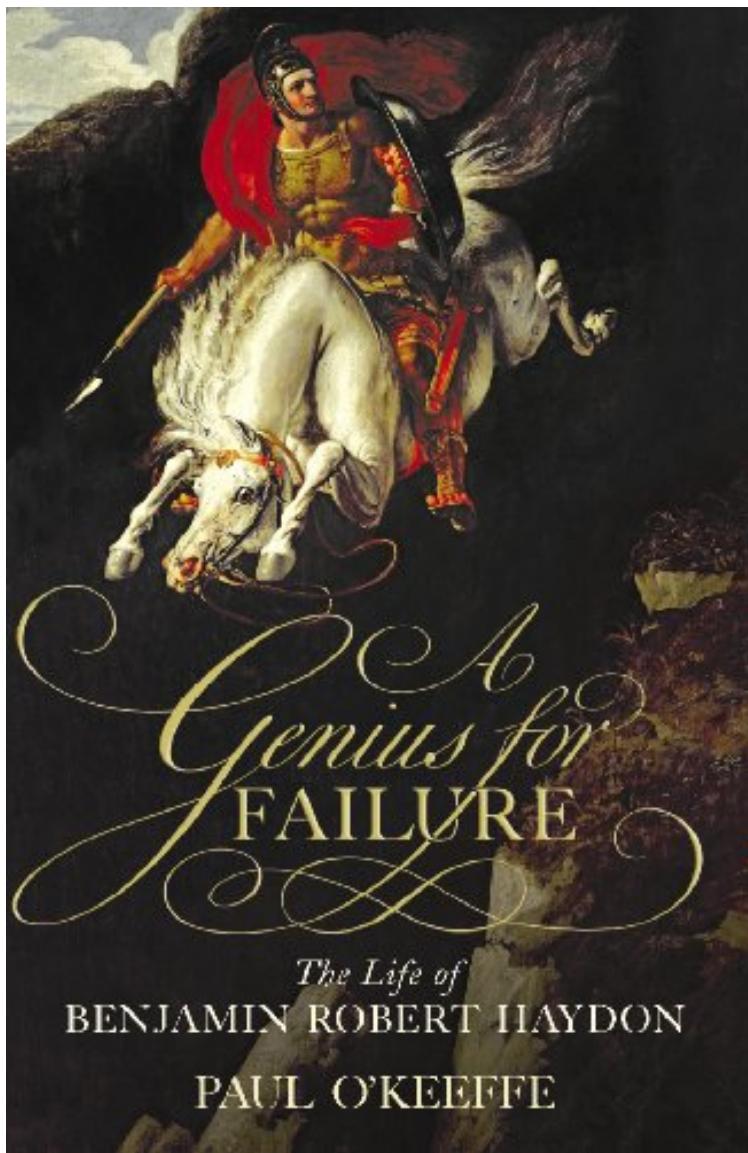


[E-BOOK] A Genius for Failure: The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon

A Genius for Failure: The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon

Paul O'Keeffe

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Paul O'Keeffe : A Genius for Failure: The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Genius for Failure: The Life of Benjamin Robert Haydon:

* Haydon's first attempt at suicide ended when the low calibre bullet fired from his pistol fractured his skull but failed to penetrate his brain. * His second attempt also failed: a deep slash across his throat left a large pool of blood at the entrance to his studio, but he was still able to reach his easel on the opposite side of the room. *Only his third attempt,

another cut to the throat which sprayed blood across his unfinished canvas, was successful. He died face-down before the bespattered 'Alfred and the First British Jury', his final bid 'to improve the taste of the English people' through the High Art of historical painting.* Such intensity, struggle and near-comic inability to succeed encapsulate Haydon's career. Thirty years before his death his huge, iconic paintings had made him the toast of early 19th-century London, drawing paying crowds to the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly for months and leading to nationwide tours. * However, his attempt to repeat such success three months before his death was to destroy him: barely a soul turned up, leaving the desperate painter alone, humiliated, and facing financial ruin. * In *A Genius for Failure* Paul O'Keeffe makes clear that the real tragedy of Haydon lay in the extent to which his failures were unwittingly engineered by his own actions - his refusal to resort to the painting of fashionable portraits, for example, and his self-destructively acrimonious relationship with the RA.* The company he kept - Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, Sir Robert Peel and the Duke of Wellington, among many others - and the momentous events he lived through - The Battle of Waterloo, the Coronation of George IV, and the passing of the first Parliamentary Reform Bill - make *A Genius for Failure* not only the definitive biography of this fascinating and tragic painter, but a stirring portrayal of an age.