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# Breaking Frame: Technology and the Visual Arts in the Nineteenth Century

*Julie Wosk*

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**Breaking Frame: Technology and the Visual Arts in the Nineteenth Century** Julie Wosk

In this incisive, abundantly illustrated study, Julie Wosk explores for the first time how the visual arts reflected the explosive psychological impact of the Industrial Revolution on English and American society. Wosk reveals the ways artists and designers responded to the hopes and fears for the first industrial age, and how their work continues to illuminate our own visions of technology and culture.

Wosk also reveals the striking ability of artists to capture the drama and the dangers of the new technologies, seen in their images of factories spewing smoke, steam boilers bursting, trains crashing, and comic views of people-turned-automatons. Their art dramatically mirrored widespread feelings of disorientationÐÐthe phenomenon sociologists have called "breaking frame."

Wosk demonstrates the startling impact of new technologies on the decorative arts and industrial design. While critics anquished, manufacturers using new materials poured out elaborately ornamented machine-made copies of original works of art. The new simulations spurred dramatic design debatesÐÐdebates which have resurfaced during our postmodern era. She also highlights how artists' responses to a world newly transformed by technology prefigured the fear and pride, resistance and accommodation to technological achievement, that are still felt over a century later.

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