

THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD (PRB)

LONDON, middle of XIX century

INTRODUCTION

- 1) the context: historical background, what painting was before the PRB, the romantic legacy
- 2) the history of the PRB: its birth and its evolution -
> the first exhibition of the group
- 3) the most important themes in the pre raphaelite art

**Birth of the brotherhood:
historical and cultural context**

Historical Context (1848-1910)

Victorian Age (1837-1901) and Edwardian Age (1901-1910)

a period of highly moralist behaviour
living conditions



ENGLISH ACADEMIC ART BEFORE THE PRB



Joshua Reynolds, *Lady Elizabeth Russell*, 1761



Angelica Kauffmann, *Mrs Morgan and her daughter*, 1771

**J.M.W. Turner, *The fall of the
Chartage Empire,*
1817**



**J.M.W. Turner, *Snow storm:
Hannibal and his army
crossing the Alps,* 1812**



MIDDLE AGES and ENGRAVINGS



Walter Crane, *Rapunzel*
Illustration, half of the XIX cent.



York
Cathedral

PRE-RAPHAELITES THEORIES



John Ruskin



William Morris

John Ruskin



Texts that influences the
PRB:

1. *Modern painters*
(1843-60)
2. *The seven lamps of architecture* (1849)
3. *The stones of Venice*
(1853)

Texts about the PRB:



1. 2 letters published in
the *Times journal*
(1851 e 1854)

2. *Pre-raphaelitism*
(1851): a pamphlet



- ★ art is everything which is produced with creativity and which is beautiful and useful
- ★ art is not what Academy decides art is: opposition to the Royal Academy, celebration of manufacturing defects

William Morris



William
Morris,
*Queen
Guinevere*
1858



Edward Burne-Jones,
Chaucer asleep, 1864



Societies:

1. *Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co.*
then *Morris & Co.*
(1861)
2. *Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society*
(1888)



Texts:

1. *The Decorative Arts. Their relation to modern life and progress*
(Trades' Guild of Learning, 1877)
2. *News from Nowhere*
(London, 1891)



William Morris, *Strawberry Thief*, 1888

...a successful idea:
130 A&C created in England between 1895 and
1905



Art Nouveau -> Henry Van de Velde, *Desk*, 1899

**History of the brotherhood:
its birth, its evolution**

1848 - 1910: the movement

(1848-1853: life of the brotherhood)

3 PHASES

1st phase: 1848-1854 _ leader: Millais _
members: Millais, Rossetti, Hunt

2nd phase: 1854-1877 _ leader: Rossetti _
members: Rossetti, Morris, Burne-Jones

3rd phase: 1877-1910 _ leader: Burne-Jones _
members: Burne-Jones, Leighton, Alma-Tadema

1st phase: 1848-1854

leader: Millais

- **FOUNDATION:** London, Millais' home, 1848
(seven original members of the brotherhood)
- **BECOMING FAMOUS:** Royal Academy's annual exhibition
(1849)



John Everett Millais, *Isabella*, 1849



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848-49

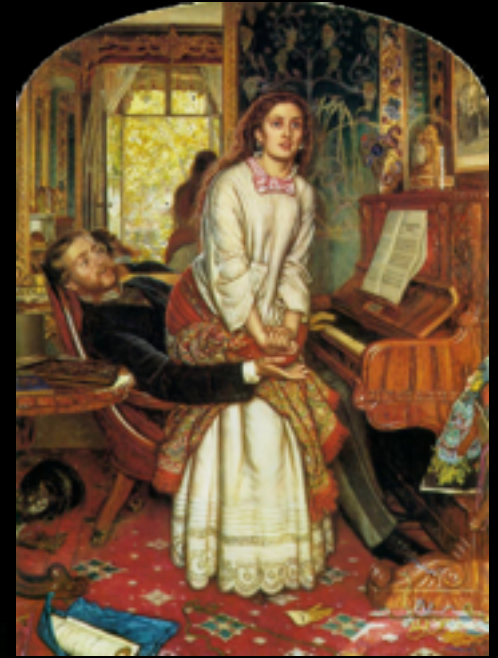


William Holman Hunt, *Rienzi*, 1849

THE THEMES OF THE 1st PERIOD



*beauty, love and death:
english and italian literature*



*the fallen woman:
contemporary age*



*purity and morality:
religion and middle ages*

some great masterpieces



John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmJIJ_tAXXY

«GERTRUDE: One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow; your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

LAERTE: Drown'd! O, where?

