
Blake and Exhibitions, 2018

BY LUISA CALÈ

LUISA CALÈ (l.cale@bbk.ac.uk), Birkbeck, University of London, works on practices of reading, viewing, and collecting in the Romantic period. Her publications include *Fuseli's Milton Gallery: "Turning Readers into Spectators"*; co-edited volumes on *Dante on View: The Reception of Dante in the Visual and Performing Arts and Illustrations, Optics and Objects in Nineteenth-Century Literary and Visual Cultures*; and special issues on "The Disorder of Things" (*Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 2011), "The Nineteenth-Century Digital Archive" (*19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 2015), and "Literature and Sculpture at the *Fin de Siècle*" (*Word and Image*, 2018). Her current project, entitled *The Book Unbound*, explores practices of collecting and dismantling the book, with chapters on Walpole, Blake, and Dickens. She is also the exhibitions editor for *Blake*.

IN 2018 a retrospective at Petworth reconsidered Blake's corpus, focusing on how the experience of the sea and the landscapes of the South Downs affected his work, from the landscapes of the early 1800s to late works such as the Virgil woodcuts and Dante drawings. The works on display also offered an opportunity to reflect on his relationships with key patrons, from William Hayley to Thomas Butts and George O'Brien Wyndham, third Earl of Egremont. In an exhibition held by the Dom Museum, which hosts the collection of Vienna's cathedral, plates from Blake's *Book of Urizen* were displayed alongside illuminated manuscripts and a book sculpture that questioned the primacy of the word. While the Dom Museum placed Blake within medieval, Renaissance, and contemporary visual cultures of the book, *Illuminating Poetry: Pre-Raphaelite and Beyond* at the Keats-Shelley House in Rome focused on the nineteenth-century legacy of the illuminated book. The desire to reinvent the Middle Ages in different moments of technological innovation shaped Blake's dialogue with the Pre-Raphaelites and contemporary interpretations of books and stained-glass windows in *Visions and Visionaries* at the Guildhall Art Gallery in London. In the exhibition *Kiss and Tell: Rodin and Suffolk Sculpture* at Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich, experi-

ments in the representation of bodies in space included the serpentine groupings of whirling souls captured in Blake's line engraving "The Circle of the Lustful" from Dante's *Commedia*, which was displayed alongside drawings and sculptures from the Pre-Raphaelites to the twentieth century, selected to complement Auguste Rodin's sculptural group *The Kiss*. The end of the year also saw Blake's association with the fiftieth anniversary of the moon landing in *The Moon: From Inner Worlds to Outer Space* at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, which showed a magnified reproduction of his emblematic etching "I want! I want!" as part of an iconography of the moon from the Incas to Galileo's map, from the moon race to space colonization.

7 October 2017–23 August 2018

Dom Museum, Vienna

Bilder der Sprache—Sprache der Bilder

Exhibition catalogue: *Bilder der Sprache und Sprache der Bilder/Images in Language and the Language of Images*. Ed. Johanna Schwanberg, with texts by Schwanberg, Nina Binder, and Katja Brandes and translations by Wolfgang Astelbauer and Georg Bauer. Vienna: Dom Museum, 2017. In German and English.

This exhibition inaugurated the renovated Dom Museum in Vienna, a historic church museum that houses the cathedral's treasures. Its collection includes sacred objects, altars, liturgical manuscripts, and books, ranging from the Gothic period to Art Deco, as well as the Otto Mauer art collection (Expressionists, Secessionists, and Austrian and international avant-garde artists). Two plates from Blake's *The First Book of Urizen*, on loan from the Albertina in Vienna, were displayed in the initial section of the exhibition, which was dedicated to open books and included Micha Ullman's book of sand. Within its empty opening, this book sculpture made of pressed sand posed the question, "What was in the beginning, before words, before pictures[?]" (cat. p. 33). This focus on the book without words also shaped the selection of scenes from *Urizen*: Blake's title page represents *Urizen* in a Mosaic scene of writing in which "the slabs are still empty," while plate 5 hosts "a cosmic book containing neither pages nor signs, with swirling flames and shadows" (cat. p. 63). While the book within the book featured in plate 5 resists deciphering, the image occupies the position of a title vignette above text arranged in two columns, suggesting the page layout of a Bible. The juxtaposition of the book held open with the text etched below articulates an allegory of the Bible and its commentary, the visual and the verbal. Blake's work connected the book sculpture's reflection on the medium without the message with the tradition of the illuminated manuscript. A pictorial initial in



Micha Ullman, *Sandbuch III* (2001). Photo by Lena Deinhardstein. Image courtesy of the Dom Museum, Vienna.

the Klosterneuburg Evangeliary (c. 1410) illuminated “the tension between handwriting and pictorial motif” (cat. p. 38), while pages from the Klosterneuburg Library’s early sixteenth-century Illuminated Manuscript of the Antichrist and Anton Koberger’s *Biblia germanica* (Nürnberg, 1483) showed the integration of text and image in the layout of illuminated manuscripts. Taken together, these works test the possibilities of the book as a medium for the dialectic of word and image.

