

**LECTURES ON PAINTING  
DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL  
ACADEMY, PP. 1-139**

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Lectures on Painting Delivered at the Royal Academy, pp. 1-139 by Henry O'Neil

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**HENRY O'NEIL**

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# LECTURES ON PAINTING

DELIVERED AT

3-9/99

THE ROYAL ACADEMY

BY

HENRY <sup>Neil</sup>O'NEIL, A.R.A.

*WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES AND APPENDIX.*

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1866.

TO THE  
PRESIDENT AND THE MEMBERS

OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

THESE

Lectures on Painting

ARE RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THEIR

OBLIGED SERVANT

HENRY O'NEIL.





## PREFACE.

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IT has often been seriously questioned whether any real benefit can be derived from oral Lectures. No doubt, as far as regards their power to impart a technical knowledge of the subject discussed, they are of no more avail to the Student in Painting than in any other art; but he who would assert that they have no influence in a matter of far greater importance, namely, mental culture, must be equally prepared to deny, not only the efficacy of all uttered eloquence, from the pulpit downwards, but also of all written opinion.

So far from sharing in this belief as to the inutility of Lectures, I consider that they may be of the greatest

value to the Student ; and, moreover, considering how a truth which tells so forcibly on its first utterance, loses power through frequent repetition, I consider that it would be even more advantageous if, instead of the same Lectures being constantly repeated year after year, every Artist who has attained a certain position in his profession, would give the students the result of his experience. And so far from any evil arising from a conflict of advice, I believe that the consequent attempt to weigh each opinion, and to test its truth according to our own experience, is a labour that must have a most beneficial tendency. For though it is impossible, by such means, to teach the technical qualities of any art, it is possible, by communicating the results of individual experience, to arouse general reflection ; and thus to establish Truth, and further the progress of Art.

But, to be of any service to the Student, a Lecture should simply reveal the knowledge which the author has acquired during his professional career. History,

in a general sense, forms our judgment; but the subjects it treats of, especially that of the Art of Painting, are so vast and so complicated that they can only be thoroughly mastered by patient study; and the conclusions arrived at through such investigation are alone fit matter for a discourse. For these reasons, the history of the Art of Painting, and its rise and progress in the different schools of Europe, are subjects only treated incidentally in these Lectures, and even there only for the purpose of strengthening any opinion I may have advanced. I fear that some objections will be urged against the frequent repetition of the same tenets; but in delivering a course of Lectures on any art, at intermediate periods, and, possibly, dwelling only on one or two of its qualities in each separate discourse, it is scarcely possible to avoid a repetition, however slight, of certain doctrines which apply, more or less, to all; and in revising these Lectures for perusal, I have not thought fit to alter the text, as delivered, in order to avoid such repetitions, because I wish to make each discourse, as far as lies in my power, complete in itself.