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art learning resource – historic art collections

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art learning resource – historic art collections

This resource will support visits to the Historic Art Galleries at National Museum Cardiff and has been written to help teachers and other group leaders plan a successful visit. These galleries mostly show works of art from the 1500s to the 1900s. Each gallery has a theme and displays a range of work such as paintings, drawings and objects made from ceramic and silver.

Booking a visit

Learning Office – for bookings and general enquires

Tel: (029) 2057 3240

Email: education@museumwales.ac.uk

All groups, whether visiting independently or on a museum-led visit, must book in advance.

Gallery talks for all key stages are available on selected dates each term. They last about 40 minutes for a maximum of 30 pupils. A museum-led session could be followed by a teacher-led session where pupils draw and make notes in their sketchbooks. Please bring your own materials.

The information in this pack, however, enables you to run your own teacher-led session and has information about some key works of art and questions that will encourage your pupils to respond to those works.

Art Collections Online

Many of the works here and others from the Museum's collection feature on our website within a section called Art Collections Online. This can be found at www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/art/online/ and includes information about the location of the work and much more.



art learning resource – historic art collections

Will all works of art be on display?

If you are visiting to see specific works, please check beforehand to make sure that they will be on display by contacting the Learning department. Galleries do sometimes change and works of art are removed from display for lots of reasons.

How do I plan a successful visit to the art galleries?

- Visit the galleries on your own before the visit.
- Limit the number of artworks to be studied.
- Check that the works you want to study will be on display on the date of your visit. This can be done by phoning the education office or by looking at www.museumwales.ac.uk/en/art/online/
- Limit the amount of time you spend in the galleries (2 - 2½ hours maximum).
- Leave before the pupils have had enough.
- Divide your pupils into smaller groups.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to work on focused activities in front of individual art works.
- Ensure a good range of activities that involve looking, talking and making.



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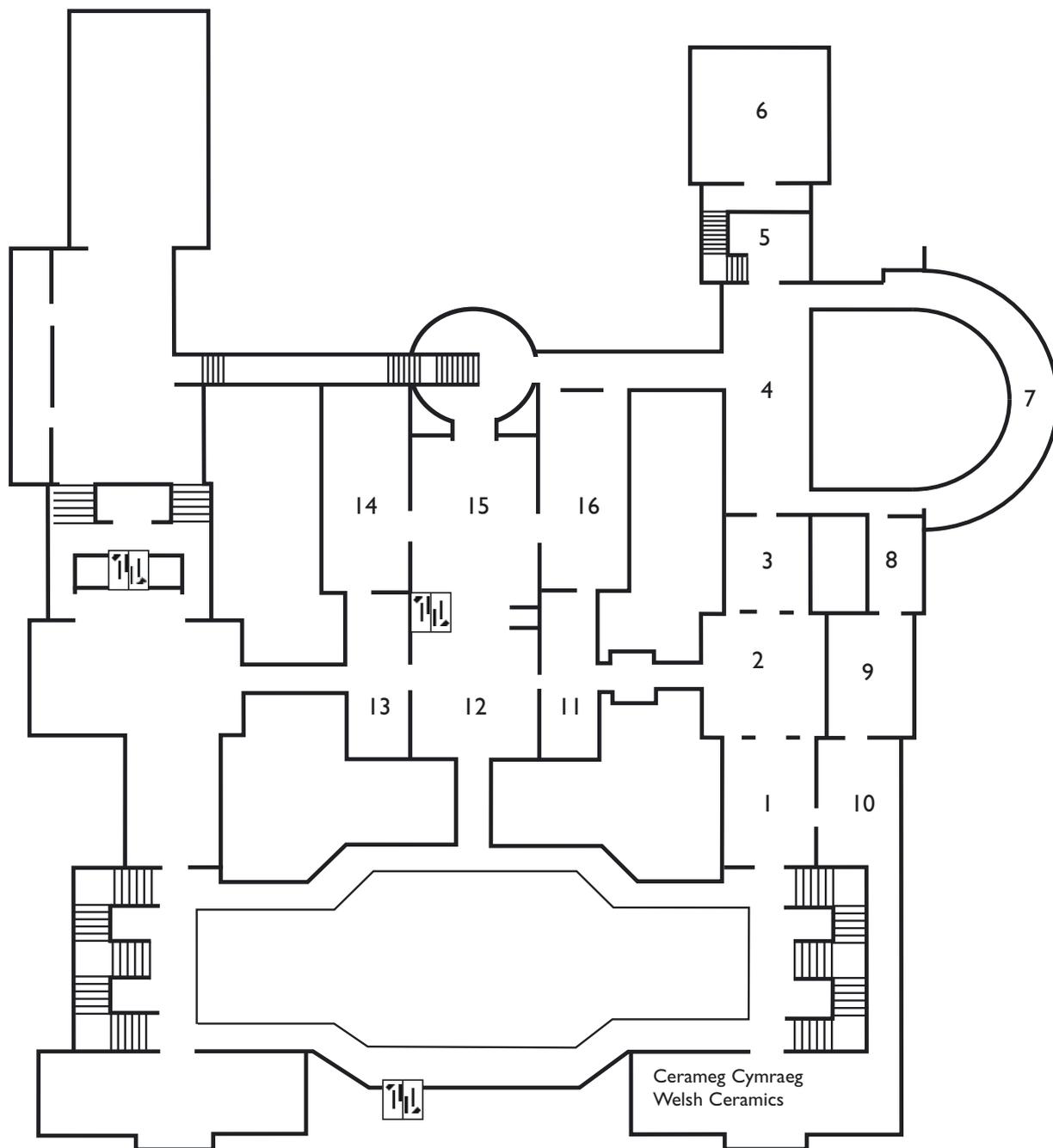
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gallery map



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insight gallery (gallery 1)

This first gallery is an introduction to the different kinds of art that you might expect to find in the Museum. You will see oil paintings, both historical and contemporary, sculpture, silver and ceramic objects and works of art on paper. The actual works on display will change from time to time.

One of the first displays is called **'Your Voice'** and is at present linked to the painting *Six Bells, Abertillery* by L. S. Lowry. Alongside are six labels, each one representing the voice of a different person. This display aims to show that there is more than one possible interpretation of a single work, and that what anyone wants to say about a piece of work can be just as important as what the curators have to say.

Ask your pupils some questions to encourage individual responses to a single work of art. Here are some general suggestions which could be adapted. The first questions focus on what you can see in the work.

- What did you notice first when you looked at the work?
- Describe the colours, lines and shapes in the work.
- Does it remind you of something you've seen before?
- Does the work look realistic?
- Is the artist trying to convey a message through the work?
- Where did the idea for making the work come from?
- How has the work been made?
- What do you like about the work and why?
- What don't you like about the work and why?



insight gallery (gallery 1)

This could lead on to pupils writing their own picture labels. Talk about the kind of information usually found on a label e.g. who made the work, how the work was made, when was it made, why was it made, where did the ideas come from for making the work etc.

Talk about other information that you would like to read on a label. Your pupils may wish to include this information on their label e.g. what different people like or don't like about the work, how to look at the work, what should you look at first, is there a message in the work.

The second display in this gallery is called '**Curator's Choice**'. A museum or art gallery curator is someone who acquires, cares for, develops, displays and interprets a collection of artefacts or works of art. Here we have asked individual curators to select a work from the collection and then write about their choice. We then asked other people to write their views on the work. This second group of people were chosen because they are linked in some way to the subject matter of the work.

learning from a portrait

We can learn much about the sitter, the period and even about the artist, just by looking at a portrait, even if we do not know anything factual. Think about what you can establish from the following things:

- The pose or stance of the sitter e.g. formal, inviting, friendly...
- The sitter's expression
- What the sitter is wearing
- Where the sitter is placed e.g. inside, outside...
- What the sitter is doing
- What the sitter is holding or has placed nearby them e.g. any symbolic objects
- Who is actually shown in the portrait – children, servants, animals...
- The artistic style and format of the portrait. Is it formal, traditional, innovative or modern?

Some things to keep in mind when looking at any portrait, by any artist, from any period:

- Who commissioned it and why?
- Who is shown?
- The role of the portrait – why has it been done?
- Where do we think it was meant to be shown?
- Who was meant to see it?
- The setting e.g. what is in the background? what is the environment like?
- The appearance of the sitter – their clothes, pose etc.
- The level of engagement with the viewer. Is the sitter looking directly out of the picture at us, or looking elsewhere?
- Are there any objects or attributes that tell us something about the person, the artist or the period?
- How much of the image was controlled by the sitter? How did they want to be seen? Is it a true likeness or an idealised representation?
- Can we learn anything about the personality of the sitter from the image?
- The role of the artist. Note that many of the artists who painted the Tudor and Stuart portraits in this gallery remain unidentified. Why do you think that is?



learning from a portrait



All of these questions can be used to consider any of the portraits that you see on your visit to the Art in Wales 1500-1700 gallery.

Portraiture became very popular in the 16th century. It was one of the most innovative and important developments in the visual culture of the time. The celebration of an individual's status and wealth through portraiture was a Renaissance concept, developed in Italy and Northern Europe, then later adopted by the Tudor court.

One of the first Welsh persons to have a portrait painted in this tradition was Henry Tudor, King Henry VII. It was during the reign of his son, Henry VIII (1509-1547) that the fashion for portraiture increased significantly. This was stimulated by the arrival of several Continental artists to the Court, most notably Hans Holbein the Younger (1497-1543), a German artist. Holbein's work established Northern portrait conventions that were a potent influence on Welsh artists, and soon the wealthy mercantile classes, as well as members of the Court, began demanding their own portraits.



art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

Tudor and Stuart Portraits

This section aims to encourage pupils to think about how wealth, status, identity and personality are communicated through portraiture.

Questions to initiate discussion

- What is a portrait? An image which represents a person, or a group of people, often aiming to capture their personal identity.
- How many people can be included in a portrait? It could be one, two, or even more. This would be called a 'group portrait' e.g. a family portrait.
- What form can a portrait take? It could be a painting, a drawing, a photograph, film, sculpture and much more.
- Does a portrait have to just show a face? It could be a full-body, a $\frac{3}{4}$ length, or it could just show the face. Sometimes people and artists choose to represent the individual through using objects.

