



**Diploma Lecture Series 2013  
Revolution to Romanticism: European Art and Culture 1750-1850**

**Science and spectacle in the work of Joseph Wright of Derby**

**Dr Georgina Cole**

**27 / 28 February 2013**

**Lecture summary:**

This lecture explores the mingling of art, science and philosophy in the work of Joseph Wright of Derby. It addresses the major themes of his work, such as air, light and art education, and their relationship to developments in Enlightenment thinking.

**Slide list:**

1. Joseph Wright, *Self Portrait*, c.1780, oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven
2. Joseph Wright, *Erasmus Darwin*, C.1792-93, oil on canvas, 76.2 x 63.5cm, private collection
- \*3. Joseph Wright, *A Philosopher Giving that Lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in place of the sun*, 1766, oil on canvas, 147 x 203 cm, Derby: Derby Museum and Art Gallery
4. An orrery made by Benjamin Martin in London in 1767, used by John Winthrop to teach astronomy at Harvard, on display at the Putnam Gallery in the Harvard Science Center
5. Godfrey Kneller, *Sir Isaac Newton*, before 1727, National Portrait Gallery, London
6. James Ferguson, *Astronomy Explained Upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles, And made easy to those who have not studied Mathematics* (1778)
- \*7. Joseph Wright, *Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump*, 1768, 183 x 244 cm
- \*8. Joseph Wright, *Blacksmith's Shop*, 1771, 128.3 x 104cm, Yale Center for British Art
9. Joseph Wright, *The Alchymist, in search of the philosopher's stone, discovers phosphorous, and prays for the successful conclusion of his operation, as was the custom of Ancient Chymical Astrologers*, 1771, oil on canvas, Derby Art Gallery
- \*10. Joseph Wright, *Vesuvius in Eruption, with a View over the Islands in the Bay of Naples*, c.1776-80, Oil paint on canvas, 122 x 176.4 cm, Tate
11. Joseph Wright, *John Whitehurst, F.R.S.*, c.1782-83, oil on canvas, 92.1 x 71.1 cm, private collection
12. Joseph Wright, *Three Persons Viewing the Gladiator by Candlelight*, 1765, 101.6 x 121.9
13. Joseph Wright, *An Academy by Lamplight*, 1769, oil on canvas, 127 x 101.2 cm, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven
- \*14. Joseph Wright, *The Corinthian Maid*, 1782-85, oil on canvas, 106.3 x 130.8 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington

**Reference:**

Benedict Nicholson, *Joseph Wright of Derby: Painter of Light*, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968)

David Solkin, "ReWrighting Shaftesbury: The Air Pump and the Limits of Commercial Humanism" in *Painting and the Politics of Culture: New Essays on British Art 1700-1850*, John Barrell ed., 73-100 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Susan Siegfried, "Sexual economies of vision in Joseph Wright", *Representations* 68 (1999): 34-58

Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Revolution 1750-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

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Joseph Wright, *A Philosopher Giving that Lecture on the Orrery, in which a lamp is put in place of the sun*, 1766, oil on canvas, 147 x 203 cm, Derby: Derby Museum and Art Gallery





Joseph Wright of Derby, *Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump*, 1768, 183 x 244 cm, London, National Gallery

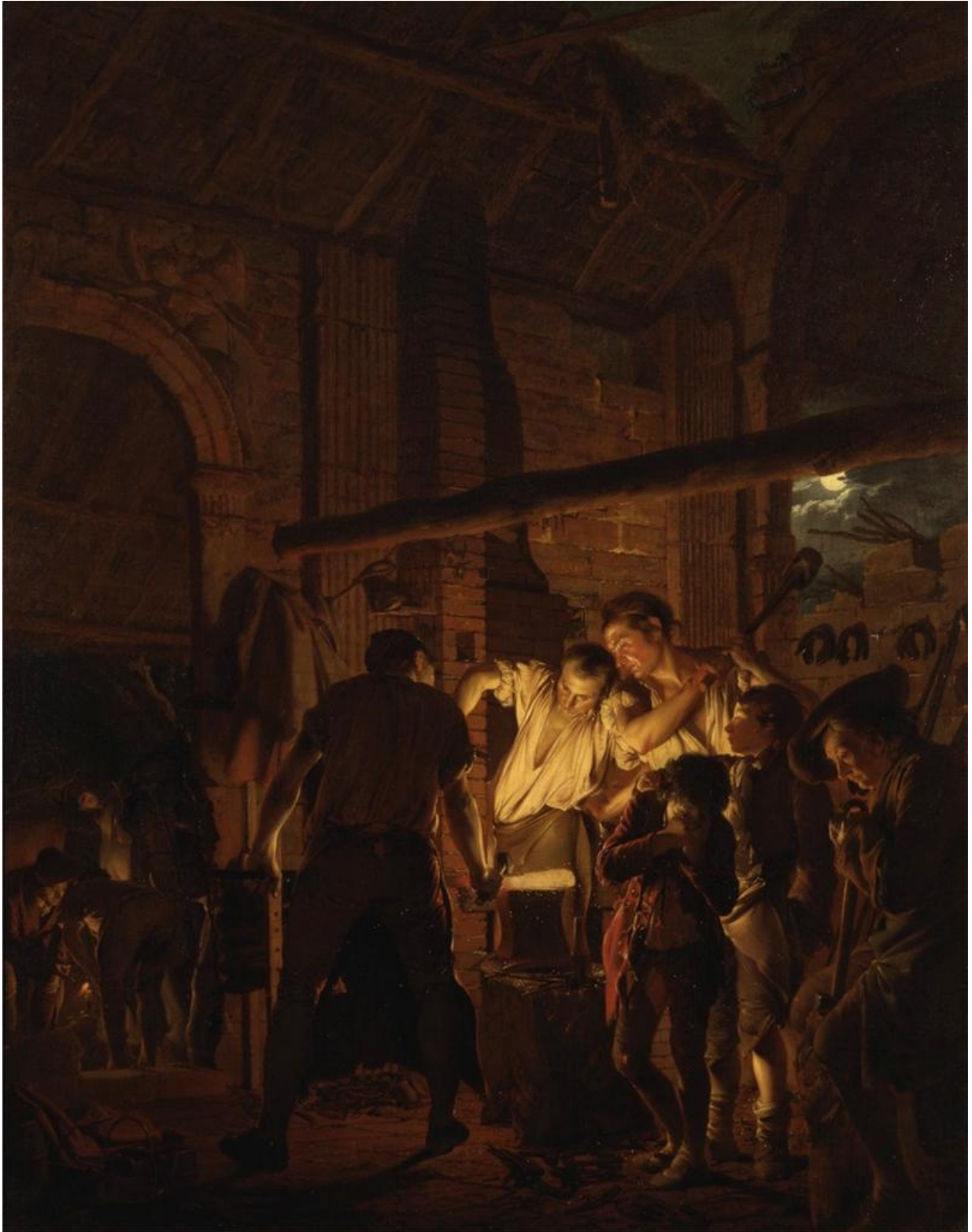


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