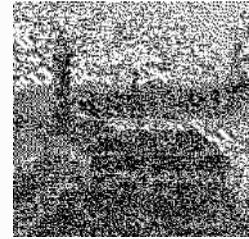




# The “Connoisseur’s Panorama”: Thomas Girtin’s *Eidometropolis* (1801–1803) and a New Visual Language for the Modern City

Article by **Greg Smith**

WORD COUNT:6,110



## Abstract

The London panorama produced by Thomas Girtin in 1801 has long since been lost, but thanks to the surviving preparatory drawings and a wealth of documentary material, we can piece together the project’s progress in unprecedented detail. Newly discovered archival material, in particular, shows it as a highly capitalized commercial project: a collaboration in which Girtin ceded many of the artist’s responsibilities to a business partner and a team of assistants. Girtin’s working drawings also help to explain how the *Eidometropolis*, as the panorama was titled, broke new ground in the depiction of the city. Allying fine art landscape effects with the scrupulous topographical veracity required of the panoramist, Girtin succeeded in creating a new way of reflecting the heterogeneous complexity of the modern city in flux. Concentrating on the issue of legibility, the second part of the article consequently examines the way in which the panoramic mode generates a fragmented and occluded image of the city, which Girtin matched with a visual strategy which emphasizes the random and the quotidian.

## Introduction: Girtin Studies Now

The study of the work of Thomas Girtin is set to enter a new era with the forthcoming publication by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art of *Thomas Girtin (1775–1802): An Online Catalogue, Archive and Introduction to the Artist*.<sup>1</sup> Research for the project has revealed a wealth of new information about the artist and his contribution to the art of watercolour. In particular, the catalogue section of the site will feature new evidence in its 1,600 or so entries of Girtin’s extensive collaborations with others and of his custom, throughout his career, of copying subjects from other sources, amateur and professional—both practices which are anathema to the pervading model of the watercolourist as a singular romantic genius. Our understanding of Girtin will also be refined by new evidence of the artist’s intervention into the complex contemporary art world, quite distinct from the support of wealthy patrons. Publishing his own autograph prints, producing work for sale by a dealer, and, as the culmination of his tragically short career, exhibiting a monumental panorama of London, all saw Girtin embrace a commercial world of art as commodity and spectacle. The latter project can only be represented in the online catalogue by the handful of preparatory drawings that survive, a seemingly poor

substitute for the 180 square metres of the painted canvas—and the panorama is surely deserving of greater attention, not least because it also exemplifies the themes of collaboration and replication in ways that have not hitherto been appreciated. The other element of the panorama that has not been properly analysed is Girtin's role in developments in the image of the city in landscape art. The watercolour drawings made by Girtin have been approached primarily as naturalistic representations of landscape effects without their function within the production process of the panorama itself being properly understood. My contention here is that a more detailed examination of the visual and documentary evidence on the panorama and its reception than is possible in the catalogue entries of an online site reveals something which has barely been hinted at in the literature on Girtin. The artist's contribution to the urban panorama was not just a matter of introducing fine art effects into a popular cultural phenomenon; it also amounted to the creation of a new visual language that reflected with unprecedented success the heterogeneous complexity of the modern city in flux.

### **Thomas Girtin and the Art of Collaboration**

My understanding of Thomas Girtin's 360-degree panorama of London taken from near Blackfriars Bridge has changed significantly since I wrote about it for the 2002 bicentenary exhibition of the artist's work at Tate Britain.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the mass digitisation of texts and images, and, more importantly, their associated search facilities, has revealed a wealth of documentary and visual material that cannot help but refine, even challenge, our sense of Girtin's contribution to the newly invented cultural phenomenon of the panorama and to the story of landscape art as part of the commercial world of commodities and of public spectacle (fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> Although I attempted to describe the project as a business venture, as well as an artistic endeavour, the lack of documentation, combined with the seductive visual attractions of the preparatory works, meant that I was content to take the opinions of Girtin's contemporaries at face value. Edward Edwards, for instance, claimed that, uniquely, Girtin's panorama was "painted by himself", and one reviewer talked of how the artist, instead of taking the "common way of measuring and reducing the objects trusted to his eye".<sup>4</sup> In other words, I fell for the artist's own publicity, which promised that this was "GIRTIN'S GREAT PANORAMA of LONDON" or, as he subsequently termed it, the *Eidometropolis*.<sup>5</sup> Meaning the "image of the capital", the learned neologism coined from Greek successfully distinguished what reviewers termed a "connoisseur's panorama" from the standard views produced by scene painters and hack topographers and established from the outset the project's status as the autograph work of a great landscape artist.<sup>6</sup>



Figure 1

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 4: The Thames from Westminster to Somerset House*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 24 × 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.27). Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

My eyes were opened by two online discoveries, neither of which could have been predicted in a pre-digital age. The first came in the form of an advertisement in *The Morning Chronicle* of 15 October 1801, which announced “TO be SOLD by PRIVATE CONTRACT, a large PICTURE, intended to form an Exhibition upon the Plan of the Panorama, representing an extensive VIEW of LONDON” (fig. 2).<sup>7</sup> That is nine months before it went on display in London, and at a date when nobody would have thought to search for information on the project. The crucial point follows. The view, it is claimed, “exhibits the principal objects of beauty, and the surrounding country, in a striking and picturesque point of view” and is made “from Drawings painted by Mr. Thos. Girtin”. Not by Girtin, but “from” his “Drawings”.

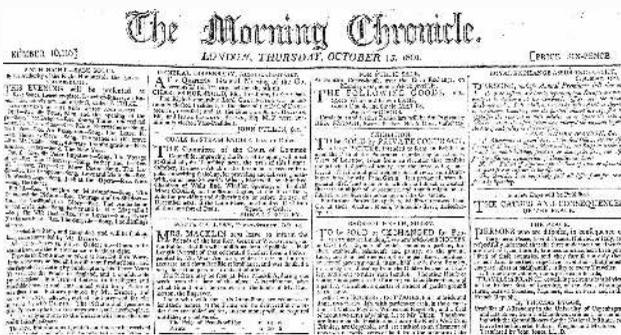


Figure 2

*The Morning Chronicle*, 15 October 1801, p.1. Collection of The British Library.

There followed an even more unexpected discovery in the form of a Chancery lawsuit: “Girtin v Girtin. Bill and answer. Plaintiff: Mary Ann Girtin. Defendant: John Girtin”, dated 14 May 1804 —eighteen months after the artist’s death (fig. 3).<sup>8</sup> Mary Ann was Thomas Girtin’s widow and she petitioned the court stating that she, and not the artist’s brother and business partner John Girtin, was entitled to the income that had accrued from the two projects that dominated the last years of Thomas’ life, the London panorama and the twenty aquatints that formed his *Picturesque Views in Paris*. John Girtin replied at length to the *Bill*, adding a detailed appendix of the expenses he incurred on behalf of Thomas (left column) and the income (right two columns) from the *Eidometropolis* and the Paris prints. This detail records the loans he made in

September and November 1801 to Thomas to “pay his men employed in painting the picture of London” (fig. 4), thus corroborating the advertisement for the sale of the canvas. This amounted to £26 16s., in addition to the £100 4s. that John lent Thomas on 12 November “to go to Paris”, taking with him what we now know would have been a completed canvas. John Girtin goes on to describe how Thomas returned from France after failing to secure permission to show his panorama there, and having worked through the earlier loan agreed that John should now “exhibit the said Picture in London [...] on the account of the said Thomas Girtin and that he [...] should receive the admission money for such Exhibition and should defray all the charges and expenses.”<sup>9</sup> In other words, not only was Thomas not the author of the *Eidometropolis* in the fullest sense, but he relinquished ultimate control of the project so that it would be more accurate to describe it as a collaborative venture. If not quite the work of Girtin & Co., then it was certainly not the triumph of the artist “himself” and his unaided “eye”.

