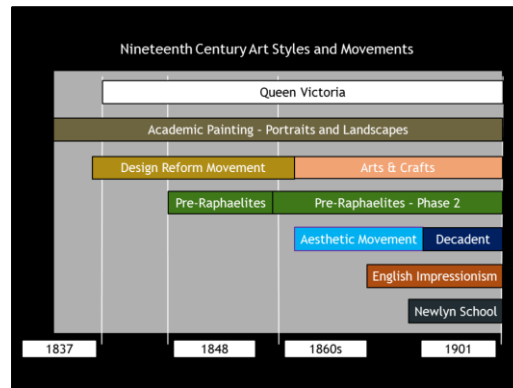




Summary of the second part of the 20 week course.



Key Events

- The **Industrial Revolution started in Britain** and was the most important event in human history since the domestication of animals, farming and the invention of fire. For the first time average income showed sustained growth.
- The UK **population quadrupled** from 1801 (10.5m) to 1901 (40m) despite 15 million emigrating in the second half of the nineteenth century and the population of Ireland halving. The reasons for the increase were the avoidance of the 'Malthusian trap' brought about by the industrial and agricultural revolutions, more and earlier marriages because of increased prosperity, no major famine or epidemic, deaths per thousand per year dropped from 22 in 1848 to 17 in 1901 (5.4 today), the quality of drinking water improved and there was more money to spend on medical advances.
- Half the **population moved** from the country to the town (in 1800 25% worked in towns and by 1900 it was 75%).
- Britain established the **largest empire** the world has ever known (a fifth of the world's population and nearly a quarter of the land area).
- **Photography** was invented at the start of the Victorian period and influenced art and the way people saw the world.
- Academic painting, particularly portraits continued to be popular throughout the period

Art Movements

- **Academic painting**, was painting as taught by the Royal Academy. History painting was regarded as the highest genre but there was never a market for it in England. Portrait and landscape painting were the most popular types of painting all through the nineteenth century.
- **The Design Reform Movement** came out of a Government committee that investigated the competitiveness of British design and as a result founded Government Schools of Design. **Arts & Crafts**, a movement that combined the fine

and decorative arts and which had an enormous international influence at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is associated with William Morris but as we shall see it had many other precedents. It also became fashionable.

- **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**, founded by a group of three (Millais, Holman Hunt, Rossetti), then four more (Thomas Woolner, F. G. Stephens, W. M. Rossetti and James Collinson), in 1848. They rejected the way painting was taught at the Royal Academy and wanted to return to nature and represent its intense colours, complexity of form and infinite detail. It caused an enormous impact and the style influenced artists through the rest of the century but as a brotherhood the artists had gone their separate ways by 1853.
- **Aesthetic Movement**, also called 'art for art's sake', emphasized the aesthetic rather than making a moral point or telling a story. It can be considered the British equivalent of **French Symbolism** and it led to the **Decadent** art movement at the end of the century. Artists include Whistler, Leighton, Albert Moore and Edward Burne-Jones. In the 1880s and 90s it became very fashionable to have Aesthetic domestic interiors and it was satirized in cartoons and plays.
- **English Impressionism**, in this category I include schools, such as the **Newlyn School** (Stanhope Forbes), the **Glasgow School** and artists influenced by French Impressionism such as **John Singer Sargent**. However, English Impressionism took its own path and is associated with the **New English Art Club**, the **Camden Town Group** and Whistler's pupil, Walter Sickert, although this takes us into the twentieth century.

Queen Victoria

- Born 24 May 1819, reigned **20 June 1837** (coronation 28 June 1838) to **22 January 1901** – 63 years, seven months and two days (63 years 217 days). This means **Elizabeth II** will have reigned for longer than Victoria on the evening of 9th September 2015 (taking leap years into account and measuring to the exact time of death). Christened **Alexandrina Victoria**, daughter Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, fourth son of George III and Princess Victoria of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld. Her three older brothers all died leaving no legitimate children.
- Her father died in 1820 followed by George IV (1820-30), who had been Regent since 1811, and then William IV (1830-7), the 'Sailor King'.
- Victoria married her first cousin Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (26 August 1819-1861) in 1840 and they had nine children (Victoria, Edward, Alice, Alfred, Helena, Louise, Arthur, Leopold and Beatrice).
- Her successor was her son **Edward VII** (1901-1910), the first Saxe-Coburg and Gotha monarch, later renamed Windsor by his successor George V in 1917.



The controversies tell us when art was a serious force that was changing society or challenging established conventions.

- **Design Reform Movement** criticized interior decoration. It was a moral crusade against the dishonesty of wallpaper and carpets that imitated real flowers and materials such as marble and woodgrain. One critic wrote, 'If you are content to teach a lie in your belongings, you can hardly wonder at petty deceits being practised in other ways ... All this carrying into everyday life of 'the shadow of unreality' must exercise a bad and prejudicial influence on the younger members of the house, who are thus brought up to see no wrong in the shams and deceits which are continually before them.'
- **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and Religion**
 - Reacted against what they saw as the lazy copying of the style of the Old Masters. They wanted artists to look afresh at nature and paint what they saw not what the Old Masters painted.
 - They were criticized for forming what was feared to be a Catholic, or anarchic or revolutionary brotherhood.
 - **Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents*** was criticized by Charles Dickens, he described Jesus as a 'wry-necked boy in a nightgown who seems to have received a poke playing in an adjacent gutter' and Mary as 'hideous in her ugliness'.
 - The became very influential on later painters very quickly but the members of the Brotherhood quickly went their own ways. Holman Hunt produced moralising religious paintings, Rossetti was criticized for being too sensual and Millais was criticized for painting sentimental works that appealed to popular tastes rather than morally uplifting works.
- **Social realism and the poor**
 - George Frederic **Watts**, Richard **Redgrave**, John **Brett**, Frank **Holl** all painted representations of the poor.

