-40) – Turner

Remember, before the railways arrived, nobody had gone faster than a horse could gallop, and even by 1844, when this picture was done, man was going 30, 40 miles an hour, and soon to go 50, 60 miles an hour. Unheard-of speeds! It really is transformational. The Great Western was even responsible for standardising time. If you look very closely, there's a hare running for its life in front of the train. The hare is, in Britain, anyway, the fastest natural animal. So there is this contrast between the modern, industrial speedy machine and the natural speedy animal.

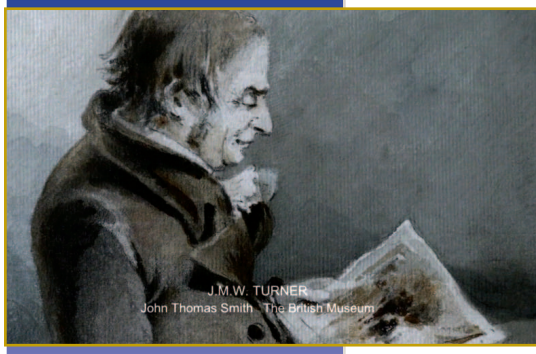


Fig. 565: JMW Turner

Fig. 566: Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway (1844)

The train in *Rain, Steam And Speed* is not just a train rushing at its onlooker, but it is also a reminder of the modern world, and how the modern world is changing the landscape, changing society, changing individual lives.

The coming of the railways, the destruction of many homes of ordinary people, especially building the stations in London and all the cities, caused a lot of resentment through old England. The people that most resented it are by now, the ageing Romantics like Wordsworth and Ruskin, who feared that these masses would invade their beautiful landscapes, but Turner's painting is a great cheer for Brunel.

When the novelist and Art critic William Thackeray first saw *Rain, Steam and Speed,* he knew he was looking at something completely new in painting. The rain in the overwhelming picture is composed of dabs of dirty putty slapped on to the canvas with a trowel. The sunshine shines out of very thick, smeary lumps of chrome yellow. The world has never seen anything like this picture. Turner is using paint to make man feel what it was like to be there. Thackerary commented on the fact that when you got close to the picture, you really couldn't get away from the thickness of the paint. It can not be said that only Impressionism and the Modern movement had these revelations. What makes Turner extraordinary is that he came upon these understandings in the 19th century. Studying the rest of Victorian painting around this time, including mates of his like Wilkie, who he admired.