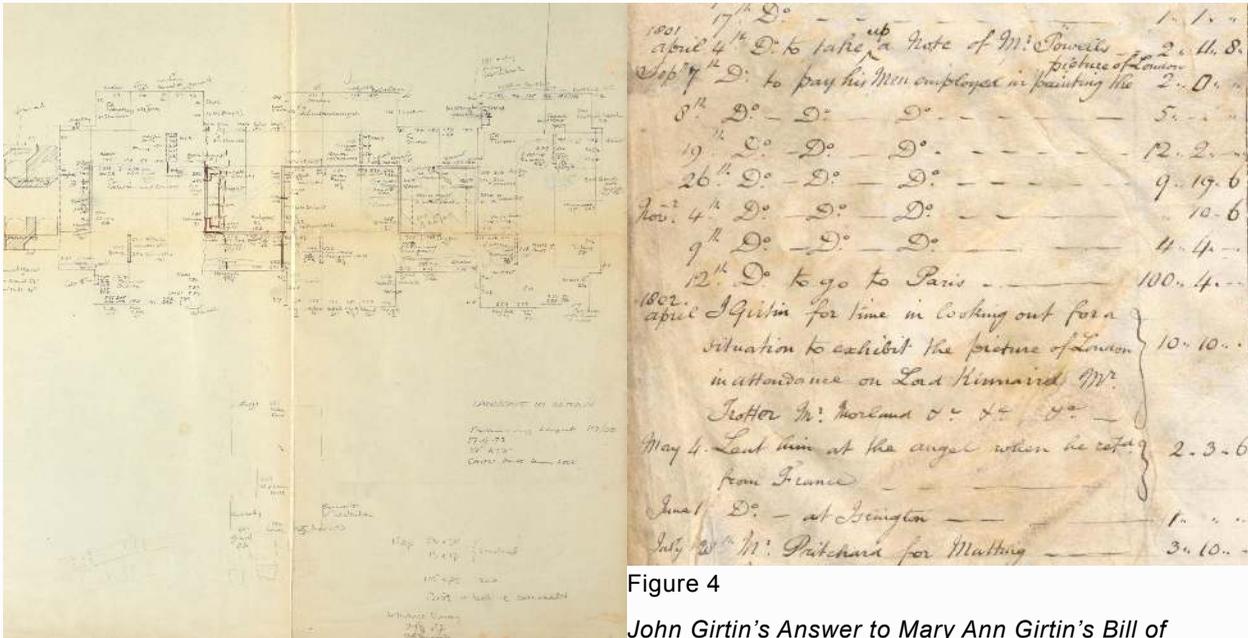


Figure 3

*John Girtin's Answer to Mary Ann Girtin's Bill of Complaint* (detail), Chancery Proceedings, 14 May 1804. Collection of The National Archives (C 13/40/6 [W1804 G3]). Digital image courtesy of The National Archives (Open Government Licence v2.0).

Figure 4

*John Girtin's Answer to Mary Ann Girtin's Bill of Complaint* (detail), Chancery Proceedings, 14 May 1804. Collection of The National Archives (C 13/40/6 [W1804 G3]). Digital image courtesy of The National Archives (Open Government Licence v2.0).

The canvas on which the 360-degree panorama was painted, measuring “1944 square feet” (180 square metres), that is 18 feet high and 109 feet in circumference (ca. 5.5 x 33 metres), has long since been lost. But in seeking to understand the character of the collaboration involved in the project, we are aided by the fact that eleven of Girtin’s two sets of seven preparatory drawings survive (fig. 5).<sup>10</sup> The six outline drawings and five colour studies laid out as a strip illustrate how the seven sections connect together and since at least one drawing covers each we have a complete record of the topographical content of the finished canvas and a good idea of the range of effects the artist introduced. However, arranging the images in this way also gives a false sense of a beginning and an end, and it takes a feat of imagination to convert the seven separate scenes into a circular view with the left and right images joining together as in the completed

panorama. Nonetheless, the exercise is a useful one, since in practical terms this is what Girtin's collaborators were employed to do. Moreover, the mental challenge of reconfiguring the seven scenes as a 360-degree view acts as a reminder that however attractive the studies may be, they are working drawings, part of a complex production process of divided labour, and they are not simply records of the lost panorama.



Figure 5

Composite image of identified fragments of Thomas Girtin's *Studies for the 'Eidometropolis'*, Clockwise from top left: Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 1: Albion Mills on the eastern side of the approach to Blackfriars Bridge*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29 x 53 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1991,1109.16); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 2: Great Surrey Street and Christchurch, Southwark*, circa 1801, graphite, pen and ink and watercolour on wove paper, 28.1 x 50.5 cm. Collection of Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (B1977.14.4325); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 32 x 54 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1991,1109.15); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 5: Thames from the Temple to Blackfriars*, circa 1801, pencil, pen and ink on wove paper, 16.2 x 44.8 cm. Collection of Roderick D. Zinsser, Jr.; Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 6: Blackfriars Bridge and St Paul's Cathedral*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 35.2 x 51 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.26); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 7: The Thames from Queenhithe to London Bridge*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 32 x 51 cm. Collection of The London Metropolitan Archives (q8972599); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 7: The Thames from Queenhithe to London Bridge*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 20.7 x 44.5 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.28); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 5: The Thames from the Temple to Blackfriars*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 21.1 x 48.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.25); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 4: The Thames from Westminster to Somerset House*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 24 x 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.27); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29.2 x 52.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.23); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 1: The Albion Mills*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 32.8 x 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.24).

The first set of preparatory drawings, in the form of highly detailed outlines (fig. 6), were almost certainly made by Girtin with the aid of an optical device, probably a frame fitted with a grid of strings corresponding to the grid marked out on the paper. The drawings work to a scale of one square inch on the sheet to each square foot of canvas.<sup>11</sup> Knowing that the circular canvas was produced by others establishes the function of the outlines as a precise matrix for an assistant or assistants to follow. And their first task would therefore have been to mark up the grid on the circular canvas which needed to be stretched on a substantial armature, and then the assistant(s) could begin the laborious task of transferring the detailed outlines, square by square. This was not a case of simply copying Girtin's seven drawings, each with their own single point perspective, but of translating them into a convincing illusion across a monumental canvas. Specifically, this required modifying every straight line in the outline drawings, which would otherwise appear curved if copied directly onto the canvas. That Girtin was not directly involved in this specialized task should have been apparent to earlier writers from the instruction inscribed on the outline for Section Seven: "omit this vessel", it reads (fig. 7)—an instruction which only makes sense if Girtin delegated this stage of the work.

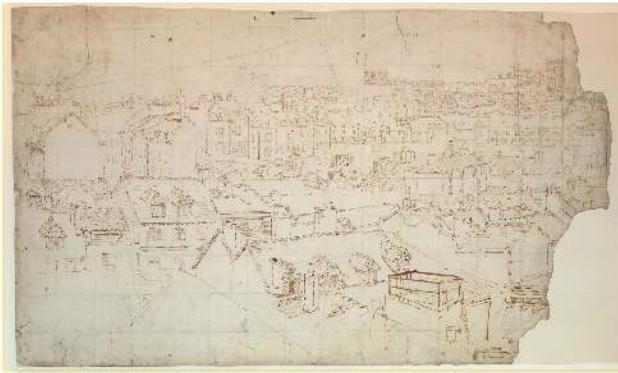


Figure 6

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 32 × 54 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1991,1109.15) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

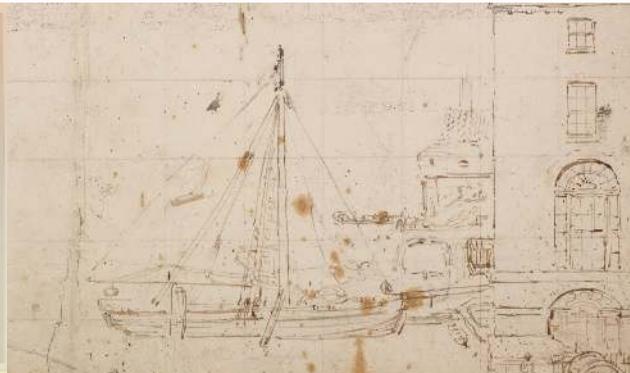


Figure 7

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 7: The Thames from Queenhithe to London Bridge (detail)*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 32 × 51 cm. Collection of The London Metropolitan Archives (q8972599) Digital image courtesy of City of London Corporation