- The deserving poor were recipients of charity but an artist could go too far.
- **Photography as art**, Ruskin never regarded photography as an art form and the debate about whether photography is an art continued through the nineteenth century. One school of thought tried to mimic the composition and subject matter of grand works of art using photographic techniques.
- **Women** were not accepted on art training courses involving nude models. There was a women's Government School of Design but it was difficult for women to find employment. Women were categorised as,
 - The 'Angel in the House'
 - In certain roles woman could work, such as a servant, governess or seamstress but these were not occupations for married women.
 - The 'Fallen Woman' was a woman who had lost her innocence and fallen from God's grace. Eve was the original prototype but it came to mean the loss of a woman's chastity. Female dancers and performers were generally regarded as fallen women.
 - The 'Femme Fatale' was a well established trope based on Eve's seduction of Adam. Typically a femme fatale was a powerful woman who used her uninhibited sexuality and beauty to manipulate men, a classic example is Oscar Wilde's *Salome*.
 - The male nude was a way of representing beauty and the female nude became acceptable to some during the 1860s and 70s. A classical theme made all representations of the nude more acceptable.
- **Art for Art's Sake, Whistler v. Ruskin** put 'modern art' on trial in 1878. Whistler, i.e. modern art, won but with damages of a farthing.
- **Rossetti and the 'Fleshly School'**. In 1871 Rossetti was criticized by Robert Buchanan for combining fleshly desire with spiritual love which he strongly denied. This started one of the best known literary controversies of the nineteenth century.
- **Morris and Socialism**. In Morris's ideal society there is no private property, no big cities, no authority, no monetary system, no divorce, no courts, no prisons, and no class systems.
- **Oscar Wilde**. Oscar Wilde's second trial was politically motivated and led to the harsher treatment of homosexuals. Wilde served two years in prison and came out chastened and bankrupt, but not bitter.
- **Max Nordau and Decadence**. In his pseudo-science book Nordau criticized many artists, including the Pre-Raphaelites of decadence arising from a mental illness. There is a path from his criticism to the rejection of modern art by the Nazi Party.

Notes

Artistic Controversies

Controversies show where art is challenging existing assumptions and bringing about change. Amongst others we see,

- The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood as a Catholic and anarchic organisation

- The Pre-Raphaelite style of painting was often criticized
- Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents* was seen as blasphemous
- 'Art for Art's Sake' led to the Whistler v. Ruskin trial
- Rossetti and the 'Fleshly School' controversy
- The representation of the nude
- William Morris and Socialism
- Oscar Wilde's homosexuality
- Max Nordau and his book *Decadence*



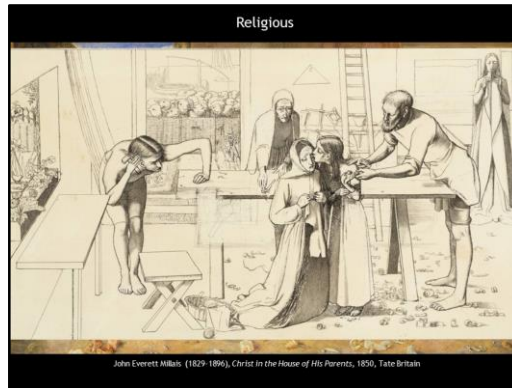
William Morris, 'Acanthus' wallpaper, 1875, Victoria & Albert Museum

- In parallel decorative art had lagged behind in England and the **design reform movement** led to the creation of Government Schools of Design.
- 'Owen Jones (1809-74), architect, designer and authority on historic pattern and ornament, had begun to formulate rational and reforming theories in the course of his travels in the 1830s and 1840s. He particularly admired **Greek, Egyptian and Islamic** (or Moorish) motifs, and adapted them into his own architectural schemes and designs for wallpaper which went into production with various manufacturers from the early 1850s. The fruits of his researches were published as ***The Grammar of Ornament*** (1856), an important source book for fellow designers of his own and succeeding generations.' (V&A website)
- Morris's designs were based on English design, observation of nature and images of plants in **16th and 17th century herbals**, illuminated manuscripts, tapestries and other textiles.
 - Despite his involvement with wallpapers and his decided views on their design and use, Morris always regarded wallpaper as a 'makeshift' decoration, a tolerable substitute for more luxurious wall coverings. Some of the old snobbery about wallpaper as an imitative material, a cheap option, still persisted, and Morris, as a wealthy man, preferred woven textile hangings for his own home.

References

See V&A article on wallpaper design

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/w/wallpaper-design-reform/>



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Christ in the House of His Parents*, 1850, Tate Britain

- The Pre-Raphaelites were one of the first groups to break away from the established academic practices.