Traditionally it was mostly the wealthy and powerful members of society who had the money and desire to commission portraits of themselves and their families. Many portraits of the royal family, the aristocracy, landowners and the gentry were created during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries.



art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

Portraits were commissioned for many reasons – to be used as propaganda, to record an important event, as an instrument in a marriage arrangement, as a memorial, or as a gift for example. Those who had the money and the desire to have a portrait made of themselves or their families would probably have done so for the following reasons:

- To display their wealth, importance and status
- To have a visual record of themselves for prosperity
- For commemoration or as a memorial
- To show the extent and size of their family

Such portraits had a vital official and public function and were made to be prominently displayed in the public rooms of the house. Portraits were also commissioned for more private or personal reasons, such as the portrait miniature, a popular tradition in the 16th and 17th centuries.

During Tudor and Stuart times portrait painting was very popular, but a portrait back then did not necessarily have the same function as a portrait today. It was in the 19th and 20th centuries that things started to change. There was an increased demand for portraits among the new rising middle-classes. Portraits also became a popular way for artists to explore new aesthetic and stylistic techniques, especially through self-portraiture.

Today, portraits can still be created for similar reasons to those commissioned hundreds of years ago – to display wealth and status. However, many more people can make or commission portraits today for a number of different reasons, such as school photographs, portraits of newborn babies or wedding portraits.

art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

The Goodman Portraits

British School, artist unknown

Edward Goodman of Ruthin, about 1550

Edward Goodman (1476-1560) of Ruthin was a wealthy and well-known figure. He was one of the earliest patrons of portraiture in Wales. He commissioned an image of himself in 1550. The artist is unidentified. This image, although powerful and assertive has been painted quite simply in an unsophisticated manner. The family crest is displayed prominently in the corner.

Goodman wears the rich costume with fur collar and luxurious red sleeves of a prosperous tradesman. He wears a mourning ring decorated with the *memento mori* device of a skull. This Latin phrase, translated as 'remember you will die' was often used to remind people of their own mortality. He holds a small scroll with the Welsh words *Offeren pawb yn i galon* (Each man's prayer is in his heart).



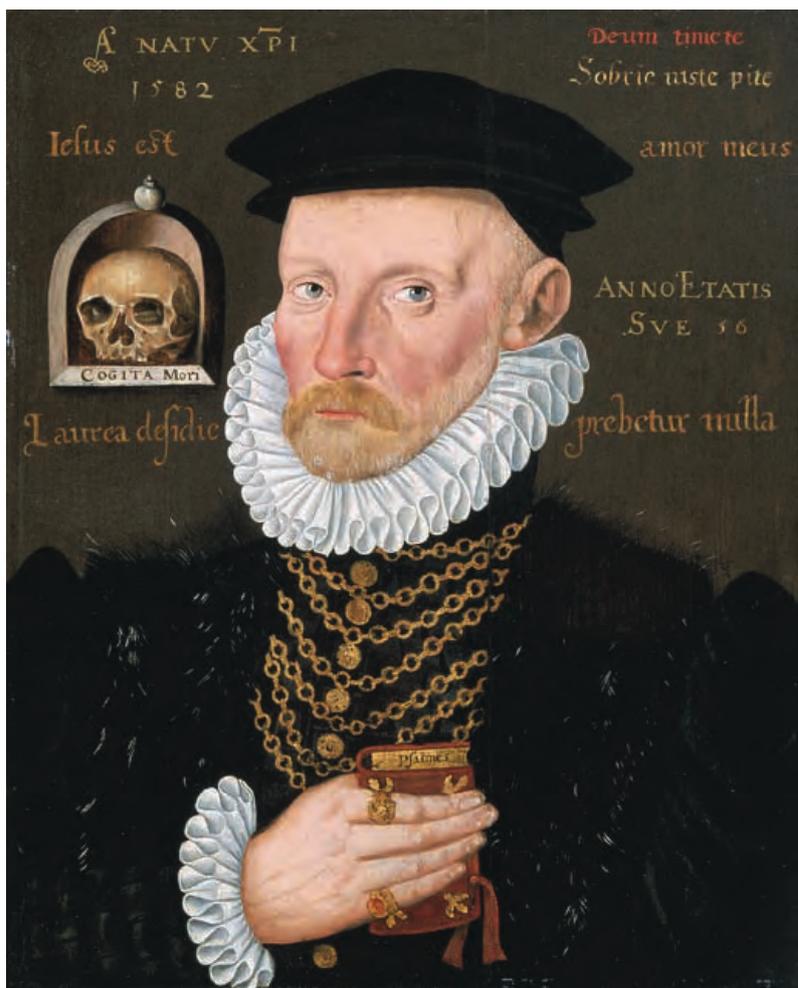
art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

British School, artist unknown *Gawen Goodman of Ruthin, 1582*

Gawen Goodman (1526-1604) was the son of Edward Goodman. This image, along with that of his father, hung in the parlour of their family home, Exmewe House in Ruthin.

He is shown in a ruff and cap, wearing a gold chain and memorial ring, and holding a psalter inscribed *Psalmes*. The psalter refers to his religious devoutness and the clothes and jewellery allude to his wealth, status and prosperity.

The numerous Latin inscriptions painted around the sitter insist on his devout goodness and Christian moral life – *Deum timere* (Fear God), *Iesus est amor meus* (Jesus is my love). The skull in the niche is accompanied by the inscription *Cogita Mori* (Remember death).



In contrast to the impression given by this portrait, a verse written in the 16th century talks about Gawen's excessive drinking and that he had a reputation for being extremely tight with his money. Gawen was, however, very keen to establish and record the prestige and heritage of his family – he organized several monuments to his father in Ruthin church, as well as commissioning busts and portraits of other members of the family.

art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

Netherlandish School

William Herbert, 1st Earl of Pembroke (1507-1570)

William Herbert came from a Monmouthshire family and became an important political and military figure in sixteenth century England and Wales. His first wife was Anne Parr, the sister of Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's last queen. It was through her influence that he became rich and powerful. He acquired extensive land in Glamorgan for his services to the King, and in 1550 he was given ownership of Cardiff Castle by the young King Edward VI.

William Herbert is shown in this portrait approaching the end of his successful military career. He is wearing a very ornate suit of armour, probably made in Milan. The armour itself is known as a medium cavalry 'demi lance' and extends only to the knees, which made it easier for a mounted soldier to ride. We cannot be sure whether this suit was ever worn in battle, however proof of its existence was found in the Earl's 1559 inventory. The helmet, which completes the outfit, is shown on the table.



The shield at the top left hand corner shows his Coat of Arms in its centre, and it is inscribed with the words *HONI SOIT QUI MAI Y PENSE* which translates as 'shame

upon him who thinks evil of it'. This phrase was the motto of the Knights of the Garter, a very prestigious honour that William had received in 1549. The badge of the order can be seen hanging around his neck – a medallion which has a picture of St George killing a dragon. William's Coat of Arms is made up of seven different coats, including his own. Coats of Arms (or Family Crests) are often included in portraits to remind us of the illustrious heritage and powerful connections of the sitter.

His relaxed and confident pose gives an impression of authority and importance. Herbert had this portrait painted to demonstrate his wealth, his social status and his success in life.

art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

Adriaen van Cronenburgh (1520/3-1604) *Katheryn of Berain, 1568*

This formal but unusual $\frac{3}{4}$ -length portrait shows Katheryn of Berain, the daughter of Tudor ap Robert Vychan of Berain in Denbighshire. She had four husbands and several children, which later earned her the title of the 'Mother of Wales'. In 1567, she married the prosperous merchant Sir Richard Clough, who came from Wales but went to live in Antwerp. Clough was highly influenced by the art and culture of the Low Countries, which prompted his interest in portraiture. In 1568, he commissioned this portrait of Katheryn by the Friesian artist Adriaen van Cronenburgh. This portrait would have had a huge impact when it was brought back to Wales, being highly innovative and unusual in comparison to anything that was being produced here at the time.

The portrait is sombre, serious, and dark in both mood and colour. Katheryn is expressionless, aloof and reserved – she makes no eye contact with the viewer. While her clothes are dark and austere, her wealth is represented in the elegant style of her dress, with its elaborate sleeves and ruff, and also in her head-dress, gold jewellery and chain. Her appearance is in keeping with the contemporary fashion for women of that time – to have a very high hairline, large smooth forehead, thin eyebrows and pale skin.

Women often plucked back their hair to achieve this look, and they used white face powder, held on with a thin layer of egg-white glaze, to ensure an ivory complexion – a practice that became especially popular from the start of the reign of Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603). This face powder was often made using white lead – a particularly poisonous compound that could cause terrible skin corrosion and scarring later in life.



art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

In keeping with Northern artistic traditions, this portrait is acutely detailed. Note especially the detail on the pendant around Katheryn's neck, and her many rings. She is also holding a locked book – perhaps a diary, bible or prayer book. This suggests both her personal beliefs and spiritual life, and also hints at the private nature of such aspects of her identity.

She rests her left hand on a human skull – a traditional Northern symbol of mortality. This skull is intended to indicate to the viewer that Katheryn is aware of her own unavoidable death, but that she is trying to ensure spiritual salvation by living a good Christian life on Earth. Many other objects could be used to portray the same meaning in paintings, such as hour-glasses, playing cards, bubbles, wilting flowers or clocks. The skull can also signify the sitter's intellectual learning and knowledge, an idea that is strengthened here by the book that Katheryn holds – a particularly unusual quality to stress in connection with a woman at this time.



art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

British School, artist unknown

Sir Thomas Mansel of Margam and his wife, Jane, about 1625

This is a double portrait that shows a $\frac{3}{4}$ -length view of Sir Thomas Mansel of Margam – a member of one of the wealthiest families in south Wales at the time. The Mansel family of Oxwich became wealthy by investing in monastic lands following Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Sir Thomas was the MP for Glamorgan. He inherited the family house in 1595, which had been built on the site of Margam Abbey, near Neath. During the first two decades of the 17th century, this generation of the family commissioned several portraits in the formal heraldic style, such as this. The purpose of this type of portrait was not to show the personality of the sitter but to publicly display the social status and wealth of the family.

The costumes worn by the couple, as well as their serious formal expressions and stance, are very prominent in this image. Dark and sombre clothes became very popular in England towards the end of the reign of King Henry VIII (who ruled from 1508-64). The attire in this image is indeed highly formal and dark in colour, but is also luxuriously encrusted with gold embroidery and pearls, all painted



with meticulous observation and accuracy by the artist. Both sitters wear fashionable lace ruff collars around their necks, a fashion which was associated with social status and aristocratic privilege at that time. An earlier example of the ruff can be seen in the portrait of Katheryn of Berain. During the 16th century, ruffs became increasingly large and elaborate, as seen here.