The painting of the canvas was an equally specialized skill, and there is some evidence from John Girtin's accounts that the "men employed" were professional scene painters from the theatre.<sup>12</sup> In this case, the function of the second set of drawings, coloured outlines without a grid, becomes clearer. They were produced as a guide for specialist professionals to add colour to the canvas, though looking at the foregrounds of Sections Three (fig. 8) and Four, in particular, one is prompted to ask how much information they were actually provided with. The colour is applied quickly, sometimes sloppily and with little regard to the outlines and they surely lack the detail needed for the assistants alone to produce the high finish which ensured the deceptive illusionism the *Eidometropolis* was consistently reported to have achieved by contemporary witnesses.<sup>13</sup> The buildings in the foreground of this section would have appeared a metre or so high to spectators at a viewing distance of say three metres and, arguably, Girtin's colour study lacks the information necessary for assistants alone to develop an eye-catching level of illusion. This is impossible to prove, but I suspect that rapidly applied washes of colour in an area where

detail is most required equate to an instruction to assistants to block out the overall colour structure and fill in the broader details, with Girtin reserving the final touches for himself. The documentary evidence that the lost panorama canvas was the result of a collaborative endeavour with a complex division of labour, therefore suggests that the interpretation of the dispatch with which the colour studies were produced as evidence that they were made on the spot to capture ephemeral natural effects was simply wrong.<sup>14</sup> As part of a collaborative production process, the lack of detail in the colour studies makes equal sense as the painstaking accuracy of the outline drawings.



Figure 8

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29.2 × 52.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.23) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Laying out the two sets of preparatory drawings as a strip (fig. 5) also highlights an anomaly that has hitherto not attracted attention and which helps to elucidate the nature of the collaborative process. Namely, that whilst the seven sections complete the 360-degree coverage, the drawings never cover more than half of the height of the canvas. This is because, if we think of the drawings as models for others to follow, what is missing in the watercolours studies might be assumed to be Girtin's responsibility. These omissions include large areas of the river and the sky, and much of the foregrounds, which, according to two reviewers, included a boxing match. The pugilists caught the attention of a newly discovered notice which suggests that they represent “*Belcher and Burke*”, who attracted large crowds to their fights, albeit not in Southwark, and that Girtin's view was enlivened by a “truly humorous ... variety of characters flocking to the battle”.<sup>15</sup> The action is described as taking place at the end of Blackfriars Bridge, but neither the outline drawing for the area in front of the Albion Mills (fig. 9) nor the coloured drawing contain figures which relate to such a scene (fig. 23). Indeed, the latter is left uncoloured just in this section, suggesting that Girtin himself executed the radical change of plan. The advertisements that John Girtin inserted in the press and the notices and reviews the panorama received are so insistent on the *Eidometropolis* as a superior landscape of natural effects that the other reference to the boxing scene was assumed to have resulted from a confusion with Robert and Henry Aston Barker's second London panorama, which also included pugilists.<sup>16</sup> Ironic, therefore, that the one area of the completed canvas that we can be reasonably

sure Girtin did paint featured an untypical genre scene of low-life humour, which may have added a carnivalesque element to the depiction of an area of London, Southwark, long associated with transgressive behaviour.

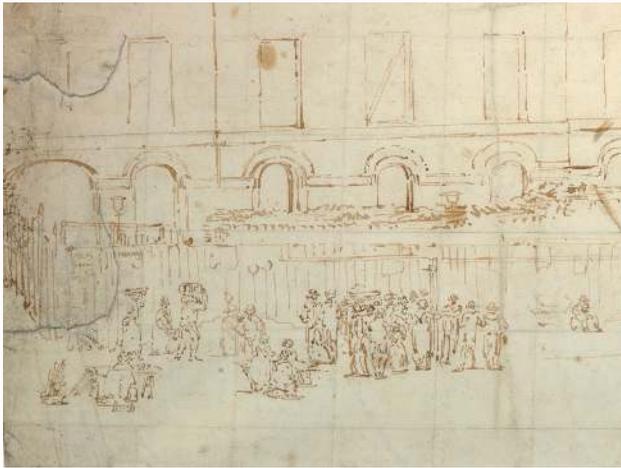


Figure 9

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 1: The Albion Mills* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29 × 53 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1991,1109.16) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

## **The *Eidometropolis* as a Commercial Venture**

John Girtin's *Answer* to Mary Ann Girtin's claim to the entry money from the *Eidometropolis* also provides crucial new information about its fate as a commercial enterprise. Keen to establish that his expenses in conducting the project on his brother's behalf outweighed the income, John Girtin recorded the weekly attendance figures, and they make for sorry reading (fig. 10).<sup>17</sup> In the period from August until the end of November and Thomas' death, when Mary Ann took over the running of the enterprise, the income from the sale of tickets was £101 7s., amounting to 2,020 visitors paying the 1s. admission, at a weekly average of only ninety-two. Back in 2002, I relied on the testimony of *The Monthly Magazine*, which stated that "Mr. Girtin's *Eidometropolis* [...] is very well attended" and I characterised the project as Girtin successfully exploiting the appeal of the latest popular spectacle, the just out-of-patent, 360-degree panorama.<sup>18</sup> However, even a cursory look at John Girtin's figures reveal a chronically undercapitalised scheme, that in business terms, at least, was poorly thought through, even shambolic in its prosecution. Thomas Girtin thus began the project with no idea of where he might display a monumental canvas which required, if not the specialist building constructed for Robert and Henry Aston Barker (fig. 11), then a complex structure to adapt an existing building, allowing visitors to enter the circular canvas from below and view it from a central platform.<sup>19</sup> An anonymous watercolour shows the home that John Girtin eventually secured for the *Eidometropolis*, Wigley's Rooms in Spring Gardens (fig. 12), neatly illustrating how it was unable to compete with the Barkers' project in terms of scale, but also how it essentially repeated their earlier London view taken from the same Albion Mills featured in Section One. The recent discovery of the details of another, even larger

contemporary panorama of London from the south end of Blackfriars Bridge, only underlines the daunting competition that faced John and Thomas Girtin.<sup>20</sup>

1804

Received from the Exhibition of the  
Pictures of London.

Aug 7	9°	5.4
4	9°	6.17
21	3	7.19
28	4	6.7
Sept 4	5	6.18
11	6	6.16
18	7	5.12
25	9	6.10
Oct 2	9	5.11
9	10	2.5
16	11	4.10
23	12	4.16
30	13	5.16
Nov 6	14	3.15
9	15	1.12
20	16	1.4
26	"	1.1
27	17	3.7
Dec 14	18	3.7
11	19	2.16
18	"	2.2
15	20	3.8
22	21	4.3
29	22	3.

Notes:  
 27 from the Exhibition  
 11 from the Exhibition  
 18 of the Duke  
 15 of Mr. Ansell  
 22 from the Exhibition  
 29 from the Exhibition

Figure 10

John Girtin's Answer to Mary Ann Girtin's Bill of Complaint, Chancery Proceedings, 14 May 1804 (detail), 1804. Collection of The National Archives (C 13/40/6 [W1804 G3]) Digital image courtesy of The National Archives (Open Government Licence v2.0)

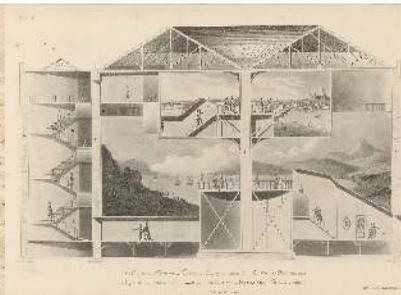


Figure 11

Cross section of the panorama building constructed for Robert and Henry Aston Barker, showing their London panorama of 1795–96 in situ, 1801, etching and engraving, 53 × 36.7 cm.