Christ in the House of His Parents

- **The reaction to Millais's painting was unprecedented.** The term 'ugly' was rarely used by critics to describe fine art yet this painting was described not only as ugly but as hideous, loathsome and disgusting. The most unfavourable was the satirical piece by **Charles Dickens** in his *Household Words*. Dickens described Mary as 'horrible in her ugliness' and clarified what he meant by ugly:
 - Wherever it is possible to express ugliness of feature, limb, or attitude, you have it expressed. Such men as the carpenters might be undressed in any hospital where dirty drunkards, in a high state of varicose veins, are received. Their very toes have walked out of Saint Giles's.
- Saint Giles was an area that was well known for its crime and had 'the worst living conditions in all of London's history'. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* wrote that the painting contained 'Ricketty children, emaciation and deformity' and 'we can hardly imagine anything more ugly, graceless, and unpleasant'. Dickens also described Christ as 'hideous, wry-necked, blubbering' and the whole painting with its '**ugliness of feature, limb, or attitude**' expressing '**what is mean, odious, repulsive, and revolting**'.
- It is clear from the critical reaction that this painting was revolutionary and was seen as an extreme attack on the conventions used to represent religious subjects. Fourteen years later, in Paris, Manet caused a similar reaction by undermining bourgeois notions of respectability with *Olympia* (1863, exhibited 1865).
- The critical response changed over the years and **by 1898 the painting was 'passionately admired, and even loved'**. By the end of the century, the painting

was no longer regarded as ugly and 'blasphemous'. This might be because Millais had become accepted as a member of elite society but the painting had also lost its ability to shock as the changes it brought about in the way we see the world had become established.

Notes

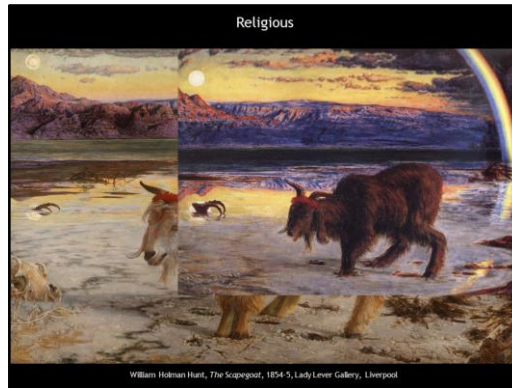
- In the painting, Christ has red hair, which was traditionally associated with Judas Iscariot and red hair regarded as both 'ugly' and a 'sign of degeneration'. Mary's eyes are almost closed and ringed in black and her brow is heavily lined, which combined with the twist of her neck, gives her a distorted appearance and Joseph's arms are veined and muscular, his nails are dirty, his left knee is damaged and his toenails are broken.
- In the *Art Journal* Ralph Wornum wrote: 'the most beautiful soul must have the most beautiful body' indicating that the moral worth of a character, in this case the Holy Family, must be signified by a beautiful body. *The Times* critic wrote that the picture 'is, to speak plainly, revolting' and there was 'no conceivable omission of misery, of dirt, and even disease, all finished with the same loathsome minuteness'. *The Athenaeum* also wrote that 'we recoil with loathing and disgust' at the 'pictorial blasphemy'. What is morally shocking to the reviewer is the minute detail, which suggests we are looking at something that is forbidden and so it must be seen only in some generalised or modified form.
- The room is unnaturally bright and evenly lit and the source of the light is on the left. In Millais's preparatory sketches, there is a window on the left, which is cut off in the final painting and is the notional source of the light. The figures have the idiosyncratic features associated with particular people and we know that they were modelled by Millais's family and friends. Millais went to a carpenter's shop in Oxford Street to sketch its interior in order to represent a carpenter's tools and method of working accurately. The tools are those of a nineteenth-century carpenter and the clothes are a mixture of Middle Eastern, conventional religious symbolism, such as Mary's blue dress and St. John's animal fur, with nineteenth-century additions, such as Christ's smock. Clearly, Millais was not trying to reproduce a historically accurate carpenter's shop but an accurately observed contemporary carpenter's shop with figures that were modelled on friends and family. The critics pointed out that the painting is full of anachronisms such as the mixture of costumes from different periods and the Victorian carpenter's tools. However, the art historian Michaela Giebelhausen believes that Millais carefully constructed these anachronisms in order to create an ahistorical setting. In the eighteenth century, she points out that such an ahistorical setting was associated with religious devotion as it prevented a painting from being seen as a genre painting set in a particular time and period.
- Christ's small stature compared with the height of the table also suggests that Millais was representing an accident resulting from childish enthusiasm rather

than a stage-managed event. This is also suggested by the assistant at the left ignoring the interruption to his work, Joseph's perfunctory examination and the look of 'I told you not to meddle' on St. John's face. Mary is holding her head back for a kiss suggesting she is the injured party and St. Anne offers practical assistance rather than comfort. Through the open entrance, a group of sheep stare over a fence inquisitively suggesting there could have just been a noisy scene. Millais linked the highest spiritual subject, the Holy Family, with the lowest rung of society, the urban poor, and turned a spiritual prefiguration into an everyday accident.

- By associating themselves with artists that pre-dated the formation of Protestantism the Pre-Raphaelites linked themselves with Puseyism, the Oxford Movement, and the widely resisted move towards Catholicism. This was reinforced by their unconventional approach to religious symbolism. The painting was therefore seen to be subversive and an attempt to undermine Protestant beliefs. This aspect of the Pre-Raphaelite movement is spelled out in Max Nordau's *Degeneration*.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_in_the_House_of_His_Parents



William Holman Hunt, *The Scapegoat*, 1854-5, 86 x 140 cm, Lady Lever Gallery, Liverpool

William Holman Hunt, *The Scapegoat*, 1854-5, 33.7 x 45.9 cm, original oil study, Manchester Art Gallery

- Hunt's painting was controversial but for different reasons. It was a sincere attempt to express his religious feelings but he adopted a Biblical story that was unknown to the majority of people.
- The original oil study, now at Manchester Art Gallery, contains conflicting symbols of Christ, the goat and the rainbow. The rainbow implies hope and salvation for the goat rather than the viewer, which is not intended as the goat prefigures the suffering of Christ.
- Hunt hoped that thoughtful Jews would understand the symbolism and be converted to Christianity before the Last Judgement.