The fact that the couple are shown holding hands is an unusual feature in a portrait of this time, and hints at their intimacy and personal lives. Jane is holding a marigold in her other hand which may refer to their daughter Mary, who appeared with her parents in another related painting, very similar to this one here.

art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

Mostyn Ewer & Basin, about 1561

The Mostyn Ewer & Basin belonged to the Mostyn family from Flintshire, one of the oldest and most celebrated families in North East Wales. They were – and still are – one of the leading landowners of the area. They were great collectors and patrons, particularly of the Welsh bards. On his death, Thomas Mostyn's patronage was celebrated with the composition of at least two poems written in his honour, the true sign of a great and worthy gentleman.

Mostyn family tradition wrongly claimed that the Mostyn Ewer and Basin was given to Richard ap Hywel of Mostyn (d.1540) by Henry VII, who is said to have visited Mostyn prior to the Battle of Bosworth. The will of Sir Thomas Mostyn (1617) lists them as 'one silver basin and ewer parcel gilt... which said plate is the old plate which were my fathers'. These items were bequeathed to Sir Thomas' son, Sir Roger Mostyn.



The Coat of Arms is that of the Mostyn family, to whom these objects first belonged. In Tudor times Coats of Arms were an important way of displaying the status of a family and their associations by marriage with other prestigious families. They are traditionally divided into four sections (quartered) with each section displaying a separate alliance. In English heraldry, however, there is no limit to the number of alliances which feature, and in this case the shield displays six sections.

Although beautiful as a decorative object, this jug and basin also had a very specific use – for washing hands at a grand dinner table. Scented water would be poured from the jug, over the hands and into the bowl. The centre is raised so that the Coat of Arms would be visible even if the bowl was full of water.

Ewers and basins were important status symbols among the gentry, and would probably have been kept for use during a ceremonial occasion or a special banquet. When not in use they were probably kept on a sideboard or dining table, providing an opportunity for the owner to display his up-to-date taste.

art in wales, 1500-1700 (gallery 10)

This ewer and basin was made about 1561 in Bruges, a Belgian city renowned for its production of luxury goods in the 16th century. It's made from silver which has been gilded in parts. Some of the design has been engraved into the surface of the silver, while the raised garlands and heads were hammered out from behind.

The basin is in a Renaissance style which was very fashionable during the period. That it found itself amongst the possessions of a Welsh gentry's family would therefore have been testimony not only to their up-to-date taste, but also to their status.

- What do you think this is?
- Think of words to describe it.
- Do you have anything in your home today that looks like this?
- Do you think it was used or is it only a decorative object?
- What kind of person might have owned it?

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

Cima da Conegliano (1459/60-1517) *Virgin and Child*, about 1502

This painting shows the Virgin Mary seated on a marble wall comfortably holding the baby Jesus on her lap and cradling his foot in her hand. The two are gazing peacefully at one another, which, coupled with their embrace, reveals the warmth of feeling and closeness of mother and son. While Mary's gaze appears sad – perhaps because she had knowledge of her son's future – the child looks on lovingly. The motherly features of Mary and the short chubby legs of the child make the figures look more realistic. Religious figures of this time were often painted to look human, making it easier for viewers to empathise with them.

For religious images to be understood it was important that the figures were recognisable, so artists often used clues and symbols in their paintings to help the viewer identify the figures portrayed. Mary's robes for example were almost always painted blue with a red gown underneath. The traditional red tunic signifies Mary's virginity, and the blue mantle refers to motherhood.



The landscape in the background acts as a backdrop for the figures, and is possibly also a place local to the artist. Stories and figures from the Bible were often depicted in real and recognisable landscapes, making it easier for people to relate to them. This landscape with the fortress and walled town also appears in other works by Cima. The mountains dominate the skyline, and to the right of the painting the tiny figure of a Turkish horseman can be seen.

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

The time when this was painted became known as the **Renaissance**, which means 'rebirth'. It was a time of rediscovery and a revival of interest in the art and architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. During this era artists developed techniques which enabled them to paint more realistically. Painting with oils directly onto a panel became more popular. Oil paints take a long time to dry which meant that artists could work more slowly and include more detail in their compositions. In this particular work Cima shows his painterly skills by depicting the light falling on the child's skin and his mother's clothes, making them look very realistic.

During the Renaissance period the Church often used religious pictures to spread its message. Many churchgoers were illiterate at that time, and books were rare, so the Church encouraged people to learn stories from the Bible through pictures. These images made individuals feel closer to the religious figures in the stories, and enabled them to identify with their feelings. Pictures of the Madonna and Child were very popular. They were seen as more than simply pictures of a mother and child – they were also a reminder that in the Christian tradition, Jesus is the incarnation of the word of God, and also that the Virgin Mary symbolised the institution of the Church.

- Describe what you can see here.
- Think of words to describe the feelings in this picture e.g. happy, sad, glad, content, angry, unlucky, moving, gloomy, pleased...
- Who do you feel close to in your life? How do you show them your feelings towards them?
- How might baby Jesus be feeling?
- Have you got a favourite picture of yourself with your parents? What are you doing in that picture?
- Do you ever spend time alone with your parents? If so, what sort of things do you enjoy doing together?
- Do you think of your parents as your friends? Are they different kinds of friends to the people you play with at school?
- In paintings artists often use facial expressions to convey thoughts and feelings. What do you think Mary would say if she could speak from this painting?

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

Amico Aspertini (about 1474-1552)

Virgin and Child between St Helena and St Francis altarpiece, 1520

This religious painting shows the Christ child in the centre. He looks directly out of the painting, making a connection between the viewer and himself. He is being held by the Virgin Mary who stands in the centre of the picture and is dressed in her traditional blue and red robe, which helps people to recognise her. Over time, the need to tell stories without using words led to religious figures sometimes being recognisable by their dress alone.

Objects also have symbolic meaning, and they contribute to people's understanding of a painting. The crystal sphere under Christ's foot shows God creating Adam – the creation of mankind. A page of the book in Mary's hand is marked by the infant's chubby fingers while his other hand clasps a red coral necklace. This necklace would have been recognised by Italian worshippers as a charm used to guard against the 'Evil Eye'.



The pair's loving embrace indicates their relationship as mother and son. Mary's plain features and her child's plump body bring an element of realism to the painting, which viewers of the period could easily relate to.

St Francis stands to the right of Mary and the Christ child, and St Helena to the left. St Francis is shown in a friar's tunic. He is often depicted in such a patched tunic, a symbol of the humility and poverty associated with the Franciscan order of which he was the founder. He bears the marks of the stigmata on his hand. These wounds symbolise the crucifixion, and refer to his intense empathy with Christ.

St Helena is the only figure who is looking at the child. She is said to have been the one who discovered the cross on which Jesus was crucified. She is holding a cross

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

as her symbol. The three other figures gaze directly out of the picture, a device used to make viewers feel as though the image is speaking directly to them.

The frieze along the bottom has been painted to look like carved stone and shows figures and stories from the bible. Moses, raising his arm in anger at finding his people worshipping a statue of the Golden Calf, can be seen on the left. On the right are idols falling before the coming of Christ, with a prophet and a sibyl. All of these stories have moral messages which would undoubtedly have been explained during Church services, as a reminder of the teachings of the Bible and of the importance of disciplined worship.

The figures in the background at the top left hand corner are Joseph and Mary on their flight into Egypt, after having been warned of Herod's impending order to kill all children under the age of two.



This painting was initially intended as an altarpiece and would have been seen by individuals when they visited the church. Its role, therefore, was to remind people of the rules which governed the Christian faith, and of the importance of adhering to them. In particular, the carving at the base of the painting warns against disobeying the Ten Commandments, giving into temptation and worshipping false idols.

- Describe what you can see here.
- Who is the most important figure here? How do we know this?
- Religious pictures like this were often used to communicate or to tell a story from the Bible. Can you think of anywhere else in life where we use pictures or symbols instead of words to communicate messages?
- Can you think of a story you would like to tell about an aspect of your life. Could you tell that story using pictures? What images could you use to tell that story?
- The images in this painting provided viewers with a reminder of the right and wrong ways in which they should live their lives. How do people today learn right from wrong?

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665)

Landscape with the body of Phocion being carried out of Athens, 1648

This painting tells a heroic story of a good man, Phocion who was born in 402 BC. He played an important part in the city life of Athens, but was wrongly believed to have betrayed the city to its enemy and was sentenced to death. Because he was believed to be a traitor, his burial within the city wall was forbidden. Two men were employed to carry him out of the city, where his body was later burnt. This painting is one of a pair. The other, at the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, shows a woman, believed to be Phocion's wife, collecting his ashes and returning them to Athens.



Reproduced with permission of the Earl of Plymouth, painting on long loan to the National Museum of Wales.

The landscape in this painting is not just a background, but is actually part of the story. It is a stage for a drama of death. Poussin has painted the idea of a far away time, where men wear togas and buildings featured statues. He frequently sketched the countryside around Rome, and he used what he had learnt to portray this imaginary landscape of Classical Antiquity.

The composition of this painting – the way the different parts have been put together – is carefully arranged. Lines are used to direct our eyes through and around the picture. The white shroud and the shape of the body immediately draws the eye to the bottom of the painting, to the main subject of the work. From here the road on which they have travelled leads the eye along a zigzag path into the painting, back through fields, towards the city and into the far distance. The wild and neglected land in the foreground becomes more pastoral

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

towards the middle distance. The curved shape of the tree in the foreground also helps to lead the eye into the centre of the picture.

Rhythm is introduced by the repetition of elements like shapes and colours. Tree shapes are repeated, and the red clothing worn by many of the people moves the eye from one part of the picture to another. Athenians in the middle of the painting continue to go about their daily activities despite the presence of a dead body in their midst. A snapshot of daily life is given through the portrayal of people bathing, playing instruments, tending sheep and praying.

The illusion of distance is created through the use of perspective. Objects appear smaller in the distance and become larger as you move into the foreground. The colours in the background are lighter than the darker, warmer tones in the front. The contrast between dark and light areas within the painting helps to create drama but also highlights some areas while making others look more mysterious. The man on horseback, for instance, seems to be riding out of darkness, while the shroud in the foreground is strongly lit thus drawing attention to Phocion's key role in this story.

