



Pre-Raphaelites

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Heather Birchall

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96 pages

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Secret society

The Victorian rebels

Founded in 1848 as a secret society, the Pre-Raphaelites rejected classical ideals and the dominant artistic genre painting of their era for what they saw as a more spiritual, sincere, and naturalistic approach. Inaugurated by William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, they evolved into a seven-member brotherhood that included poets and critics as well as painters.

Moving away from the classical compositions exemplified by Raphael (hence the group's name), the Pre-Raphaelites rather turned to medieval culture and the jewel-like colors of Quattrocento art for inspiration. Their principal themes were initially religious, but also included subjects from literature and poetry, as exemplified by Sir John Everett Millais' famous *Ophelia*, drawn from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Inspired by the theories of John Ruskin, they were also committed to the close study of nature.

This book presents key works from the Pre-Raphaelite group to introduce their reactionary principles, their dazzling colors, their interest in love, death, and nature, and their extensive influence on latter-day Symbolism and beyond.

About the series:

Each book in TASCHEN's Basic Genre series features: approximately 100 colour illustrations with explanatory captions

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a selection of the most important works of the epoch, each presented on a 2-page spread with a full-page image and accompanying interpretation, as well as a portrait and brief biography of the artist *Biographie de l'auteur*

Norbert Wolf graduated in art history, linguistics and medieval studies at the universities of Regensburg and Munich, and earned his PhD in 1983. He held visiting professorships in Marburg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Dusseldorf, Nuremberg-Erlangen, and Innsbruck. His extensive writings on art history include many TASCHEN titles, such as *Diego Velazquez*, *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner*, *Caspar David Friedrich*, *Expressionism*, *Romanesque*, *Landscape Painting*. About the author: Heather Birchall is Curator of Historic Fine Art at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. She previously worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and Tate Britain, helping to organize major exhibitions including *Millais (2007)* and *How We Are: Photographing Britain (2008)*. A specialist in Victorian art, she has contributed to books and written articles about John Ruskin, the relationship between painting and photography, and British watercolours.

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