

# V.O. SCOPE

Le supplément cinéma de **V**ocable

TIMOTHY SPALL



PRIX D'INTERPRÉTATION  
MASCULINE  
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Un film de Mike Leigh

Dans les salles le 3 décembre 2014

4 pages pour découvrir le contexte historique  
du film et un entretien avec son réalisateur.

*Mr. Turner*

un film de

MIKE LEIGH



FILM FOCUS FEATURES INTERNATIONAL et BFI PRODUCTIONS en coproduction avec CANAL+ CINE+ et FRANCE TELEVISIONS  
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PRODUIT PAR MOPF PRODUCTIONS en association avec LIPSINC PRODUCTIONS A THIN MAN FILM TIMOTHY SPALL BOBOTHY ATKINSON MARIOUS BAILEY  
PAUL JENSON LESLEY MANVILLE MARTIN SWANWICK écriture de MIKE LEIGH • MR TURNER • casting SARA GOLD production exécutive DANIELLE BRANDON direction artistique ANOCELINE HIGUEN  
et TIM FRASER montage et son CHRISTINE BLENDALL direction artistique ANOCELINE HIGUEN scénario et montage de GARY YERSONH direction artistique ANOCELINE HIGUEN  
coproduit par MICHEL SAINT-JEAN MALTE GRUNERT production exécutive TESSA HONN NORMAN MERRY production exécutive GAIL EGAN produit par GEORGINA LOWE écrit et réalisé par MIKE LEIGH

## RAIN, STEAM AND SPEED



▲ "Turner – *Rain, Steam and Speed* – National Gallery file" by J. M. W. Turner.  
(NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON. LICENSED UNDER PUBLIC DOMAIN VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

**AS YOU CAN SEE IN THE FILM**, Turner was fascinated by technology. The location of *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway* is accepted as Maidenhead Railway Bridge, across the River Thames between Taplow and Maidenhead. A tiny hare appears in the bottom right corner of the painting. Some have this as a reference to the limits of technology. Others believe the animal is running in fear of the new machinery and Turner meant to hint at the danger of man's new technology destroying the elements of nature.

to have *ici* interpréter / hare lièvre / to hint at suggérer.

## ECCENTRIC MR. TURNER?

**MIKE LEIGH CHOSE TO PRESENT TURNER'S LAST 26 YEARS** when he became more and more radical in his work, which alienated, confused and bemused a lot of people. Here are a few facts you should know:

- **IN 1800**, Turner's mother became hopelessly ill and was committed to a mental hospital. She died shortly after. Turner's father, a barber and a wig maker, raised his son.
- **TURNER WAS 15 YEARS OLD** when he received a rare honour: one of his paintings was exhibited at the Royal Academy. By the time he was 18 he had his own studio. Before he was 20, print sellers were happily buying his drawings for reproduction.
- **UNLIKE MANY ARTISTS OF HIS ERA**, he was successful throughout his career.
- **AS HE GREW OLDER TURNER HAD NO CLOSE FRIENDS**. None of his acquaintances saw him for months at a time. He always travelled alone. He still held exhibitions, but he usually refused to sell his paintings. As time passed, his despair at the thought of dying increased. This resulted in somewhat unbalanced behaviour, such as becoming very secretive about his second home with Mrs Booth in Chelsea, where he even assumed the guise of an 'Admiral Booth' in order to shield his identity.
- **ALTHOUGH KNOWN FOR HIS OILS**, Turner is regarded as one of the founders of English watercolor landscape painting.

to bemuse déconcerter / wig perruque / print sellers vendeurs de reproductions / acquaintance connaissance / despair désespoir / unbalanced behaviour comportement déséquilibré / guise apparence / to shield protéger, cacher / to regard considérer.