Reproduced in *Plans, and Views in Perspective, with Descriptions of Buildings Erected in England and Scotland* by Robert Mitchell (London: Oriental Press, 1801). Collection of The Metropolitan Museum (52.519.153) Digital image courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum (CC0 1.0)

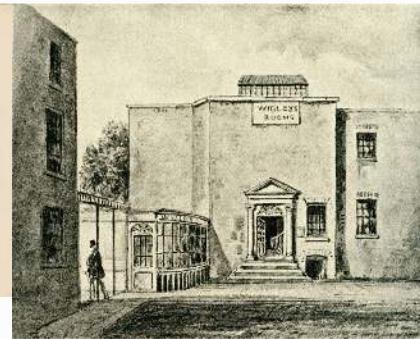


Figure 12

Exterior of Wigley's Rooms, Spring Gardens, in *Survey of London, Trafalgar Square and Neighbourhood* (Parish of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Part III, vol. 20, fig. 49b (London County Council, 1940)

Still, contemporary critics and writers characterised the *Eidometropolis* as an artistic triumph, producing a “most picturesque display”, which also gives the most “perfect idea of the sublime”.<sup>21</sup> For *The Morning Herald*, the *Eidometropolis* was a triumph of “effect” and “variety” within which the “Connoisseur stands enraptured” by the “great commercial city”, glorious proof of British “genius” (fig. 13).<sup>22</sup> The evidence of the bottom line, however, highlights a fundamental contradiction in the notion of a “connoisseur’s panorama”. The attendance figures, compared with the 40,000 it has been calculated who visited the Barkers’ panoramas annually, indicate that there were just not enough connoisseurs to return a profit.<sup>23</sup> Indeed there were barely enough visitors to cover the running costs and the capital for the project, initially expended by Thomas Girtin and latterly by John Girtin, could only be covered by the future income from the Paris prints. This was not simply a case of the brothers misjudging the market, but rather as their completely misunderstanding the distinction between the characteristics of a successful popular spectacle and Thomas Girtin’s broader strategy as an artist; namely, the need for the modern landscapist to restrict his appeal to a select audience, the “Connoisseur”, who appreciated his claim to produce an elevated landscape of sentiment and effect beyond the school of topography from which he had emerged.



Figure 13

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 6: Blackfriars Bridge and St Paul's Cathedral*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 35.2 × 51 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.26) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

## **Rethinking the Urban Panorama: Fragmentation, Occlusion, and Obscurity**

Archival discoveries aside, the most significant challenge to my thinking about Girtin's London panorama was provided by James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, who titled the introduction to their 2005 collection of essays on the *Romantic Metropolis*, "Engaging the Eidometropolis". Chandler and Gilmartin argue that Girtin's use of the word *Eidometropolis* contains a deliberate echo of Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg's *Eidophusikon* and that this was part of an attempt to conflate the mimetic veracity of the Barkers' image of the city and Loutherbourg's theatre of changing effects to create a new image for the Romantic, modern metropolis. The authors specify that it was Girtin's "outstanding naturalism", allied to his elision of the distinction between the landscape and the cityscape, which established his pivotal position in the "story of metropolitan mimesis", though the formal elements deployed by Girtin are not specified.<sup>24</sup> The eleven surviving preparatory drawings and the surprisingly full range of contemporary references to the Girtins' panorama of London, mean that re-"Engaging the Eidometropolis", offers rich rewards. The *Eidometropolis* embodies within its topographical template, I suggest, an enhanced visual language for the metropolis: a way of depicting the city that can accommodate the heterogeneous mix of the modern and the historical (fig. 14), the elevated and the humble, the rural and the industrial, as well as capturing some of the sense of the dynamic flux of the urban experience.<sup>25</sup>



Figure 14

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29.2 × 52.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.23) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

My starting point here is the one serious exception to the generally favourable reaction to the *Eidometropolis*, criticism of the visibility and legibility of the subject, namely, London itself. Thus, as two critics complained of a later display of the canvas in Paris, Girtin's viewpoint may have been perfect for the "magnificent and famous St Paul's", but the ancient buildings of Westminster "can only be seen from a distance and thus not entirely clearly" (fig. 15).<sup>26</sup> Indeed, they are "virtually unrecognisable", and in the opposite direction, the other great focus of the historic fabric of the city and its commercial power, London Bridge and the Pool of London, was even more problematic (fig. 16). When the Barkers produced their two panoramas from virtually the same viewpoint, as far as we can tell from the prints they published, they adopted an even light which showed off the more distant historic sights to good and equal effect. But Girtin's complex lighting, which saw a broken sky in the south give way to an impending storm to the north, obscured many of the most important monuments, even more than their distant position required. The issue of legibility was compounded by the arbitrary ways in which the capital's sites composed, or equally, did not compose themselves from Girtin's viewpoint. An otherwise supportive writer in *The Monthly Magazine* addressed the issue, complaining that the "two towers of Westminster-abbey appear in one mass, which destroys that lightness and air which constitute a leading beauty in the building" (fig. 15), adding that, though from:

*the point of view in which it is taken it is probably a true representation [...] a license is allowed to painters [...] and where a picturesque effect can be produced, a trifling deviation would [...] be overlooked, or forgiven.*<sup>27</sup>

In this case, the tower of St Margaret's, Westminster, is entangled in the form of the Abbey which appears as an undifferentiated mass and the magnificent structure of Westminster Bridge, such a powerful symbol of civic pride, barely emerges from the small-scale, ad hoc industrial sites of the Surrey bank. In contrast to the Barkers' view of London in which buildings tend to be given their own discrete space so that they read legibly, Girtin accepts the unpicturesque and random alignments that the panorama inevitably generates. So that whilst one viewer of the Barkers' panorama claimed to identify no less than 65 spires, just over half the number are visible in Girtin's circuit, with significant buildings hidden behind others or distorted to the point that they cannot be recognised (fig. 17).<sup>28</sup> Girtin's approach, therefore, allied a complex narrative

of changing effects and a fragmented and partial view of the city, which called upon the viewer to reconfigure the whole from its obscured and occluded parts.



Figure 15

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29.2 × 52.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.23) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 16

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 7: The Thames from Queenhithe to London Bridge* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 20.7 × 44.5 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.28) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 17

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 7: The Thames from Queenhithe to London Bridge*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 20.7 × 44.5 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.28) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

Pulling back from the detail of Section Three to look at the foreground (fig. 18), one is struck by the first of many instances where Girtin's viewpoint results, not only in the marginalisation of sites of historical importance, but in a radical reversal of the subject hierarchy of topographical art. Whilst the great state and church monuments of Westminster appear insignificant and distorted in the distance, the newly built Stamford Terrace and the older domestic and industrial buildings of Upper Ground are illuminated by the bright sunlight—at noon on a summer's day. Indeed, across the monumental canvas many of the capital's most important historical buildings are dwarfed by modest domestic dwellings and industry of varying degrees of noisomeness. Repeatedly, the play of light randomly favours the quotidian or humble over the exceptional or important: chimneys and towers rise above grand church steeples (fig. 19); and wharves stand out in comparison with nearby courts of law (fig. 20). A later panoramist of London, Thomas Horner, began work at dawn because only then could he see the capital before the smoke from domestic fires and from manufactories obscured the totality of the city, the all-inclusiveness of the image, which was his primary concern.<sup>29</sup> Here in Section Four in particular, Girtin took the opposite approach, exploiting the dramatic and sublime potential of an iron foundry at work, the dense smoke of which actually obscures Inigo Jones' Banqueting House in the distance (fig. 21). And reviewers certainly appreciated the effect, with one advising visitors to “take notice of the smoak floating across the picture from Lukin's Foundry”, whilst another praised the view as it “appears through a sort of misty medium, arising from the fires of the forges, manufactories.”<sup>30</sup> The Girtins' advertisements for the *Eidometropolis* still focused on the promise of providing visitors with the best views of London's premier monuments, however, and it is questionable whether they would have been satisfied by the artist's application of the key principle of the sublime: that obscurity is more effective at conveying the immensity of the modern city than the careful enumeration of visual facts in an even light.<sup>31</sup>



Figure 18

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29.2 × 52.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.23) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 19

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 4: The Thames from Westminster to Somerset House* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 24 × 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.27) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 20

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 5: The Thames from the Temple to Blackfriars* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 21.1 × 48.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.25) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)



Figure 21

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 4: The Thames from Westminster to Somerset House* (detail) showing Lukin's Iron Foundry, Nicholson's Timber Yard and Watts' Patent Shot Tower, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 24 × 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.27) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