The First Book of Urizen, copy J, plate 1, title page (composed and printed 1794).
Albertina, Vienna, DGNF9346/1.

The First Book of Urizen, copy J, plate 5 (composed and printed 1794).
Albertina, Vienna, DGNF9346/5.

13 January–25 March 2018
Petworth House (National Trust)
William Blake in Sussex: Visions of Albion

Building on the Blake collection at Petworth, this exhibition explored the impact of Blake’s Sussex period on his development as an artist, tracing his reimagining of sea, light, and landscape in later works to his experience of maritime and rural scenes during his Felpham period.¹

Exhibition catalogue: *William Blake in Sussex: Visions of Albion*. Ed. Andrew Loukes, with essays by Martin Butlin, Mark Crosby, Naomi Billingsley, Loukes, and Hayley Flynn. London: Paul Holberton Publishing, 2018.

1. For a review of this exhibition with more images, see Luisa Calè, *Blake* 52.2 (fall 2018).

Works in the list below are grouped by theme, then by order of display:

Thomas Phillips, *William Blake* (1807).
National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 212.

**Many Admirable Things
(projects for Hayley and related works)**

Edmund Spenser (c. 1800–03). Butlin #343.9.
Manchester City Galleries, 1885.5.

John Milton (c. 1800–03). Butlin #343.11.
Manchester City Galleries, 1885.3.

Winter (c. 1800–03).² Butlin #808.
Tate Britain, London, T02387.

Landscape near Felpham (c. 1800). Butlin #368.
Tate Britain, London, A00041.

Henry Howard, *William Hayley* (c. 1800).
National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 662.

William Hayley, *Little Tom the Sailor* (1800).
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1862,0712.296.

William Cowper (c. 1801–04). Butlin #354.
Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, WA1963.89.8.

The Shipwreck, after Romney (1804), preparatory drawing
for the engraving for Hayley's *Life of George Romney*.
Butlin #350.
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1936,0613.1.

William Hayley, *An Essay on Sculpture* (1800), "The Death
of Demosthenes."
Lord Egremont.

William Hayley, *Designs to a Series of Ballads* (1802),
tailpiece to the preface (view of Chichester).
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Douce B 818.

William Hayley, *Ballads* (1805), "The Eagle."
West Sussex Record Office, West Sussex County Council,
Chichester, Crookshank 327.

2. Butlin #808, followed by the Tate, dates the work c. 1820–25; in his essay in the exhibition catalogue, Butlin redates it to the Felpham period (p. 17 and note 20).

William Hayley, *Life ... of William Cowper* (1803–04),
"The Weather House."
Lord Egremont.

William Hayley, *The Triumphs of Temper* (1803), "Canto V.
Verse 43."
West Sussex County Council Library Service,
821HAYLEY.

On the Stocks (biblical watercolors)

The Three Marias at the Sepulchre (1800–03). Butlin #503.
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge,
PD.31-1949.

The Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter (1803). Butlin #452.
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1949,1112.3.

*The Angel of the Divine Presence Clothing Adam and Eve
with Coats of Skins* (1803). Butlin #436.
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge,
PD.29-1949.

Ruth the Dutiful Daughter-in-Law (1803). Butlin #456.
Southampton City Art Gallery.

Under a Fortunate Star (the Petworth Blakes in context)

Robert Blair, *The Grave* (1808), title page.
Lord Egremont.

The Resurrection of the Dead (1806), alternative design for
the title page to Robert Blair's *The Grave*. Butlin #613.
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1856,0712.208.

Blake's letter of 18 January 1808 to Ozias Humphry
describing his *Vision of the Last Judgment* watercolor.³
Lord Egremont.

The Vision of the Last Judgment (1808). Butlin #642.
Petworth House (National Trust), NT 486270.

The Fall of Man (1807). Butlin #641.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, P.29-1953.

Illustrations of the Book of Job (1826), "Job and His Family."
Lord Egremont.

3. On the three versions of this letter, see Robert N. Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace, 2015," *Blake* 49.4 (spring 2016), caption to illus. 8.

Illustrations of the Book of Job (1826), “Job’s Sons and Daughters Overwhelmed by Satan.”
Lord Egremont.

Two letters of 1829 from Catherine Blake to the third Earl of Egremont regarding *The Characters in Spenser’s “Faerie Queene.”*
Lord Egremont.

“Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims,” probably third state (c. 1810–20).
Lord Egremont.

