

SEMINAR 8

JOHN CONSTABLE: KEY CONCEPTS & IDEAS

- was one of the most revolutionary artists of the 19th century
- elevated rural scenes and landscape painting to the status of high art
- filled his paintings with religious hints and suggestions
- discovered that autobiography was the artist's inevitable vocation
- painted the landscape of his youth, especially the area around Dedham Vale in Suffolk
- his sketches were the harbingers of his greatest innovations as a painter
- his sketches were considered breathtakingly modern but totally unexhibitable in his time

VOCABULARY TO DESCRIBE CONSTABLE AND HIS PAINTINGS

- to alter the language of paint, its texture and material essence
- to be obscured by its fame
- to be seen as an inflammatory painting
- a fresh and breezy picture of a man and a boy
- to cross a river in a hay-cart
- mowers reaping in a distant field
- a subtle network of dots and flecks
- to treat a humble subject matter on a grand scale
- a picture of no more than a stretch of water
- to constitute a serious subject matter for painting
- to remain a lifelong preoccupation
- to conceive a violent dislike of the rote set of subjects (i.e. to be painted at school)
- to immerse oneself in the territory of one's youth
- to conjure up in art the shifting vibrancy of nature
- coils of paint like blurred shaving cream to suggest scudding clouds
- dabs of silvery paint alternating with green to suggest the shimmer of a poplar's leaves
- to live in one's own world of pictorial experiment
- a man of independent means
- to live the life of a perpetual art student
- a feeling come untethered from meaning
- paint becoming a liquid emission of excitement