

PREFACE

This is the eleventh volume of the annual VIDES journal, created by second year students studying for Oxford's MSt in Literature and the Arts (MLA). VIDES stands for Volume of Interdisciplinary Essays but also the Latin term *vides*: you see. These essays bring together both aspects of the title in their wide ranging and interdisciplinary approach but also in their assessment of ways of seeing. Through comparing artefacts across art, literature, history, material culture and philosophy and considering how these inform one another, these essays explore a range of topics in a truly interdisciplinary way. The remit for VIDES is each essay will analyse and compare two different artefacts within the context of British history, focussing on the British Isles or Britain in the world. The articles here span the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, covering topics as wide-ranging as fashion, travel, botany, photography, and imperialism, and cover the globe, from the South Pacific to India, and from Singapore to the English countryside. The essays grapple with the complex issues of race, class, gender, work, the environment, colonialism, and politics, demonstrating the importance of the Humanities for not only interpreting the past but also understanding our present and future. The VIDES journal is an entirely student-led enterprise produced as the cohort reaches the culmination of studies after months of learning. The nature of this course means that students have come together for four residential sessions in Oxford but in the in-between have returned to their homes, families and work in the UK and abroad. This has brought about logistical challenges in creating this journal, which has required the group to come together over not just compiling the essays but all the necessary editorial tasks, from copyediting and image copyright to formatting.



William Hogarth, *The Painter and his Pug*
1745, 900 x 699 mm., Tate Britain, UK
[from: 'Awakening Consciousness: Ford Madox Brown's Work
and Friedrich Engels's Condition of the Working Class in
England' - Chris Easton]

But the journal is much more than a collection of essays — it is a rich tapestry of diverse scholarly voices and underscores the value in drawing together a fantastic range of experiences and perspectives. If VIDES is to see, the essays in this volume demonstrate how seeing also means to look again, sometimes at familiar topics in a new light – from the perspective of gender or race for example – or by bringing two or more disciplines together to create new methodologies and approaches. This volume is a credit to interdisciplinary study and will surely inspire future generations of MLA students and scholars.

Dr Leah R. Clark
Co-Director, MSt in Literature and Arts