

Emma Tour: Jane's World by Ginny Wheeler

Jane Austen invites us into her world through her characters. *Emma* provides us with a window into her wit, her world, and the customs of the time. At the same time, Austen's *Emma* is a ground-breaking book in that she created a new point of view. Up until *Emma*, books were either written in first-person narrative or not. Austen writes a book where she perfects the art of getting inside the head of Emma as well as presenting the omniscient narrator's dispassionate, observant views. She does this so seamlessly that we hardly realize that it is happening. Today that convention is called third person omniscient, but what Austen does is more directed. Sometimes the reader must infer the narrator's view from the use of language--perhaps an ironic word or phrase appears in the flow of Emma's thoughts to distance the narrator from Emma and thereby imply the narrator's views. Or the narrative unobtrusively shifts from Emma's perspective to the narrator's for a sentence or two or in the choice of a phrase or even one word.

What delights us so much is that we see the world through Emma's eyes and at the same time through the narrator's point of view. The narrator creates the delightful ironies and delicate humor, but is never mean spirited. Instead, the narrator tells it like it is, because, obviously, Emma is oblivious to reality.

Harriet's deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of everything in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given... She would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting and certainly a very kind undertaking, highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and power.

Jane's World: A commentary on marriage or the language of romance



Poorly Defended Rose, 1789, The Letter, 1791 Michael Garnier

The Reality of a Woman's Choice to Marry or Not to Marry:

Emma: A single woman with a very narrow income must be a ridiculous, disagreeable, old maid! the proper sport of boys and girls; but a single woman of good fortune is always respectable, and may be as sensible and pleasant as anybody else.

Jane: "There are places in town, offices, where inquiry would soon produce something—offices for the sale not quite of human flesh, but of human intellect"

Jane Austen chose to remain single and had the means to do so.

- Marriage or having her own fortune were a woman's best options.
- Weddings and rescues bookend the book: Miss Taylor's and Emma's weddings; Mr. Knightly rescuing Emma from an evening of boredom with her father, Mr. Woodhouse and then again rescuing her by marrying her.
- Marriages could take place with a license or wedding banns read on three consecutive Sundays.
- Unlike Emma, Miss Bates, Jane Fairfax, and Harriet Smith all faced uncertain fates because of financial or social vulnerability.
- Women had no independence.
- 70% of women remained unmarried
- 50% lived in the country
- None could own property - all went to the sons
- Writing and governess were the only occupations considered by the gentry class women.
- Puberty between 18-20 and married between 25-28.

Jane's World: Point of View



Portrait of Olive Craster, Sir Nathaniel Dance-Holland, 1762

“Her height was pretty, just such as almost every body would think tall, and nobody could think very tall; her figure particularly graceful; her size a most becoming medium, between fat and thin, though a slight appearance of ill-health seemed to point out the likeliest evil of the two.”

Compare this picture to A Poorly Defended Rose.

- Dance-Holland paints what he observes much like the omniscient narrator; whereas, Garnier gets inside the young woman’s head - what she is thinking and feeling much like we see inside Emma’s head. New acquisition - Sothebys’ auction in lively bidding. Sold by Olive Craster’s descendent. Art buyers are buying old masters, perhaps as a reaction to the derivatization of the contemporary art market.
- Olive Craster, an heiress from a distinguished family, and husband George embarked on an expensive and extensive Grand Tour across France and Italy shortly after their marriage; Olive kept meticulous notes of her purchases of fashionable clothes and accessories.
- English portrait painter Nathaniel Dance depicts Olive spectacularly dressed in a blue silk dress and exquisite lace jacket. Her hair is dressed with silk flowers and a feather aigrette, or tuft of plumes, one of many she acquired in Italy. Dance’s most striking inclusion is the pet squirrel seated on Olive’s hand. Squirrels had no specific allegorical significance; they were kept as pets.
- Dance’s inclusion of the squirrel immediately recalls Hans Holbein’s portrait A Lady with Squirrel and a Starling, which Dance knew well.
- Austen flawlessly uses the dispassionate omniscient voice of the narrator and gets inside Emma’s mind all at once.. . a revolutionary point of view at the time. Emma is not telling her own story; yet we both share her judgments and watch her making them. Before Austen’s time, novelists chose between first-person narrative that was very limiting and third-person narrative where the author was all-knowing and watched the action from afar. Austen combined the two.
- Austen’s technique has never been surpassed. She weaves the two together seamlessly.

