



J. M. W. Turner: Painting Set Free

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When the prolific British painter Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) died at the age of 76, his contemporaries held a generally negative view of his recent work, describing it as indulgent, eccentric, and even repulsive. But over the past century, a number of curators and critics have reassessed Turner's late paintings. Instead of finding his employment of shimmering color to evoke light unpleasant or unskilled, they have seen it as a precursor to the Impressionists and consider his use of abstraction to be distinctly modern.

In this elegantly conceived volume, leading experts on Turner consider these contrasting views of the artist in a groundbreaking exploration of his paintings. They examine his notes and sketchbooks to determine whether his health may have impacted his art and how Victorian views of old age influenced perceptions of the elderly artist. They also question the notion that Turner's late work articulated a conclusive, radical vision heedless of public reaction, for evidence makes clear that he had a firm idea of the art market in his day.

Fully illustrated in color, this book is published on the occasion of an exhibition on view at the Tate Britain, London, from September 15, 2014, through January 18, 2015; at the J. Paul Getty Museum from February 24 through May 24, 2015; and at the de Young Museum in San Francisco from June 20 through September 20, 2015.

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