

HAMBURGER  
KUNSTHALLE

A Graphic Novel  
by Noëlle Kröger

WILLIAM BLAKE'S  
UNIVERSE







Welcome to William Blake's universe!

But now who actually was William Blake?

This is a graphic novel by Noëlle Kröger (\*1997) about the nonconformist and talented artist and poet who lived and worked in London from 1757 to 1827. We invite you to immerse yourself in his story and get to know Blake as a person and artist of his time.

What is your impression of William Blake in the graphic novel? And how do you see him through his art in this exhibition? Does your view and perception of Blake's paintings change after you have learned more about him?

Would you like to find out more about the various works of art? Then use the free audio guide for adults and children in the Hamburger Kunsthalle app! Here, the variable fantasy creature Los, who originates from Blake's work and gives artists their power of imagination, accompanies you through the exhibition. In some of the artworks, you can see Los in one of the forms in which he appeared to Blake.

Have fun discovering, experiencing and exploring Blake's universe!



A Graphic Novel  
by Noëlle Kröger

# WILLIAM BLAKE'S UNIVERSE

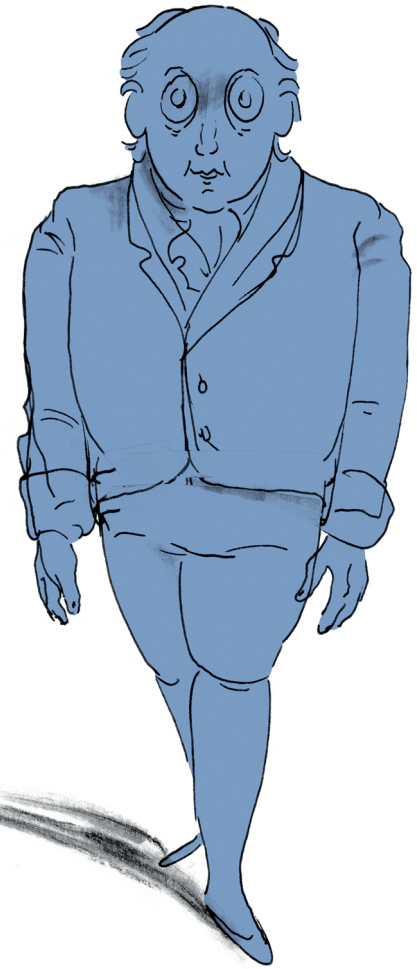
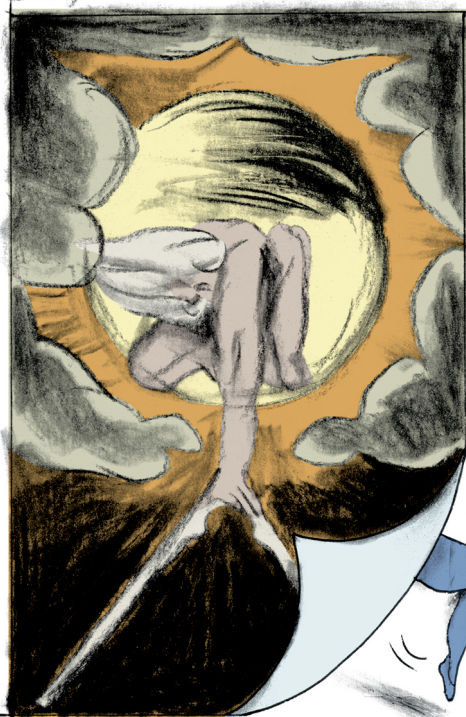






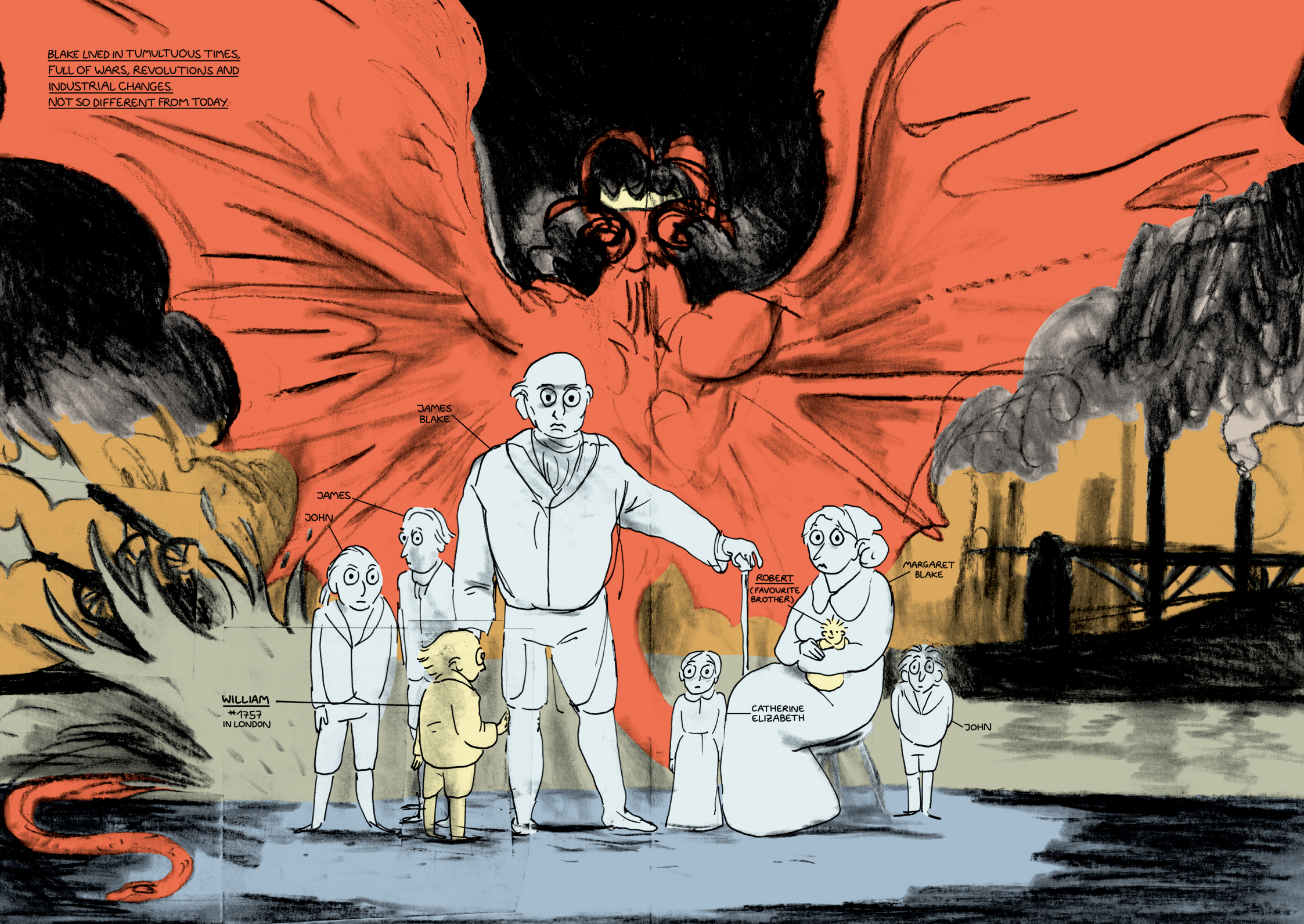


RUSTLING  
CLEARING  
THROAT





BLAKE LIVED IN TUMULTUOUS TIMES,  
FULL OF WARS, REVOLUTIONS AND  
INDUSTRIAL CHANGES.  
NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM TODAY.