Nicolas Poussin was a Frenchman but Rome was his adopted town. He was inspired by the countryside around Rome, and by its ancient ruins. His study of ancient Roman sculpture combined with his wish to depict a bygone time influenced the development of his Grand History paintings. He worked mostly for private collectors, painting mythological, biblical and historical subject matters. Towards the end of the 1640s the landscape became an increasingly important element of his work.

History painting was one of the most respected types of painting in the 17th century, and artists who painted in this style were held in the highest regard. Private collectors would often request paintings depicting scenes from ancient stories because they wanted to show off their knowledge. Some of the stories depicted would entertain, while others had a moral lesson.

Poussin painted this work towards the end of his career, at a time when painting the landscape was becoming increasingly important to him. Here he combined his wish to depict a heroic story with his desire to paint a carefully arranged landscape.

- What did you notice first when you looked at this painting?
- How is the foreground different to the background?
- What do you think has just happened before this scene?
- Take your eye for a walk around the picture. Start by going along the path. Where do you go from there?
- If you were the man looking after the sheep in this picture, what do you think you could see and hear?

art in italy, 1500-1700 (gallery 2)

● Gallery activities

- ▶ Write a dialogue between any two people in this picture.
- ▶ Write a newspaper report about this event. Write a headline and then a news story.

● Back at school

- ▶ Collect examples of stories that are told through pictures – comics, illustrations in books, religious stories, photographs in newspapers. Choose a story that you know well and tell it through pictures.

art in the netherlands, 1500-1700 (gallery 3)

The Le Nain Brothers *A Quarrel*, 1640

A group of men, two of them in breastplates, and two boys are playing cards, using a drum as a table. The focus of the composition is the card game and the obvious quarrel that has broken out between the players. A single card has landed on the floor and one of the men is brandishing his weapon, ready to strike a fellow player. The facial expression of each figure contributes to the tension captured in this painting. The pale young boy on the right appears the most shocked as he stares open mouthed at the floor. The old man on the left raises a bottle and stares intensely out towards the viewer as if he is inviting us into the drama.

The colours here are sombre, confined mostly to shades of grey and brown. The reflective surface of the breastplates, red and the shiny, pulls the eye to the centre of the work.



art in the netherlands, 1500-1700 (gallery 3)

The Le Nain brothers were French and they worked from their studio in Paris. In France during the 1600s a hierarchy of painting categories was developed. History painting was regarded as the most important, followed by portraiture, landscape and still life. Scenes of everyday life, which became known as 'genre' scenes were regarded as the lowest in the hierarchy. In the Netherlands however genre painting was very popular. The Dutch genre painters depicted every aspect of daily life from the life of the upper classes to cafes full of peasants.

Some Dutch genre paintings were designed to teach lessons in morality. Although the Le Nain brothers were working in this tradition of Dutch genre painting, their work is generally less moralising in tone. However, in this painting there are possible warnings against fighting, drinking, setting bad examples for children and even idleness.

There were three Le Nain brothers in all, and their style of painting was very similar. They signed their work by only using their surname. It is therefore difficult to distinguish the work of one from another, which is why today their paintings are attributed to the three of them.

- Describe what is happening here.
- What did you notice first when you looked at the work?
- What do you think each person here is thinking?
- What provoked this scene?
- What do you think happens next?
- Describe the mood of this painting e.g. friendly, angry, upsetting, welcoming, amusing, mad, heated, fun...

art in the netherlands, 1500-1700 (gallery 3)

Jan van de Cappelle (1624-1679)

The Calm, 1654

This large painting shows the artist painting his preferred subject – the sea, the sky and ships. The sky, with its dark clouds, dominates the boats below. Van de Cappelle was interested in creating atmosphere in his paintings. The contrast between the darker and the lighter clouds, and the reflections in the still water below all contribute to the atmosphere here.



Although he was mostly interested in creating atmosphere, he also painted very accurate and detailed ships. A range of boats have been painted here, reflecting his genuine interest in shipping. The large boats in the foreground, the area of the picture closest to the viewer, are very detailed. In this scene a person of rank is being rowed from a 'State yacht' towards the fortified town on the right, while soldiers can be seen standing on the deck of a 'lighter' which is loaded with field guns and military supplies. A lighter is a flat-bottomed open cargo boat or barge, used for taking goods to or from a larger vessel when it is being loaded or unloaded.

Compare the boats in the foreground to those in the background. The detailed ships in the foreground give way to smaller, less detailed and paler images of ships in the background. This was one of the ways in which the artist introduced perspective, the impression of 3-dimensional space to his painting.

art in the netherlands, 1500-1700 (gallery 3)

Jan Van de Cappelle lived in Holland, where, during the 17th century, painting pictures of the sea and shipping was becoming very popular. Marine painting as a 'genre' or type of painting was created by the Dutch, whose wealth depended on the sea in the 17th century.

Van de Cappelle is believed to have been a self-taught artist. He collected works by other artists such as Rembrandt and studied them carefully. Because he came from a wealthy family in Amsterdam he did not rely on his income from painting.

- What do you notice first when you look at this work?
- What can you see in the foreground, the middle ground and background?
- Describe the weather in this painting.
- Does the colour of the sky influence the colour of the sea?
- Talk about the different ways the artist has used colour e.g. light against dark, complimentary colours, cold and warm colours.
- What are these boats used for and how can we tell?
- If we wanted to paint this image again and give the impression that the boats were moving what could we change?

● Gallery activities

'Wish you were here'

Ask your pupils to write a postcard to someone from one of these boats. These prompts might help:

- ▶ Describe what you can see from the boat.
- ▶ Talk about the weather and the people who are with you on the boat.
- ▶ Where have you just been and where are you going?

● Back at school

'Near and far'

- ▶ Create a group work, which will explore different ways of suggesting space. The sea, sky and boats could be the subject of your work. Ask the pupils to make individual coloured drawings of boats:

Some large, dark with lots of detail.

Some a little smaller, not as dark with less detail.

Some much smaller in a pale colour with no detail at all.

Arrange the boats on a painted background of sea and sky. Talk about how to create the idea of space. Place the small ones in the distance, overlap with medium sized boats and place the large ones in the front.

art in the netherlands, 1500-1700 (gallery 3)

Frans Snyders

The Poulterers Shop, 1610-1612

This work is typical of the scenes from everyday life and still life pictures painted by Dutch and Flemish artists in the early 17th century, many of which had a symbolic meaning with moral or sexual overtones. Viewers in the seventeenth century would have recognised these hidden messages.

The setting for this painting is a poulterer's shop, from which people could purchase game and vegetables. The central figure is a young kitchen maid dressed in red and white. She is shown selecting chickens to take back to her household. With two already grasped firmly in one hand, she points delicately towards a basket on the table, containing more chickens, as if to tell the old man standing beside her that she requires another.

Meanwhile the older man, presumed to be the shopkeeper, stares transfixed

at her face, an expression which in the context of their surroundings (i.e. the kitchen) would traditionally have had a veiled erotic content.

In the foreground of the painting is a table laden with vegetables and game. On the right, a cockerel and two doves sit amongst a pile of artichokes, while opposite them lie two dead pigeons, a rabbit, a duck and a bittern. Also at the bottom left of the image is a large misshapen bunch of celery. Recent x-ray photographs reveal that the area with the celery bunch originally featured the front legs of a roe buck, which was later painted over.



art in the netherlands, 1500-1700 (gallery 3)

To the right of the old man hangs yet another bird, some onions and a chain of sausages, the skins of which glisten in the incoming light. The artist encourages the viewer to explore the painting in more depth by including an open door behind the maid which draws the eye into a larder and along a shelf displaying pots and kitchen utensils.

Snyders specialised in still life painting, focusing on detailed depictions of birds, vegetables and game. He ensured that the objects that made up this painting were both natural and unforced in their arrangement. Though they appear randomly placed, the position of the animals in particular indicates that the artist had taken a great deal of time studying their physiques and the way in which they fell when dead.

Snyders was known to call upon the talents of other artists to produce his work. In this painting while the animals and fruit were painted by Snyders, the figures were completed in the studio of Sir Peter Paul Rubens. Differences can be seen in the painting styles and the thickness of paint used.

- Can you name the animals and the vegetables in this painting?
- Do they look real?
- Describe the different textures you can see here.
- Describe the colours used here.
- This is a painting of everyday life. Can you think of other paintings you may have seen that show everyday life?
- What do you think is the relationship between the two figures?



learning from the landscape

Nature and the land have inspired artists since ancient times. The Greeks and Romans included the landscape on wall paintings. However by the 16th century, the landscape as a subject in its own right had become less popular. It sometimes appeared as a background for biblical, mythological and historical subjects. In the Museum, there are many examples of the landscape being used purely as a setting for such subjects.

Cima de Conegliano (1459-1517) *Virgin and Child*

The landscape here appears as a setting for this biblical image.

Information about this painting appears in the Art in Italy 1500-1700 (Gallery 2) section.



Claude Lorraine (1600-1682) *Landscape with St Philip Baptising the Eunuch, 1678*

- What do you notice first when you look at this painting?

The landscape is very dominant here. It's not simply used as a background. In a Classical Landscape, such as this one, every object is carefully positioned to create a perfect, harmonious setting.

A sense of space has been created by distinguishing between the foreground, the middle ground and the background. The foreground (the part of the picture closest to the viewer) is dominated by the trees which cast strong shadows onto the ground. The figures and the chariot stand in the middle ground, while the background disappears in a haze of silvery blue colour. We are drawn to the group of figures and the building in the middle ground. They are biblical figures – Claude is using this landscape as a setting for a story from the New Testament.



Claude Lorraine was a French artist who made Italy his home. In later life, he and the artist, Nicolas Poussin, believed that the landscape could be an important subject in its own right. Both worked in Italy and in turn influenced many later artists who visited the Italian countryside, often with patrons, on the Grand Tour. You can learn more about the Grand Tour in the Art in Britain, 1700-1800 (Gallery 4) section.

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

This gallery displays works of art inspired by the landscape of Wales.