London Bridge and the Tower are particularly poorly served by Girtin's viewpoint, reduced to a distant blur as a storm hits the City and the bridge is cut abruptly by the modern façade of the

Albion Mills (fig. 22). Girtin’s audience would no doubt have found significance in the way that the burnt out industrial mill, commonly thought to be the victim of an arson attack by workers whose livelihood it had threatened, occludes the distant Tower, and indeed, aligns with the still working picturesque mill at Maid Lane (fig. 23).<sup>32</sup> Such meaningful juxtapositions were, however, primarily driven by chance and Girtin invariably accepted the strict logic of the panoramic mode, which though it provides good angles for some buildings, creates equally incomprehensible ones for others, often cutting into and occluding forms in arbitrary and disorientating ways. Section Two provides the most startling example of this. Girtin’s viewpoint from the river-end of the roof of Albion Place Terrace, that is opposite to the Albion Mills, may have provided a fine view of St Paul’s, but in the opposite direction the view was dramatically interrupted by an expanse of roof that dwarfed Sir Christopher Wren’s great monument. The blank space in the outline drawing highlighted here (fig. 24), covers the receding length of the roof and four sets of chimneys and this obscures buildings in the vicinity including the Rotunda of the Leverian Museum of Natural Curiosities. The roof was left blank in the drawing because it would not have been possible to paint on the canvas such close objects in an illusory manner and it was almost certainly mocked up instead as a three-dimensional structure, using real tiles and chimneys.<sup>33</sup> This was not simply a question of the artful play of illusion and reality, though. The artist and his team had to meet the practical challenge of producing on the canvas, a few metres away from the viewer, a substantial structure which actually extended into their viewing position on the roof—and, by all accounts, the audience was satisfied with the effect. Writers consistently praised the whole as a “triumph of perspective” and one singled out this section for particular praise, noting that the “person who attends” the *Eidometropolis* had to intervene between two disputing visitors to show that “some earthen chimney-pots”, rather than being “three or four feet long ... proved to be no more than six inches!”<sup>34</sup>



Figure 22  
 Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 7: The Thames from Queenhithe to London Bridge* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 32 × 51 cm. Collection of The London Metropolitan Archives (q8972599) Digital image courtesy of City of London Corporation



Figure 23  
 Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 1: The Albion Mills*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 32.8 × 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.24) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

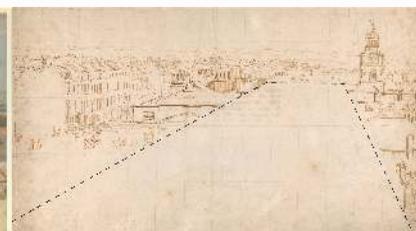


Figure 24  
 Thomas Girtin, *Study for the "Eidometropolis" Section 2: Great Surrey Street and Christchurch, Southwark*, circa 1801, graphite, pen and ink and watercolour on wove paper, 28.1 × 50.5 cm. Collection of Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (B1977.14.4325) Digital image courtesy of Yale Center for British Art (Public Domain)

## **The Modern City in Flux: Depicting “the Vast Increasing Extent of the Metropolis”**

The vista south from Albion Place Terrace in Section Two is not the most picturesque, dominated by recently built terraces following the opening of Blackfriars Bridge in 1769 (fig. 24). However, it is here that we first get a sense of the city as resulting from a dynamic process of growth and generation with the perspective of the new buildings in Great Surrey Street, mirroring the bold angle of Blackfriars Bridge opposite. For one writer, the *Eidometropolis* caught so precisely the city in the act of change that he reasoned that it would be of interest to the “Antiquary” of the future, someone who “would see what London was, and mark the great alterations that are about to take place.”<sup>35</sup> The author, who also proposed that Girtin’s London view might grace a future “National Repository of the Arts”, was thinking of the changes proposed for London Bridge, but for other writers it was the rapid expansion of the city into what the Girtins’ advertisements characterised as the “surrounding Country” that arrested attention.<sup>36</sup> London seen “from an exalted situation”, claimed one, “commands admiration equal to the astonishment of strangers in perambulating the vast increasing extent of the metropolis.”<sup>37</sup> The key to understanding how the panorama might express these developments in such positive terms as “admiration” and “astonishment” is the way that a bold diagonal cuts through the heart of the 360-degree view (fig. 25). This links the most recent bridge to span the Thames, Blackfriars, the Albion Mills as the epitome of industrial progress, and the Great Surrey Road, marking the expansion of the city into the countryside and, tellingly, it was only in these sections that Girtin included figures. Thus, in contrast to the Barkers’ view, which was taken from a few metres away and where Blackfriars Bridge draws people into the city, here all is dynamic expansion outwards.



Figure 25

Composite image of identified fragments of Thomas Girtin's *Studies for the 'Eidometropolis'*. From left: Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 6: Blackfriars Bridge and St Paul's Cathedral*, circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 35.2 x 51 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.26); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 1: The Albion Mills*, circa 1801, graphite and watercolour on laid paper, 32.8 x 53.8 cm. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.24); Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 2: Great Surrey Street and Christchurch, Southwark*, circa 1801, graphite, pen and ink and watercolour on wove paper, 28.1 x 50.5 cm. Collection of Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection (B1977.14.4325)

It is Section Three (fig. 26), however, which most effectively projects a sense of the city in flux, and it does so whilst also displaying the most vivid and complex representation of the heterogeneous mix of land uses in the capital: of old and new, urban and rural, domestic and industrial. Specifically, it is the contrast between the older picturesque buildings of Broad Wall, in the foreground, and the newly built terrace in Stamford Street, which cuts across and into a grassy area to the right, which introduces us to one of the key developments transforming the capital at this date. Richard Horwood's great London map of 1799 (fig. 27) indicates that this was one of the last remnants of the tenter grounds of the soon-to-disappear Lambeth cloth manufactories. These open spaces were used to dry newly manufactured cloth and Girtin left small areas of his colour study untouched, showing white against the green grass, to indicate the survival of an urban industry that needed a semi-rural context. However, such was the rate of building, particularly of speculative housing, that even in the time that it took for Girtin and his assistants to produce the *Eidometropolis*, the terrace at Stamford Street shown here was extended westwards and the green space had disappeared by the date the panorama closed in the early summer of 1803.<sup>38</sup> Prior to the opening of Waterloo Bridge in 1817, Lambeth was still predominantly rural in character and Girtin's view includes evidence of this in the form of bands of trees and distant windmills, even though the new terrace blocks out views of the area's surviving market gardens. Nonetheless, the angle of the brightly lit new terrace cutting into a green space associated with a declining industry must have indicated to contemporary viewers that the urban encroachment into Lambeth continued apace.



Figure 26

Thomas Girtin, *Study for the 'Eidometropolis' Section 3: Westminster and Lambeth* (detail), circa 1801, graphite and pen and ink on wove paper, 29.2 × 52.5. Collection of The British Museum (1855,0214.23) Digital image courtesy of Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

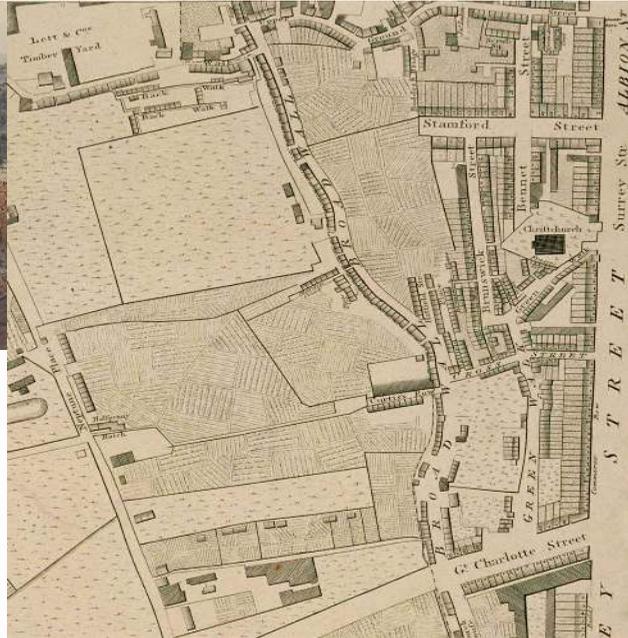


Figure 27

Richard Horwood, *A Map of London and Westminster*, detail showing the area to the west of Blackfriars Bridge, 1799, engraving, 58 cm long. Collection of The London Metropolitan Archives (q8972949) Digital image courtesy of City of London Corporation