JAMES  
BLAKE

JAMES  
JOHN

WILLIAM  
\*1757  
IN LONDON

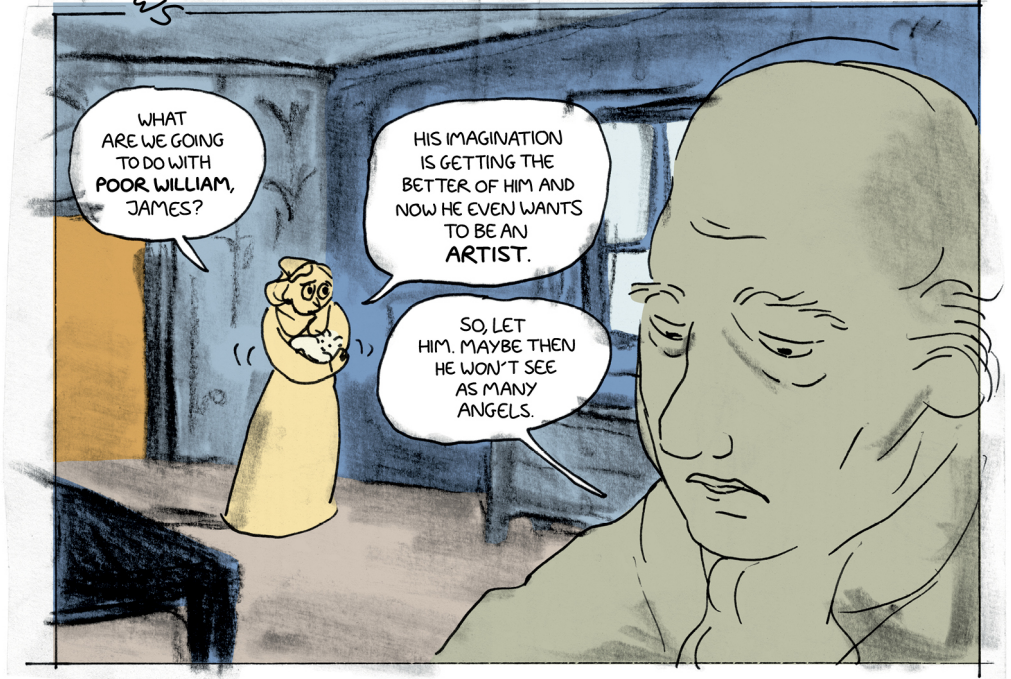
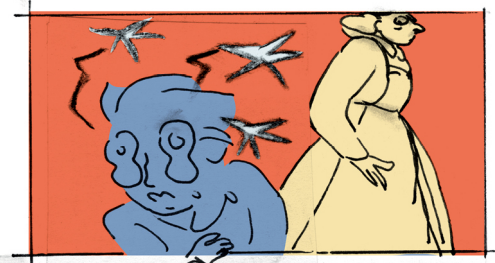
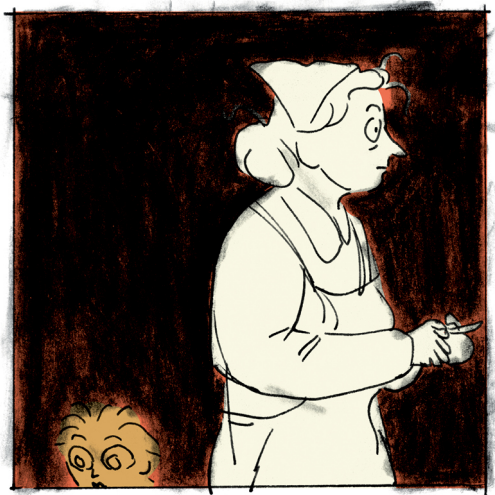
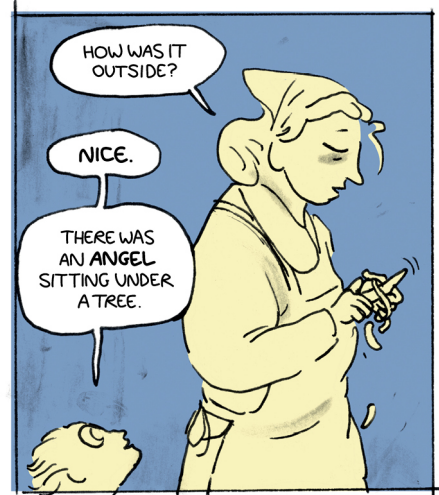
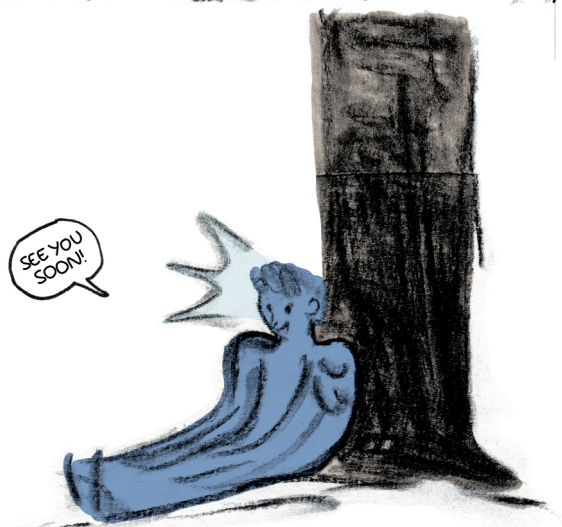
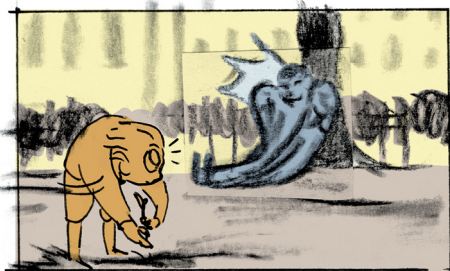
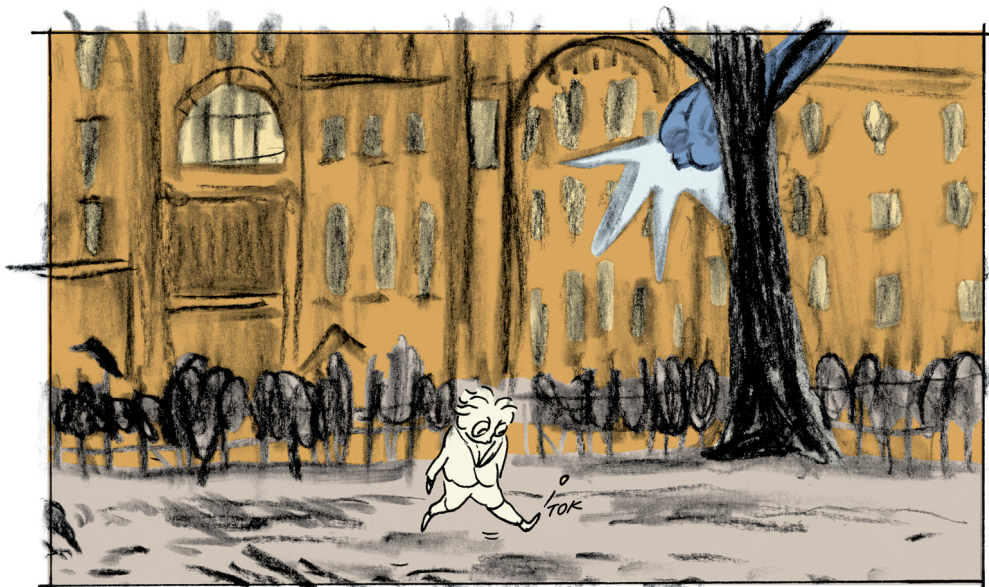
ROBERT  
(FAVOURITE  
BROTHER)