About 250 years ago artists started to explore Wales in large numbers. Whilst travelling overseas had become more difficult as a result of the great conflict in Europe, journeying around Wales conversely had become easier. Snowdonia became one of the most admired destinations in Wales, and Caernarfon castle was one of the most popular subjects to be painted.

Artists continue to be inspired by Wales and its landscape today. This gallery therefore shows both historic and contemporary responses to the landscape, side-by-side. The outer wall of the gallery is divided into twelve themes, mostly places or ways of working. Paintings, sculptures, sketchbooks and objects all contribute to the story of the Welsh landscape, and they can all be explored in this gallery.

Questions and discussion

- Why do you think artists visited Wales to paint?
- What makes the Welsh landscape special?
- Wales has many different types of landscapes – can you think of any?
- Describe the landscape near your school or home.
- How do you think the landscape of south Wales is different to the landscape of north Wales? e.g.
 - Are the mountains in the north bigger and rockier?
 - Are the mountains in the south rounder and smaller?
 - Is the south more industrial?
 - Which areas are rural?

Some of the works featured in this gallery will be removed and replaced with others from time to time, however the gallery will continue its focus on the Welsh landscape. Please contact the Learning office before visiting to check if specific works are on display.

The landscape has not always been a popular subject matter. It was once confined to the background of paintings, while history painting was considered more important. Richard Wilson, a Welsh artist nicknamed 'the father of landscape painting' was one of those who challenged this opinion. J M W Turner was another – his naturalistic paintings full of light and atmosphere were considered highly innovative for his time.

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

Richard Wilson (1714-1782)

Dolbadarn Castle, 1760s

This is a painting of Dolbadarn Castle in north Wales with Snowdon in the distance.

The castle holds an important place in the history of Wales and had become a popular tourist attraction by the 18th century. Many artists were also drawn to the wider area of Snowdonia to paint.



- Do you think Richard Wilson painted this place exactly as it really was?
If you were to stand by this lake today and look towards Snowdon, you would notice that some elements look quite different to how they appear in this painting. Richard Wilson has moved some things about, left parts out and even included things that might not even have been there. The house and farm buildings look as if they were from Italy. They have red clay tiles on the roof rather than slate as would be expected on a building from this area of north Wales. If it wasn't for Dolbadarn Castle itself you could think that you were actually in Italy.
- Why do you think he did this?
He may have been trying to paint a view that appears better and more perfect than reality. He did not want to paint a world with nasty weather and poor, ugly

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

buildings, but rather a place where the sun was shining and everything was in the right place – a perfect world.

- Do you think that the kind of weather he has painted here is typical of the weather in north Wales?

It probably looks more like the weather you would find in Italy, with a yellow warm light bathing the landscape.

The arrangement or composition of his painting was pre-determined. Everything has been carefully placed to create a harmonious and balanced effect. It is a Classical landscape, the composition being very similar to that perfected by Claude and Poussin.



The curved tree on the right leads the eye into the middle distance while the dark foreground and the trees form a frame around the view.

- Look for other paintings by Richard Wilson in the Museum.
- Can you see any similarities between them?
- Can you see the same composition being used?

Richard Wilson spent seven years (from 1750 to 1757) travelling and painting in Italy, and was advised during this time to concentrate on painting the landscape. Many artists travelled to Italy to study ancient buildings and the countryside. Some travelled with British aristocrats who were on the Grand Tour, a journey believed to complete a young gentleman's education by immersing him in Classical Antiquity. Wilson was commissioned by a number of such men to paint views of the Italian countryside. This work was painted soon after his return from Italy.

- Do you think he painted this on the spot?

Richard Wilson made lots of drawings on the spot, usually working with black chalk. He never made watercolour studies, but would remember the colours for when he was back in his studio. He may even have inserted images from his Italian sketchbooks into this Welsh landscape.

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

Allowing pupils to develop their own responses to individual works is an important aspect of looking at paintings. This should be done after looking, questioning and having developed an understanding. A series of questions could be asked which could lead to a written or spoken creative response, e.g.

- How many people can you see here?
- Who might these people be?
- Where do you think they have come from?
- What are they doing?
- What are they talking about?
- What noises can they hear?
- If you were playing in this landscape where would you want to be?
- If you were standing by this water how would you feel?

Richard Wilson was the son of a clergyman from Montgomeryshire. He started his career as an apprentice to a portrait painter in London. After travelling to Italy in 1750 he began to concentrate on painting the landscape and was influenced by artists like Poussin and Claude.

Wilson returned to London in 1757 where he set up a studio. He had many pupils who helped him with his work. Eventually he became ill and retired to Colomendy near Mold where he died in 1782.

● Back at school

Exploring composition

The landscape could be the subject of your work. Ask your pupils to decide what they want to include in their landscapes – trees, buildings, mountains, animals, people etc. Cut out the shapes of these from different coloured papers. Get them to place these onto a coloured background and move them around until they are happy with the arrangement. Talk about the different arrangements. Look at the composition in other paintings. Glue the paper collage together.

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

John Brett (1830-1902)

Forest Cove, Cardigan Bay, 1883

This accurately painted work is a typical example of John Brett's coastal landscapes. The brilliant and luminous colour and his observation of rock formations were dominant features of his coastal works.



John Brett had shown an early enthusiasm for both painting and geology. He entered the Royal Academy as a student, however he was more interested in the work of a group of young artists who formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. This secret society of artists, established in 1848 believed in the importance of studying nature attentively and in painting as realistically as possible. This greatly influenced Brett's painting.

During the 1880s Brett rented a house in Pembrokeshire for his family so that he could paint, sketch and photograph the south and west coast of Wales. In his schooner, the Viking, he travelled around the Pembrokeshire and Cardigan coasts accurately recording the geological detail and the rock formations.

This painting displays the Pre-Raphaelites' ideals of truth to nature as well as Brett's interest in geology. The luminosity of colour employs the Pre-Raphaelites' technique of painting into a wet white ground. Brett worked outside in the open air, and in his studio. He often produced oil sketches of landscapes on the spot.

- Do you think this is a painting of a real place?
- Why do you / don't you think this place is real?
- Describe the way that the artist has painted this scene.
- What do you think the artist is mostly interested in?
- Describe the different textures and surfaces.
- Describe the different types of colours you can see.

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

Lionel Walden (1861-1933)

The Steelworks, Cardiff, at night, 1897



- What do you see first of all when you look at this painting?
- What else do you see? There is something hiding in the darkness. Can you see what it is?
- There is a person standing near the tracks holding a lamp. What is he doing?
- Look at the reflection of the chimneys on the wet ground.
- Where does your eye fall when you look at this painting?
- Where do the different light sources come from?
- How does this painting make you feel?
- What kind of landscape is this?
- When do you think it was painted?

This was painted in 1897. Cardiff was only a small town two hundred years ago, however, by the time this was painted it was growing into a large industrial city. Coal was being shipped all around the world from the docks in Cardiff. A steel industry, the 'Dowlais-Cardiff Works' was built on Cardiff East Moors, and many people were talking about it because it was so big. Lionel Walden, an American artist who visited Wales was inspired by this view.

the welsh landscape gallery (gallery 7)

- What do you think the artist is interested in?
Lionel Walden was interested in how industry was changing the landscape. He saw the place at night and must have been drawn to the view confronting him. The light sources against the dark sky, the smoke and the glistening steel all contribute to this dramatic scene.

● Gallery activities

- ▶ Make a drawing of the most dramatic part of this painting. Colour your paper with some bright red, yellow and orange colours. Colour over these with a black wax crayon. Use something like a blunt pencil to draw into the black, revealing the bright colours underneath.
- ▶ Imagine that you are the man standing next to the train line. Describe what you can see.



painting from nature (gallery 8)

Sketching from nature was not a new thing in the 18th century. Artists had often worked outside producing watercolour, pencil and ink sketches. However, by the 1780s landscape painters saw the advantage of producing oil sketches to capture colours, texture and light. One artist who became known for his spontaneous oil sketches was the Welsh artist Thomas Jones.

Thomas Jones (1742-1803)

Buildings in Naples, 1782

- Describe the shapes that you can see here.
- Does the painting look as if it has been painted from memory or from observation?
- What type of buildings can you see here?
- What kind of person might have lived here?
- Is this a **Classical Landscape** like those painted by Poussin and Claude?
- Is it an image of a pretty place, with grand important buildings?
- Do you think it might be a real place?



painting from nature (gallery 8)

Thomas Jones became interested in painting ordinary scenes. These included views of crumbling walls, doorways, rooftops with laundry and shuttered windows. He had not always depicted this kind of subject matter. He once painted grand landscapes, often including a historical subject.

This is a view of Naples, Italy. Thomas Jones went to Italy in 1776 to paint. He lived there for seven years, mostly in Naples. He found a place to stay opposite this building and from here painted a series of small studies of what he could see directly from the window of his studio and from rooftops. He often painted views close to his home. After returning home, he first lived in London but then returned to Wales. There are oil sketches that he painted around his home in Wales also on display in this gallery.

- Can you see how Thomas Jones has only painted part of the building?
- He has cropped the building, which was a very unusual thing to do at the time. Cropping is when a picture is cut to a certain size and shape. It is almost like looking through a camera, and zooming in on a certain part of the image.
- Do you think this painting looks old or new / modern?
This will be your opinion, but many people today think it looks quite modern, as if it could have been painted quite recently. This may be because of the way the building has been cropped, the use of colour and light, and the everyday subject matter.

There are also other landscapes by Thomas Jones in the Museum.

Thomas Jones was a Welsh landscape painter. He came from Pencerrig, between Builth Wells and Llandrindod Wells in mid-Wales. Thomas Jones was one of Richard Wilson's pupils. Like Wilson, he also travelled to Italy and during his time in Naples he produced some oil sketches – personal studies which were not really meant for exhibition. Today, he is probably best known for these studies.

● Back at school

- ▶ Sketch a view that can be seen directly through your classroom window. This will of course depend on your view, but the most humble and unexpected subject matter can result in interesting work. Just think about Thomas Jones' art. You may be able to see parts of buildings. Some of the buildings may look like geometric shapes. Experiment with cropping to produce various compositions.

Collage / mixed media work

Use your drawing to inspire and inform this work. Collect a range of papers in different tones. Cut out different shaped squares and triangles. Arrange on paper, overlapping to create the illusion of distance. Draw some detail onto your papers.

welsh artists of the 18th century (gallery 9)

There were no art schools and only a few patrons in Wales in the 18th century. Welshmen wanting a career as artists were therefore drawn to London. This gallery focuses on a few of those men.

