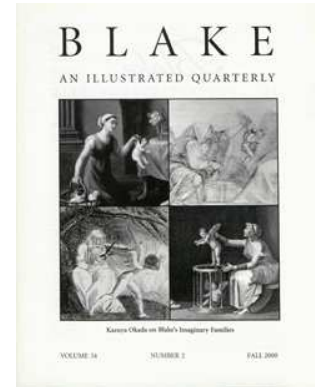


AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY  
**BLAKE**

N E W S

## Blake Exhibition at Tate Britain

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 34, Issue 2, Fall 2000, pp. 62-63



BLAKE EXHIBITION AT TATE BRITAIN

The following material on the upcoming Blake show and associated events at Tate Britain (formerly the Tate Gallery) has been gleaned from press releases. We present it here almost verbatim:

Tate Britain: 9 November 2000–11 February 2001  
 Admission: £8 (concessions £5, family ticket £21)  
 Opening Hours: Daily 10.00–17.40 Last Admission: 17.00  
 Supported by Glaxo Wellcome plc

The major exhibition at Tate Britain this autumn will take a fresh view of the unique and innovative British artist and poet, William Blake (1757–1827). Although largely overlooked in his time, Blake's impact and influence on later generations of artists, writers and musicians has been enormous. He remains a major reference point in British culture today and this show aims to reveal his remarkable work a wide audience.

Supported by Glaxo Wellcome plc, it is the first major exhibition of Blake's work in Britain for more than twenty years and will offer a clear and informative overview of his life and work, placing him in the context of the political and social upheavals of his time and exploring his powerful personal symbolism.

The exhibition will consist of approximately 400 of Blake's works, including some of his best known images. Drawn from international public and private collections, they include all 100 plates of the illuminated book *Jerusalem* (c.1821, lent by Yale Center for British Art and not exhibited in this country since the 1920s), *Newton* (1795) and *The Tyger* from *Songs of Experience* (1794). Alongside such key works, lesser known images, documentary material, and work by Blake's contemporaries will create a rich picture of the artist and his world.

The show has been conceived in four thematic sections. The first, entitled *One of the Gothic Artists*, will focus on Blake's interest in medieval art. This was inspired by his early apprentice years spent drawing the tombs of English monarchs in Westminster Abbey—the site of 'his earliest and most sacred recollections'. This section embraces Blake's education in the craft of engraving, his contact with organised religion, the State and national mythology (which culminated in his exploration of the myth of Albion in *Jerusalem*) and his interest in the ideal of the medieval artist as a figure of individual and artistic integrity.

*In the Furnace of Lambeth's Vale* sets Blake's great prophetic books in the context of the French Revolution and radical politics in the 1790s, the period when he lived in Lambeth,

London. Illustrated books by Blake will be displayed alongside relevant documentary material. There will also be a partial recreation of the artist's studio, based on new research, including a printing press from the period and explanations of Blake's technique.

Blake's assertion that 'the imagination is not a state, it is the human existence itself', forms the title of the third section, which explores the imaginative sources from which he developed his ideas, language and images. Characters from Blake's personal mythology will be explored, including Urizen, Los and Orc, and there will be a section devoted to Blake's important relationship with the seventeenth-century poet John Milton, featuring the illuminated book *Milton* (1811).

The final section, *Very Many Formidable Works*, presents the complete illuminated books that constitute Blake's greatest achievement as artist and poet, bringing together his revolutionary technical, stylistic and literary achievements. Here the exhibition reaches a climax in the specially designed displays of some of Blake's grandest works, ranging from *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (a late copy lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art) to the richly coloured *Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion* (printed c.1818–20).

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition, featuring contributions from the distinguished biographer Peter Ackroyd; Professor Marilyn Butler, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford; Michael Phillips, a leading Blake scholar; and Robin Hamlyn, Senior Curator, Tate Collections, who has been supported by a team of Tate curators in the creation of this remarkable exhibition.

Events and Courses Programme

Events

Wednesday 15 November, 18.30

Peter Ackroyd

The acclaimed novelist and Blake biographer discusses Blake's life and ideas.