We are warned at the beginning of the story: “The real evils, indeed, of Emma’s situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself.”

Jane Austen said she created a heroine in Emma “whom nobody but myself will much like.”



Jane's World: Emma is Puck.



The Fallen Tree Thomas Gainsborough 1750-55

A Midsummer Nights Dream: The course of true love never did run smooth.

Sir Walter Scott compares Jane Austen's writing to a Flemish painting: "The subjects (or characters) are not often elegant, and certainly never grand; but they are finished up to nature, and with a precision which delights the reader."

- Dutch landscape influences: nature, tree in foreground, donkey in the middle, and perfection of distance.
- The Dutch masters depended on a careful arrangement of what they saw, but Gainsborough combined observation of nature with his own imagination.
- Although portraits brought him fame, he still found time for what he called his "fancy pictures," the genre scenes that combined landscapes with figures
- Gainsborough studied under a French artist, but also helped restore and copied Dutch masters. Both influenced his style.
- Entry to Pre-d'-Rome. When competing for the Prix de Rome landscape painting, you had to paint a sketch with a fallen tree, then a competition sketch, and finally a painting of the actual picture.
- He painted this at the age of 25. Gainsborough began and finished his career as a landscape painter. Son of a successful cloth merchant. Apprenticed to the French painter.
- Nothing could be more English than this particular work.
- Notice the light, shadow and texture. His treatment of light is his most significant contribution to landscape painting. In fact, Monet, Pissaro, Sisley, and Morisot traveled to London to see his work.

Jane's World:

- England is at war for most of Jane's life time: American Revolution, Napoleonic Wars that ended the year *Emma* was published - 1815.
- Highbury is peaceful harmony until Frank and Mrs. Elton come on the scene.
- Imagine this is Boxhill - donkey for Mrs. Elton, tree to sit and enjoy the views, Highbury in distance.
- Boxhill is a pivotal scene in the book as all the lovers are scrambled up and need to be sorted out.
- Miss Bates babbles, the Eltons put Highbury folks down, Emma laughs at Miss Bates, Frank uses Emma, Knightly scolds Emma, Jane Fairfax remains meek. To Jane meekness is a fault, not a virtue.



Gainsborough Famous Portraits, 1794
Blue Boy and *Pinkie*

Jane's World: Reason reigns supreme



Portrait of John Langston, Esquire, of Sarsden, Thomas Gainsborough 1787

Compare Emma's thoughts on the two sets of lovers: Jane & Frank; Mr. Knightly and herself.

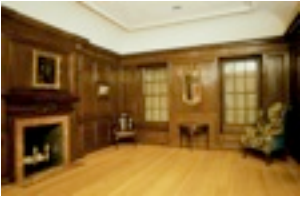
Emma's reaction to Jane's secret engagement: "Poor girl! ... She loves him, then, excessively, I suppose. . . Her affection must have overpowered her judgment."

Emma's response to Mr. Knightly's proposal: "What did she say? Just what she ought, of course. A lady always does"

Jane's idea of marriage was one based on mutual respect. - *Mr. Knightly decides to live at Hartfield.*

- Jane Austen paints delightful word pictures for us - mostly through dialogue. . . through her characters' own words. These pictures are like the vignettes in a genre painting.
- Good sense being a positive quality in Austen. Mr. Knightley is introduced as a "a sensible man"
- Knightly serves as Emma's mentor and moral guide, being "one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of them"
- Mr. John Knightley anticipated that the evening at the Westons would be "five dull hours in another man's house, with nothing to say or to hear that was not said and heard yesterday and may not be heard and heard again to-morrow"
- Was he rational and sensible when he thought of Emma as "faultless in spite of all her faults"?
- Is Mr. Knightly Jane Austen's spokesperson? Emma's alter-ego?
- The evening of rain lengthens out like the long prospect of her future days with only her father for company. But then "the wind changed into a softer quarter; the clouds were carried off; the sun appeared; it was summer again". Mr Knightley arrives and, while Mr Perry consoles Mr Woodhouse for his weather-induced indisposition, he walks with Emma in the garden.
- John Langston, Esquire, was a country gentleman in England of great standing. His dark suit with ruffled blouse and powdered wig are of-the-moment fashion. Langston is standing before an open window depicting a bucolic countryside, perhaps meant to represent his own land holdings in Sarsden.
- Thomas Gainsborough was one of the most talented and sought-after British portraitists of the 18th century. While he maintained that landscape painting was his first love, his numerous portraits of English nobility brought him great financial rewards.
- Gainsborough moved to Bath where his portraits were an instant success among the most fashionable, wealthy clientele who vacationed there. This gave him the means to support his wife and 2 daughters in style.
- Notice the effects of shadow and texture as seen in *The Fallen Tree*.