While Wales lacked schools of art, there was, however, a growing interest in the expression of Welsh national identity through music, literature and the visual arts at that time, and many of these artists were drawn to subjects such as the landscape and historic legends of Wales.

Richard Wilson (1714-1782), Thomas Jones (1742-1803), and William Parry (1742-1791) are three of the artists who currently appear in this gallery.

welsh artists of the 18th century (gallery 9)

Thomas Jones (1742-1803)

The Bard, 1774

The bard was the hero of a romantic poem written by an English author Thomas Gray (1716-1771), who knew next to nothing about Wales when he wrote it in the 18th century. By the 19th century, the bard had become a symbol of Wales and the Welsh.

Thomas Gray was a popular poet of the 18th century. He wrote of the invasion of Wales in 1282 by the army of Edward I, and the reputed massacre of all but one of the medieval Welsh bards. The last bard is said to have cursed the English invaders before throwing himself into the river.

Although Gray had never been to Wales, his poem is very descriptive:

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the poet stood;

Gray's intensely visual description of this event and of the surrounding landscape, became an inspiration for painters in the mid-18th century.



welsh artists of the 18th century (gallery 9)

In the 18th century it was believed that 'history' painting (paintings that depicted great events from literature or the bible, with a moral) was far superior to other types of painting such as landscapes or still life.

Thomas Jones produced landscapes and history paintings up to 1776, when he went to Italy for an extended stay. He believed that this painting of the Bard was 'one of the best I ever painted'. In it he placed the gaunt, bearded bard into an imaginary windswept mountain landscape, among the 'cromlechs' and stone circle of a much more ancient, Celtic past.

The stone circle was inspired by Stonehenge, which Jones visited in 1769. He believed that this 'stupendous monument of remote antiquity' was druidic and in this painting he transplants it into a windswept mountain.

Thomas Jones was born in Radnorshire in 1742, the son of a wealthy landowner. He trained with the Welsh landscape artist Richard Wilson in London. He spent eight years in Italy before returning to Britain and, after inheriting his family estates, retired to Radnorshire.



art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

During the reign of Queen Victoria Britain became a rich country. It was a time of great inventions, new ideas and discoveries. The first postage stamp – the penny black – appeared in 1840, the first passenger railway in 1825 and the telephone was invented in 1876.

The invention of photography in 1839 helped some artists. It also encouraged people to think differently about the role of artists.

New materials also became available for artists. By the late 1800s, oil paints were sold ready-mixed in tubes, which made them easier to carry. New chemicals also meant that artists had access to a wider selection of colours.

A range of different subjects became popular, and many art movements were established during this period. The landscape became a popular subject in its own right. Some 19th century artists were drawn to the power of nature and created powerful and emotional responses to it. Others found inspiration in ancient heroic tales and the myths and legends of the past – or alternatively, in scenes from every day life.

During the 1800s machines were invented to do jobs faster than people, and many things were mass-produced. Some artists believed that these factory-made products were badly made. The Arts and Craft movement led by William Morris disliked the unrewarding life of factory workers and sought to raise the standards of craftsmanship.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a group of artists who formed a secret society. They admired medieval art and disliked the influence of the High Renaissance artist Raphael. Often working from life, they believed in truth to nature, setting natural poses against realistic backgrounds. Many of their paintings are scenes from the Bible and from Shakespeare.

art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898)

Perseus and Graiae, 1875-78

- What do you notice first when you look at this work? Silver? Gold? Words? The four figures?
- Can you think of words to describe this work?
- What do you think is happening here?

Perseus was the Greek hero who killed the gorgon Medusa, a vicious female monster who turned those who looked at her into stone. To locate the monster, he needed the help of the three sisters, the Graiae, who had one eye and one tooth between them.

Perseus stole the eye while it was being passed between them and forced them to show him the way to Medusa. Using a mirror to enable him to see the gorgon, without being turned into stone, Perseus beheaded Medusa and used her head as a weapon.



art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

Gesso is the Italian word for the mineral gypsum. Gesso was used to prepare a wooden surface for painting. It could be built up, as in this work, to form a low relief, which was cut into. The artist then worked with oil paints and bronze and silver leaf on top of the carved gesso.

The latin inscription around the edge of this work tells the story. This was the centrepiece of one of Burne-Jones's decorative schemes. Six of the ten scenes were to be oil paintings, and the others low-relief panels. It was not well received when exhibited and Burne-Jones abandoned the remaining low-relief scenes.

PERSEA CONSILIO PALLAS MOVET INSTRUIT ARMIS
 LUMINE PRIVATAE MONSTRANT PENETRALIA GRAIAE
 NYMPHARVM HINC ALES PLANTAS CAPVT OBDITVS VMBRIS
 GORGONA MORTALEM DE NON MORTALIBVS VNAM
 ENSE FERIT GEMINAE SVRGVNT VRGENT QVE SORORES
 SAXEVS EN ATLAS CAESO QVE ER LPTA DRACONE
 ANDROMEDA ET COMITES IAM SAXEA CORPORA PHINEI
 EN VIRGO HORRENDAM IN SPECVLO MIRATA MEDVSAM

art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

John Gibson (1790-1866)

Phaethon driving the Chariot of the Sun

- What do you think is happening here?
- Where is he? On land or flying in the sky?



Phaethon was an ancient Greek hero. He was the son of Helios, god of the sun. He persuaded his father to allow him to drive his chariot through the sky. He lost control and went too close to earth, causing thunder. Jupiter, the god of the skies and weather destroyed the chariot with a thunderbolt, and Phaethon fell to his death.

Aurora

- Can you think of single words to describe this work?

Aurora in Roman mythology was the goddess of the dawn. Every morning she would fly through the sky to announce the arrival of her brother Helios, the god of the sun. The vase in each hand holds the dew which she collected from the sea which can be seen beneath her feet.

Both of these works show mythology inspiring works of art. John Gibson was a sculptor from Conwy in North Wales. He was apprenticed to a sculptor and studied anatomy. His interest in the civilisation and culture of ancient Greek and Rome influenced his choice of subject matter greatly. He spent most of his life living and working in Italy, except for a few years when he returned to Britain and received several commissions from Queen Victoria.



art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)

Fair Rosamund, 1861

- Who do you think this woman might be?
- How is she feeling?
- Describe her expression.
- What is she doing?
- What else can you see here?

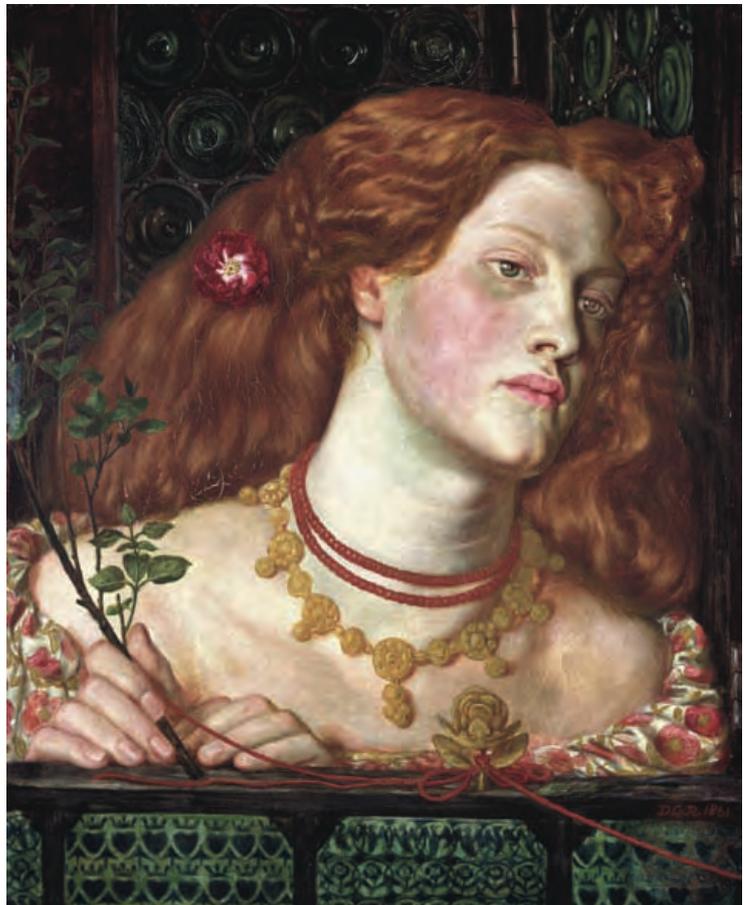
Rossetti looked to the past for the subject of his painting.

King Henry II (1154-1189) was married to Eleanor. He also had a mistress, called Rosamund. According to legend, Henry built Rosamund a palace that could only be reached through a maze and used a red cord to find his way through to meet his mistress. When Eleanor discovered the maze, she followed the cord to find Rosamund, and murdered her. In reality, Rosamund was not murdered by Eleanor, but retired to a convent where she died in 1176.

In this painting only Rosamund is represented. The only reference to the story is the red cord. The balustrade on which Rosamund leans is

decorated with hearts topped with a crown, in reference to her position as the King's mistress. The rose in her hair refers to her name. The model for this work was Fanny Cornforth, Rossetti's housekeeper, who he had met in 1858, and who later became his mistress. Rossetti depicts Rosamund as unoccupied; she has no purpose other than to wait for her lover's arrival. Her dress is impractical and revealing, as it slips from her shoulders. She wears decadent jewellery, her face is flushed and her hair is loose.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was one of the founder members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.



art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

James Tissot (1836-1902)

The Parting, 1872

- What can you see in this painting?
- Who do you think these three people are?
- How are they related to each other?
- How do you think they are feeling? Why do they feel this way?
- Where are they?
- What can you see in the background?
- Are they clothes that you would wear inside or outside?
- Are they rich or poor?
- What do you think is about to happen?

This is one of a number of scenes of every day life painted by Tissot. It may be a farewell breakfast as the soldier leaves to join the others in the boat on the river. This scene has been set against the window of his studio in London. It has been meticulously painted to show the opulent textiles, the silver and the ceramics.

