



THE NOVEL IN QUESTION
MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN 200

Monday 15 October

The first science fiction novel ever written, *Frankenstein*, leads us on an unsettling journey from the sublime beauty of the Swiss alps to the wind swept wastelands of the Arctic Circle. The narrative arose from a friendly competition for the best horror story by Lord Byron, Percy Shelley and 18 year-old Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin as they travelled together in the wilds of Switzerland. Mary Shelley won; perhaps her competitors stood no chance against such fierce intellect, insight and passion. Mary, daughter of the feminist Mary Wollstonecraft and the philosopher Godwin, creates the story of a grotesque experiment in which Viktor Frankenstein creates a hideous but sentient monster only to have the monster turn on him. In the process, Shelley engages us in a modern, uncannily prescient discussion of the dangers of artificial intelligence, especially the potential within robots for their carefully calibrated emotional systems to turn against their creators.

NB: It is not essential to have read the book for this study day, but if you would like to, (and we do urge you to, as it is an engaging story), we would recommend the Penguin Classics edition.

All Culture in Question lectures take place in the Art Workers Guild, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, unless otherwise indicated. Coffee is served at 10.30, the lecture begins at 11, and a light lunch with wine is served at 1 pm. The event ends by 3.30 p.m.

£85 INSCAPE members, £95 non-members. Your family, friends and neighbours who have not previously attended an Inscape lecture are most welcome to be our guests.