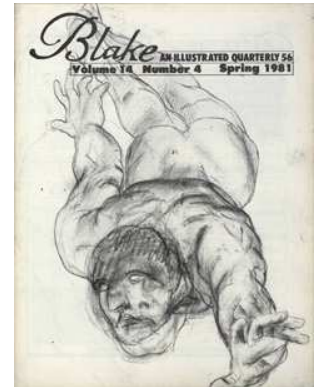


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At The British Art Center: Turner & Shakespeare

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NEWSLETTER

AT THE BRITISH ART CENTER: TURNER & SHAKESPEARE

The following is a press release from Yale University: *Turner and the Sublime*, a major loan exhibition exploring the relationship of J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851) to theories of the sublime, will open at the Yale Center for British Art on Wednesday, 11 February 1981.

The sublime as an aesthetic concept has been discussed by numerous writers, and Turner's own interest in the theory, as propounded in the eighteenth century by Edmund Burke and others, has often been noted. But Turner, far from being bound by any theoretical conceptions, used these as the starting point for a whole series of technical and artistic innovations. In pursuit of the sublime, Turner made many very large watercolors which emulated the grandeur and importance of oil paintings. Several of these, together with their no less impressive full-scale preparatory studies, will be included in this exhibition, some being shown for the first time. The most significant of Turner's paintings in the genre of the sublime will be represented by fine impressions of prints, often engraved under the close supervision of Turner himself.

This exhibition, the first to examine a specific aspect of Turner's art, will include 123 watercolors, prints and drawings executed between 1793 and 1845. Of these works, sixty constitute an unprecedented loan from the resources of the Turner Bequest, deposited in the British Museum in London; in addition, a sizable number of works come from the Center's own holdings, and others from private collections.

Turner and the Sublime has already received considerable attention at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto where it opened on 1 November 1980. After closing in New Haven on 19 April 1981, it will travel to the British Museum in London where it will be on view from 15 May through 20 September 1981.

The 192-page catalogue accompanying the exhibition, published by British Museum Publications and available at the Center's Sales Desk, includes 32 color plates and 108 black and white reproductions. Written by Andrew Wilton, a leading authority on Turner watercolors and Curator of Prints and Drawings through December 1980, the catalogue discusses Turner's training and early career in the light of traditional attitudes to the sublime and considers the mature Turner's use of them for his own needs.

Shakespeare and British Art, an exhibition bringing together for the first time the University's extensive holdings of Shakespearean art, will open at the Yale Center for British Art on Thursday, 23

April and remain on view through Sunday, 5 July 1981.

William Shakespeare was one of the most important literary inspirations for British artists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nearly 1400 works based upon scenes or characters in his plays were shown at the Royal Academy exhibitions between 1769 and 1900. One of the most significant events in the development of an English School of history painting was Josiah Boydell's *Shakspeare Gallery*, a group of paintings, illustrating the plays of Shakespeare, which were commissioned in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and engraved for subscription. Illustrated editions of Shakespeare's works proliferated, especially during the nineteenth century when over three hundred were in print.

This exhibition surveys the literary and visual sources of Shakespearean illustration, from the first illustrated edition of 1709 to Victorian interpretations of this theme. It draws on the large collection of Shakespearean material in the British Art Center, including a number of paintings from the Boydell *Shakspeare Gallery* and others of important eighteenth century actors in major roles, such as Benjamin Wilson's *David Garrick and George Anne Bellamy as Romeo and Juliet* and Pieter Van Bleeck's *Mrs. Cibber as Cordelia*. Nearly thirty paintings and over 120 drawings and prints from the Center's collection will be on view. Among the artists represented by important drawings and watercolors are Francis Hayman, George Romney, Henry Fuseli, Richard Parkes Bonington, Francis Danby and Frederic Lord Leighton. The Lewis Walpole Library in Farmington, Connecticut will be lending five watercolor drawings by H. W. Bunbury as well as fifteen engravings. Finally, a number of prints and rare, illustrated editions of Shakespeare from the collections of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and Sterling Memorial Library will be on display.

The exhibition has been organized by Geoffrey Ashton, Librarian of the Garrick Club and former resident fellow of the British Art Center, who is a specialist in theatrical and Shakespearean art. It will be accompanied by a catalogue with 110 illustrations and detailed entries on all 190 objects in the exhibition.

In conjunction with *Shakespeare and British Art*, the Center will offer a range of special programs. On Friday, 24 April at 4 p.m., The Lord Annan, Vice-Chancellor of the University of London, will deliver a lecture, sponsored by the British Studies Program, entitled "How Should We Produce Shakespeare?" On Saturday, 25 April from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., there will be a symposium, *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Topics under discussion will include: the relationship of Shakespeare's plays to visual depictions of them, the importance of Shakespearean drama as a subject for art, and performances of the bard's works during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The program will feature the following talks:

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The Coral Reef: Some Morning Thoughts on Shakespeare
--Maynard Mack, Sterling Professor Emeritus of English, Yale University.

Confrontation and Complexity in Shakespeare's Scenes
--George Hunter, Professor of English, Yale University
University.

Acting Shakespeare--Eugene Waith, Douglas Tracy Smith
Professor of English Literature, Yale University.

Boydell's Shakespeare--G. E. Bentley, Professor of
English, University of Toronto.