MARGARET  
BLAKE

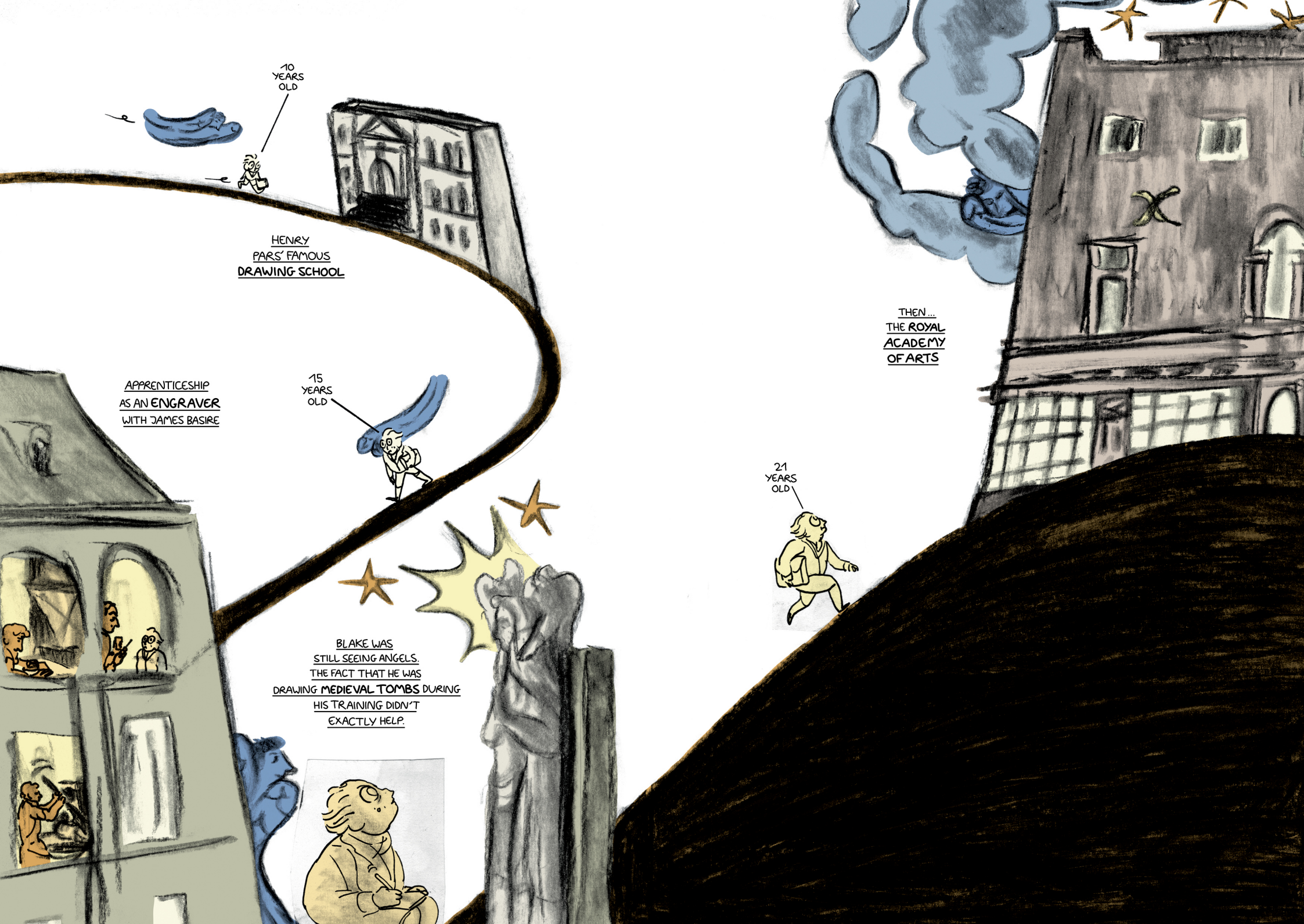
CATHERINE  
ELIZABETH

JOHN









10 YEARS OLD

HENRY PARS' FAMOUS DRAWING SCHOOL

APPRENTICESHIP AS AN ENGRAVER WITH JAMES BASIRE

15 YEARS OLD

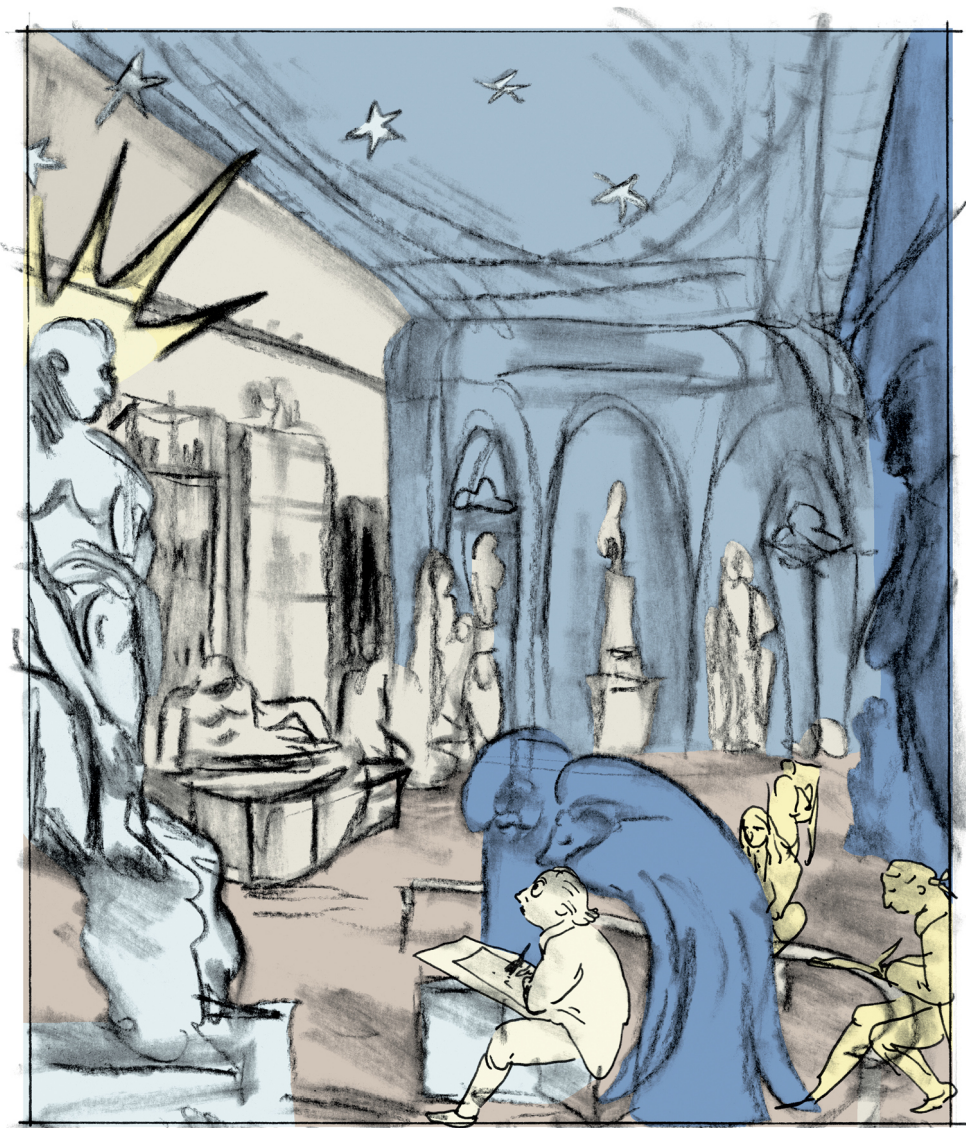
THEN... THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

21 YEARS OLD

BLAKE WAS STILL SEEING ANGELS. THE FACT THAT HE WAS DRAWING MEDIEVAL TOMBS DURING HIS TRAINING DIDN'T EXACTLY HELP.