## CHRONOLOGY

1775	Joseph Mallord William (J.M.W.) Turner born in Covent Garden, London
1789	14 yrs Turner enters Royal Academy School
1790	15 yrs First drawing accepted for Royal Academy Exhibition (See below)
1799	24 yrs Elected as an associate member of the Royal Academy
1807	32 yrs Appointed as Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy
1812	36 yrs Begins work on his epic poem <i>The Fallacies of Hope</i> . He never finished it but paired an excerpt with his masterpiece <i>Slave-Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying, Typhoon Coming On)</i> in 1840.
1823	48 yrs Receives commission to paint the Battle of Trafalgar for the Royal family at St James's Palace
1834	59 yrs Witnesses and sketches the burning of the Houses of Parliament, London.
1839	64 yrs <b>Louis Daguerre publicly introduces his daguerreotype process. Photography suddenly enters the public consciousness.</b>
1840	65 yrs Meets John Ruskin, the famous English art critic of the Victorian era, for the first time.
1846	71 yrs <b>The South Eastern Railway opens a line from Canterbury to Margate Photography suddenly enters the public consciousness.</b>
1851	76 yrs Dies

Mr. Turner only chronicles the last 26 years of the artist's life.

Historical events

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY

**The Royal Academy of Arts** was founded through a personal act of King George III on 10 December 1768 with a mission to promote the arts of design in Britain through education and exhibition. The motive in founding the Academy was twofold: to raise the professional status of the artist by establishing a sound system of training and expert judgement in the arts, and to arrange the exhibition of contemporary works of art attaining an appropriate standard of excellence.

act loi, décret / exhibition exposition / twofold double / to raise élever / sound valable, sensé, solide / training formation.







## MARGATE



Turner first came to the seaside town aged 11, having been sent by his parents to school there. He returned to Margate aged 21 and from the 1820s onwards became a regular visitor. It was the starting point for his visits to Europe. Mrs Booth's seafront guesthouse on Cold Harbour at Rendezvous, where Turner stayed when visiting the town, was originally situated on the same site where The Turner Contemporary Gallery officially opened on 16 April 2011.

to sketch dessiner / from... onwards à partir des années 1820 / guesthouse pension de famille / originally à l'origine.

## THE GENIUS OF TURNER

**1. WHERE MANY CONTEMPORARY CRITICS** saw near chaos in J.M.W. Turner's later canvases, today we see an artist gradually adjusting his style to fit his interest—a case of great art being understood only after its time. Turner's interest is in how paint describes color in atmosphere and the mystical experience these elements can induce in a viewer. To pin down nature's changing moods, Turner found that the transposition of a mystical experience to art was effected in the artist's general approach to his subject, not in the particularities of the scene rendered.

**2. IN THE 1810S AND 1820S,** Turner produced series of small-scale topographical watercolours in which he evoked forms by layering blocks of colour according to a classification system of "light" and "dark" colours that challenged many assumptions of contemporary colour theory. Turner adapted his watercolour methods to oil paintings, which he built up from foundations of colour to create uniquely evocative shapes and glowing forms.

1. canvas toile / to fit correspondre à / viewer spectateur / to pin down mettre le doigt sur / mood humeur / to render restituer.

2. small-scale à petite échelle, de petites dimensions / watercolour aquarelle / to layer superposer / to challenge remettre en question / assumption hypothèse / foundation base, fond / shape forme / glowing lumineux, flamboyant.



## BEFORE AND AFTER TURNER

Important artistic influences upon Turner during the 1790's were Thomas Gainsborough, Henry Fuseli and Richard Wilson. He was also profoundly indebted to the French landscape painter Claude Lorrain. In his day, he was even known as the "British Claude". Turner could have been among the artists we now classify as Romantics. He was ahead of his time and his oil painting evolved towards a visionary pre-Impressionist style. Turner's work no doubt influenced artists such as Monet, Degas, and Renoir. He remains a reference for many artists today.

to be indebted to devoir à, être redevable à / day ici, époque / to be ahead of one's time être en avance sur son temps, faire œuvre de pionnier

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Over the course of five decades, Turner filled hundreds of sketchbooks with visual records of scores of tours through England, Scotland, and Wales, and around the Continent to Belgium, France, Holland, Italy, the Rhineland, Switzerland and elsewhere.
- Turner's will left more than **19,000 watercolors (2,000), drawings, and oils (550)** to the British nation. Most of these works are in the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery, London.
- There are fewer than **10 major Turner paintings still in private hands today!**

over... decades pendant 50 ans / sketchbook carnet de croquis / scores of multitude de / Rhineland Rhénanie / watercolor aquarelle.



## TIMOTHY SPALL

**TIMOTHY SPALL (BORN 27 FEBRUARY 1957)** spent two years studying art to prepare for his role in Mike Leigh's Mr. Turner under the tutorship of London artist Tim Wright. The culmination of his training was a full-size copy of Turner's *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth Making Signals in Shallow Water, and Going by the Lead* from 1842. On 24 May 2014 he won the Best Actor award at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival.

tutorship tutelle / culmination point d'orgue / training formation / full-size grandeur nature.

