



# **Men at Work: Art and Labour in Victorian Britain (The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art)**

*Tim Barringer*

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For artists of the increasingly mechanized Victorian age, questions about the meaning and value of labour presented a series of urgent problems: Is work a moral obligation or a religious duty? Must labour be the preserve of men alone? Does the amount of work bestowed on a painting affect its value? Should art celebrate wholesome rural work or reveal the degradations of the industrial workplace? In this highly original book, Tim Barringer considers how artists and theorists addressed these questions and what their solutions reveal about Victorian society and culture.

Based on extensive new research, *Men at Work* offers a compelling study of the image as a means of exploring the relationship between labour and art in Victorian Britain. Barringer arrives at a major reinterpretation of the art and culture of nineteenth-century Britain and its empire as well as new readings of such key figures as Ford Madox Brown and John Ruskin.

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