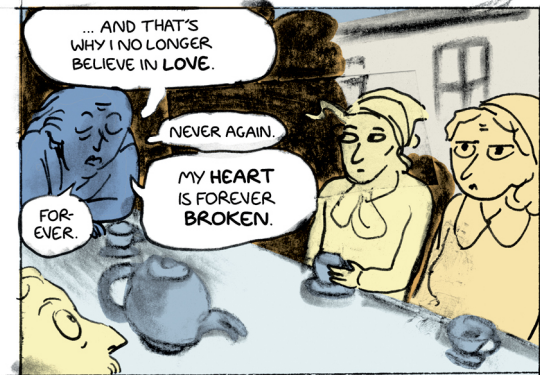








JOHN AND WILLIAM REMAINED FRIENDS FOR LIFE.



... AND THAT'S WHY I NO LONGER BELIEVE IN LOVE.  
FOR-EVER.  
NEVER AGAIN.  
MY HEART IS FOREVER BROKEN.



MR. BLAKE, YOU'RE A FOOL TO CRY OVER SOMEONE LIKE THAT.



MISS BOUCHER-!  
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT.

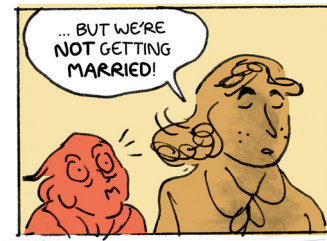
ELSEWHERE, BLAKE HAD LESS LUCK TO START WITH.



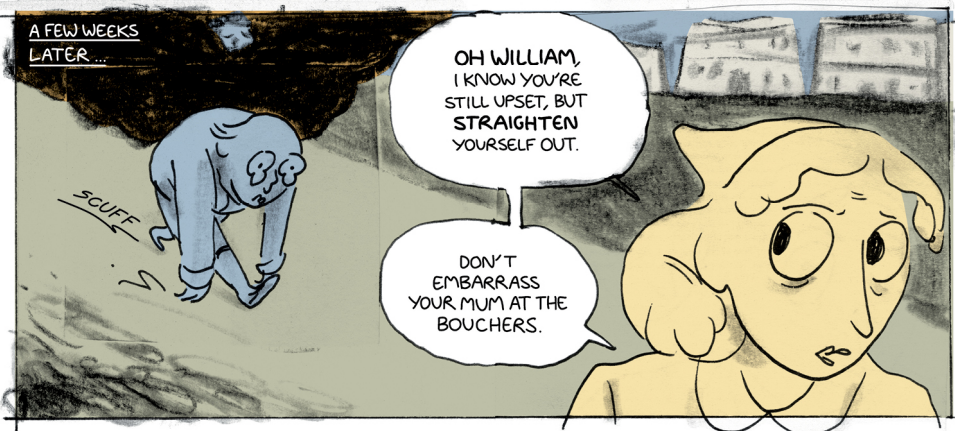
LISTEN, WILLIAM...



I'D STILL GO OUT WITH YOU...



... BUT WE'RE NOT GETTING MARRIED!



A FEW WEEKS LATER...

OH WILLIAM, I KNOW YOU'RE STILL UPSET, BUT STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF OUT.

DON'T EMBARRASS YOUR MUM AT THE BOUCHERS.



CATHERINE BOUCHER, DO YOU FEEL SORRY FOR ME?

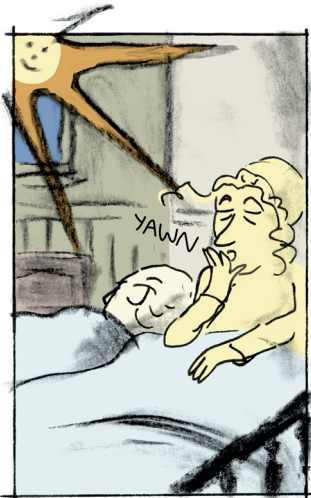


IN FACT, I DO. I PITY YOU, WILLIAM.

THEN I MUST LOVE YOU, CATHERINE.

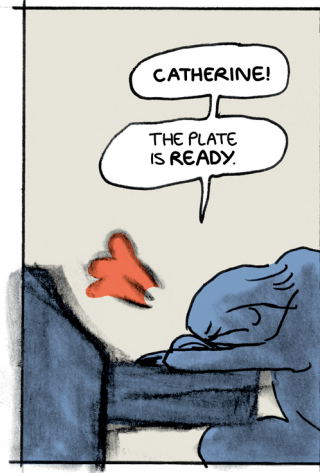
WILLIAM BLAKE AND CATHERINE BOUCHER MARRIED ON 18 AUGUST 1782.





CAN WE GET THE COMMISSION DONE TODAY?

SURE.



CATHERINE!  
THE PLATE IS READY.



I'LL PRINT IT STRAIGHT AWAY.

HM.



I'VE ALREADY POLISHED THE COPPER PLATE.



THANK YOU.  
YOU'RE WELCOME.  
I'LL COLOUR  
YESTERDAY'S  
PRINTS.



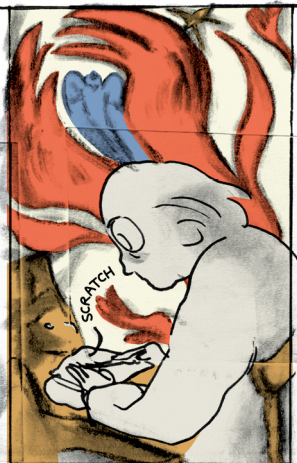
SCRATCH



CLACK



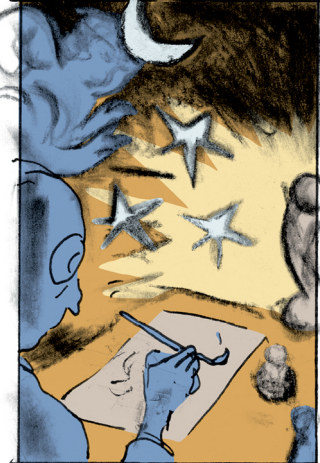
SCRATCH  
SCRATCH



SCRATCH

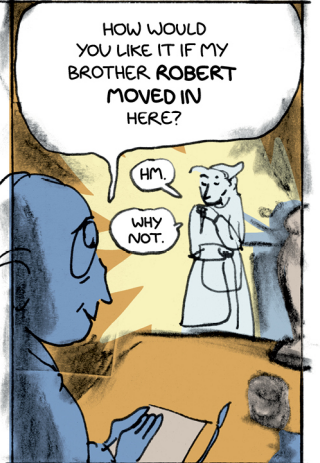


SCRATCH



CATHERINE?

YES?



HOW WOULD YOU LIKE IT IF MY BROTHER ROBERT MOVED IN HERE?

HM.

WHY NOT?



AND SO...



DAYS LATER...

PLEASE WILLIAM.

YOU HAVE TO KEEP WORKING.

WE NEED THESE COMMISSIONS TO SURVIVE.