The Characters in Spenser’s “Faerie Queene” (c. 1825).
Butlin #811.
Petworth House (National Trust), NT 486263.

Satan Arousing the Rebel Angels (1808). Butlin #536.1.
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, FA.697.

Satan Calling Up His Legions (c. 1800–05). Butlin #662.
Petworth House (National Trust), NT 486264.

Arrows of Desire (Sussex, Milton, and Jerusalem)

Milton, copy A, plate 29 (composed c. 1804–11, printed c. 1811).
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1859,0625.29.

Milton, copy A, plate 2, preface (composed c. 1804–11, printed c. 1811).
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1859,0625.2.

Milton, copy A, plate 36 (composed c. 1804–11, printed c. 1811).
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1859,0625.36.

“Vala, Hyle, and Skofeld,” separate impression of *Jerusalem* plate 51 (composed 1804–c. 1820).
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge,
P.709-1985.



© Scott Ramsey. Image courtesy of Petworth House, National Trust.

Jerusalem, copy A, plate 26 (composed 1804–c. 1820, printed c. 1820).
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1847,0318.93.26.

Jerusalem, copy A, plate 37 [Bentley numbering] (composed 1804–c. 1820, printed c. 1820).
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1847,0318.93.33.

Versus Blake (the artist on trial)

The Information and Complaint of John Scolfield (1803).
West Sussex Record Office, West Sussex County Council,
Chichester, QR/W643/78.

True Bill “John Scholfield/John Cock/Sworn in Court” (1803).
West Sussex Record Office, West Sussex County Council,
Chichester, QR/W643/63.

Charge Sheet for Assault (1803).
West Sussex Record Office, West Sussex County Council,
Chichester, QR/W643/64.

On the Banks of the Ocean (later pastoral and marine subjects)

Robert John Thornton, *The Pastorals of Virgil* (1821),
seventeen wood engravings (printed 1977).
Tate Britain, London, T02115-31.

The Dove Brooding over the Face of the Waters (c. 1805–10). Butlin #604.
British Museum, London, Prints and Drawings
1936,0613.3.

The Spirit of God Moved upon the Face of the Waters (c. 1820–25?). Butlin #690 recto.
Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal.

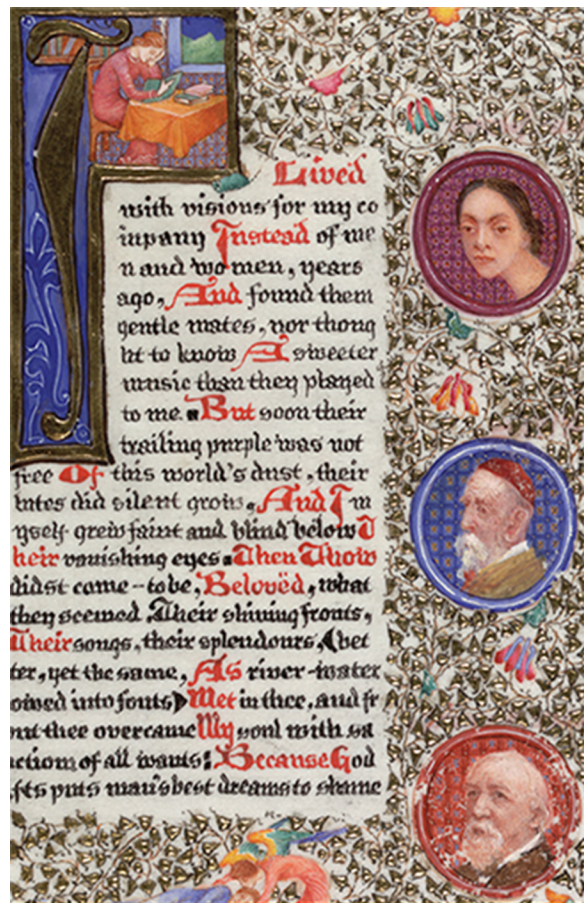
The Angel Marking Dante with the Sevenfold “P” (1824–27). Butlin #812.79.
Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro.

The Sea of Time and Space (1821). Butlin #803.
Arlington Court (National Trust), NT 985730.

29 January–28 April 2018
Keats-Shelley House, Rome
Illuminating Poetry: Pre-Raphaelite and Beyond

This exhibition, curated by Giuseppe Albano and Dinah Roe, situated Blake’s “Spring” within a medieval aesthetic of bookmaking in the long nineteenth century, supplementing the collection of the Keats-Shelley House with loans from the American Academy in Rome, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the National Library of Scotland, and private collections.

Songs of Innocence, copy R, plate 22, “Spring” (composed 1789, printed c. 1802).
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge,
P.673-1985.