Fig. 566a: Rain, Steam and Speed – Scientific discoveries

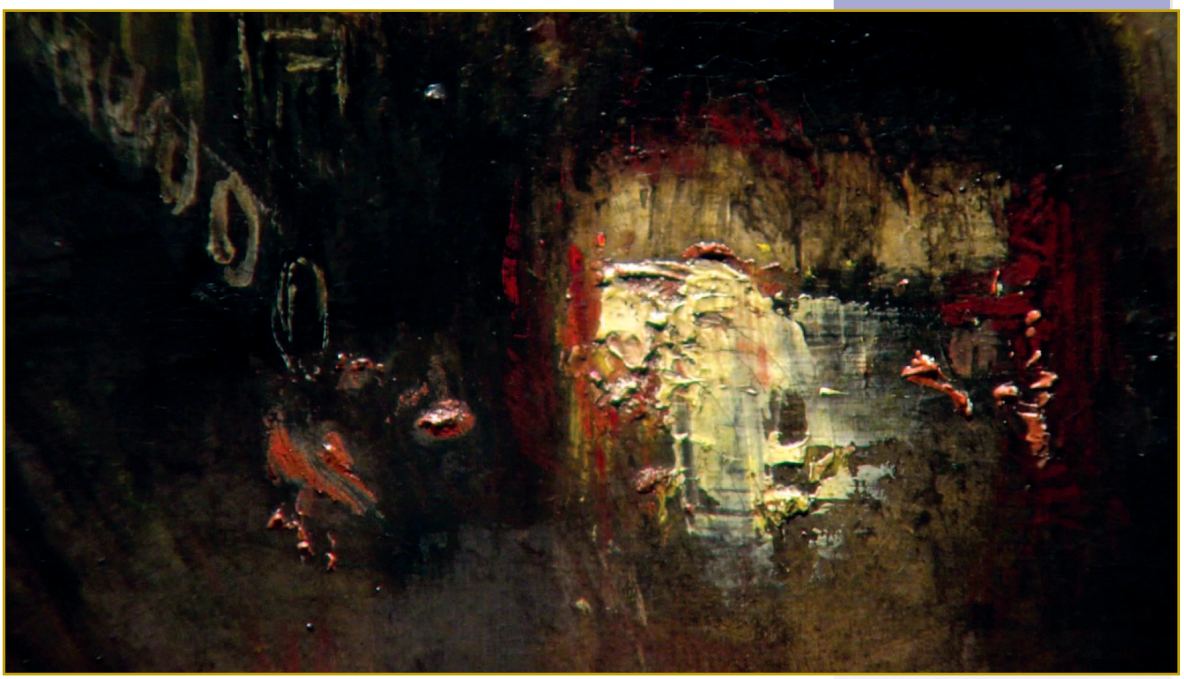


Fig. 566b: Rain, Steam and Speed – Engineering breakthroughs

Fig. 566c: The rain in the overwhelming picture is composed of dabs of dirty putty slapped on to the canvas with a trowel.

Fig. 566d: The sunshine shines out of very thick, smeary lumps of chrome yellow.

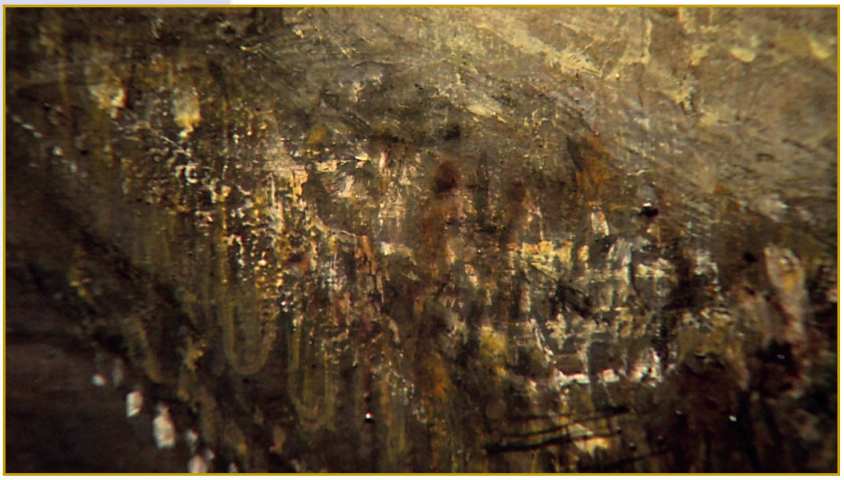


Fig. 566e: Thackerary commented on the fact that when you got close to the picture, you really couldn't get away from the thickness of the paint.

The notion that as a fellow of the Royal Academy, one would make this turmoil of paint and deliver it as Art. Who else is doing that? The answer is no-one. It isn't simply nice, little curlicues of smoke coming out of the funnel. It is somebody who understands how steam power has harnessed heat and turned it into motion. Nobody else had found a way of painting that transformation. The artist wanted to instinctively see if belching smoke and a cantering train would generate that kind of beauty. What he does is the industrial Sublime.

It's a kind of modernisation, perhaps, of the Sublime. It's making it applicable to a modern age, which is making scientific and technological advances and is learning to harness nature.

Fig. 567: Brunel's Design for the Maidenhead Bridge

The Sublime usually presupposes the intrusion of something mechanical as the enemy. It's not the enemy for Turner. The most atmospheric of all of Turner's paintings, where all the elements come together – earth, air, fire and water – becomes a celebration of progress. For Turner, industry becomes the Sublime. It is as though those natural forces have been harnessed by mankind for their own betterment. The volcanoes and hurricanes that might traditionally be associated with the Sublime now occur inside boilers and drive pistons. No-one had thought like that, painted like that, imagined it like that, and it's not going to be repeated, arguably, until one gets in to the 1910s. Turner was painting what was happening, the reality of that time, because he had his finger on the pulse. He managed to achieve something quite phenomenal, and that's what makes Turner a great artist. He is phenomenally important for the history of Art and the history of Britain.[8]

This is JMW Turner, Britain's great Romantic landscape painter, who delivered to us a visionary story of the Industrial Revolution. Who painted nature, and at the same time revealed the wonders of Science and invention.

Turner used paint to herald a new world, of thought and understanding.

8 BBC The Genius of Turner – Painting the Industrial Revolution

Fig. 568: Sheepwashing (1817) – David Wilkie

3. CONCLUSION

The change of inner life can be seen in the transforming "blue" of the picture and one can see new colours coming out of the blue smoke, the colours of life. The flesh tones, the incredibly white linens and that stunning luscious pink that he puts on the girl's lips. This glimpse of possible "rose tints", take the observer out of the depths of Picasso's "blue period" before entering the happier, rosier mood of grace.

