

An Iron Forge by Wright of Derby

Acquisition of painting 'An Iron Forge' by Joseph Wright of Derby, 1772, oil on canvas, 1213 x 14320mm. This picture shows men at work in a small iron-forge, with the forge-master's extended family looking on. At a time when most artists presented a thoroughly nostalgic vision of rural work, focusing on traditional agricultural tasks. Wright was quite exceptional in depicting scenes of modern industry. But this picture should not be taken as a straightforward illustration. Its dramatic light effects create an almost religious atmosphere, and by showing the various generations of the family together Wright alludes to the traditional theme of the 'ages of man'.

Nation/region

London

Grant awarded

£900,000

Award date

24/10/1995