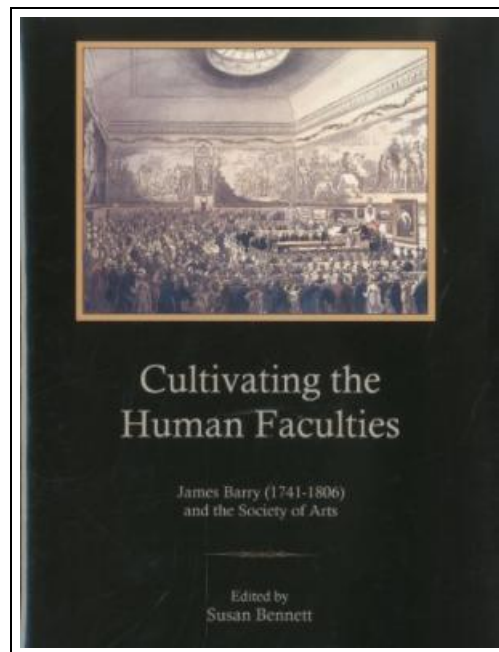


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Lehigh University Press, United States, 2009. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. The Irish artist, James Barry, is a major neoclassical artist of international significance. A keen exponent of the grand style of history painting, his work virtually disappeared from view following his death. His reputations was raised from obscurity in the 1980s by Robert R. Wark and David Solkin, but especially by William Pressley's excellent biography and catalogue raisonne. This collection of essays examines in more detail Barry's relationship with the (Royal) Society of Arts, and their encouragement of high art and the arts of design, to put into practice Barry's belief that one great maxim of moral truth, viz. that the obtaining of happiness, individual as well as public, depends upon cultivating the human faculties. By taking different aspects of Barry's mural cycle *The Progress of Human Knowledge and Culture* that he painted for the Great Room of the (Royal) Society of Arts (1777-1801), the contributors show the wider contemporary art and design debates focusing on nationalism and improvement, publicity and patronage, thereby establishing new connections between theory (political, social, and cultural) and practice. The first half of this volume considers the development of the premiums offered by the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in the polite arts, from its initial focus on designs for manufacturers to a program that tended toward high art. Consideration is also given to the Society's encouragement of female excellence, which Barry featured in his mural series for the Society. The second half looks in more detail at Barry's *The Progress of Human Knowledge and Culture*. Recent discoveries have shed new light on Barry's innermost thoughts and intentions, and his constant reworking of the Society's murals, illustrating the...



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