1784:



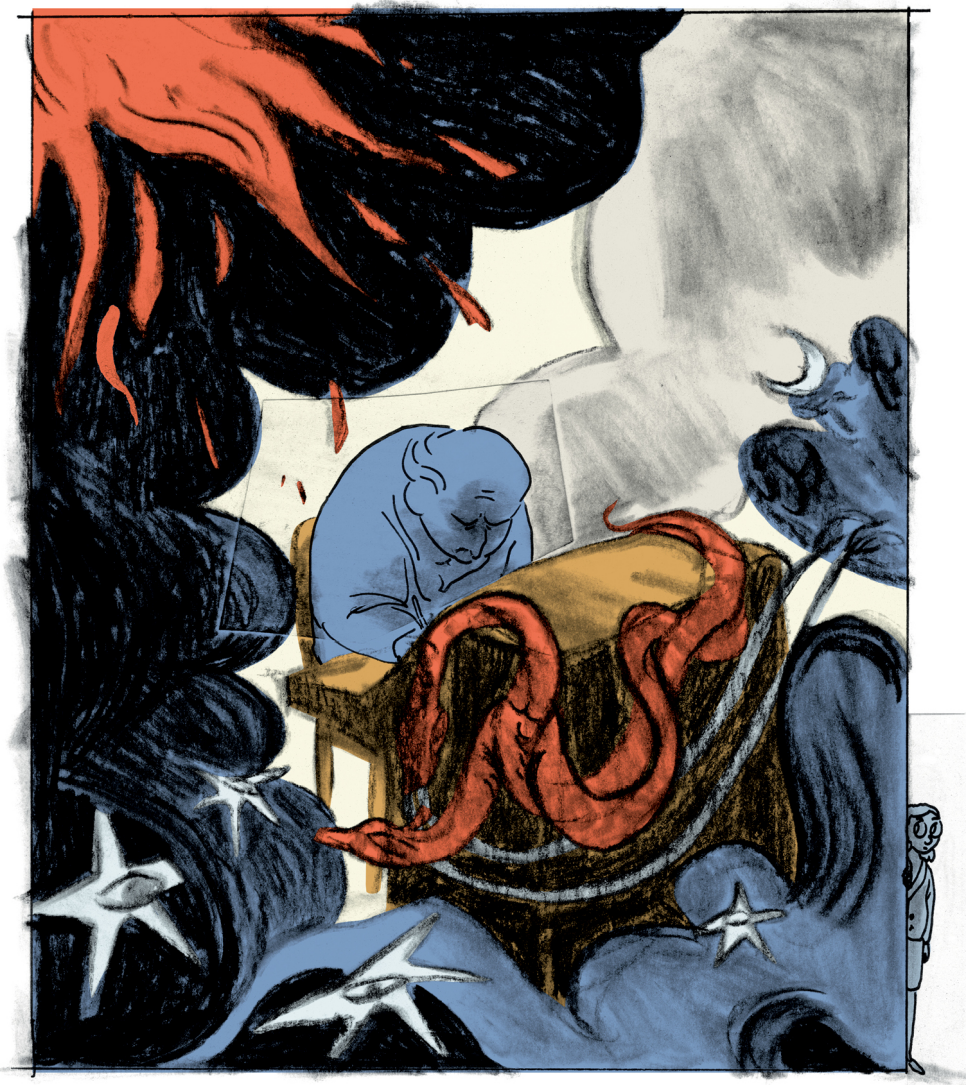
1785:



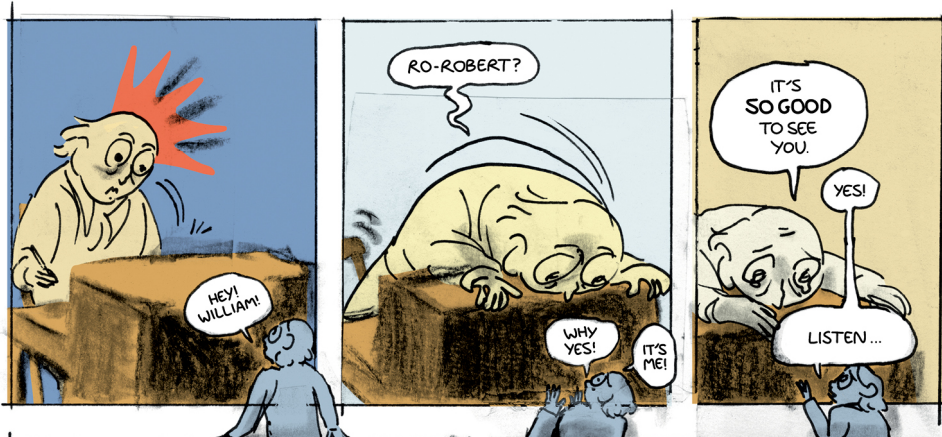
1786:



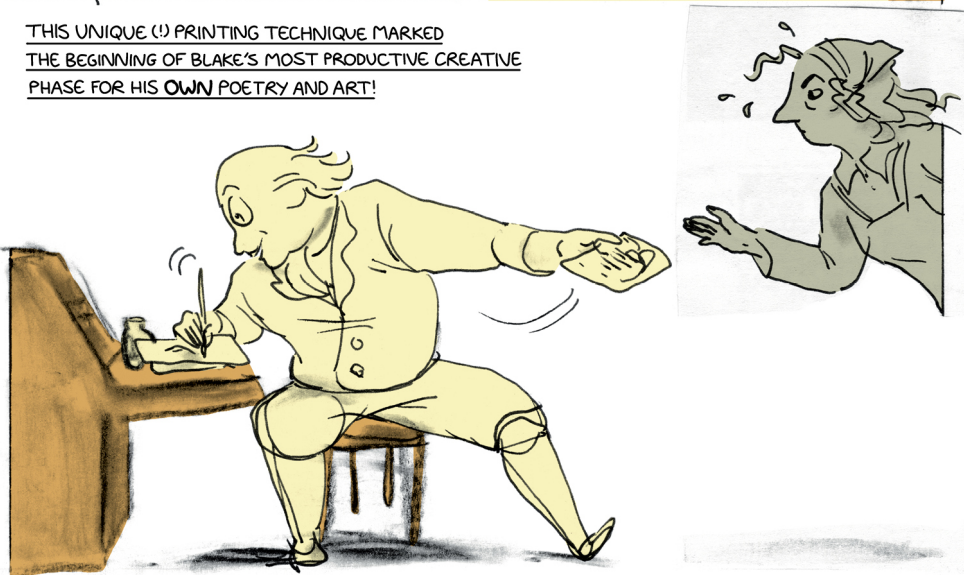
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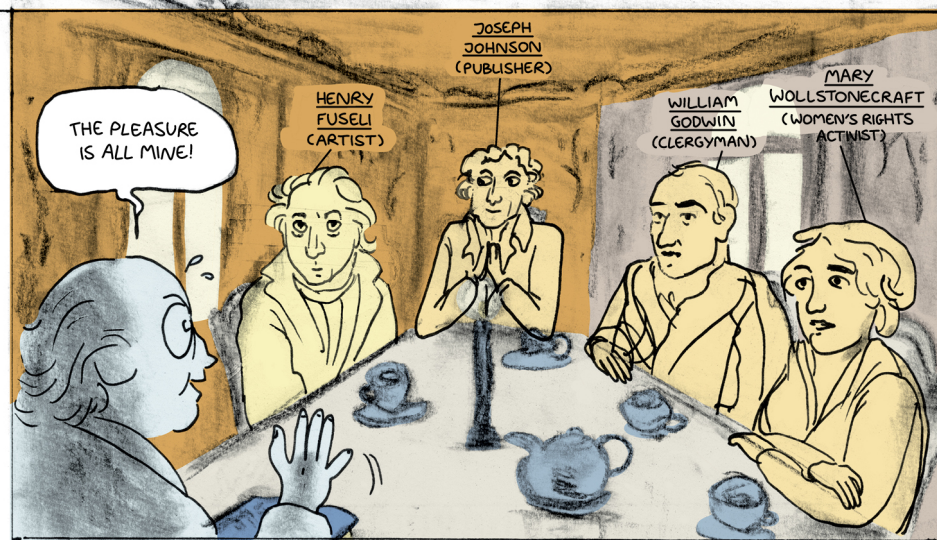




THIS UNIQUE (!) PRINTING TECHNIQUE MARKED THE BEGINNING OF BLAKE'S MOST PRODUCTIVE CREATIVE PHASE FOR HIS OWN POETRY AND ART!



AND FINALLY: AS A GUEST OF THE PUBLISHER JOSEPH JOHNSON ...







IT ALL  
BEGINS WITH  
URIZEN...

... THE CREATOR  
OF THE MATERIAL  
WORLD!