Notes

- **The Scapegoat** (1854–56) is a painting by William Holman Hunt which depicts the "scapegoat" described in the **Book of Leviticus**. On **Yom Kippur**, the **Day of Atonement**, a goat would have its horns wrapped with a red cloth – representing the sins of the community – and be **driven off**.
- He started painting on the shore of the **Dead Sea**, and continued in his studio in London. The work exists in **two versions**, a small version in brighter colours with a dark-haired goat and a rainbow, held by Manchester Art Gallery, and a larger version in more muted tones with a light-haired goat held by the Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight.
- In the Royal Academy exhibition catalogue Hunt wrote that "the scene was painted at **Oosdoom**, on the margin of the salt-encrusted shallows of the Dead Sea. The **mountains** beyond are those of **Edom**." Edom is the region south of the Dead Sea and the fabled site of Sodom. It is not clear that Oosdoom exists and it may be

Hunt's version of Sodom. He painted most of the work on location in **1854**, but completed the work in London in the following year, adding some touches in 1856 before it was exhibited at the academy in that year." Bad weather forced Hunt back to Jerusalem so he took the goat and some Dead Sea mud and stones.

Unfortunately, the goat died on the way and he had to buy another.

- There are two versions, one with a rainbow signifying forgiveness in Birmingham Art Gallery and the other larger one is shown above.
- Dante Gabriel **Rossetti**, in a letter to William Allingham in 1856, called the painting "**a grand thing, but not for the public**". **Ford Madox Brown** wrote in his diary: "Hunt's Scapegoat requires to be seen to be believed in. Only then can it be understood how, by the might of genius, out of an old goat, and some saline encrustations, can be made **one of the most tragic and impressive works in the annals of art.**". **Ernest Gambart**, as related by Hunt, was less enthusiastic, and was later to remark: "**I wanted a nice religious picture and he painted me a great goat.**" The *Art Journal* in 1860, at the time of the exhibition of Hunt's later work *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, was to characterise the painting as "having disappointed even his warmest admirers".
- The reaction to the painting was not as Hunt expected. In his autobiography *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, Hunt relates the **first reaction** to the painting by art dealer Ernest Gambart:

Gambart, the picture-dealer, was ever shrewd and entertaining. He came in his turn to my studio, and I led him to *The Scapegoat*. "What do you call that?" "*The Scapegoat*."

"Yes; but what is it doing?"

"You will understand by the title, *Le bouc expiatoire* [the sacrificial goat]."

"But why *expiatoire*?" he asked.

"Well, there is a book called the Bible, which gives an account of the animal. You will remember."

"No," he replied, "I never heard of it."

"Ah, I forgot, the book is not known in France, but English people read it more or less," I said, "and they would all understand the story of the beast being driven into the wilderness."

"You are mistaken. No one would know anything about it, and if I bought the picture it would be left on my hands. Now, we will see," replied the dealer.

"My wife is an English lady, there is a friend of hers, an English girl, in the carriage with her, we will ask them up, you shall tell them the title; we will see. Do not say more."

The ladies were conducted into the room. "Oh how pretty! what is it?" they asked.

"It is *The Scapegoat*." I said.

There was a pause. "Oh yes," they commented to one another, "it is a peculiar goat, you can see by the ears, they droop so."

The dealer then, nodding with a smile towards me, said to them, "It is in the wilderness."

The ladies: "Is that the wilderness now? Are you intending to introduce any others of the flock?" And so the dealer was proved to be right, and I had over-counted on the picture's intelligibility.



William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple*, 1860, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

See <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/whh/replete/finding2.html>

See

http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/sudley/collections/drawingroom/finding_saviour_hunt.aspx

- Hunt did not make the same mistake again, **Gambart spent £5,500** (over £2 million in modern money) on *The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* (1854-60). The **most expensive** painting by a living artist in history up to that time. Hunt took the risk of not exhibiting it at the Royal Academy and so **saved their 30% cut**. Gambart showed it in solitary splendour in an **exhibition attended by hundreds of thousands** for one shilling a time.
- Hunt's next painting, *The Shadow of Death* (1873), Gambart was outbid by Agnews who bid **£20,000**. 1866 was a terrible summer and the year of the last bank run (Overend, Gurney and Co.) before Northern Rock in 2007, in which Hunt and Gambart lost money. Gambart's house exploded because of the numerous gas lights he used during a fancy dress ball to show he was unaffected by the crisis. Gambart's young wife, Annie Baines, was so upset she was sent away and the following year she died from liver disease aged only 35 after it was discovered Gambart had several mistresses.

Notes

The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple

This painting by William Holman Hunt was intended as an accurate version of the subject known as 'Christ Among the Doctors', when the child Jesus debated the scriptures with the rabbis (Gospel of Luke, 2:41). The Gospel states:

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

Hunt depicts the moment at which Mary and Joseph find Jesus, while the rabbis in the temple are reacting in various contrasting ways to his discourse, some intrigued, others angry or dismissive. This depiction of contrasting reactions is part of the tradition of the subject, as evidenced in Albrecht Dürer's much earlier version. Hunt would also have known Bernardino Luini's version of the subject in the National Gallery (at the time ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci).