The bright daylight that picks out the new terraces and their slate roofs is just one example of where modern, frankly utilitarian buildings are highlighted to an unprecedented degree for the period. Early in his career, Girtin depicted the burnt out shell of the Albion Mills as a sublime spectacle of twisted metal and massive walls, but from his viewpoint in 1801, the façade appears more like an architectural elevation (see fig. 23).<sup>39</sup> And returning to Section Three, one is struck by the extraordinary way in which the artist confers the same pictorial interest on a new build as the picturesque jumble of older unplanned buildings in the foreground (fig. 26). Girtin renders precisely the characteristic features of the standard London terrace, which, following the 1774 Building Act, saw a very unpicturesque standardisation of construction designed to reduce the risk of fire. The new three-story terraces of London stock brick and shiny slate tiles, with their mansard roofs and dormers, are divided by prominent interior party walls, which stand proud above. The windows are also recessed as part of efforts to improve fire safety and this feature can be deduced from the slim shadows which appear around them. Fire regulations do not ordinarily result in good art, but Girtin rendered the utilitarian and the modern in a visually interesting way through his use of light and colour. Writing about this period of landscape painting, Andrew Hemingway has argued in his outstanding and persuasive book, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture*, that “the more the image was conceived as a ‘picturesque view’, the more evidence of modernity had to be relegated to the background or simply omitted.”<sup>40</sup> Girtin did not just bring the modern to the fore, he successfully incorporated a key element of the city and its dynamic development into the artistic domain.

The modern is not necessarily synonymous with the contemporary, however. The boxing contest in Section Two may refer to the recent bouts between Belcher and Burke, but commentators have sought in vain for a sign that the canvas was executed during a more urgent conflict—the ongoing war with revolutionary France. It was particularly gratifying therefore to discover, whilst trying to identify the buildings shown by Girtin within his 360-degree view with the aid of Horwood’s 1799 map, a hitherto unnoticed sign of Britain at war (fig. 27). Knowing to within a metre where Girtin sat to make his drawings, it was possible to identify two distant vertical smudges of colour adjacent to Watts’ Patent Shot Tower as the telegraph which had been erected a few years earlier on the Admiralty Office at Charing Cross (see fig. 21). The signalling system consisted of two frames with six shutters, which could be opened and closed to form the code for each of the letters of the alphabet, and in this way messages could be sent to the coast and to the fleet engaged in the defence of the nation. An insignificant detail in the watercolour, but blown up on a monumental canvas, it would have attracted some attention at least.

Establishing the identity of two indefinite smudges in the watercolour, just as significantly also confirms a broader point. Using Horwood’s map in tandem with Girtin’s drawings establishes that the numerous buildings that can be identified are invariably in the correct place, and such a consistent positional accuracy confirms that Girtin must have employed a viewing frame. Whatever artistic effects Girtin introduced into the *Eidometropolis*, however much chance fragmented or occluded important structures, indeed, notwithstanding the way the viewpoint opposite the Albion Mills flagrantly inverted the visual hierarchy, his panorama was built on a topographically exact structure. Girtin and his team observed the fundamental rule of the panorama, therefore: everything is included in its rightful place and from the correct angle. Girtin may not have been able to omit or add the topographical facts generated by his adopted viewpoint, but he could still choose to obscure or highlight a building, and in that sense, he retained a sense of agency. Here, in this section, Girtin exercised his prerogative as an artist in a highly telling way, using the smoke from Lukin’s Foundry to hide Inigo Jones’ distinguished classical Banqueting House, whilst leaving visible signs of industry and war in the form of the Shot Tower and the telegraph towers (see fig. 21). Creating a visual language that might reflect the complexities and dynamism of the modern expanding city was not just a matter of allying fine art effects with the topographical exactitude required by the panorama, however. It also required a radical shift in attitude whereby Girtin could begin to replicate the urban experience by allowing a random signification to the landscape effects he employed. Sunlight could illuminate a humble terrace or smoke might hide an architectural masterpiece, but equally the effects and their signification might be reversed elsewhere in the 360-degree circuit. Girtin was able to forge an effective visual language for the modern city, I suggest, because he was able to find an equivalent in the deployment of his array of naturalistic effects to the random displacements and strange unmediated occlusions generated by pursuing the remorseless logic of the panoramic mode of vision.

### **Conclusion: Girtin and the Effacement of the Topographical Subject**

At the outset of this examination of Girtin’s contribution to the urban panorama, I suggested that the forthcoming online catalogue might not be best place to analyse broader changes in landscape practice. This may be true, but it must also be admitted that looking at the panorama in isolation from the rest of the artist’s practice is not ideal either. In particular, it is easy to underestimate the way in which the *Eidometropolis* simply extended some of the innovations that already marked Girtin’s work as a landscape watercolourist. The fact that an area of the working

drawing for Section Four of the panorama can only now be identified as representing a wartime telegraph system actually exemplifies a trend that fundamentally shaped his work as an artist after 1797: a determined strategy to displace and obscure the ostensible topographical subject of his watercolours. This view of an outlying part of Bamburgh Castle was for a long time misidentified as *The Rocking Stone, Cornwall* (fig. 28). An entirely understandable mistake if one compares it with the more conventional depiction that Girtin made earlier in his career for the antiquarian market (fig. 29). A picturesque scene of a castle gives way to a fragmented composition stripped of any clear topographical identity by some of the same random qualities seen in the panorama drawings. Another watercolour dating from before the *Eidometropolis*, and which again eluded identification until recently, shows *Appledore, from Instow Sands* (fig. 30). It is typical of the numerous unconventional compositions that will feature in the Girtin online catalogue, lacking a conventional framing device or a clear and recognizable focus of interest. Year on year, the proportions of Girtin's landscapes became wider with the frequent effect, as here, that they appear panoramic, though not a panorama in the proper original sense. The point here is that if we look at the artist's career as a whole, it is clear that it was his earlier critical engagement with the panorama, presumably as a consumer, that fundamentally changed his approach to landscape composition, and the production of the *Eidometropolis* in 1801 only confirmed a shift in his practice.<sup>41</sup>



Figure 28  
Thomas Girtin, *Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland, 1799-1800*, graphite, watercolour and bodycolour on laid paper, 32.8 × 53.8 cm. Tate (N04409) Digital image courtesy of Tate (CC-BY-NC-ND 3.0 Unported)



Figure 29  
Thomas Girtin, after James Moore, *Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland, 1792-1793*, graphite, watercolour and bodycolour on wove paper, 16.9 × 21.8 cm. Collection of Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford (WA1934.119.1) Digital image courtesy of Ashmolean Museum



Figure 30  
Thomas Girtin, *View of Appledore, North Devon, from Instow Sands, circa 1789-1801*, graphite, brown ink and watercolour on laid paper, 24.5 × 47.2 cm. Collection of The Courtauld Gallery, London (D.1952.RW.846) Digital image courtesy of The Samuel Courtauld Trust

## About the author

Greg Smith is an independent art historian, who has published extensively on the history of British watercolours and watercolourists, as well as landscape artists working in Italy. He has also worked as a curator at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, the Design Museum, London, and the Barber Institute of Fine Art,

Birmingham, and has organised exhibitions on the work of Thomas Girtin (Tate Britain), Thomas Jones (National Gallery of Wales), and Thomas Fearnley (Barber Institute of Fine Art). As Senior Research Fellow at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Greg Smith published a major online project: *Thomas Girtin (1775–1802): An Online Catalogue, Archive and Introduction to the Artist*.

