

The Museum of Modern Art

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TURNER: IMAGINATION AND REALITY, by Lawrence Gowing. 64 pages, 77 illustrations (16 in color). Hardbound, \$4.95; paperbound, \$2.95. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, distributed by Doubleday and Co., Inc.

A book on J.M.W. Turner by the English critic Lawrence Gowing has been published by The Museum of Modern Art to coincide with the unprecedented loan exhibition of Turner paintings and watercolors from the British national collection on view at the Museum in New York from March 23 through May 22.

Both the book and the exhibition, **TURNER: IMAGINATION AND REALITY**, concentrate on the last twenty years of the artist's life. "These pictures...reveal potentialities in painting that did not reappear until our time. They tell us something about the inner nature of a whole pictorial tradition, of which recent American painting is an integral part," Mr. Gowing observes. "Turner not only saw the world as light and color; he isolated an intrinsic quality of painting and revealed that it could be self-sufficient, an independent imaginative function."

"There is a special reason for looking at Turner. We are aware that in his painting something singular and incomparable happened. It astounded and bewildered his contemporaries and it is still not altogether comprehensible today. In the pictures that Turner showed -- and concealed -- in the last two decades of his life a change was evidently taking place of a kind that is disturbing to an artist's public....Since his time such transformations have recurred with increasing frequency. We are now familiar with the disturbance that they make. We are far from familiar with Turner."

The 77 illustrations in the Museum's publication, 16 of which are in color, include many works which have never left the British national collection, to which Turner bequeathed them. A number of these have never been exhibited, even in England. Assembled with them are 9 masterpieces from American collections; together they give a comprehensive view of Turner's astonishingly original achievement. His whole range in his final years is presented -- the exhibited paintings and those

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which were kept in his studio, the watercolors, the intimate sketchbooks and the notes of his technical researches -- with a small number of earlier works to place them in perspective. In the text, Lawrence Gowing, Keeper of British Painting at the Tate Gallery in London, assesses Turner's significance to his time and to ours. A biographical note, selected bibliography and catalog of the exhibition supplement the text.

Mr. Gowing, himself a painter, has been Professor of Fine Art at the University of Durham and Principal of the Chelsea School of Art. He is a Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery and for nine years was a Trustee of the Tate Gallery. He is the author of Renoir (1947), Vermeer (1952), Cézanne (1954), and Constable (1960), and he is a frequent contributor to periodicals.

The Museum's exhibition of one hundred oils and watercolors was selected by Mr. Gowing and Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications at The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition was arranged in collaboration with The Tate Gallery and with the assistance of the British Foreign Office, The National Gallery, and The British Museum.

TURNER: IMAGINATION AND REALITY is available in two editions: hardbound, \$4.95, distributed by Doubleday and Co., Inc., and by mail from the Museum and at the Museum bookstore, and paperbound, \$2.95, available only from the Museum.

Review copies, photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, and Patricia B. Kaplan, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.