2:30-4:30 p.m.

Shakespeare and the Artist in the Nineteenth Century
--Geoffrey Ashton, Librarian, Garrick Club, London,
England.

Turner's "Juliet and her Nurse"--Ronald Paulson,
Thomas E. Donnelly Professor of English, Yale
University.

*Shakespearean Paintings and Nineteenth-Century Art
Criticism*--Richard D. Altick, Professor of English,
The Ohio State University, Columbus.

*Honor and Dejection: Holman Hunt's Problem with a
Problem Play*--Mark Roskill, Professor of Art History,
University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

On Sunday, 26 April at 3 p.m., Ann Carter-Cox,
a soprano who has given solo recitals at Carnegie
Hall, Town Hall and Abraham Goodman House in New York
and appeared regularly at the Medieval Faires held
at the Cloisters each summer, will perform at the
Center. Accompanying herself on the lute and
dulcimer, she will sing songs of medieval and
Renaissance England, including lyrics from
Shakespeare's plays. The following Sunday (3 May),
also at 3 p.m., students in the Yale School of Drama
will present scenes from Shakespeare as performed
in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As part of the Center's "Art in Context" series
Tuesdays at 12:30 p.m., Judith Colton, Associate
Professor of the History of Art, will present an
informal lecture on the oil painting by Adrien
Carpentiers entitled "Roubiliac Modeling his
Monument to Shakespeare" on 21 April, and Patrick
Noon, Acting Curator of Prints and Drawings, will
discuss "The Reconciliation of the Montagues and
the Capulets," a watercolor by Frederic Lord Leighton,
on 21 April.

Gallery talks by members of the Department of
Academic Programs are scheduled for the following
Thursdays at 2 p.m.: 23 and 30 April; 7 and 21 May;
4, 18 and 25 June. Special tours of the exhibition
may be arranged by contacting Teri Edelstein at
203/436-3013.

A summer film series, featuring Shakespearean
films made in the United States, Great Britain, and
Germany displaying a variety of cinematic techniques
and concepts, is scheduled for the following Saturdays
at 2:30 p.m.: 13 June--*Macbeth*; 27 June--*A Midsummer
Night's Dream*; 18 July--*Othello*; 1 August--*Romeo and
Juliet*; 15 August--*Hamlet*. All programs are open to
the public without charge.

"BLAKE AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY" AT THE 1980 MLA

That the 1980 MLA Special Session on "Blake and the
Eighteenth Century" was probably the longest such
meeting of the convention does not alone explain the
fact that the audience seemed to increase rather than
diminish in numbers during the presentation of the
four papers and a response. This was an eternity in
love indeed with its temporal productions. Leo
Damrosch, Jr. spoke first on "Blake and the Recovery
of the Lyric," arguing that Blake "recovers" the
lyric through poems "totally committed to meaning in
its deepest sense" and that the fullness of this
commitment is what separates Blake most decisively
from the tentative lyric poetry of the eighteenth
century. But at the same time, it is this "total
moral commitment to works of art that point beyond
themselves" that leads to Blake's later work and its
concern with "the gap between what art claims and
what it can perform." Jim Borck offered an illumi-
nated discussion of "Blake and the Topography of the
Human Imagination," and suggested that "Blake's
interest in London corresponds to other contemporary
interests in anatomy texts and cartographic develop-
ments during his life." Blake "must transform the
landscape from which his map has been drawn, an
external re-mapping which will cause distinctly new
interior maps to spring forth"--in particular, the
London that Blake "wishes to re-construct is an
artistically remapped London based upon anatomical
details." Jim's illustrations pointed to Vesalius'
Fabrica, an important anatomical text, as a source
for the poses of some Blake figures. In "Unlocking
Blake's Crystal Cabinet," Tom Vogler related some of
the significant details and the poetic argument of
that poem to Blake's understanding and detestation
of Lockean epistemology and metaphysics. Referring
to Barker's famous Panorama of 1787 and to Bentham's
proposed Panopticon, Tom characterized the speaker
of the poem as one who has entered "the tower of
observation, or the Lockean stage of self-reflection,
in which he can see himself seeing, while we see him
seeing himself and describing what he sees." Here,
however, "the power of observation does not unlock
the epistemological prison but rather constitutes it
and expands it." The speaker's attempt to "seize
the inmost Form" reveals that there is *nothing* there
that can be seized, perceived, or comprehended by
natural vision." In his remarks on "Classical Line
and Romantic Identity," Morris Eaves argued against
the recent tendency to use Blake's favorite aesthetic
opposition--line vs. color--to align him with artistic
neoclassicism and eighteenth-century attitudes toward
art. For Morris, "Blake--characteristically--reestab-
lishes Enlightenment principles on romantic grounds.
In the case of artistic line, he shears off certain
conventional associations (of line with reason and
nature, for instance), retains others (of line with
intellect), and adds still others (of line with
imagination). The result is a thoroughly romantic
cluster of metaphors." The Session closed with a
response in the spirit of true friendship from
Stephen Carr; addressing each of the preceding papers,
Steve's meta-critical effort attended to some charac-
teristic problems of placing Blake within standard
categories and sequences of literary history. "Read-
ing Blake forces us to explore, to question, and in