Hunt was obsessed with the idea of revitalising religious art by emphasising ethnographical accuracy combined with detailed Biblical symbolism. Hunt travelled to the Middle East to create the picture, using local people as models and studying ancient Judaic customs and rituals. Progress on the painting was delayed by difficulties with models, and eventually Hunt postponed it to work on another project, *The Scapegoat*. He eventually completed it in 1860, back in England. His friend Frederic George Stephens wrote a pamphlet containing a detailed explanation of the content and the characters.

The subject was begun during Hunt's visit to Palestine in 1854 but completed back in London, with the interior of the Temple being composed from the Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace. It was then shown in a series of popular travelling exhibitions at which visitors could buy the pamphlet and subscribe to an engraved reproduction. These were organised by the dealer Ernest Gambart, and proved a great financial success. George Holt paid 1200 guineas (£1,260) for the work in 1888.

From F. G. Stephens Pamphlet

Stephens wrote a helpful guide through Hunt's cast of characters.

'Nearest of the Rabbis is seated an old priest, the chief, who, blind, imbecile, and

decrepit,' clutches the Torah to himself 'strenuously yet feebly; his sight is gone, his hands seem palsied . . . He is the type of obstinate adherence to the old and effete doctrine and pertinacious refusal of the new.' Thus, he not only is the representative symbol of those Pharisees who refused to believe in Christ — in the Messiah for whom they had been waiting — but he also prefigures all men who resist Christianity. 'Blind, imbecile, he cares not to examine the bearer of glad tidings, but clings to the superseded dispensation.'

The second Rabbi is, 'a good-natured, worldly individual, with a feminine face, who, holding the phylactery-box, that contained the promises of the Jewish dispensation in one hand, touches with the other that of the blind man, as though to . . . express a mutual satisfaction in their sufficiency, whatever may come of this new thing Christ in conversation has suggested'. Whereas the older man represents what the painter took to be an exhausted, feeble tradition and is himself psychologically incapable of entertaining any new ideas, this good-natured man will not allow himself to be troubled by any venturesome thought. He is a good member of the Establishment of any age and place, and although he chiefly explains the nature of those who opposed Christ in his own time, for Hunt he is also analogous to many an Anglican clergyman as well.

Their neighbour, a man 'eager, unsatisfied, passionate, argumentative,' represents a far different kind of person, for 'his strong antagonism of mind will allow no such comfortable rest as the elders enjoy'. He has been arguing with Christ when the entrance of Mary and Joseph interrupts the debate.

In contrast, the fourth Rabbi, a haughty, self-centered man 'assumes the judge, and would decide between the old and new. He is a Pharisee of the most stiff order. Beyond even the custom of the chief Rabbis and ordinary practice of his sect, he retains the unusually broad phylactery bound about his head.'

Between these last two figures appears one of the musicians, who 'seems to mock the words of Christ upon some argument that has gone before, and, with one hand clenched and supine, protrudes a scornful finger, hugging himself in self-conceit. He is a Levite, a time-serving, fawning fellow ... who would ingratiate himself with his seated superiors.'

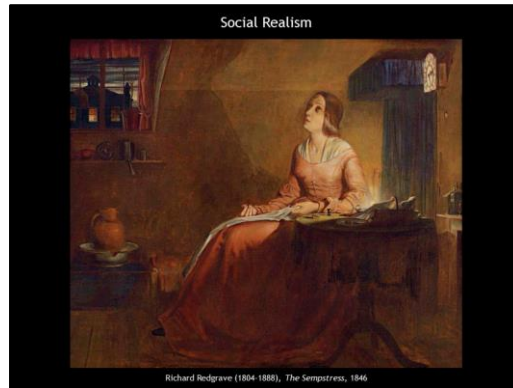
The fifth Rabbi 'has a bi-forked beard, like that of a goat, reaching to his waist,' and this 'good-natured, temporizing' fellow makes himself comfortable upon his divan 'and would willingly let every one else be as much at ease'.

Again employing the principle of contrast, Hunt has made the sixth Rabbi 'an envious, acrid individual, a lean man' who has arrived late at the Temple and stretches forward

to see the face of the Virgin.

The seventh and last of the Rabbis is a 'mere human lump of dough . . . a huge sensual stomach of a man, who squats upon his own broad base, and indolently lifts his hand in complacent surprise at the interruption'.

These seven men and their attendant musician provide a gallery of psychological as well as physical portraits of the Pharisees of Christ's time and of all ages. As Stephens explains, the painter leads us through **'many forms of character, from the blindness of eye and heart of the eldest Rabbi, through the simple reposing confidence of the second, to the eager championship of the third, the self-centred complacency of the fourth, the indolent good-nature of the fifth,'** the envious hostility of the sixth, and the sensual complacency of the last.



Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), *The Sempstress*, 1846

- This painting defined a new genre in art. The representation of social problems.
- It illustrates Thomas Hood poem *The Song of the Shirt* (1843). The poem was written in honour of Mrs Biddell a Lambeth widow and seamstress living in wretched conditions. In what was, at that time, common practice, Mrs. Biddell sewed trousers and shirts in her home using materials given to her by her employer for which she was forced to give a £2 deposit. In a desperate attempt to feed her starving infants, Mrs. Biddell pawned the clothing she had made, thus accruing a debt she could not pay.
- It is impossible today to **understand the impact of the poem**. Thackeray described it as '**the most startling lyric in our language**'. It was set to music, the subject of a play and of many sermons.
- The *Athenaeum* criticized the painting as '**too sentimental**' and warned about art that appeals to the power of feeling rather than higher aesthetic criteria. This is one of the first Victorian 'sentimental' paintings and it is carefully constructed using academic conventions that hark back to Caravaggio's chiaroscuro and Teniers's domestic interiors. The upturned face bathed in light suggest a religious martyr or saint experiencing a revelation.
- The poem and Redgrave's painting gave rise to many imitators and it created a new category of paintings devoted to social themes. The most common theme in the 1840s was the seamstress and many artists used the symbols first constructed by Redgrave.

Notes

The Sempstress

- This painting is **the fountain head** of a whole tradition of social realist painting in Victorian England.
- This painting is based on a poem of the same name and the two had a profound

effect.

- You can see it is 2:30 in the morning and the sky is streaked with moonlight. The lit windows opposite indicate that the same thing is happening all over London. The seamstress's eyes are swollen and inflamed as she must do close work by the light of a candle. The morsel of food on the plate indicates she has to eat while she is working and on the mantelpiece you can see medicine bottles. One has a label saying 'The Mixture' and it is supplied by Middlesex Hospital so she is unwell.
- This is one of the first paintings in which art is used to campaign for the poor. **Richard Redgrave did not come from a wealthy family and his sister had been forced to leave home and find a job as a governess. She became ill when in service and had to be nursed by his family until she died. It was painted in 1843, the year that Punch appeared and in the Christmas issues there was a poem that struck a nerve.** By Thomas Hood and called *The Song of the Shirt*. It began:

*With fingers weary and worn
With eyelids heavy and red
A Woman sat, in unwomanly rags
Plying her needle and thread –
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the "Song of the Shirt"*

- The verse that inspired Redgrave. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1844 (this is the 1846 version). The poem continues that she is sewing a shirt but also her own shroud.
- **Redgrave was an Academician, art director of the South Kensington Museum** (now the V&A), received the cross of the Legion of Honour and was **surveyor of crown pictures for 24 years** and produced a 34 volume catalogue. **He declined a knighthood in 1869.**
- Sempstresses often went blind and if a single stitch was wrong their wages were docked. Articles appeared saying British citizens were being subjected to a **form of slavery** and a German living in England called **Friedrich Engels** showed a study he had written of the **horrors** of the situation to a **friend** living in **Paris called Karl Marx**.
- Redgrave had created a **new category of painting** but it is not based on visiting the poor but the interior is borrowed from a 17th-century Dutch work and the **swollen eyes** looking **heavenward** is typical of many Baroque images of **swooning saints**. Redgrave realised that unless he made the subject **respectable** it would not be accepted. He **succeeded** brilliantly.



John Singer Sargent, *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*, 1892, 127 × 101 cm, Scottish National Gallery

- John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), American artist, the leading portraitist of his generation. He trained in Paris before moving to London in 1884 because of the 'Madame X' scandal.
- On a visit to Monet at Giverny in 1885, Sargent painted one of his most Impressionistic portraits, of Monet at work painting outdoors with his new bride nearby (*Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood*). The painting is shown later.
- Lady Gertrude Agnew (1865-1932, née Vernon), the wife of Sir Andrew Agnew, 9th Baronet.
- The success of the painting endowed Lady Agnew with **additional notability and prestige**.
- She looks directly and appraisingly, her expression capturing the impression she is participating in an **"intimate conversation" with those observing** the painting.
- The portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, in 1893 and may have been influential in the **artist's acceptance as an associate** of the Academy the following January.
- *The Times* (29 April 1893), wrote that the picture was **"not only a triumph of technique but the finest example of portraiture, in the literal sense of the word, that has been seen here for a long time"**. While Mr Sargent has abandoned none of his subtlety, **he has abandoned his mannerisms**, and has been content to make a beautiful picture of a charming subject, under conditions of repose."

Notes

- Patrons were often displeased with the result "This happened so often that he used to define a portrait as 'a likeness in which there was something wrong about the mouth'" (Evan Charteris, *John Sargent*, 1927, p157)

- According to one biographer, 'Sargent was a man of deep convictions with his art and would not give in just to please his patron' (Charteris, p157). However, the reason he was so popular is that he brought out the best in his sitters. One letter indicates that there were changes he would not make to please a client,

Dear ???,

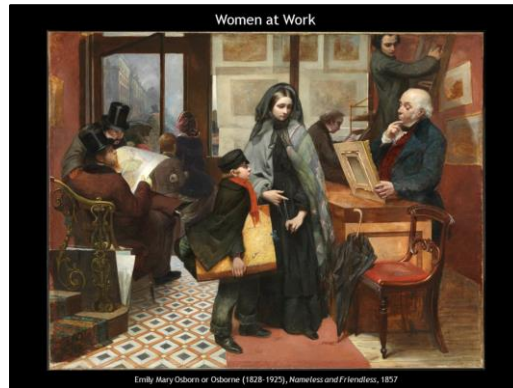
I have received your kind letter and if I thought an interview was of the slightest use and would not lead to a further discussion I would of course welcome it.

But the point on which we differ is one with which a long experience in portrait painting has made me perfectly familiar -- I have very often been reproached with giving a hard expression to ladies portraits, especially when I have retained **some look of intelligence** in the face, besides amiability, as I consider myself forced to do in this case.