Tickets: £5 (£2.50 concessions)

Wednesday 23 November, 18.30 (date to be finalised)

Tom Paulin

The renowned poet, critic and broadcaster analyses Blake's imagination and poetry.

Tickets: £5 (£2.50 concessions)

Tuesday 28 November, 19.00–21.00

Chambers of the Imagination—John Tavener Concert

The composer, Sir John Tavener introduces a concert of his music specially organised to mark the date of Blake's birth.

The evening includes celebrated pieces such as *The Tyger*,

*The Lamb, Eternity's Sunrise and Song of the Angel.* The soloist is the acclaimed soprano, Patricia Rosario, the music is performed by the orchestra of the Royal College of Music and the choral pieces are sung by The Elysian Singers. This concert will take place at St. Johns, Smith Square.  
Tickets: £16 (£12 concessions)

**Friday 1 December, 18.30-20.00**

**St James', Piccadilly  
Patti Smith Concert**

A rare opportunity to hear the New York poet and musician, Patti Smith, perform a selection of her songs and read extracts from writings by Blake and others. The concert takes place in St James', Piccadilly, where Blake was baptised.  
Tickets: £16 (£12 concessions)

There is an exciting programme of lectures and evening events planned to coincide with the exhibition. Invited speakers include the Blake scholar and poet, Kathleen Raine, and Morris Eaves and Joseph Viscomi of the William Blake Archive. Daytime lectures include talks by Michael Phillips, Christine Riding, Richard Humphreys, Marilyn Butler and Robyn Hamlyn. A Blake film programme will also be shown. Further details of lectures and events will be available in the November/December *What's On* leaflet. For a copy of this leaflet, please call 020 7887 8604/8758.

#### Conferences

**8 & 9 December, 10.00-17.30**

**Blake, Nation and Empire**

In association with St. Mary's College, A College of the University of Surrey. Our understanding of William Blake arrives at radically divergent conclusions depending on whether the starting-point is his poetry or his art. This conference will attempt to explore these apparently incompatible perspectives on Blake by discussing his response to contemporary subcultures, the influence of bourgeois nationalism and the contradictions of imperialism. Blake, Nation and Empire will give equal weight to both Blake's early and late career as defined by the Lambeth period of the 1790s and the post-Napoleonic era when he was producing *Jerusalem*. Invited speakers include: Linda Colley, Robert Essick, Morton Paley and Ian McCalman.  
Tickets: £80 (£50 concessions) includes refreshments and wine reception

**2 & 3 February, 10.00-17.30**

**William Blake—The Alternative View**

Invited speakers include: Billy Bragg, Jah Wobble, and Iain Sinclair.

#### Courses

**Vision and Imagination: Blake and the Impressionists**

**Four Tuesday mornings 14 Nov-5 Dec 2000, 10.30-12.00**  
This course explores the exhibitions William Blake at Tate Britain and Impression: Painting Quickly in France 1860-1890 at the National Gallery. Tickets £65 (£55 concessions) includes coffee and free admission to each exhibition.  
To book call 020 7747 2888.

**An Eccentric Legacy: William Blake**

**Five Thursday evenings 16 Nov-14 Dec, 18.00-20.00**

This course takes a fresh look at the eclectic and powerful legacy of the British artist and poet William Blake through a series of gallery talks, slide lectures and performances. Tickets £85 (£70 concessions) includes drinks, exhibition entry and catalogue.

#### Gallery Talks

There will be gallery talks on William Blake on the first Tuesday of every month. These talks will be listed in the November/December *What's On* leaflet.

#### Breakfast Tours

Early Morning Tours of the Blake exhibition are available. The guided tours start at 9am, before the gallery is open to the public, and last for 1 hour. Breakfast can also be provided. For prices and more information contact Jane Toussaint at 020 7887 8758.

#### Open Evening

**Friday 24 November, 18.30-21.00**

**Education Open Evening: William Blake and the Turner Prize 2000**

A private view including a series of talks and events on Lambeth, Westminster and the work of William Blake. Staff will be on hand to talk about Tate Britain's Education programs and services.

For more information about any of the above events please call Tate Box Office at 020 7887 8888.

[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk) <<http://www.tate.org.uk>> (includes online booking)

Please note all event information may be subject to change.