Jane's World: A keenly observant writer at an early age



Queen Anne Room, G326

Jane at 10, from *The History of England by a Partial Prejudiced and Ignorant Historian*:

“Henry the 4th ascended the throne of England, much to his own satisfaction, in the year 1399.” Austen adds a short phrase that provides both insight and a chuckle. She was already doing that at age 10.

- Simple, dignified architecture that was named after the queen from 1702-1714.
- Oak paneling to keep out drafts came from 18C home in Stafford England
- Symmetry inside and out
- Pediment design - nod to classics (Neo-classical period)
- The carved festoons of fruits and flowers above the fireplace are crafted in a manner popularized by the master English woodcarver Grinling Gibbons.
- Jane may have based her characters of Frank on her brother Edward, who was adopted by a wealthy family who had no children of their own.
- Began writing at 10-11 years old with plays for the family and *The History of England by a Partial Prejudiced and Ignorant Historian*.

Gina Heath King, the Jane Austen fan who helped with these rooms: “We all still know someone like the characters in these books. They’re so richly drawn, they don’t die.”

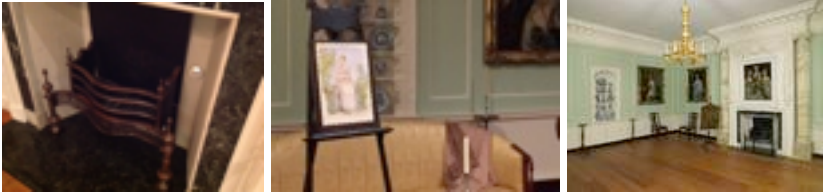


Sketch of Jane Austen by her sister Cassandra



Chawton Cottage

Jane's World: Emma's living room



from “The Task: The Winter Evening” by William Cowper, one of Jane’s favorite poets:

*Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And, while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful ev’ning in.*

- Shawls, word games, and, atop an easel, an unfinished watercolor.
- Bill Skodje painted created an copy of a fictional painting. He researched paper and pigment and discovered some historical peculiarities. For instance, landscape oil paintings that glowed, golden-hued, were popular in Austen’s day and, to compete, watercolorists used plenty of blue, yellow, and red. “The pedestrian green of nature,” as Skodje puts it, despite its abundance in actual landscapes, was avoided.
- Upper classes went on the Grand Tour to complete their education. They saw European capitals and the ruins of Greece and Rome. Architectural details reflect the classical period.
- Painted pine to resemble stone. Heavy pediments. Ionic columns painted to look like marble.
- The classical theme is seen in the decorative motifs: cornice, chair rail, and skirting, and includes the key pattern, egg and tongue molding, and acanthus leaves. The overdoors are carved with laurel and acanthus leaves.
- Fir Paneling from Scandinavia painted the popular pea green
- No curtains and carpets.
- House would have been gray or light sandstone brick.
- Furnishings would have been brought forward from the periphery of the room or brought from other rooms in the house to create the event (cards, listening to music, party)
- The Queen Anne style features objects comfortably tailored to the human body, with curved seats and backs, cabriole (S-shaped) legs, pad feet, and sumptuously grained and veneered wood, as seen in the seating furniture on display here.
- The floor has been sanded to a very smooth finish. When this was built, it would have been treated with a solution of lye at least twice a year. This practice continued well into the 19th century and would deodorize, kill any bacteria, and give a very fine pale luster to the wood.
- Fireplace: Coal gradually replaced wood and peat, and a new fixture was placed in the hearth to hold the coal. The depth of the indentation at present is a little shallow.
- The niche holds a collection of Chinese blue and white porcelain mainly from the K’ang Hsi Period (1662-1722), and illustrates the Georgian passion for collecting Chinoiserie.
- This room came from Stanwick Park (STAN-nick) one of the country homes built in 1682 of the Dukes of Northumberland, which stood on ground close to the town of Stanwick in Yorkshire.
- In 1923, the mansion house was demolished.