GERTRUDE: There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide;
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up:
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indued
Unto that element: but long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.»

«GERTRUDE: Una disgrazia incalza alle calcagna
un'altra, tanto presto si succedono.
Laerte, tua sorella s'è annegata.

LAERTE: Annegata! Ah, dove?

GERTRUDE: C'è un salice che cresce di traverso
a un ruscello e specchia le sue foglie
nella vitrea corrente; qui ella venne,
il capo adorno di strane ghirlande
di ranuncoli, ortiche, margherite
e di quei lunghi fiori color porpora
che i licenziosi poeti bucolici
designano con più corrivo nome
ma che le nostre ritrose fanciulle
chiaman "dita di morto"; ella lassù,
mentre si arrampicava per appendere
l'erboree sue ghirlande ai rami penduli,
un ramo, invidioso, s'è spezzato
e gli erbosi trofei ed ella stessa
sono caduti nel piangente fiume.
Le sue vesti, gonfiandosi sull'acqua,
l'han sostenuta per un poco a galla,
nel mentre ch'ella, come una sirena,
cantava spunti d'antiche canzoni,
come incosciente della sua sciagura
o come una creatura d'altro regno
e familiare con quell'elemento.
Ma non per molto, perché le sue vesti
appesantite dall'acqua assorbita,
trascinaron la misera dal letto
del suo canto a una fangosa morte.»







Silvia Camporesi, *Ofelia*, 2004



Lars Von Trier, *Melancholia*, 2011

2nd phase: 1854-1877

leader: Rossetti

A SUCCESSFUL MOVEMENT: Ruskin's positive opinion on the brotherhood, 1851 -> Burne-Jones joins the group

after 1854: A NEW PERIOD FOR PRE-RAPHAELITES

Hunt in Holy Land

Millais as Royal Academy's director

Rossetti as new PRB's leader -> *symbolism* as the new key of PR art

Hunt in Holy Land



William Holman Hunt, *The finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1854-60



Millais in Royal Academy



John Everett Millais, *L'enfant du regiment*, 1855



John Everett Millais, *The black Brunswicker*, 1860



Dante Gabriel
Rossetti, *Beata
Beatrix*, 1863

Dante Gabriel
Rossetti, *Pandora*,
1869



3rd phase: 1877-1910

leader: Burne-Jones

DO STILL PRE-RAPHAELITES EXIST?

Grosvenor Gallery, 1877: aestheticism

PRB EVOLUTION:

1st phase: naturalism and excessive details (Millais)

2nd phase: symbolism (Rossetti)

3rd phase: aestheticism (Burne-Jones) -> double legacy



Edward Burne-Jones,
The wheel of Fortune, 1875-83





Michelangelo,
Dying slave,
1513-15 ca.

Parmigianino,
*Madonna of the
rose*, 1530





Edward Burne-Jones,
The golden stairs,
1880

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/victorian-art-architecture/pre-raphaelites/v/sir-edward-coley-burne-jones-the-golden-stairs-1880>

**the PRB collection
at the Walker Art Gallery (Liverpool)**

John Everett Millais, *Isabella*, 1849





John Brett, *The stonebreaker*, 1857-58



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Dante's dream*, 1871

SOURCES FOR THE MASTERPIECES YOU'LL SEE IN ENGLAND

<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/collections/preraphaelites/>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/becoming-modern/victorian-art-architecture/pre-raphaelites/a/a-beginners-guide-to-the-pre-raphaelites>

<http://www.rossettiarchive.org/index.html>

<https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/features/may06.shtml>

wikipedia