The expression of ???'s face in the portrait is kind and indulgent, with over and above this, a hint at a sense of humour. If I take this out, it will become as soft as anyone could desire. But as a matter of fact **nothing will make me**, much as I regret not meeting your wishes.

Yours truly,

John S. Sargent
(Charteris, p160)



Emily Mary Osborn or Osborne (1828-1925), *Nameless and Friendless*, 1857
 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Mary_Osborn

Emily Mary Osborn

- Osborn began showing her work at the Royal Academy **when she was just 17** and continued to do so **over a period of 40 years**. This is **her most famous work** which has been called 'The most ingenious of Victorian widow pictures.' A recently bereaved woman is attempting to make a living as an artist by offering a picture to a dealer while two 'swells' on the left stare at her distracted from the bare legged ballet dancer they have been previously ogling. She nervously pulls on a loop of string while the dealer disdainfully judges her work. It has been suggested that this painting relates to Mary Brunton's novel *Self-Control* published in 1810 but republished in 1850. This describes the struggles of a self-motivated female artist to sell her pictures in order to help save her father from financial ruin.

Society of Female Artists

- The difficulties experienced by women in exhibiting and selling their works led to the formation of the Society of Female Artists in 1857, the year *Nameless and Friendless* was first exhibited at the Royal Academy. Emily Mary Osborn was a member of this group and one of the artists associated with Barbara Bodichon's Langham Place circle and campaign for women's rights.
- Osborn was a member of the Society and a member of Barbara Bodichon's Langham Place circle that campaigned for women's rights. Despite the problems faced by women artists Osborn went on to develop a successful career.
- The *Art Journal* on Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless' 1857:
A poor girl has painted a picture, which she offers for sale to a dealer, who, from the speaking expression of his features, is disposed to depreciate the work. It is a wet, dismal day, and she has walked far to dispose of it; and now awaits in trembling the decision of a man who is

to become rich by the labours of others.'

- Osborn never married and died aged 97 in 1925.

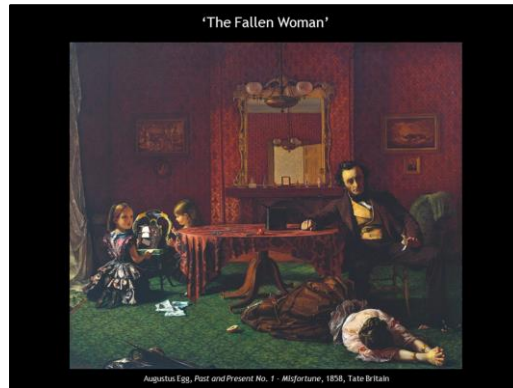
Reviews of Exhibitions of the Society of Female Artists:

***The Illustrated London News*, 6 Jun 1857:**

Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex, we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists: but observation, taste, or the art of selection, and various other qualities adapted to the arts, are to be found in this Oxford-Street display.

***The Art Journal*, 1 May 1858:**

...that which we see at the Egyptian Hall is the result of assiduous self-tuition, for we have no school for the instruction of ladies in painting from the living model. Labouring under such disadvantages as the female student does, we are not disappointed to see here so many drawings of flowers, fruit, and still-life objects – we are only surprised into exultation to see so much excellence in the higher departments of art...



Augustus Egg, *Past and Present No. 1 - Misfortune*, 1858, Tate Britain
 See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustus_Egg

Past and Present

- This series of three paintings of a fallen woman drew '**crowds of sensation seekers eager to be outraged**'. The Athenaeum wrote about **Augustus Egg, Past and Present**, '[t]here **must be a line drawn as to where the horrors that should be painted for public and innocent sight begin**, and we think Mr. Egg has put one foot at least beyond this line'.
- The fascination with the fallen woman is partly explained by the reassurance it provides to those who conform.
- The following is taken from the Tate's description of the painting. 'The theme of the triptych is the discovery of the woman's infidelity and its consequences. In this first scene the wife lies prostrate at her husband's feet, while he sits grimly at the table and their children (the older girl modelled by William Frith's daughter) play cards in the background. The husband is holding a letter, evidence of his wife's adultery, and simultaneously crushes a miniature of her lover under his foot. The setting is an ordinary middle-class drawing room, but closer observation reveals that the room is full of symbols.
 - Egg was clearly **influenced** in his approach by Holman Hunt's ***The Awakening Conscience*** of 1853 (Manchester City Art Galleries).
 - The **house of cards is collapsing**, signifying the breakdown of the couple's marriage. The cards are supported by a novel by Balzac - a specialist in the theme of adultery.
 - An **apple has been cut in two**, the one half (representing the wife) has fallen to the floor, the other (representing the husband) has been stabbed to the core.
 - As a parallel, the **two pictures on the wall** depict the expulsion of Adam

and Eve from the Garden of Eden (labelled *The Fall*); and a shipwreck by Clarkson Stanfield (labelled *Abandoned*). The couple's individual portraits hang beneath the appropriate image.