Jane's World: Comedy

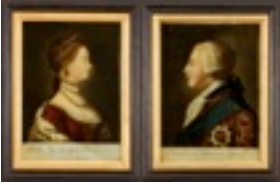


The Edward Walpole Children, 1747, Stephen Slaughter, English

According to Horace Walpole, "Life is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel."

- This depicts Walpole's four children by his mistress.
- The paintings, while not original to the room, hang like ancestral portraits in an English country house.
- Horace Walpole was his uncle - both members of Parliament.

Jane's World: Things are not what they seem



Portraits of George III and Queen Charlotte, England 18C

Dedication: To his royal highness The Prince Regent, This work is, by his royal highness's permission, most respectfully dedicated, by his royal highness's dutiful and obedient humble servant, The Author

- A central theme of *Emma* is that things are often not at all what they seem.
- Besides misreading people's motivations and intentions, the book is filled with games, riddles, charades, acrostics, anagrams, puns, and double-entendres.
- In 1814, a year before Austen published *Emma*, Princess Caroline sent a scathing letter to the Prince Regent repeatedly addressing him as "his royal highness." The letter became public. She may have been mocking her husband.
- The royal librarian conveyed to her that His Royal Highness, an Austen admirer, gave his permission to dedicate her newest novel to him. Austen refers to the Prince Regent three times as "his royal highness" -- satirizing his position as King George IV-in-waiting. This is the kind of puzzle that Austen employs in her novel. It has to be read more than once to catch all the witticisms.
- Furthermore, the Prince Regent often called himself "The First Gentleman of Europe" and *Emma* explores the idea of a true gentleman.
- During one conversation Mr. Knightly discussed "moving the path to Langham" in some detail - all of which mimics a controversial street plan proposed by the Prince Regent that contemporaries who were reading carefully would find amusing - at the Prince's expense, of course.
- Prince of Wales (the Prince Regent) was the subject of a satirical poem called "The Prince of Whales" written by Charles Lamb. The charade Mr. Elton left for Emma may have been interpreted more correctly by Harriet.
- These "glass pictures" are prints, or mezzotints, that were pasted on glass and the paper rubbed away from the back, enough to permit light to show through and give the effect of soft color.
- This technique was popular in the 18th C
- Home was built for before the American Revolution for American upper class who identified strongly with the British elite. They wanted to imitate them in dress, decor, etc. One way was to put portraits of the British monarch in their homes.
- **Georgian Era** began in 1714 with George I, a German who spoke no English. 18C England was prospering as a result of trade with the East and the colonies in the New World.
- **The Regency** is the period from 1811-1820 when King George III was deemed unfit to rule so his son became his proxy as Prince Regent. Upon the death of his father he became George IV, who actually was part of the political opposition.
- King George was "the mad king who lost America" largely to blame for policies that led to the American Revolution, while his wife was well regarded for her strength of character. His madness that recurred from time to time during the last 11 years of his reign is now believed to be bi-polar and the blue urine a result of the medicine. So his "bouts of madness" may have been when he was in the manic stage.





J.G. delin. et fecit.

Pub. July 1792. by H. Humphreys, No. 41. Strand.

A VOLUPTUARY under the horrors of Digestion.

1792 caricature of the Prince Regent by James Gillray

Jane's World: Tea was highly valued and very expensive



Tea Caddy, 1825

- Rosewood, two lidded compartments, blue and white porcelain insets
- Egyptian inspired by the heavy neo-classical furniture published in the influential design periodical Ackermann's Repository of the Arts, this tea caddy could well be a miniaturized version of a classical sideboard appearing in that publication.



Tea Caddy with fitted casket, 1768-1769, William Vincent

- Silver with shagreen covered box with silver mounts



Tea Caddy Henry Chawner, 1793-1794 and Jockey Cap Spoon, Joseph Taylor, 1798-99

- Tea caddy George III with sliding top
- Tea scoop, in form of a hunting cap with bright-cut engraving

Jane's letter to her sister shows her love of tea: "Let me know when you begin the new Tea. I am still a Cat if I see a Mouse."

