

Contents

Foreword / 7

Introduction / 9

The second Labor of Hercules / 9

After history / 11

Whence, how, whither? / 13

1 Perspectives on Progress: A History / 15

The Great Exhibition / 15

The meaning of the history of ideas / 18

Koselleck: the history of ideas of progress / 21

Ideas of progress and related categories of change / 26

2 From the Ancients and the Moderns: A Door to the Future / 29

The Querelle between the Ancients and the Moderns / 30

A new look at an old question / 34

Perfection and perfectibility / 39

3 From Romanticism to the Avant-Garde / 45

The nineteenth century: Comte and Spencer / 47

Nineteenth-century cultural science:

from cave paintings to Rembrandt / 51

Modernism and the avant-garde / 54

4 On Making Revolution / 61

'The little Modernsky' / 61

The present as the past of the future / 63

The structure of artistic revolutions / 65

The progress argument / 70

The periodizing museum / 75

Progress as aporia / 77

5 Innovation in Painting and Architecture: De Stijl / 81

Abstraction and the beauty of a grain silo / 81

The new style and the spirit of the time / 88
Innovation in architecture / 91
Innovation in painting / 94
Consistent development / 103
The artistic revolution of De Stijl / 106
De Stijl and posterity / 110

6 The End of Art / 115

The cakewalk in the present / 115
The avant-garde as apotheosis: the end of art / 116
Forward again: the end of Arthur Danto / 122
Farewell to progress? / 126

7 A New Approach to an Old Concept / 131

Ever richer / 131
Art as cognition / 135
Progress as regulative principle / 143

Notes / 147

Bibliography / 165

Index of Names / 177