## Footnotes

1. The site is due to go online sometime in 2021–2022.
2. Greg Smith, *Thomas Girtin: The Art of Watercolour* (London: Tate, 2002).
3. These findings are discussed in greater detail in: Greg Smith, “Girtin v Girtin: New Information on a Panorama of London by Thomas Girtin (1775–1802); and his *Picturesque Views in Paris*”, *The British Art Journal* 18, no. 3 (2017/2018): 28–47; and Greg Smith, A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”: *Thomas Girtin’s “Eidometropolis” and Other London Views, c. 1796–1802* (London: The London Topographical Society, no. 180, 2018).
4. Edward Edwards, *Anecdotes of Painters Who Have Resided or Been Born in England* (London: Luke Hansard and Sons, 1808), 280; “Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts”, *The Monthly Magazine, or, British Register* 14, Part 2 (October 1802): 255.
5. *The Morning Post and Gazetteer*, no. 10,586, 8 September 1802, 1.
6. “Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts”, *Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802): 255.
7. *The Morning Chronicle*, no. 10,109, 14 October 1801, 1.
8. The National Archives, Prob. 6/179 f.616. The document is published in full in Smith, “Girtin v Girtin” and the quotes here are taken from that article.
9. Smith, “Girtin v Girtin”, 30.
10. These are reproduced in Smith, A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”, Figs 1–11, including a newly discovered outline for Section Five.
11. The best guide to the practical details of the production and display of the panorama remains the original patent taken out by Robert Barker in 1790 and which was reprinted in *The Repertory of Arts and Manufactures* (4, 1796: 165–167). There is no reason to believe that Girtin departed significantly from the detailed prescriptions laid out by Barker, including the use of an optical frame.
12. Smith, A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”, 36.
13. One visitor was recorded as spending two hours laid out “on the platform viewing this matchless production of art”; *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, no. 342, 31 October 1802, 349.
14. Thomas Girtin and David Loshak, *The Art of Thomas Girtin* (London: A. and C. Black, 1952), 105. Challenging the simplistic interpretation of dispatch as a signifier of painting on the spot is a recurrent theme of the forthcoming *Thomas Girtin (1775–1802): An Online Catalogue*.
15. *Bell’s Weekly Messenger*, no. 341, 24 October 1802, 341. For the significance of this change in plan, see Smith, A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”, 38–40.
16. “Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts”, *Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802): 254–255. The detail features in the plan the Barkers’ produced for the Paris showing of their London panorama, see Smith, A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”, 39.
17. The costs and income generated by the *Eidometropolis* are discussed in Smith, “Girtin v Girtin”, 30–32.
18. “Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts”, *The Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802), 254.

19. As with all details on the Barkers' panorama, I have relied on Ralph Hyde and Peter Jackson, *London from the Roof of the Albion Mills: A Facsimile of Robert and Henry Aston Barker's Panorama of 1792–3* (London: London Topographical Society no. 139, in association with the Guildhall Library, 1988).
20. Smith, A "Connoisseur's Panorama", 42. The touring panorama measured an impressive 3,500 square feet.
21. "Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts," *Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802), 255; *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, no.331, 15 August 1802, 262.
22. *The Morning Herald*, no. 6523, 6 December 1802, 5. The review, published after Girtin's death, details how Girtin's great depiction of his "native place, glory of the world" might be erected as his monument, a memorial to a "national loss".
23. Denise Blake Oleksijczuk, *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 6.
24. James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (eds), *Romantic Metropolis. The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8.
25. My understanding of the London panorama has been aided by Oleksijczuk's detailed analysis of the Barkers' first urban panoramas (*The First Panoramas*, 23–65) and by Markham Ellis, "'Spectacles within Doors': Panoramas of London in the 1790s", *Romanticism* 14, no. 2: 133–148.
26. "Panorama von London zu Paris: Abbé Sicard mit Seinen Weiblichen Taubstummen-Zöglingen Besucht es", *London und Paris* 14 (1804): 52; "Ueber die Panorama's von London und Boulogne in Paris", *London und Paris* 19 (1807): 332.
27. "Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts", *Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802), 255.
28. William MacRitchie, *Diary of a Tour Through Great Britain in 1795* (London: Elliot Stock, 1897), 83.
29. Ralph Hyde, *Panoromania! The Art and Entertainment of the "All-Embracing" View* (London: Trefoil, 1988), 79–85.
30. *The Morning Herald*, no. 6523, 6 December 1802, 5; "Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts", *Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802), 255.
31. The impact of the sublime on the urban panorama is discussed in John Brewer, "Sensibility and the Urban Panorama", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (June 2007), 237.
32. See "Conflagration! The Burning of the Albion Mill, Southwark, in 1791", in B.E. Maidment, *Reading Popular Prints 1790–1870*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 27–52.
33. As with a number of aspects regarding the installation of the *Eidometropolis*, there is no direct evidence that the roof was mocked up from real elements, but other panoramas of the date certainly did, including the Barkers' later London view, and there is no other explanation for leaving a blank in an otherwise very detailed drawing.
34. "Additions and Corrections in Former Obituaries", *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 73, Part 1 (February 1803), 187; "Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts", *Monthly Magazine* 14, Part 2 (October 1802), 255.
35. *The Morning Herald*, no. 6523, 6 December 1802, 5.
36. *The Observer*, no. 554, 8 August 1802, 3.
37. *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, no. 331, 15 August 1802, 262.
38. Ida Darlington, *Survey of London: Volume 22, Bankside (The Parishes of St. Saviour and Christchurch, Southwark)* (London: London County Council, 1950), 122–124.

39. See Smith, A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”, 46–48.
40. Andrew Hemingway, *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 167.
41. Surprisingly, the story of how the newly invented panorama influenced landscape artists in this period has yet to be written. If, or when it is, I suspect that Girtin will feature prominently, but not exclusively, in the discussion.

## Bibliography

- Andrews, M. (1994) “The Metropolitan Picturesque”. In Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (eds), *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics Since 1770*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 282–298.
- Arnold, D. (2000) *The Metropolis and its Image: Constructing Identities for London, c.1750–1950*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Arnold, D. (2000) *Re-Presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience and Social Life in London, 1800–1840*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Arcott, C. (2000) “The Representation of the City in the Visual Arts”. In D.M. Palliser, Peter Clark, and M.J. Daunton (eds), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain: Volume 2, 1540–1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 811–832.
- Bell’s Weekly Messenger (1802) no. 331, 15 August, 262.
- Bell’s Weekly Messenger (1802) no. 341, 24 October, 341.
- Bell’s Weekly Messenger (1802) no. 342, 31 October, 349.
- Bell’s Weekly Messenger (1803) no. 352, 9 January, 14.
- Birmingham, A. (2001) “Landscape-O-Rama: The Exhibition Landscape at Somerset House and the Rise of Popular Landscape Entertainments”. In David H. Solkin (ed.), *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House 1780–1836*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 127–143.
- Birmingham, A. (2005) “Urbanity and the Spectacle of Art”. In James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (eds), *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780–1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 151–176.
- Bigg, C. (2007) “The Panorama, or, La Nature A Coup d’Oeil”. In Erna Fiorentini (ed.), *Observing Nature—Representing Experience: The Osmotic Dynamics of Romanticism 1800–1850*. Berlin: Reimer, 73–95.
- Brewer, J. (2007). “Sensibility and the Urban Panorama”. *Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 2: 229–249.
- Chandler, J. and Gilmartin, K. (eds) (2005) *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780–1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Combe, W. (1794–1796) *An History of the Thames River*. London: John and Josiah Boydell.
- Comment, B. (1999). *The Panorama*, trans. from French by Anne-Marie Glasheen, Revised and expanded edn. London: Reaktion.
- Comment, B. (2000) *The Painted Panorama*, Revised and expanded edn. New York: H.N. Abrams
- Darlington, I. (1950) *Survey of London: Volume 22, Bankside (The Parishes of St. Saviour and Christchurch, Southwark)*. London: London County Council.
- Edwards, E. (1808) *Anecdotes of Painters Who Have Resided or Been Born in England*. London: Luke Hansard and Sons.