AND ALONG  
WITH IT A RIGID  
ORDER.

BUT THERE  
IS STILL ORC!

GOD'S, I MEAN URIZEN'S  
ADVERSARY!

STILL HIDDEN  
BY ENITHARMON,  
THE INSTITUTION  
OF THE CHURCH.

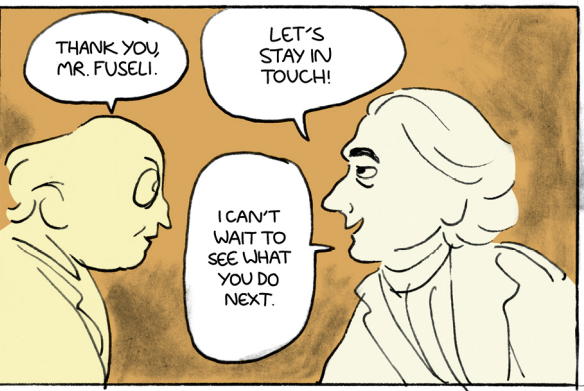
I SOMETIMES  
DEPICT ORC AS  
A SNAKE.

BUT THE  
FRENCH  
REVOLUTION IS  
APPROACHING...





... AND THERE'S NO STOPPING IT.



BLAKE EXPERIENCED MORE THAN ONE REVOLUTION. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS SYMPATHETIC TO THEM, HE ALSO SAW THE DREAD. IN 1800 HE WROTE TO JOHN FLAXMAN:

"... terrors appear'd in the Heavens above  
And in Hell beneath, & a mighty & awful change threatened the earth.  
The American War began.  
All its dark horrors passed before my face  
Across the Atlantic to France. Then the French  
Revolution commenc'd in thick clouds."

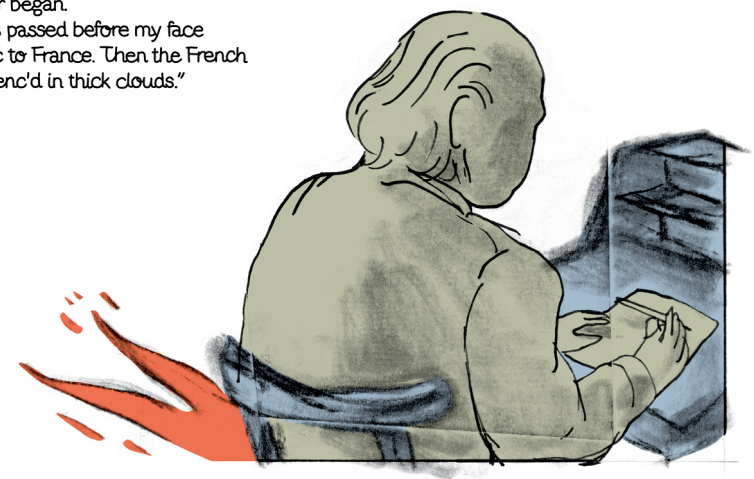


LISTEN! THERE MUST BE BOTH!

URIZENS MATHEMATICAL PRECISION ALONE IS OPPRESSIVE!

WE NEED CHAOS! HELL! THE RENEWAL!

CREATIVITY SPIRITUALITY! REMOTE FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH!







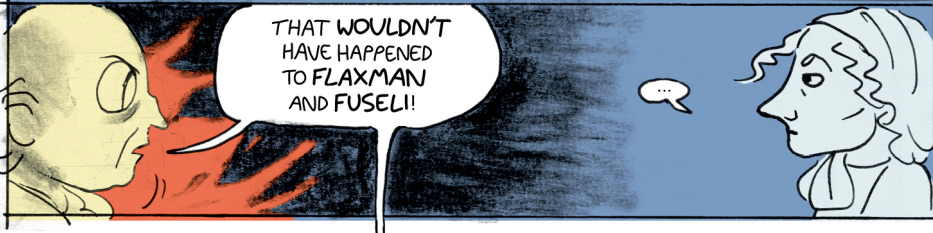
MAIL FOR YOU!



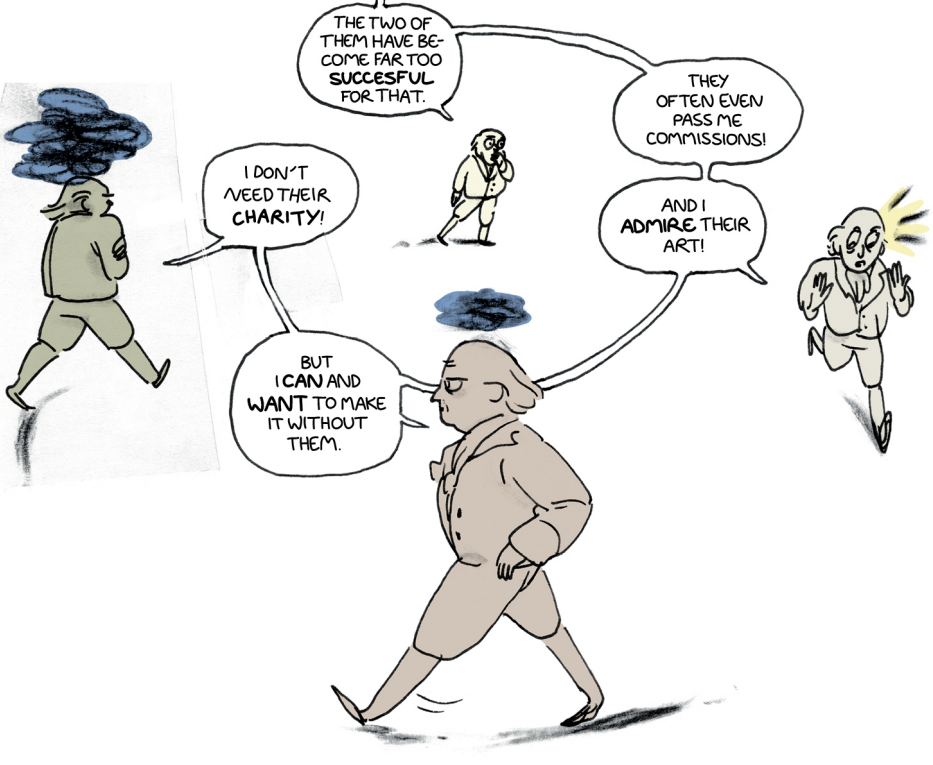
THE ROYAL ACADEMY WROTE ME.  
AND?  
REJECTION.



TOO BAD FOR THEM!  
THEN THEIR EXHIBITION WILL SIMPLY BE WORSE.



THAT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED TO FLAXMAN AND FUSELI!



I DON'T NEED THEIR CHARITY!

BUT I CAN AND WANT TO MAKE IT WITHOUT THEM.

THE TWO OF THEM HAVE BECOME FAR TOO SUCCESSFUL FOR THAT.

THEY OFTEN EVEN PASS ME COMMISSIONS!

AND I ADMIRE THEIR ART!



POOR WILLIAM!  
BUT YOU REALLY DON'T NEED THEM.



CATHERINE, YOU'RE RIGHT!

I'LL JUST HAVE MY OWN EXHIBITION!