ILLUMINATING POETRY Pre-Raphaelite & Beyond

An exhibition at the Keats-Shelley House
from 29 January till 28 April 2018





13 September 2018–20 January 2019
Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk,
Denmark

Månen—fra den indre verden til det ydre rum/
The Moon—From Inner Worlds to Outer Space

To celebrate the upcoming fiftieth anniversary of the first moon landing, this exhibition displayed a magnified reproduction of Blake's etching "I want! I want!," featuring a figure climbing a ladder connecting the earth to the moon, among works documenting the prehistory of moon travel. As curator Marie Laurberg argues, "We traveled there imaginatively long before we were physically able to."⁴ Also on display were works by Joseph Wright of Derby and

Caspar David Friedrich. The exhibition reconstructed the moon's hold on our imagination from the Incas to the moon race, from early modern mapping to NASA imaging, and from Surrealism to artists who held residencies at NASA (Robert Rauschenberg, Laurie Anderson). Also on show were newly commissioned works by contemporary artists.

For Children: The Gates of Paradise, plate 11 [Bentley numbering], "I want! I want!" (composed 1793). Magnified photo reproduction from an unidentified copy.

4. Quoted by Andrew Dickson in "The Meaning of the Moon, from the Incas to the Space Race," *New York Times* 12 September 2018.



Photo by Megan Wilson. Image courtesy of Ipswich Borough Council.

24 November 2018–28 April 2019
Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich
Kiss and Tell: Rodin and Suffolk Sculpture

Blake's line engraving of the Circle of the Lustful from Dante's *Commedia* was part of a group of loans from the Tate and East Anglia collections for an exhibition built around Auguste Rodin's sculptural group *The Kiss*, alongside sculptures and life drawings by Thomas Woolner, Ellen Mary Rope, Henry Moore, Maggi Hambling, and Elisabeth Frink.

"The Circle of the Lustful: Francesca da Rimini," line engraving (composed 1826–27, printed 1968 [for Lessing J. Rosenwald]).
 Tate Britain, London, T01950.

11 December 2018–30 April 2019
Guildhall Art Gallery, London
Visions and Visionaries: Visions and Imaginings in Blake, Burne-Jones, Allen Ginsberg, John Latham, and Other Masters

Exhibition catalogue: *Visions and Visionaries: Visions and Imaginings in Blake, Burne-Jones, Allen Ginsberg, John Latham and Other Masters*. Ed. Orietta Benocci Adam, Luke Farey, Francesco Gonzales, and Marcello Pecchioli, with a preface by the Sir Denis Mahon Charitable Trust, a foreword by Elizabeth Scott, essays by Gonzales, Gareth Bell-Jones, Farey, Pecchioli, Saskia Rubin, and Michelle Cioccoloni, and translations by Gonzales, Leonardo Passeri, and Alessandra Totta. [London]: Sir Denis Mahon Charitable Trust, 2018.

This small exhibition responded to the Pre-Raphaelite collection of the Guildhall by juxtaposing Blake with nineteenth-century and contemporary visionary artists whose visions can be associated with what Marcello Pecchioli terms "Techno Medioevo—Age of Future Reloaded."



Photos of the Guildhall exhibition by Luisa Calè.



Pecchioli's research agenda has been articulated through a series of avant-garde exhibitions that explore parallels between our "shiny, electronic super-modernity" and the "technological, artistic, epistemological, cosmological, multimedia" Middle Ages (cat. p. 180). In the Guildhall display, Blake's illustrations to Gray's medievalizing poems hung next to Edward Burne-Jones's *St. Dorothy* and *St. Agnes* in the lower section of the exhibition, entitled "The Temple Room." Drawn after stained-glass cartoons for lights in the east window at All Saints' Church, Cambridge (cat. pp. 124, 134-35), Burne-Jones's designs linked the lower part of the room to "The Mezzanine," which featured Grayson Perry's watercolor and collage *At Woodbury Park* and John Latham's screen print on metallic foil and glass/book sculptures. The mezzanine also hosted works in the third section of the exhibition, "Age of Future": Massimo Trenti's *Time Capsule*, star-inspired enamel works by Leonardo Passeri, and Pecchioli's luminescent stained-glass window, *Alien Priest*. While the works by Blake and the Pre-Raphaelites looked back to the Middle Ages, in the mezzanine medieval inspiration propelled art forward into the future.

The Blake items on display were from:

William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray (Clairvaux: Trianon Press for the William Blake Trust, 1972). Collotype and hand-stenciling on wove paper with separately printed text on laid paper. Leaves 42 x 32.6 cm.

"The Bard," page bearing manuscript list of titles plus 13 pages. Butlin #335.52-65.

"The Fatal Sisters," page bearing manuscript list of titles plus 10 pages. Butlin #335.66-76.