

Prometheus Unbound; the Art of Industry

A Study Day by Adrian Sumner exploring how Art was transformed by the Industrial Revolution.

Images of Industry, good and bad, selected from 2000 years of history, but looking closely at the new forms generated by the Industrial Revolution, and the wealth of poetry and symbolism it unleashed. Features William Blake and John Martin, Wright of Derby and JMW Turner, Romantics, Pre Raphaelites, Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, Vorticists and Futurists, Dadas, Surrealists, Precisionists and YBAs(not forgetting Arts and Crafts, Bauhaus, Ruralists etc..).

Programme.

Session 1. Looking at the Romantic Movement, and how a new breed of artists(who were also natural scientists) found inspiration in the Drama of 'Sublime' Nature, slowly searching deeper and deeper for modern equivalents for Storm, Tempest, Thunder and Lightning, and finding it in Forge and Furnace, Mine and Railway, and Blake's 'Dark Satanic Mills'. Featuring Wright of Derby, George Stubbs, John Constable, J M W Turner, William Blake of course, and Caspar David Friedrich, and how their inheritors embraced the 'Shock of the New.'

Session 2. How Industry was recorded, promoted and often glamorised in Print and Painting, looking at the Great Names of the Machine Age; Matthew Boulton, James Watt, George Stephenson, Richard Arkwright, and, of course, Isambard Kingdom Brunel. Their works, celebrated in prints, periodicals and photographs, created a whole new category of art. Rapid developments in transport produced another unexpected joy, a wonderful flowering of posters, for Railway, Steamship, Aircraft and a thousand exotic destinations from Harrogate to Cairo.

Session 3. In 1851 the Great Exhibition showcased Great Britain as leader of the new, industrialized world, and this was the spur for William Morris to create the Great Wave of Resistance which turned into the Arts and Crafts Movement, the Guilds, the Gothic Revival, the Aesthetic Movement, and ultimately International Art Nouveau. This lecture shows how 'resistance was futile' leading via Liberty and the 'Maison de L'Art Nouveau', to the Modernism of the Bauhaus, and the streamlined speed and glamour of the Jazz Age.

Each session 60 minutes, or what you will.