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Work Sights: The Visual Culture of Industry in Nineteenth-Century America (Science/Technology/Culture)

Vanessa Schulman

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In this extensively illustrated work, Vanessa Meikle Schulman reveals how visual representations of labor, technology, and industry were crucial in shaping the way nineteenth-century Americans understood their nation and its place in the world. Her focus is the period between 1857 and 1887, an era marked by the rapid expansion of rail and telegraph networks, the rise of powerful, centralized corporations, and the creation of specialized facilities for the mechanized production and distribution of products. Through the examination of popular as well as fine art?news illustrations and paintings of American machines, workers, factories, and technical innovations?she illuminates an evolving tension between the perception of technology and industry as rational, logical, and systemic on the one hand and as essentially unknowable, strange, or irrational on the other.

Ranging across the fields of art history, visual studies, the history of technology, and American studies, *Work Sights* captures both the richness of nineteenth-century American visual culture and the extent to which Americans had begun to perceive their country as a modern nation connected by a web of interlocking technological systems.

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