- Ellis, M. (2008) “‘Spectacles within Doors’: Panoramas of London in the 1790s”. *Romanticism* 14, no. 2: 133–148.
- The Gentleman’s Magazine (1803) “Additions and Corrections in Former Obituaries”. *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, 73, Part 1 (February): 187–188.
- Girtin, T. and Loshak, D. (1954) *The Art of Thomas Girtin*. London: A. and C. Black.
- Hardy, P. (2013) “The Rhinebeck Panorama, Landscape, Migration and the River”. In *The Panoramic River: The Hudson and the Thames*. Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum.
- Hemingway, A. (1992) *Landscape Imagery and Urban Culture in Early Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyde, R. (1980) “A London Panorama, c. 1800 Resurrected”. *The London Topographical Record* 24: 211–216.
- Hyde, R. (1985) *Gilded Scenes and Shining Prospects: Panoramic Views of British Towns, 1575-1900*. New Haven, CT: Yale Center for British Art.
- Hyde, R. (1988) *Panoromania! The Art and Entertainment of the “All-Embracing” View*. London: Trefoil.
- Hyde, R. (n.d.) *Dictionary of Panoramists of the English-Speaking World*, <http://www.bdcmuseum.org.uk/uploads/uploads/biographical\dictionary\of\panoramists2.pdf>. Accessed 21 May 2018.
- Hyde, R. and Jackson, P. (1988) *London from the Roof of the Albion Mills: A Facsimile of Robert and Henry Aston Barker’s Panorama of 1792–3*. London: London Topographical Society no. 139, in association with the Guildhall Library.
- Inglis, J.R. and Sanders, J. (2015) *Panorama of the Thames: A Riverside View of Georgian London*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Laxton, P. (1985) “Richard Horwood’s Map and the Face of London, 1799–1819”. In *The A to Z of Regency London*. Lympe Castle, Kent: London Topographical Society, no.131, published in association with the Guildhall Library and Harry Margery.
- Library of the Fine Arts (1832) “Recollections of the Late Thomas Girtin”. *Library of the Fine Arts* 3: 307–319.
- London und Paris (1804) “Panorama von London zu Paris: Abbé Sicard mit Seinen Weiblichen Taubstummen-Zöglingen Besucht es”. *London und Paris* 14: 50–54.
- London und Paris (1807) “Ueber die Panorama’s von London und Boulogne in Paris”. *London und Paris* 19: 331–333.
- MacRitchie, W. (1897) *Diary of a Tour Through Great Britain in 1795*. London: Elliot Stock.
- Maidment, B.E. (2001) *Reading Popular Prints 1790–1870*, 2nd edn. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Malcolm, J.P. (1802–1807) *Londinium Redivivum; or, an Ancient History and Modern Description of London*. 4 vols. London: J. Nichols.
- Malton, T. (1792–1801) *A Picturesque Tour Through the Cities of London and Westminster*, 2 vols. London: Thomas Malton.
- Mitchell, R. (1801) *Plans, and Views in Perspective, with Descriptions of Buildings Erected in England and Scotland*. London: Oriental Press.
- The Monthly Magazine (1802) “Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts”. *The Monthly Magazine, or, British Register*, 14, Part 2 (September): 159.
- The Monthly Magazine (1802) “Monthly Retrospect of the Fine Arts”. *The Monthly Magazine, or, British Register*, 14, Part 2 (October): 254–255.

The Monthly Magazine (1803) “Incidents, Marriages and Deaths in and Near London. With Biographical Memoirs of Distinguished Characters Recently Deceased”. *The Monthly Magazine, or, British Register*, 15, part 1 (February): 83–84.

The Morning Chronicle (1801) no. 10,109, 14 October, 1.

The Morning Chronicle (1802) no. 10,373, 18 August, 1.

The Morning Chronicle (1802) no. 10,467, 6 December, 1.

The Morning Chronicle (1802) no. 10,469, 8 December, 3.

The Morning Chronicle (1803) no. 10,540, 3 March, 2.

The Morning Chronicle (1803) no. 10,561, 28 March, 1.

The Morning Herald (1802) 19 November.

The Morning Herald (1802) 6 December.

The Morning Post and Gazetteer (1802) no. 10,307, February, 2.

The Morning Post and Gazetteer (1802) no. 10,554, 2 August, 1.

The Morning Post and Gazetteer (1802) no. 10,586, 8 September, 1.

The Morning Post and Gazetteer (1802) no. 10,624, 22 October, 1.

The Morning Post and Gazetteer (1802) no. 10,651, 23 November, 1.

Mosse, J. (1967–1968) “The Albion Mills, 1784–1791”. *The Newcomen Society Transactions* 40: 47–60.

Nurse, B. *London: Prints & Drawings Before 1800: The Gough Collection, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford*. Oxford: Bodleian Library and London: London Topographical Society no. 179.

The Observer (1802) no. 554, 8 August, 3.

The Observer (1802) no. 573, 19 December, 3.

Oettermann, S. (1997) (translated from German by Deborah Lucas Schneider). *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium*. New York: Zone Books.

Oleksijczuk, D.B. (2000) “Gender in Perspective: The King and Queen’s Visit to the Panorama in 1793”. In Steven Adams and Anna Greutzner Robins (eds), *Gendering Landscape Art*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 146–161.

Oleksijczuk, D.B. (2001) *The First Panoramas: Visions of British Imperialism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Otto, P. (2007) “Between the Virtual and the Actual: Robert Barker’s Panorama of London and the Multiplication of the Real in Late Eighteenth-Century London”. *Romanticism on the Net*, no. 46, DOI:10.7202/016130ar.

Pragnell, H.J. (1968) *The London Panoramas of Robert Barker and Thomas Girtin*. London: London Topographical Society, no. 109.

*The Repertory of Arts and Manufactures* (1796).

Roberts, H. and Godfrey, W.H. (1950) *Survey of London: Volume 22, Bankside (The Parishes of St. Saviour and Christchurch Southwark)*. London: London County Council.

Saint, A. (1992) “The Building Art of the First Industrial Metropolis”. In Celina Fox (ed.), *London—World City: 1800–1840*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 51–76.

Skempton, A.W. (1971) “Samuel Wyatt and the Albion Mill”. *Architectural History* 14: 53–73.

Smith, G. (2002) *Thomas Girtin: The Art of Watercolour*, London: Tate.

Smith, G. (2017/2018) “Girtin v Girtin: New Information on a Panorama of London by Thomas Girtin (1775–1802) and his *Picturesque Views in Paris*.” *The British Art Journal* 18, no. 3: 28–47.

Smith, G. (2018) A “*Connoisseur’s Panorama*”: Thomas Girtin’s “*Eidometropolis*” and Other London Views, c.1796–1802. London: The London Topographical Society, no. 180.

Snell, G. (2013) “The Thames View: From Prospect to Panorama”. In *The Panoramic River: The Hudson and the Thames*. Yonkers, NY: Hudson River Museum, 31–51.

Snell, G.W. (2014) “A Forest of Masts: The Image of the River in the Long Eighteenth Century”. PhD diss., University of Sussex.

Somerset House Gazette (1824) “The Panorama”. *Somerset House Gazette*, 12 June, 151–152.

Somerset House Gazette (1824) “Thomas Girtin”. *Somerset House Gazette*, 12 June, 151–152.

The Times (1802) no. 5498, 25 August, 1.

The Times (1802) no. 5521, 22 September, 1.

The Times (1802) no. 5563, 11 November, 1.

Wilcox, S. (1976) “The Panorama and Related Exhibitions in London”. MLitt diss., University of Edinburgh.

Wood, G.D-A. (2000) *The Shock of the Real. Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760–1860*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

## Imprint

<b>Author</b>	Greg Smith
<b>Date</b>	29 November 2018
<b>Category</b>	<a href="#">Article</a>
<b>Review status</b>	Peer Reviewed (Double Blind)
<b>License</b>	<a href="#">Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0)</a>
<b>Downloads</b>	PDF format
<b>Article DOI</b>	<a href="https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-10/gsmith">https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-10/gsmith</a>
<b>Cite as</b>	Smith, Greg. “The ‘Connoisseur’s Panorama’: Thomas Girtin’s <i>Eidometropolis</i> (1801–1803) and a New Visual Language for the Modern City.” In <i>British Art Studies: Landscape Now</i> (Edited by Mark Hallett). London and New Haven: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Yale Center for British Art, 2018. <a href="https://britishartstudies-10.netlify.app/girtin-panorama/">https://britishartstudies-10.netlify.app/girtin-panorama/</a> .