Tissot was born in France, studied in Paris and worked in London for a number of years.



art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851)

The Beacon Light, 1830s

- What can you see here – in the foreground, in the background?
- Describe the lines in this painting.
- Describe the colours. Are they cold colours or do they make you feel warm?
- Is it a very still painting or a painting full of movement?
- Look at the contrast between the light and dark areas, and the smooth and rough areas.
- Can you see everything in this painting very clearly? Look at the parts which are in focus and out of focus.
- Think about the last time you were outside in a storm. What could you see around you? How did you feel?

The Beacon Light shows a dramatic storm at night. The white moon to the left lights up the night sky, and the fiery beacon to the right sends out a warning to ships caught in the storm. Turner worked with quick brush marks, which suggests the force of the wind as it creates huge waves. Look closely at the white waves and you will see that he has used very thick paint, and has then used the end of his brush to scrape into the paint. This all adds to the texture and the movement of the painting.

Turner was one of the greatest landscape painters of the 19th century. He was famous in his own life time, and many artists have admired him since. He



art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

showed talent as an artist when he was just a young boy. Turner enrolled as a student at the Royal Academy when he was 14 years old and became a full academician in 1802 when he was 26. He spent part of his childhood away from London living with his relatives in Margate near the sea. He always lived close to water. When he lived along the Thames he owned a sailing boat which he used as a painting studio. From there he could study the sky and the reflections in the water.

The sea was one of the main subjects of his art and it attracted him throughout his life. Movement was also an important element of his work. He often looked for wild landscapes and ships on stormy seas. It is very likely that Turner had experienced storms like the one in this painting.

Turner also loved to travel and he often sketched while touring around the country. Whilst he journeyed in Wales during the 1790s, the lack of lightweight equipment made painting outdoors almost impossible. Although he made many sketched notes and outline drawings outside, his painting was done in the studio. He usually worked straight onto his canvas, with a clear image in his head of what he wanted to depict.

● Gallery activities

.....
 First Impressions. What are the first words that come into your mind when you look at this painting?

Ball of fire ... storm ... Surf board ... Flying gold fish ... Flames ... Water ... Waves ... danger ... Rough ... Smooth ...

Write a few sentences to describe what you can see.

Imagine that you are on a boat on the water. How would you be feeling? What noises can you hear? Is it cold or hot? Is it fun? Are you scared?

Choose a part of the painting that you think best describes the weather. Make a drawing of that part using coloured crayons very freely. Look carefully at the direction of the lines. Can you make your own drawing look as if it is full of movement?

art in victorian britain (gallery 6)

Animal Wall, Cardiff Castle

These plaster models were maquettes (a 3-d 'sketch') made in preparation for the animal wall in front of Cardiff Castle.

Cardiff Castle was passed through marriage to the Bute family in 1766. The 2nd Marquess of Bute was responsible for turning Cardiff into the world's greatest coal exporting city. The 3rd Marquess of Bute employed the architect and designer William Burgess in 1866 to transform the Castle Lodgings.

Whilst Burgess designed these animals, the nine models were carved by the sculptor Thomas Nicholls, who also produced carvings for other areas of the castle. The animal wall was first erected in 1887-8, after Burgess had died. It was moved to its present location in 1930 when six more models were added.

There are six plaster maquettes on display.

- How many of the animals can you name?
- Why do you think Burgess designed them to appear along the Castle wall?
- What do you think their poses and expressions suggest?



art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

This gallery tells many stories, one of them focusing on probably the wealthiest man in 18th century Wales, Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and his family. This period saw many British artists rising to prominence, together with the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1769, which showed that artists were beginning to establish themselves as professionals rather than just craftsmen. Some upper-class men travelled to Italy on what became known as the Grand Tour. This resulted in much art being purchased as a taste for Old Master paintings and Classical Antiquity became fashionable. The landscape became very popular as a subject, alongside the 'conversation piece' and 'grand style' portraits.

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn (1749-1789)

The Williams-Wynn family were the greatest landowners in 18th century Wales. As well as property at Wynnstay, Denbighshire, the family had estates in Shropshire, Montgomeryshire and Meirioneth. Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn was only 5 months old when his father died and he became the 4th Baronet of Wynnstay. By the late 1760s, through royalties on coal, lead, tin and copper, his landed income was around £20,000 a year. He spent extravagantly on building projects, art, drama and music and was Wales's most important patron of the arts.

In May 1768 at the age of 19 he embarked on his Grand Tour of Europe. The Grand Tour was considered an essential part of the education of young gentlemen, and encouraged them to appreciate antique sculpture, Renaissance architecture and classical painting.

Watkin Williams-Wynn's party included two companions, Thomas Apperley and Captain Hamilton who were responsible for making his tour educational. The three are portrayed together in a triple portrait in this gallery. They spent over six weeks in Rome and this had a life long influence on Sir Watkin's artistic taste for the rest of his life.

art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

Pompeo Batoni (1707-1787)

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, Thomas Apperley and Captain Edward Hamilton, 1768-1772

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn set out on his Grand Tour in June 1768. He was accompanied by Edward Hamilton, a cavalry officer and amateur musician, and Thomas Apperley, his 'governor' who had been with him at Oxford. After visiting Paris and Florence, the party arrived in Rome, where Sir Watkin ordered history paintings from Anton Raphael Mengs and Pompeo Batoni. He also commissioned this portrait from Batoni, who was the most celebrated painter in the city at this time. This is considered to be Batoni's finest 'Grand Tour' portrait.

Sir Watkin stands on the left holding a crayon and a copy of a fresco by Raphael. At the table, Thomas Apperley draws his patron's attention to a passage from literature, Dante's Divine Comedy. Captain Hamilton holds a flute in his hand, which is a reference to Sir Watkin's love of music.



art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1732-1792)

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn and Henrietta, his wife, in masque costume, 1769

This portrait shows Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, aged 20, with his wife Lady Henrietta Somerset. The couple got married in April 1769, but she died 3 months later. This painting was intended to be a marriage portrait, although it is unlikely to have been finished before she died. The black costumes suggest that it was completed as a memorial portrait.

They are both wearing 'Vandyck' costume, a particular style of costume associated with the 17th-century portrait painter Anthony Van Dyck. This type of costume was fashionable from the 1740s onward, and appeared in British portraits through to the 1770s. Sitters often chose to appear in historic dress when having their portraits painted because it implied their educated taste and knowledge of history. Black was not uncommon in men's Vandyck costumes, but it was unusual for women. It was also unusual for a couple to wear colour co-ordinated clothes, except at masquerades.

Here they are both holding a theatrical mask. Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn was fond of the theatre and masquerade dress is mentioned in his accounts. He was fascinated by the stage and had even built his own theatre at Wynnstay.



art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

The Wynnstay Organ

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn commissioned this organ for the music room at his house in London. The Music Room was the largest room on the ground floor. He moved into his house in London in January 1775. He held a musical housewarming breakfast in May, and the organ was installed before that. The organ was made by John Snetzler, and the architect Robert Adam designed the outside casing. Watkin Williams-Wynn was a great admirer of Handel, and there is a portrait medallion of the composer on the case. The organ was eventually moved to the Wynn family home in Wynnstay, north Wales in 1864.

Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn was one of the leading musical amateurs of his time. He sang, played many instruments and attended many concerts and the opera in London. He had his own organist and harpist and often held music parties at his two homes in London and Wynnstay, north Wales.



art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

Toilet Service

This Toilet Service was made as a wedding gift from Sir Watkin's mother for his first wife, Lady Henrietta Somerset. She sadly died three months after the wedding. Toilet Services were often given as marriage gifts. They usually consisted of a mirror, two rectangular comb boxes, hairbrushes, a jewellery box with a pin cushion top, a jug and basin and boxes for cosmetics. This Toilet Service is unusually large and grand. The maker was the principal goldsmith of the King. Most of the pieces are Rococo, a very decorative style that evolved in France. Natural objects such as shells, rocks, insects and animals inspired Rococo designs.

- How many items can you recognise?
- Are these items different to the things you have on your own dressing table?



art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92)

Charlotte Grenville, wife of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, and her three children, 1778

- Who are these people?
- Is she the mother?
- What are the children doing?
- The children depicted here are believed to be between 3 and 6 years old. How do the children compare with you? How are their clothes, their surroundings and their actions different or similar to yours?
- Is this a family group?
- Do you think this is a natural pose or has it been specially set up for the painting?
- Who do you think commissioned the work?
- Did the wife want it painted so that she could be seen as a caring and loving mother?
- Did the husband want to show off his fashionable wife and beautiful children?
- What can we learn about these children from looking at this painting?
- Do the poses give us information about the relationship of the sitters to each other?
- What is the contribution of the colours, the textures and the size of the painting to the overall impact of the work?



art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

Family portraiture became more popular during the 1700s, and the image of the mother became increasingly important. Even the most aristocratic women discovered the joys of at least posing as good mothers. This portrait shows Charlotte Grenville, looking very relaxed and enjoying the company of her three eldest children. She is not reading her book but is gazing lovingly at them.

Charlotte Grenville was the second wife of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn. Her eldest child, also called Watkin, is about six years old here. Fanny is about five and Charles is about three. They are seen here playing and are very relaxed in each other's company. Attitudes towards children changed during the 18th century and this is reflected in how they were depicted in art. There was a move away from creating images of stiff hierarchical looking children to portraying them as animated and lively – more as individuals than stereotypes. These children look very child-like in both appearance and expression.

Portraits in general during the 18th century were not concerned with merely conveying a likeness. Many portraits made reference to other great works of art or to the ancient past. Artists valued tradition and often believed in idealising beauty. Joshua Reynolds would often make references to the past in his portraits. Here he has included classical features such as urns and columns, and he has even based the pose of Lady Charlotte on that of an antique statue.

Lady Charlotte is shown wearing rich and luxurious materials such as silk, fur and gold trimming. She is wearing a Turkish-style costume, which was popular during the early 18th century. The fashion for all things Turkish is also emphasised by her surroundings – the large cushion and oriental carpet. Turkey had an immense influence on the taste and culture of 18th century Europe. The country was gradually being opened up to Western travelers, who had long been intrigued by the secret and above all exotic court in Constantinople.

The artist has captured the shimmering quality and movement of the different fabrics. A painting technique, 'fat over lean' has been used here. Dark colours were thinned down with turpentine and applied to the canvas. After these thin layers had dried, brighter tones of thick oil paints were applied. These colours would be mixed together on the canvas while the paint was still wet.



