branch screening than just playing a video. At times it makes sense to show more than one video to highlight different aspects of an issue. Video programmes by themselves rarely provide answers, but they are good at asking questions and getting an informed discussion going. Good communications are two-way communications. A screening without feedback is like a ballot without information. Grassroots feedback from shopfloor screenings is valuable and can be fed into the union's programme production and distribution policy.

For this struggle to be effective trade unions need to make programmes which can be used at branch and shopfloor level. This year a typical union with half a million members will have a turnover of about ten million pounds. About 10% of this will be spent on paper communications: pamphlets, newspapers, newsletters and postage. If 20% of that budget was put into video production then more than twenty programmes could be made and distributed annually. A proportion of general information videos could be made, along with other specific videos to meet the needs of special groupings within the membership.

The development of a distribution strategy is central to the use of video in trade unions. The strategy would recognise that broadcast TV provides an alternative distribution channel (if access can be obtained), and that it is useful to distribute original footage for use in other programmes to avoid needless extra production (many unions share the same concerns). A recent initiative has been the setting up of a steering committee called TU/TV by representatives from unions using video, independent video workers, and union resource centre workers. The committee is aiming to promote the use of video in unions and is holding a day school in early summer which will be attended by officers from the major unions in Britain (enquiries to TURC).

New technology is here to be used. Video is a flexible medium that can communicate well. If trade unions are gong to take education seriously then they need to take a good look at video, and consider the establishment of a video distribution network.

THE PRE-RAPHAELITES

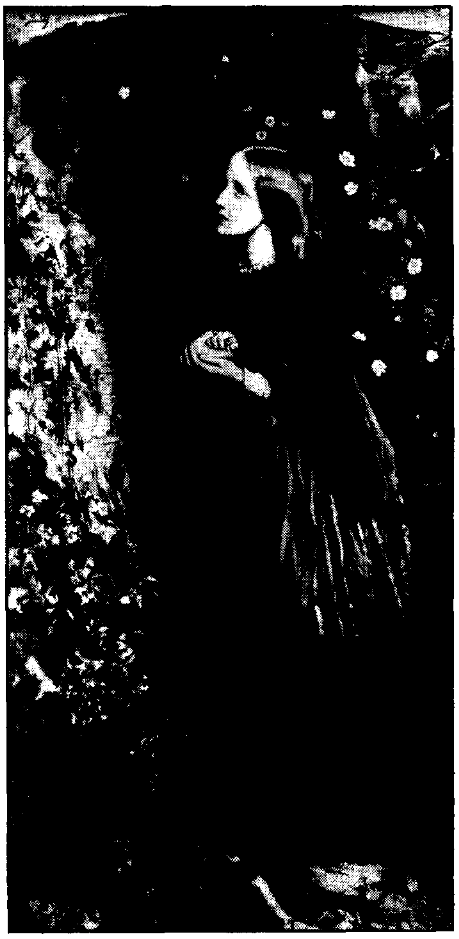
Deborah Cherry

The Pre-Raphaelites is an exhibition which celebrates artistic creativity as decisively masculine[1] This exhibition brings together works by five 'major' male artists — Ford Madox Brown, Edward Burne-Jones, William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti — and their 'followers'. Everything is constructed in terms of individual achievement.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, a group of seven artists and writers, is said to have been dominated by Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti, described as 'three enterprising and variously (but hugely) gifted young men' who developed their own different and highly individual paths. The lengthy period — from the founding of the Brotherhood in 1848 to Rossetti's death in 1882 — is reduced to a chronology of individual development marked by switches in artistic style and lifestyle. The catalogue entries put the works into a narrative of the artist's personal and artistic life, relations with his models. Little attention is given to the critical reception of the paintings or public debates about them. Life and art have been collapsed together, presented as mutually explanatory: art is a matter of private biography.