## Turner's touch

**LA TOUCHE IMPRESSIONNISTE.** Le peintre britannique Turner (1775-1851) a profondément marqué les esprits de son époque et ses œuvres continuent de séduire encore aujourd'hui le grand public. Les 26 dernières années de sa vie ont été portées à l'écran dans *Mr. Turner* (dans les salles le 3 décembre 2014). Son réalisateur, Mike Leigh, nous a accordé un entretien téléphonique dont voici un extrait. Vous pourrez retrouver l'interview complète et des compléments audio sur le site [www.vocable.fr](http://www.vocable.fr)

VOCABLE

BY RONAN LANCELOT

RENCONTRE AVEC

MIKE LEIGH

Réalisateur



### Turner's touch

- 1. to achieve** parvenir à / **approach** méthode / **cast** acteurs.
- 2. shore** rivage / **could you elaborate** ? pouvez-vous être plus précis ? / **actually** en fait / **to tie** attacher / **mast** mât / **storm** tempête / **academic** universitaire, expert / **to question** mettre en doute / **I don't give a shit** je m'en fous complètement / **to strap** attacher.
- 3. decade** décennie / **to get, got, got together** ici réaliser, monter (projet) / **to inform** ici imprégner / **to shoot, shot, shot** tourner / **tool** outil / **to abase** abaisser la qualité de, altérer / **throughout** tout au long de (ici film) / **landscape** paysage (terrestre) / **seascape** paysage marin / **tone** ton, teinte.
- 4. manufacturer** fabricant / **pen nib** plume de stylo / **bequest** legs / **radical** révolutionnaire / **wealthy** riche / **obviously** de toute évidence / **to engrave** graver.

**VOCABLE:** Can you take us through the process of writing this film?

**MIKE LEIGH:** You can research for a million years, but it doesn't make the characters, the action happen in front of the camera. You've still got to make it happen in detail. Every single characterisation in the film is very detailed, however small the character; and to achieve that you have to use the same kind of techniques and approaches as I would if I was inventing one of my normal contemporary films, through improvisation with the cast.

**2. V:** In your movie, Turner explains that some painters paint from the shore and other paint from the sea. Could you elaborate?

**ML:** Turner actually claimed to have had himself tied to a mast for four hours during a storm. Modern academics now question whether it's true. I, personally, don't give a shit because we're making a movie, and if you're going to make a movie about an iconic person like Turner, one of whom one of the most famous iconic things is that he had himself strapped to a mast of a ship, it would be eccentric not to include it in the film.

**3. V:** Can you tell us about the photography of the film?

**ML:** Director of photography Dick Pope and I have got a very long working relationship, and that's one of the essential ingredients for this film. I thought of doing a film about Turner in 1999, and it took us all a decade or so to get it together. It meant that we had a long time to talk about it, and to look at the work, and consider how we might inform the film with the sense



And... action! (DR)

of Turner. We decided to shoot it on a digital camera and it was interesting because it's a tool that we've not used before very much and we abased it really. Throughout, even when it's not really looking at landscapes or seascapes or anything, we still have this palette, the colours, the choices of the tones, the atmosphere of Turner.

**4. V:** Was it true that someone offered Turner £100,000 for all of his work and that he refused?

**ML:** Yes, absolutely. A famous manufacturer of pen nibs offered him exactly that, and Turner responded exactly as you see in the film: he said no. "I want it kept together for the nation in one place, to be seen free, gratis," and of course that is what you will find mostly in the Tate Britain in London now, it's the Turner Bequest; some of it is in the National Gallery and some of it in the British Museum. What was radical about that is that at the time the only public gallery where people could look at work for nothing, anywhere in the world, was The Louvre in Paris. All art was in private collections, and so the public couldn't see them. The ordinary people who weren't wealthy could get access to black and white copies obviously engraved by other people. ●

# Vocable

[www.vocable.fr](http://www.vocable.fr)

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Si vous souhaitez organiser une projection avec vos classes, contactez Alicia HERNANZ - 01 53 46 66 66 /63 [AliciaHERNANZ@diaphana.fr](mailto:AliciaHERNANZ@diaphana.fr)