

Art in an Age of Revolution, 1750-1800. By Albert Boime (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1988. xxvii plus 521 pp. \$35.00).

Albert Boime has produced a remarkable compendium of eighteenth century European culture in *Art in an Age of Revolution 1750-1800*. The author manages to establish a wide-angle perspective that includes political events, major intellectual trends, scientific developments, and economic issues that influenced European artists during this revolutionary epoch. Boime's genius lies in his ability to compare so effectively the web of intellectual and artistic factors that influenced England, Continental Europe and the United States during this period.

The author stretches beyond the narrow boundaries of salon and drawing room to explain the marketing underpinnings of eighteenth century art, for example, pointing out the commercial adventure that supported and encouraged the proliferation of classical objects and designs from Italy to most Western European countries. Within the commercial framework of the art market, during the incipient phases of the industrial revolution, Boime presents a veritable dictionary of major artists and their works.

Boime consistently points out the influence of class and patronage on the process of artistic production, for example, noting the importance of aristocratic patronage in compositions by Angelica Kauffman. "Kauffman managed to create an appealing environment of domesticated, playful, and erotic deities for lords and ladies who looked upon them as their antique counterparts." (p. 116) In this manner, neoclassical art reflected the self-image and vanities of an aristocratic elite in England and France during the early 18th century.

Subsequent to French failure in the Seven Years War, and British defeat in America, the neo-classical mode in France began to convey the ideals of enlightened despotism and the more ascetic vision of the enterprising bourgeoisie. Using this mode, Jacques Louis David then became the artistic prophet of republican virtue. Boime not only shows how neo-classical expression in "The Oath of the Horatii" reflected the revolutionary goals of the upper-middle classes, instilled with Rousseau's vision of a state based on the Social Contract and the Declaration of Rights of Man, but he also points out how the common people could identify with an image that clearly embodied the affirmation of their political sovereignty.

One of the most exciting aspects of this study is the impact of scientific pursuit on artistic themes, style, and symbolism. Artists such as Joseph Wright of Derby were greatly influenced by the experimentation of the Lunar society in England with light and electricity during the late eighteenth century. Derby portrayed subjects that illustrated the mastery of energy for industrial purposes in "The Blacksmith's Shop" and "The Iron Forge." Fuseli, a Swiss artist who received his primary support from the wealthy and elite in England, was likewise interested in portraying elements of the sublime through the use of light and terrifying images.

Boime offers a provocative analysis of William Blake showing how the artist entertained the political and religious as well as scientific views of the Lunar society. Blake's deep-seated abolitionist ideals were apparent in his work. Bondage for Blake meant slavery, prostitution, or any type of mental oppression. Blake portrayed bondage through the use of color and light (black shadows as men). The author develops a delicate and rhythmic counterpoint between Blake's poetry and

art. In addition to a rigorous historical analysis, this dialectical method seems to uncover the key to Blake's apocalyptic message. Unlike Fuseli, Blake chose to portray a positive vision of the French Revolution with "Glad Day." According to Boime, "Glad Day" represented release from slavery and oppression both in France and England during the revolutionary epoch.

Although the author is preoccupied with the situation of the lower classes, Boime is limited by the nature of this subject to documentation relating to middle class artists and their wealthy patrons. When merit is due, Boime does praise the political and artistic accomplishments of women and the less advantaged. The author is most generous in eulogizing women such as Olympe de Gouges, one of her gender who made a mark either singly or collectively in the revolutionary drama. While the number of examples are unfortunately few, Boime notes their absence. But the lack of women and commoners does detract somewhat from Boime's endeavor to do a full-scale "social history of modern art."

Art in an Age of Revolution is the first in a series of volumes that Boime is writing on the social history of art from the French Revolution to the contemporary period. The present study might be described more accurately as an intellectual history of eighteenth century art, but because it touches on political, economic, social, and gender issues with such acumen, it should be addressed as a major "oeuvre" in the field of eighteenth century cultural history. We can only look forward to seeing the next, recently published volume in this ambitious series: *Art in an Age of Bonapartism (1800-1815)* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

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Sister Republics: The Origins of French and American Republicanism. By Patrice Higonnet (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988).

Drawing connections between the American and French revolutions has long appealed to the public as well as to the scholarly community. In recent years historians interested in such links have focused upon ideological and financial factors. Some promote the idea that the American example inspired emulation in France; others note that intervention in the New World contributed to the bankruptcy that precipitated France's revolutionary crisis. But even this last statement, not to mention the first, has elicited hot contention.

By examining the evolution of France and America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Patrice Higonnet exploits the revolutions in an unusual way – seldom seen in recent years. The author creates a comparative perspective by analyzing prerevolutionary ideology and behavior as well as revolutionary developments and outcomes on both sides of the Atlantic. On occasion, Higonnet draws examples from other countries, especially England.

Not only the relative novelty of the approach makes this an adventurous work, but Higonnet also ranges broadly over the two societies and cultures. Relying on a myriad of secondary works and his own primary research on the eighteenth