Pre-Raphaelite art is therefore offered to us as a domain where changes occur because of personal impulses. It has been effectively taken out of its historical context, the social and material conditions in which it was produced and consumed. In this exhibition art practice is considered to be the outcome of the innate talent and genius of artistic personages. This celebration of innate genius is an account of the past which actively denies the class struggles and gender conflicts of nineteenth-century society, the ways in which historical individuals were formed by and acted within class and gender power relations.

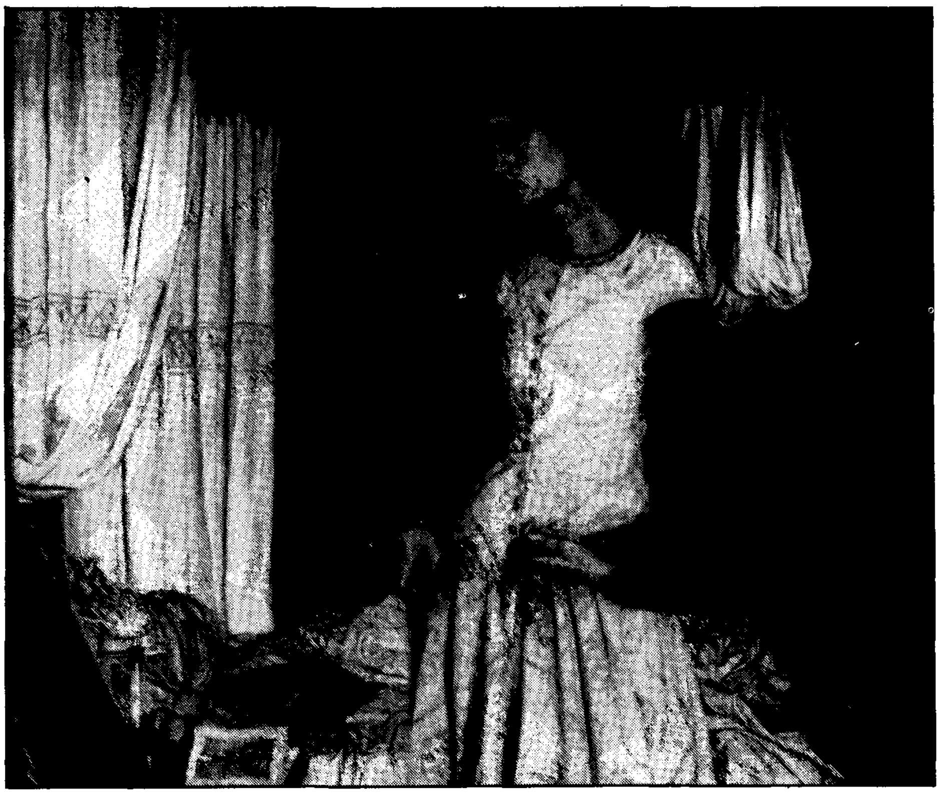
Artistic creativity is presented in this exhibition as the prerogative of men, the attribute of the male artist, of his masculinity. *The Pre-Raphaelites* includes only one woman artist, Elizabeth Siddall; in this showing of 250 items her work is represented by two water-colours. The exhibition has signally failed to include works by the many other women artists of this cultural group such as Rosa Brett, Catherine and Lucy Madox Brown, Georgiana Macdonald (later Burne-Jones), Marie Spartali. This exhibition denies the historical existence of women artists, refuses to acknowledge that women were producers of culture. Moreover, because the exhibition deals with fine art, the work of women such as Jane Burden Morris in embroidery and textiles has once again been erased. Indeed the omissions and silence on women artists are structural to this hagiography of great masculine genius. High cultural events such as *The Pre-Raphaelites* function powerfully in the production of patriarchal ideology. Male



Arthur Hughes: The Long Engagement

artists and their works are accorded the privileged focus of attention and scholarship. Masculinity and creativity are not only set against the absence of women artists but also against the spectacle of 'feminine beauty'. Above all this is an exhibition about great men who made pictures of women.

