

A look into the PRE-RAPHAELITE movement and the study of one of the most famous PRE-RAPHAELITE Paintings -



# The Accolade

a painting by Edmund Leigh Bleaton

Pre-Raphaelite lore, legend and romance

I must admit when Dana first emailed the topic through to me - I was dumbfounded. I had no idea what Dana was talking about, was this some strange new language she had discovered that I had managed to miss out on? - I had never even heard about (the word I still can not pronounce) Pre-Raphaelite, never mind understanding what it meant. My only saving grace was the simple fact that if I did not know what it meant then plenty of miniaturists out there didn't have a clue either. Thus started my journey of discovery into a movement that was fascinating, captured in a time legends, filled with romance and mythology.

## WHAT WAS PRE-RAPHAELITE -

Pre-Raphaelite was not a time, it was in fact a movement, a brotherhood of men, a group of people who came together to try to preserve a period of time in the art world.

The study of Pre-Raphaelite painters and poets introduces us to a style of painting and writing, steeped in mythology and literary allusion and popular today with lovers of romantic art and poetry.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (also known as the Pre-Raphaelites) was a group of English painters, poets and critics, founded in 1848 by John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt.

The intention of the group was to reform art by rejecting what they considered to be the mechanistic approach, first adopted by the Mannerist artists who succeeded Raphael and Michelangelo. They believed that the Classical poses and elegant compositions of Raphael in particular had been a corrupting influence on academic teaching of art. Hence the name "Pre-Raphaelite". In particular they objected to the influence of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the founder of the English Royal Academy of Arts. They called him "Sir Slossua", believing that his broad technique was a sloppy and formulaic form of academic Mannerism. In contrast they wanted to return to the abundant detail, intense colours, and complex compositions of Quattrocento Italian and Flemish art.

The Pre-Raphaelites have been considered the first avant-garde movement in art, though they have also been denied that status, because they continued to accept both the concepts of history painting and of mimesis, or imitation of nature, as central to the purpose of art. However, the Pre-Raphaelites undoubtedly defined themselves as a reform movement, created a distinct name for their form of art, and published a periodical, *The Germ*, to promote their ideas. Their debates were recorded in the *Pre-Raphaelite Journal*.

These journals make very interesting reading and would encourage you to read them, they should be available at your local library.

Well - now that we understand what (that terrible word I still can't pronounce) mean - let's have some fun with it...