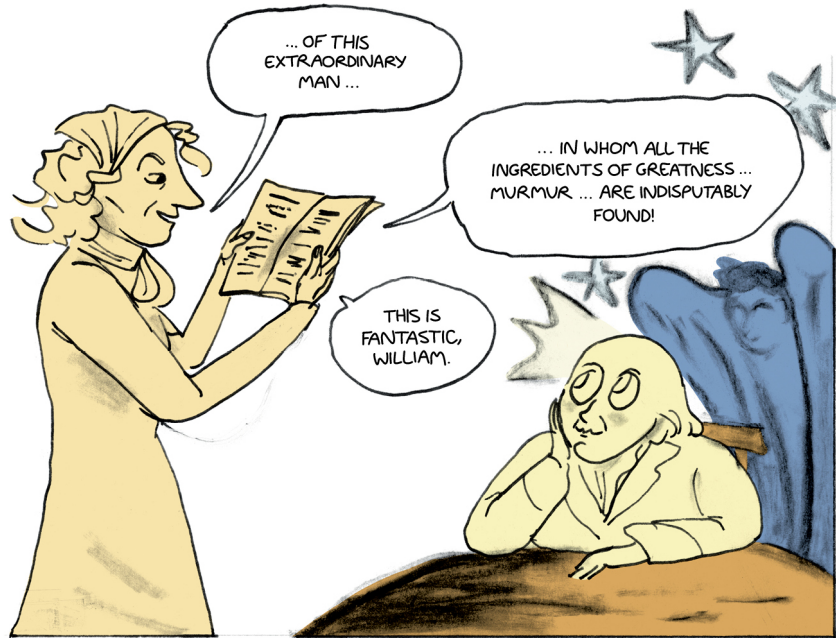




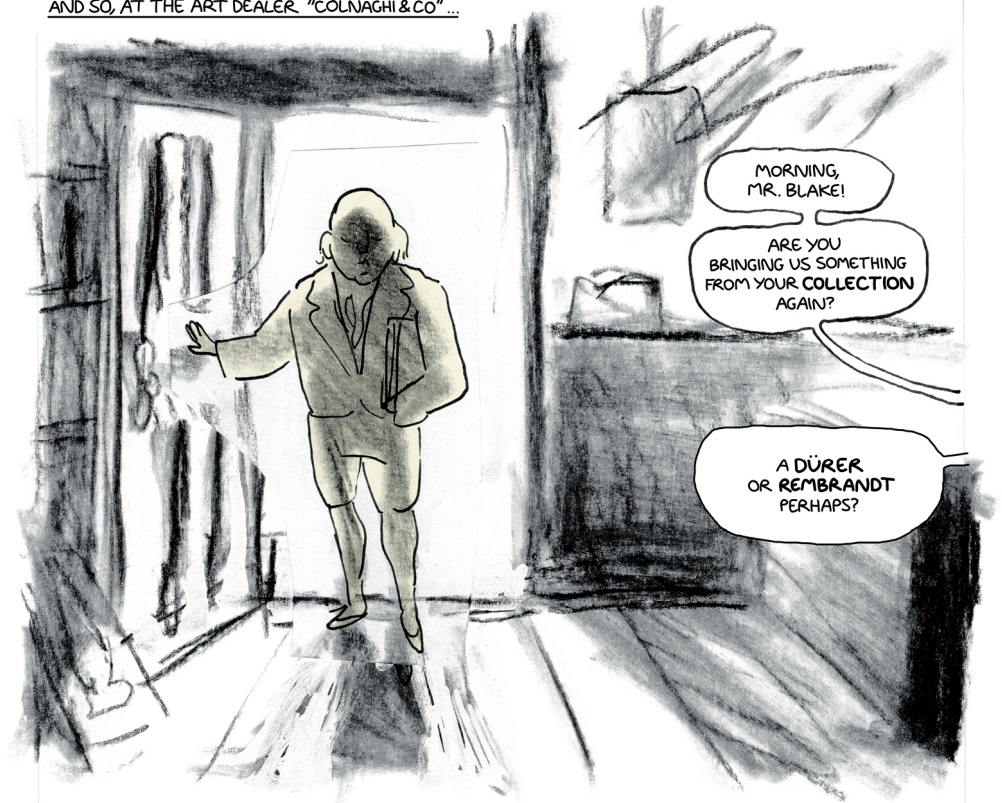




1811:



UNFORTUNATELY, EVEN AFTER THE HAMBURG REVIEW, BLAKE REMAINED UNKNOWN. AND SO, AT THE ART DEALER "COLNAGHI & CO" ...



MORNING, MR. BLAKE!

ARE YOU BRINGING US SOMETHING FROM YOUR COLLECTION AGAIN?

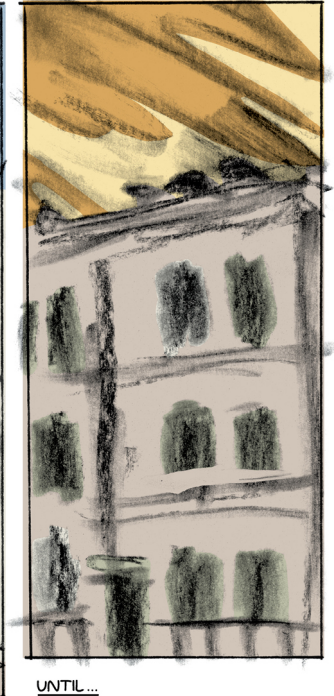
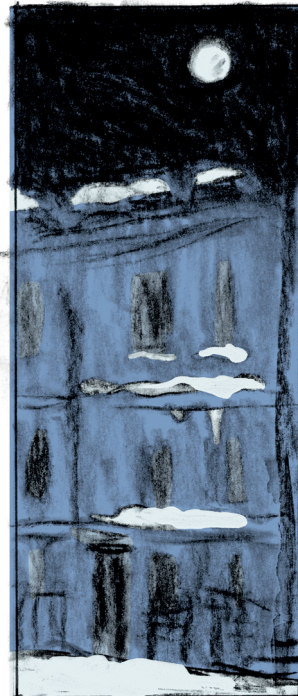
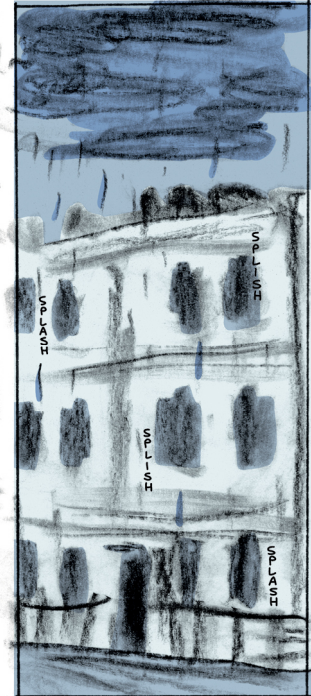
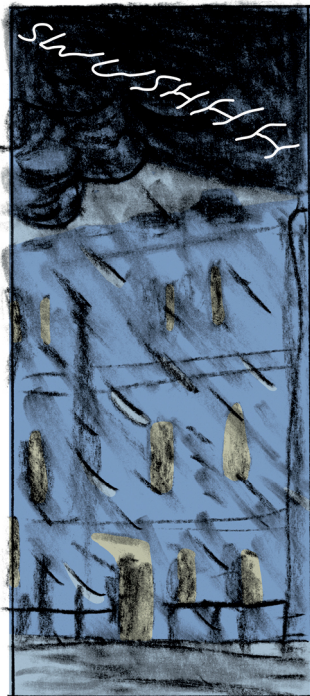
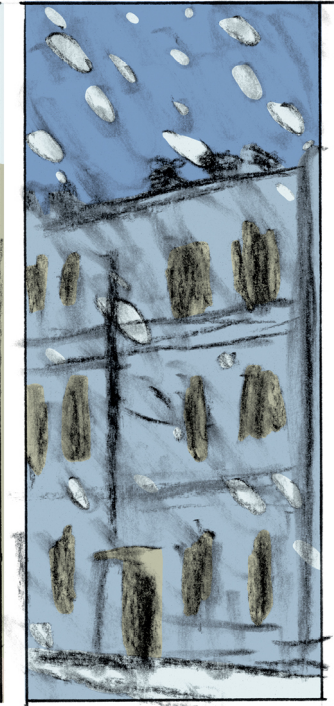
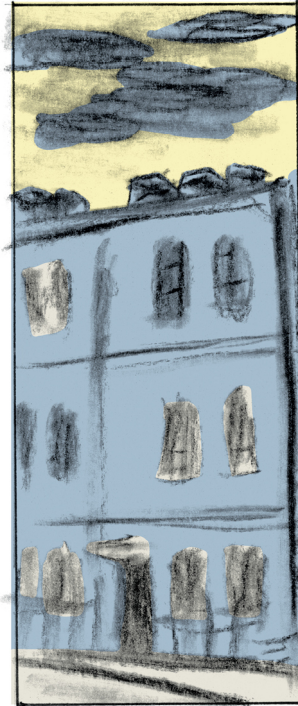
A DÜRER OR REMBRANDT PERHAPS?