Fig. 569: The texture of fire

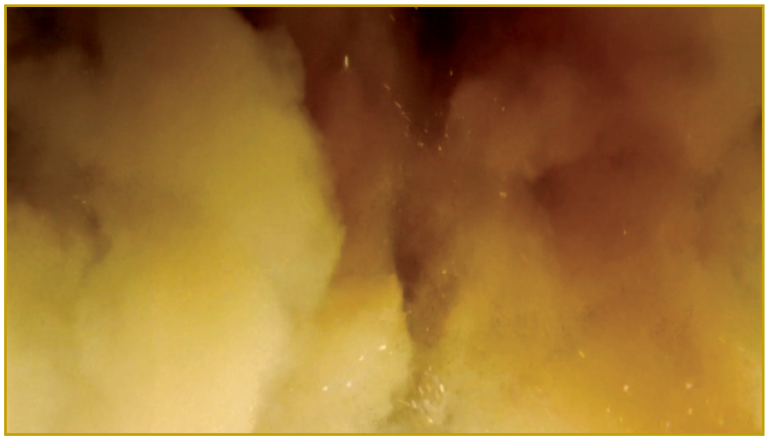


Fig. 570: The texture of fire smoke

Fig. 571: The texture of train smoke

Giotto di Bondone is seeing heaven as divinely blue – a vision of the spiritually, dreamlike future after this life. He painted the most beautiful, the most brilliant deep vault dusted with hundreds of golden stars. This blue ceiling is a depiction of heaven. As a Florentine, Benvenuto Cellini, left behind a great legacy and the duty to continue the tradition of working with gold with the passion and perseverance of the great Florentine artistic tradition.

Gustav Klimt, lived through a period where gold became debased, became cheap and tacky and Klimt was determined to make gold sacred again – he are saying through his paintings that gold is the most precious thing a man can have. Wedgwood wanted every person to have a piece of antiquity in their home by owning a piece of his classical style white pottery. It was flawless, immaculate whiteness. Wedgwood took this idea of the simplicity of taste and beauty to everyone. White had conquered Europe – thanks to Wedgwood and Winkleman. It gave taste and unity to the people.

James McNeill Whistler. He was a snob from a wealthy family and with more money than motivation, Whistler decided upon a career in Art. To Whistler, the Victorian public's taste for Art was repulsive. He wanted to set himself apart from this and bring in new ideas. He found inspiration in a novel that was published the same year of his arrival in London, "*The Woman in White*", by Wilkie Collins. *The Woman in White* was the catalyst for his exhibition of paintings presenting women in white dresses.

Those who didn't understand the painting were pretty much everyone – the working class, the middle class, the establishments. Those who did understand the painting was Whistler and his small group of intellectuals, elite based in Chelsea. **White became the colour of the elitism.**

Le Corbusier, was an architect, designer, painter, urban planner, writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now called modern architecture. Le Corbusier believed that by eradicating all forms of decoration and reminders of the past the citizens would achieve "inner cleanness". In 1925 he wrote the purist manifesto *Towards a New Architecture*. The manifesto contained within it the blueprints for a new world and central to Corbusier's plan was the whitewashing of architecture.

Titian was a colour addict and when it came to blue he wore his heart on his sleeve. For him the Churches control over colour must have been deeply frustrating. But Titian's obsession with blue would only be fully understood when one of his greatest paintings began to fall apart, Bacchus and Ariadne, famous scene from Roman Mythology. Blue was used here for fun, it was stripped from its conventional use.

Yves Klein invented his own blue and he believed it could change the world. His story begins with the dazzling blues of the Côte d'Azur.

He lost himself as an artist in making paintings, each of just a single block of colour – red, slightly less red and yellow, but the colour that captivated him most was the colour of the sky. In this revolution anything that took his fancy was treated in his new blue. Undeterred Yves continue to fill the world with his blue art.

A love for life can clearly be felt in Marc Chagall's work. He adopted the vibrant colours of postimpressionist artists such as Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh. He went on to experiment with many different types of compositions and media, ranging from oil paint and gouache (opaque watercolour paint), to stained glass, and printmaking.

It is quite difficult to be sure of the symbolism intended by the reference to certain colours. Some colours, however, do have obvious symbolic value in Scripture. Purple and scarlet, as the colours of the dress of kings, suggested royalty and majesty (Jude 8:26; Esther 8:15; Daniel 5:7; Nahum 2:3). Black usually signified death, evil or mourning (Revelation 6:5-6; Jeremiah 14:2), and red, war and blood-shed (Revelation 6:4; 12:3).

This then, is the splendour of colour, light and darkness, pertaining to Romantic Art Expressions.

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