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## Benjamin West and the Struggle to be Modern (Hardback)

By Loyd Grossman

Merrell Publishers Ltd, United Kingdom, 2015. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 262 x 216 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. At the time of his death in 1820, Benjamin West was the most famous artist in the English-speaking world, and much admired throughout Europe. From humble beginnings in Pennsylvania, he had become the first American artist to study in Italy, and within a few short years of his arrival in London, was instrumental in the foundation of the Royal Academy of Arts (he succeeded Sir Joshua Reynolds to become its second President) and became history painter to King George III. In his lifetime, West's meteoric rise to prominence and the great pleasure he took in his success attracted criticism, and his posthumous reputation took a savage mauling from Victorian critics, one of whom dubbed him The Monarch of Mediocrity . But even at his critical nadir, West's most celebrated work, The Death of General Wolfe, commemorating the British victory at the Battle of Quebec in 1759 and first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1771, continued to fascinate. Although it was not, as is sometimes claimed, the first history painting to feature contemporary costume, it was the first...



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