Most of the reviews already published have dwelt at length on the spectacle of beautiful women provided by this exhibition. Intense interest has been generated around the female models. Art is consumed as that 'natural' condition of men looking at, being inspired by women. Such interpretations are also set in play in the catalogue. Rossetti, whose attributes are his artistry, genius and masculinity, is represented as making art because of his amorous and sexual encounters with a series of 'beautiful' women. William Morris's picture *Queen Guinevere* is understood in terms of 'the aloof, withdrawn personality' of Jane Burden Morris and considerable speculation on the relations between her, Rossetti and William Morris. Pre-Raphaelite women are offered to us as stereotypes of passive feminity: mysterious, melancholy, silent. Their active work and historical existence have been silenced. The class and gender relations between these historical women and men have been misrepresented. These bourgeois male artists persistently sought out working-class women for their difference and their sexual availability. Women like Elizabeth Siddall and Jane Burden were subjected to a programme of drastic reform. They were withdrawn from their working-class families and environments and drawn into this cultural group to work as artists, embroiderers, writers, models. The material conditions of existence of these women, located in specific gender and class power relations, determined their work as models for male artists, their sexual and social subordination.[2] In *The Pre-Raphaelites* stereotypical notions of the langorous melancholy of these women have been projected onto and read off from the paintings for which they are said to have modelled. But these women and their lives do not explain the images of Woman shown in this exhibition. The images are neither expressions of the male artist's sexuality nor reflections of the female model's features and personality.



William Morris: "Queen Guinevere" (detail)

These images of women were produced in a regime of representation of Woman. This was historically situated in the shifting material and ideological practices of the period, 1840s — 1880s. The painted and drawn images of women do not record individual men's obsessions with individual women, masculine fantasies about woman as 'the mystery of existence', or daily occurrences in these women's lives. Visual representations render visible the difference of Woman. Historians have drawn attention to the nineteenth-century construction of Woman in terms of gender contrast, and around the polarity of virgin/whore, Madonna/Magdalen, indicating that this distinction was drawn between women especially on the axis of class. The pure bourgeois woman stood against the impure adulteress, prostitute, working-class woman. Visual images worked to secure this polarity between the pure woman — figured in Beatrice, the Virgin, the nun — and the impure woman — the 'fallen woman' of *The Awakening Conscience*, the adulterous Guinevere. Pre-Raphaelite paintings were engaged in representing a complex of class and gender power relations. Works such as Millais's *Isabella* or Hughes's *The Long Engagement* assisted in the generation of the ideology of heterosexual romantic love, so crucial to the formation of the bourgeoisie, which bound women effectively and willingly in subordination to men.

Today women are subordinated to men across a wide and diverse range of social institutions. High culture is a key institution for women's oppression. By erasing the complex histories of class and gender in which images were made, the knowledge produced in art history and high culture about art and the artist actively work to secure present-day patriarchal power relations, sexual and social. In *The Pre-Raphaelites* artistic creativity is decisively tied to masculinity, art proposed as the outcome of men desiring women, and Woman defined as Image, that beautiful object to be looked at, desired by and delected over by men. By contrast Man is the active agent, he who has power to define Woman in terms of desirable appearance and passivity: her beauty feeds his desire which by his innate talent is effortlessly turned into his great art, or so art history tells us. Such patriarchal definitions of Woman, desire and sexuality are pervasive in our society, and high culture provides no safe or tranquil retreat.

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[1] The Pre-Raphaelites Exhibition is on at the Tate Gallery in London until May 28.

2 For an extended consideration of these issues see Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: A Study of the Representation of Elizabeth Siddall in *Art History* VII 2, June 84.

ARCHITECTS IN CRISIS

Martin Pawley

The importance of architectural design in the cultural life of the community . . .fallen to ridicule?