Sir Joshua Reynolds was an English portrait painter. He travelled to Rome and Venice where many of his artistic ideas were established. He admired the colours of the Venetian painter Titian, and he thought that historic paintings were important. He often aimed to give his portraits a greater sense of importance by giving them a historical or mythological slant.

On his return to London he became widely known as a portrait painter of children.

● Back at school

Me and my family

Ask the children to collect photographs of themselves with various family members. Discuss how they appear in these photographs – their poses, clothes and surroundings. As homework ask the children to make some drawings of their family. Pupils can then use information from their drawings and from their photographs to plan their own paintings. Tell the children to think about the message they want to give others who see their painting.

Textures

Explore different painting techniques to capture the effects of textured fabrics. This could be developed into more experimental work, thus providing opportunities to work with mixed media.

art in britain, 1700-1800 (gallery 4)

Johann Zoffany (1733-1810)

Henry Knight of Tythegston (1738-1772) with his three children, about 1770

- Look at this family group. Can you think of words to describe them?
- Who are they all looking at?
- Look at the objects they have in their hands. What do these contribute to the painting?
- Describe their poses. Standing or sitting? Formal or playful?
- Do you think they are all behaving themselves?

Henry Knight commissioned this portrait from Zoffany, one of the most respected artists of this time, at a period in his life when he was left alone with his children. Knight's wife Catherine had left him in 1769, and he is shown here soon afterwards with his sons Henry and Robert, together with his daughter Etheldra. His eldest son is holding a helmet of the 15th Light Dragoons, with whom Henry Knight probably served.

The seaside setting presumably refers to the location of Tythegston, a couple of miles from the coast, between Bridgend and Porthcawl. The tree motif, frequently used in Zoffany's group portraits, gives all the figures equal prominence. This monumental family group evokes the wealth and sophistication of the south Wales gentry in the mid 18th century.



faces from wales, 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

This gallery shows portraits of people who have contributed to life in Wales over the past 200 years. The portraits range from those that have been officially commissioned, to more personal observations of individuals.

Henry VII, the first of the Tudor monarchs was born at Pembroke Castle. The Welsh were very happy when he became King. Many of the wealthy families in Wales became even wealthier. Some of the very early portraits in the Museum are of members of these families, such as the 1st Earl of Pembroke and Katheryn of Berain, whose portraits can be seen in other galleries in the Museum.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, many of the middle classes in Wales became wealthier and as a result they too wanted to have their portraits painted. The Industrial Revolution also resulted in a number of rich industrialists commissioning portraits. In the 19th century the development of photography transformed the nature of portraiture. It became cheap and instant. As a result many more people could commission a photographic portrait. Despite this, the tradition of painted portraiture still survived into the 20th century.

The portraits featured in this gallery are sometimes removed and replaced with others. Please check before you visit to check that specific works are on display.

The human face is something that is so familiar and easily recognisable that pupils could walk past the portraits in this gallery and think about them as merely pictures of people. Each portrait could be dismissed as being very ordinary. The aim is to encourage children to look closely at the portraits and to think about any hidden messages. What is the artist or the sitter trying to reveal through the portrait?

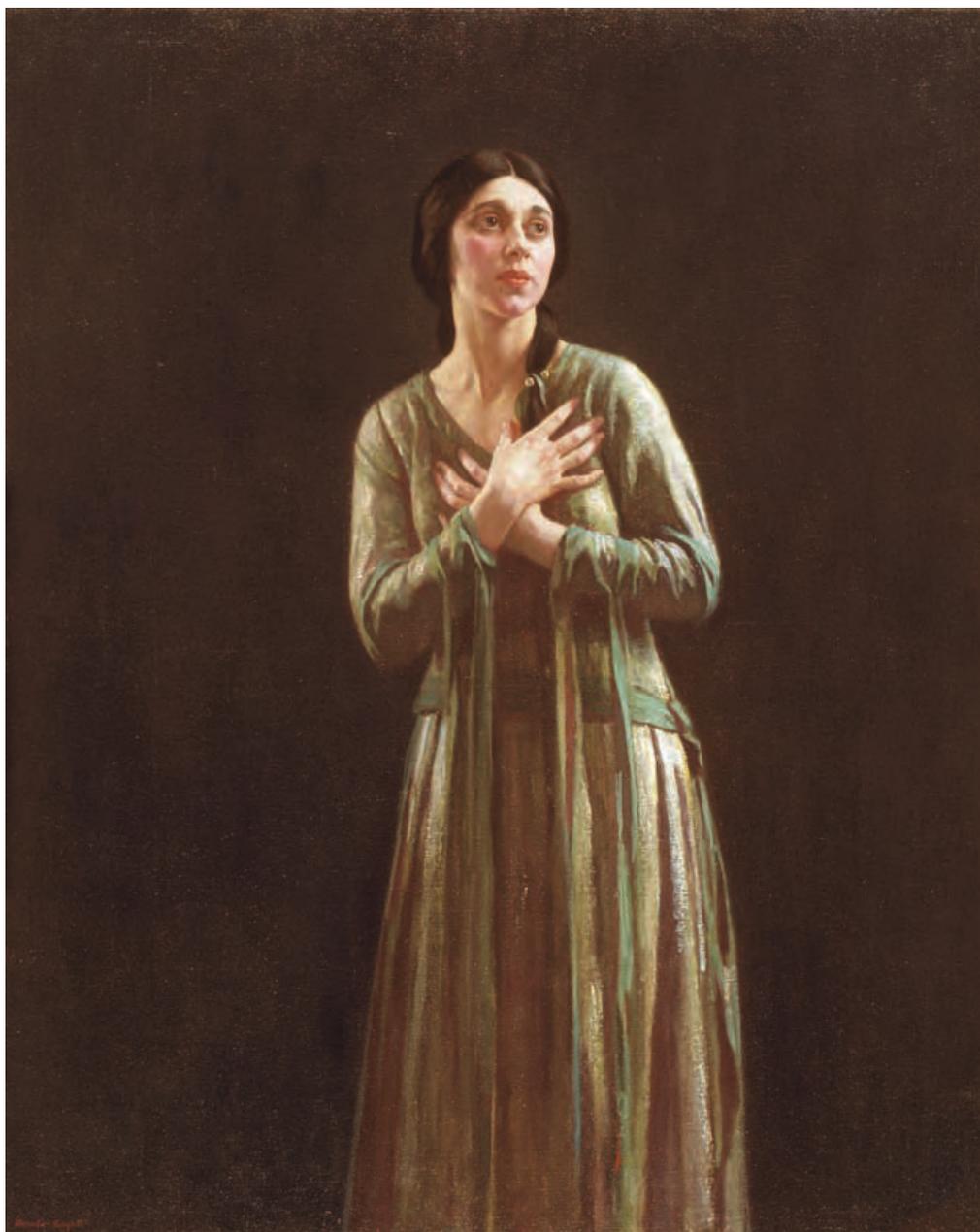
faces from wales 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

Harold Knight (1874-1961)

Dame Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, 1922

Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies was a renowned stage actress in the 20th century. Her first major success was playing the lost Princess Etain in *The Immortal Hour*, a choral drama, in 1922. This painting shows her in that production.

- Describe her pose.
- Try to mimic the way she's standing.
- Describe the expression on her face. Does she look confident, afraid or happy?
- Where do you think she is? What is she looking at? What is she doing with her arms – do they give us any clues about how she may be feeling?



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faces from wales 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

John Lavery (1856-1941)

David, 1st Earl Lloyd George (1863-1945), 1935

David Lloyd George was painted here after retiring from his career in politics. He had been Prime Minister from 1916 to 1922 and became known as 'The Man who Won the War' after leading Britain to victory during the war years. He defended Welsh rights and his views were often considered radical.

- Describe this man. What does he look like? What is he wearing?
- What is he doing with his hand?
- How do you think he's feeling?
- Look at his clothes and the way he's sitting. Does he look comfortable? Is he enjoying himself? What do you think he's thinking about?



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faces from wales 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

Martin Archer Shee (1769-1850)

Sir Thomas Picton, about 1812

Sir Thomas Picton was born in Pembrokeshire, and at a young age he joined the army. He was considered to be one of the most talented officers working for the Duke of Wellington, and was promoted to Lieutenant General in 1811. He displayed outstanding bravery in a battle in 1812, and soon after that this portrait was painted. He stands here in full uniform, holding a sword in one hand and a hat in the other.



faces from wales 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

Margaret Lindsay Williams (1888-1960)
Clara Novello Davies (1861-1943), 1915

Cardiff-born Clara Novello Davies came from a very musical family and became a renowned singing teacher and choral conductor, touring internationally with her Welsh Ladies Choir. She is perhaps now best known as the mother of the singer and actor Ivor Novello, whose musical career she encouraged.

- Describe the costume in this portrait.
- What occasions do you think it was worn?
- Does it suggest anything about the sitter?
- Why do you think this portrait is full-length?
- Look at the way she is standing – how do you think she felt wearing this costume? Is she proud, ashamed or confident? How would you feel wearing clothes like these?



faces from wales 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

Simon Harmon Vedder (1866-1937)

William Goscombe John (1860-1952)

William Goscombe John was a highly respected artist and sculptor. Today he is especially known for his public sculptures and portrait busts. He contributed many of his work to help form the collections at the Museum. He is shown here working in his studio, with a sculpture in the background. He is working on a clay model for one of his sculptures, and the crouching figure behind him is from the Elf, one of his best known works.

- Look at the background. Where is William Goscombe John? What is he doing?
- List the objects you can see in the background. Why do you think the artist painted these objects? Do they tell you anything about Goscombe John? What do you think his interests were?
- Imagine if this portrait had a plain, empty background. Does this change the meaning of the portrait? How much would you be able to tell about Goscombe John without this background?

faces from wales 1800-2000 (gallery 5)

Evan Walters (1893-1951)

A Welsh Collier, 1936

Walters came from a Welsh-speaking, working-class background and grew up in Llangyfelach, a mining village near Swansea. Although he experimented with style, colour and subject matter during his career, the life and hardship of the coal-mining community remained a constant source of inspiration for him. He painted what he saw around him, and his work often dealt with suffering, mourning and death.

The family of this sitter has now identified him as Thomas Rees from Llangyfelach. He was the artist's distant cousin.

- Look at the clothes worn by this man. What do they tell us?
- Describe the colours in this painting. What do they suggest?
- Think about the expression on his face. How do you think this man might be feeling?