At the Westin ball Miss Bates: "No coffee, I thank you, for me---never take coffee.---A little tea if you please, sir, by and bye, ---no hurry---Oh! her it comes. Everything so good!"

- In the Austen home of Chawton in Hampshire, tea was kept under lock and key in the cupboard to the left of the fireplace in the dining parlour. Only Jane had the key.
- Locked tea caddies were made of fine inlaid woods, decorated in some fashion. They were often divided into two sections to hold two different teas---usually black and green---and may even have a glass bowl for mixing the tea. A small brass or silver scoop, called a tea ladle, was used to measure out the tea. Jane recorded her mother's purchase of a "silver Tea-Ladle and six whole Teaspoons, which makes our sideboard border on the Magnificent."
- Jane loved sugar in her tea. The well-off could afford pure white sugar. It came in cone-shaped loaves weighing several pounds and had to be grated before it could be used. (Sugar lumps had not been invented yet.) Granulated sugar had just been invented so it wasn't widely used yet.
- Jane kept a copper kettle on the fireplace hob grate in their dining room like the one in the Northumberland Room.
- In 1700's the British elites began to prefer tea, popularized by Charles II's wife Catherine, England's first tea-drinking queen.
- Queen Anne first set the mode of drinking tea for her morning meal. This led to a more delicate breakfast for the upper classes rather than one of meat, heavy foods, and ale that remained the preferred breakfast of the working classes.

Jane's World: Etiquette, Elegance, and Emma



Wedgwood, 1820 teapot, sugar and creamer

On Monday I had the pleasure of receiving, unpacking and approving our Wedgwood ware. It all came very safely and upon the whole is a good match, tho' I think they might have allowed us rather larger leaves, especially in such a year of fine foliage as this.

- Wedgwood who was a pioneer of mass production in the English porcelain industry also pioneered the use of celebrity endorsement to promote his products to the middle class. After Charlotte had ordered a complete set of tea things, he secured her permission to sell similar items to the public under the "Queen's Ware." He took out newspaper advertisements etc
- Jane's Wedgwood: Going to London was rare for country folks so when they did go, they ran errands for other people. On one such occasion when Jane had finished all her errands, she had time to go to the Wedgwood showroom and place an order.
- Frank's breach of etiquette when he went to London was that he did not ask the Highbury folks what errands they might like him to do for them.



Coughley or Worcester Factory, late 18C

- Covered dish and tray for gruel perhaps? Mr. Woodhouse's love of gruel
- Gruel: a pint of water and a spoonful of oatmeal. Boil and stir often. Strain through a sieve and salt to taste. Add fresh butter and stir it in until it is smooth. Add some flavoring is you wish like nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, or lemon.
- The Highbury folks doted on Mr. Woodhouse as would be becoming of a man of his status and age.

Mr. Woodhouse: "You must go to bed early, my dear---and I recommend a little gruel to you before you go. You and I will have a nice basin of gruel together. Nice smooth gruel, thin, but not too thin."

Jane Austen's carriage

- Her brother Henry lived in London and let her use his barouche, a stylish type of open carriage used by the wealthy. This was equivalent to sending her out in a Rolls Royce with a chauffeur.
- Providing transportation in Highbury was a matter of etiquette and status. After all, the streets would be full of horse manure so even a short distance would be unbecoming.
- Jane wrote about her experience: **The Driving about, the Carriage been open, was very pleasant.--- I like my solitary elegance very much, and was ready to laugh all the time, at my being where I was. --- I could not but feel that I had naturally small right to be parading about London in a Barouche."**

Jane's World: Tea Times



Tilt-top Tea Table, 1760, Mahogany

- Tilt-top Tea Table, 1740, Walnut - William Savory, Cabinet maker - created in Philadelphia

Tea times and tea etiquette differentiated the classes:

“Mrs. Elton who had lived in Bath was shocked....at the poor attempt at rout-cakes (biscuits or cookies) and there being no ice (ice cream) in the Highbury card parties.”

“Mrs. Elton would soon show them how every thing out to be arranged. “In the course of the spring she must return their civilities by one very superior party---in which her card tables should be set out with their separate candles and unbroken packs in the true style---and more waiters engaged for the evening than their own establishment could furnish, to carry round the refreshments at exactly the proper hour, and in the proper order.”