This year Britain's 25,000 architects are celebrating their institute's 150th anniversary. The festivities will culminate in a gala evening at Hampton Court in May, with Prince Charles as guest of honour. The only problem is that the profession is coming apart at the seams.

Since 1945 the architectural profession has changed so profoundly that its present form has neither historical precedent nor foreseeable future. In the immediate postwar years it underwent an enormous expansion so that by 1950 the number of registered practitioners was already 40% higher than in 1939 and, more significantly, the number of students of architecture had risen by 500% to an estimated 11,000 — virtually one student for every architect. The unsettling nature of this explosive growth was clear even then, and as early as 1948 the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Council appointed a committee chaired by Sir Percy Thomas 'To consider the present and future position of architects in private practice.'

It was the conclusion of the committee that 'If the housing needs of the nation, the making good of buildings destroyed by war and dereliction, and the demand for new ones, were the criteria by which to estimate the future prospects of architects ... a steady prosperity for the profession for at least the next fifty years' could be foreseen. And so it appeared, for an immense growth in central government, local government and nationalised industry construction work had thus far created employment in pace with increased membership — not merely by the direct route of creating departments staffed with salaried architects, but also through the handing on of work to private practices.

Since it could be shown that the growth of the public sector made a large contribution to the work of the private, earlier criticisms of the emergence of a large salaried class in the profession were soon stilled.

In the same way the considerable expansion of architectural education and the emergence of a class of membership insulated from the vagaries of the construction economy altogether found few opponents. While the first professorship in architecture, at Liverpool University, dated from 1894, and full time classes at the Architecural Association began in 1901, almost all the 29 schools of architecture in existence in 1950 had been created in response first to the requirements of legal professional registration, laid down in the 1930s, and second to the introduction of grant-aided study under the 1944 Education Act. Between 1939 and 1950 the number of architects involved in teaching more than doubled and, as the postwar student boom passed through the schools, this group became established as the intellectual leadership of the profession. A status confirmed by the 1958 Oxford Conference which decided that full time education in university and polytechnic departments was to be the recognised route to professional status.

Steady prosperity for the profession in the terms foreseen by the Percy Thomas report did in fact continue for the best part of a quarter of a century, peaking in the late 1960s when nearly half a million houses were completd every year and 10% of the GNP was consumed in building. In 1964 the expansion of the public sector was such that only one of 61 county councils had no architects department and the 200 local authority departments in existence employed 25% of the profession. Central government employed another 10% in what was then called the Ministry of Public Building and Works, the National Health Service, what was to become the Department of Education and Science, the Home Office and several other administrative branches. By 1976, even though the fall in workload triggered by the 1974 energy crisis had already wound construction activity back to the level of the late 1950s, no less than 40% of a profession twice as large as it had been in 1950 consisted of salaried architects in the public employ. The dependence of private architects upon the public sector was even more striking, with 40% of new commissions arriving from this source.

The profession which greeted the economic disaster of the recession was thus structured in an entirely novel way. Of about 22,000 active architects, 9,000 were salaried public employees, 3,000 were teachers or engaged in miscellaneous activities, and 10,000 were employed in the private sector either as salaried workers, associates or partners in more than 3,000 practices — of which some 450 were responsible for well over half the work carried out. Actual principals in private practice were probably fewer than 5,000, a number not very different to that in existence in 1939.

The onset of a severe decline in workload soon opened up cracks in the cement linking these disparate factions. Separate organisations representing each group gained strength and the institute itself was compelled to fight on two fronts: externally for the life of the profession, and internally against the withdrawal of any group which considered itself inadequately represented or served. In the public sector redundancies, begun with local government reorganisation in 1974, rapidly intensified with the merging and closure of formerly independent departments. In the private sector practices closed down, sought overseas work, or reduced themselves to a skeletal establishment, often only the principals themselves. Teaching jobs were much in demand, often drawing 50 or more applicants for every post even though incomes in this sector were relatively low. Problems which had been developing