



Multi-Spindle Drilling Machines on Aero-Engine Work by AS Finlayson

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Labours of love

Arts editor Mary Ingham reviews an enjoyable exhibition which makes light work of a serious subject

REVIEW

A WORLD OF... WORK Brantwood, near Coniston

John Ruskin, who lived at Brantwood for his last 28 years, believed work had to be life-enhancing for worker and consumer alike.

The exhibits in Brantwood's Blue Gallery explore aspects of work from a romanticised view of rural life to the industrial power that reduces the worker to a cog in a machine.

It's also a lot of fun as it celebrates the completion of Hunt Emerson and Kevin Jackson's comic trilogy, *Bloke's Progress*, which is published by the Brantwood-based Ruskin Foundation.

The final book is *How to Work* and the centerpiece of the exhibition is Hunt Emerson's brilliant version of Ford Madox Brown's famous painting *Work*



Hunt Emerson's version of Ford Madox Brown's *Work*; right: *Riving Slate at Elterwater* by Maggie Berkowitz

– exhibited alongside Madox Brown's original watercolour study for the painting and a reproduction of the finished oil painting. Hunt brings the chaotic street scene of the original bang up to date with 'phoncom' digging up the road and a top-hatted dandy shown

carrying a lapdog in Madox Brown's study replaced by a man wearing a hoodie and trainers, a bulldog baring its teeth in his wake.

There's a beautiful work in ceramic tiles by Maggie Berkowitz, of Minthorpe – *Riving Slate at Elterwater*



Quarry; John Cassidy's fine bronze sculpture, *The Ship Canal Digger*; AS Finlayson's stunning oil painting *Multi-Spindle Drilling Machines on Aero-Engine Work* (don't be put off by the title!) and exhibits behind glass such as the Ruskin Lace bookmarks made by Margaret Dawson and a first (English) edition of Mao's 'Little Red Book'.

As always in this gallery, a large amount of interest is packed into quite a small space.

A World of... Work is at Brantwood until Sun Sept 2.