Jane wrote in 1978: “We dine now at half after Three; in 1808: “We never dine now till five.”

- Home built in 1772 in Charleston, SC for Colonel John Stuart, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the British Government.
 - The room was one-room wide that allowed cooling ocean breezes to flow through the rooms. Grandest room in the home. Also served as a ball room.
 - On the second floor. The closed door at the far end led to the balcony, and there were windows where the two passageways now connect this *room* with the *Charleston Dining Room*.
 - Tea was relatively expensive so if you offered it to your guests, it implied some degree of social status. The new, fashionable, expensive beverage naturally required new, fashionable and very expensive equipment to properly serve it: porcelain, woodworkers created tea tables, silversmiths handcrafted tea sets. Ladies had tea parties to show off their expensive tea and tea things
 - Mantel is Rococo, from English book of designs and probably carved by an English carver.
 - Chippendale by English cabinet maker Thomas Chippendale furniture popular for the times.
 - James Ford Bell and his wife, Louise Heffelfinger gave to museum.
 - In the 18th century, seating furniture lined the walls when not in use and the floors were left bare.
-
- Tea times was a fashion statement and a class distinction.
 - Dinner started later and later as was the fashion. Tea was served in the drawing room one or two hours later. By the Regency period, dinner was served at 6, 7, or even later.
 - People called all hours of the day before dinner “morning” and the period between dinner and tea as “afternoon” “Evening” did not start until after tea.
 - In the country, dinner remained earlier in the day. This was not only old-fashioned, but a class distinction. Dinner times changed for the Austens over time.

Jane's World: A resourceful woman



Pianoforte, George Gilfert, 1800-1825, mahogany

Mrs. Elton has a high opinion of herself: A woman with fewer resources than I have...

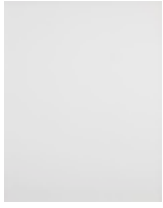
Emma's reasoning for never marrying: If I know myself, Harriet, mine is an active, busy mind, with a great many independent resources. . . If I draw less, I shall read more; if I give up music, I shall take to carpet-work. etc. etc. etc.

- A woman's "resources" included playing the piano.
- When Jane was ten, she and Cassandra who was 12, spent a year and a half at the Reading Ladies Boarding School which was the inspiration for Mrs. Goddard's Boarding School.
- Harriet Smith, like Jane and her sister, was a parlor boarder - a special status that cost twice what an ordinary boarder was charged.
- Parlor boarders ate breakfast and dinner with the other girls in the schoolroom, but they took their tea and supper with the owner of the school. They were treated to an elegance they were accustomed to having at home: graceful little tea tables, china cups and teapots, muffins and cake, and adult conversation.
- Mahogany veneer with applewood and ebony inlays
- Notice the foot pedal

Why is the vanity of Emma easier for us to accept than that of Mrs. Elton?

ENCORE!

Jane's World: Full of obscurities



Icehouses, 2001, Catherine Opie

- Opie studies relationships especially as they relate to communities. She documents those relationships in terms of the spaces they inhabit. In this case, ice house communities.
- How are our identities shaped by our surrounding architectures?
- This is very obscure. In what ways did Jane Austen explore obscurities?

Frank Churchill: “perhaps Miss Woodhouse--I think you can hardly be quite without suspicion” and “I am sure you have seen and understood me”

Jane's World: Memento Mori



The Rose Gardens, 2008, Sarah Jones

- Jones uses lighting techniques to create a black backdrop for the naturalness of flowers.
- Here she photographs the same rose bushes from two sides.
- I can't help but compare this story to Downton Abbey that takes place a century later. From the beginning of the first season, we know the social changes that will take place to the gentry class as we watch the show.
- Jane Austen is living in the Regency Era as she writes about it. She doesn't have the luxury of hindsight. Yet, do you think she may be hinting at changes yet to come - wishful thinking or thoughtful intuition?

Jane's World: It's a small world after all



Pig, Ricardo Bloch, 1979, silver print

- From his Minnesota County Fair portfolio
- PHD in Molecular Biology from Harvard in 1975
- Bush Artist Fellowship 1995
- Numerous positions and awards here in MN
- Lifescape Books <http://ricardobloch.com>

What would Emma's Lifescape book look like?