... UNTIL THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT OF WILLIAM'S EXTENSIVE PRINT COLLECTION.



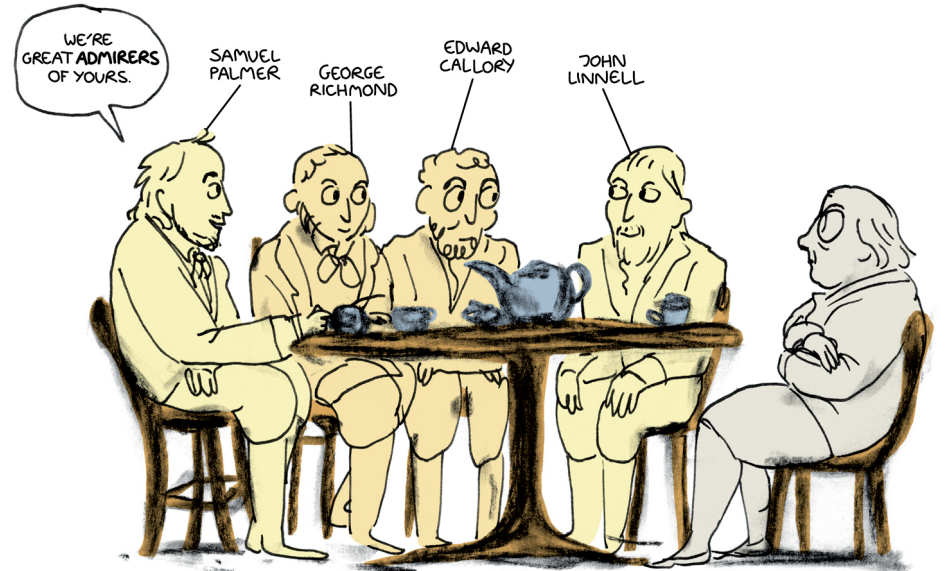
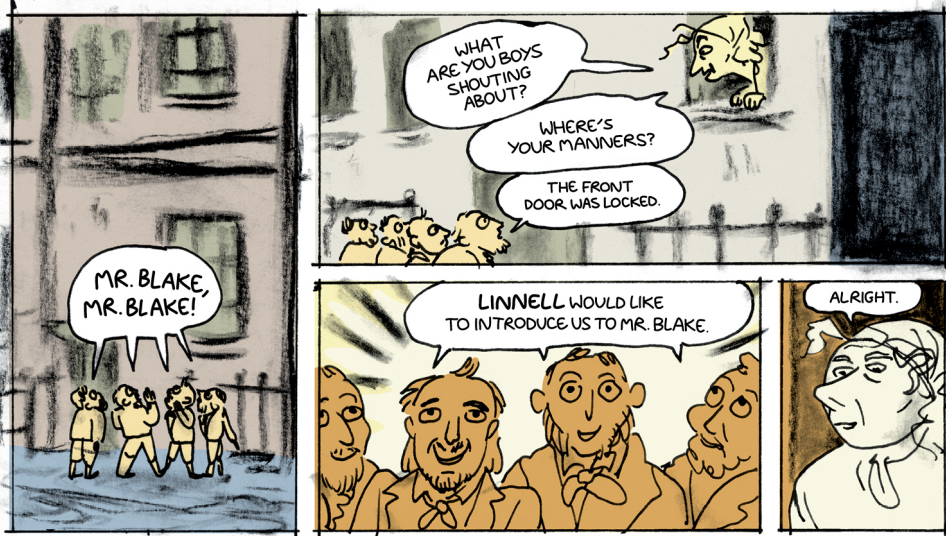


WILLIAM AND CATHERINE WERE LIVING IN POVERTY. WILLIAM WITHDREW MORE AND MORE FROM PUBLIC LIFE.

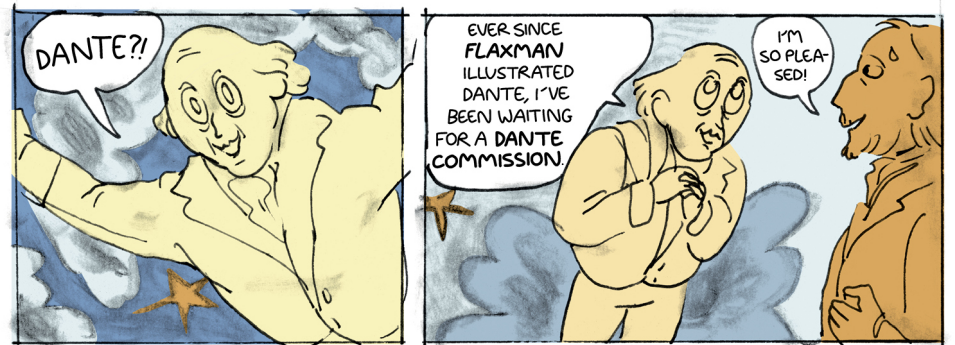


UNTIL...





BLAKE COULD THINK WHAT HE LIKED OF THIS GROUP OF YOUNG ARTISTS. LINNELL IN PARTICULAR WAS A FREQUENT GUEST AND ARRANGED SEVERAL COMMISSIONS FOR HIM.













## William Blake's Universe

An exhibition by Hamburger Kunsthalle  
14 June to 8 September 2024

**Noëlle Kröger** (\*1997, he/she) is a Hamburg-based comic artist. There she completed her BA and MA in illustration at the University of Applied Sciences (HAW) Hamburg. "Good Person Trouble" was published in the USA by Fieldmouse Press and awarded the GINCO Dear to our Hearts Prize, 2021. In autumn 2024, Reprodukt will publish "Meute", which was a finalist for the Berthold Leibinger Comic Prize 2024.

## Imprint

This graphic novel is published on the occasion of the exhibition  
"William Blake's Universe" at Hamburger Kunsthalle

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## Management Board

Director: Alexander Klar  
Managing Director: Norbert Kölle

Curators: Andreas Stolzenburg in collaboration with  
David Bindman (London), Esther Chadwick (Courtauld Institute of Art, London)  
Assistant curator: Jan Steinke  
Research trainee: Julia Kersting

## Graphic Novel

Concept and realization: Melanie Fahden, Julia Kersting, Noëlle Kröger, Jenny Saitzek,  
Jan Steinke, Andreas Stolzenburg, Andrea Weniger  
Authors: Noëlle Kröger  
Editing: Melanie Fahden, Julia Kersting, Noëlle Kröger, Ulla Mußler, Jenny Saitzek,  
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## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

### CURATOR'S TOUR

Each time from 6 pm to 7.30 pm  
25 July 2024 with Andreas Stolzenburg  
8 August 2024 with Julia Kersting  
22 August 2024 with Jan Steinke  
29 August 2024 with Andreas Stolzenburg

### COMIC READING WITH NOËLLE KRÖGER AS PART OF THE SALON BLAKE

29 August 2024 from 6.30 pm to 8.30 pm  
Presented by Simon Schultz

Please visit our website for the latest  
information on upcoming events:  
[www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/en/kalender](http://www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de/en/kalender)

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