- In the background of the picture the mirror reflects an **open door**, denoting the woman's impending departure from the home.
 - The position of her arms and the **bracelets** round her **wrists** give the impression that **she is shackled**. In Victorian England a man could safely take a mistress without fear of recrimination, but for a woman to be unfaithful was an unforgivable crime. As Caroline Norton, an early feminist, wrote, 'the faults of women are visited as sins, the sins of men are not even visited as faults' (quote in Lambourne, p.374).
-
- The set of pictures was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1858 with no title, but with the subtitle, "August the 4th - Have just heard that B - has been dead more than a fortnight, so his poor children have now lost both parents. I hear she was seen on Friday last near the Strand, evidently without a place to lay her head. What a fall hers has been!"
 - In Victorian England a man could safely take a mistress without fear of recrimination, but for a woman to be unfaithful was an unforgivable crime. As Caroline Norton, an early feminist, wrote, 'the faults of women are visited as sins, the sins of men are not even visited as faults'



Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *Lady Lilith*, 1872-3, Delaware Art Museum

Lady Lilith

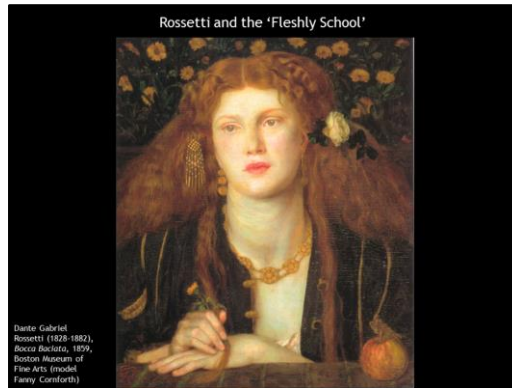
- Lilith, the subject of this painting, is described in Judaic literature as the **first wife of Adam**. She is associated with the seduction of men and the murder of children. The depiction of women as powerful and evil temptresses was prevalent in 19th-century painting, particularly among the Pre-Raphaelites. The artist depicts Lilith as an iconic, Amazon-like female with long, flowing hair. Her languid nature is reiterated in the inclusion of the poppy in the lower right corner—the flower of opium-induced slumber.
- Lilith is a type of woman known as a *femme fatale*, another Victorian stereotype. She combs her sensuous red hair, long hair was a sexual symbol in Victorian times and looks in a mirror, a sign of self-absorption. The power of women was regarded by Victorian men as ‘perilous’ and she represent the New Women, free of male control, scourge of the patriarchal Victorian family.
- The legend is that Lilith was created at the same time as Adam not from his rib but from the same handful of dust, she was his equal. She refused to be subordinate and left and folk law says that she preys on babies and visits men in their dreams to bewitch them.
- **Lilith** is an **unusual** subject for Rossetti to choose as she does not figure highly in serious literature and Rossetti could have chosen Salome or Judith. Her **first appearance** is in **Goethe’s Faust** when Faust catches a glimpse of a golden-haired beauty in the distance and it is likely that Goethe’s introduction of Lilith as Adam’s first wife and a seductress rather than a child-slaying witch influenced Rossetti. The ensnaring hair was certainly a theme that Rossetti responded to in many paintings. In Goethe’s *Faust*, Mephistopheles warns Faust:
Adam's wife, his first. Beware of her.
Her beauty's one boast is her dangerous hair.

*When Lilith winds it tight around young men
She doesn't soon let go of them again.*

- We know that Rossetti visited Paris at this time and saw **Titian's Lady at her Toilette** (1515, also called *Woman with a Mirror*) which is clearly an influence. In fact, in one letter Rossetti refers to it as his 'Toilette picture'.
- The painting was begun in **1864** with **Fanny Cornforth** as the model with her golden hair, and this was completed in 1868. At the request of his patron Leyland he removed Cornforth's face and replaced it with that of **Alexa Wilding** and her red-gold hair.
- The roses are the flowers of Venus and love, the poppy sleep and dreams and a source of laudanum, the drug that killed Rossetti's wife Elizabeth Siddal. Foxglove lying under the boudoir mirror at the rear produces digitalis a deadly poison. Two candles flank the mirror suggesting an altar to Love, to Lilith, to Vanity or even to Death.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Lilith



Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *Bocca Baciata*, 1859, Boston Museum of Fine Arts (model Fanny Cornforth)

Fleshly School Controversy

- Wikipedia: 'The Fleshly School is the name given by Robert Buchanan to a **realistic, sensual school of poets**, to which Dante Gabriel **Rossetti**, **William Morris**, and **Algernon Charles Swinburne** belong. He **accused them of immorality** in an article entitled "The Fleshly School of Poetry" in *The Contemporary Review* in October 1871. This article was expanded into a pamphlet (1872), but he subsequently withdrew from the criticisms it contained, and it is chiefly remembered by the replies it evoked from Rossetti in a letter to the *Athenaeum* (December 16, 1871), entitled *The Stealthy School of Criticism*, and from Swinburne in *Under the Microscope* (1872).'
- The criticism of Rossetti's first collection of poetry **contributed to his mental breakdown** in June 1872. He stayed with Jane Morris at Kelmscott but 'spent his days in a **haze of chloral and whisky**'. He improved the following year and painted portraits of Alexa Wilding and Jane Morris. In 1874, Morris cut Rossetti out of his business and Rossetti left Kelmscott in July 1874 and never returned. He deteriorated and **became mentally unstable** and spent his last years as a **recluse at Cheyne Walk**. He died on Easter Sunday, 1882, at the country house of a friend. He had gone there to recover his health which had been destroyed by chloral and alcohol. He had been housebound for years because of **paralysis of his legs** resulting from his addiction to chloral which he took to reduce the pain from a botched operation. He suffered from alcohol psychosis resulting from the excessive amounts of whisky he used to disguise the bitter taste of the chloral hydrate.

Bocca Baciata

- This painting by Rossetti of 1859 is usually described as the **first** painting of the

Aesthetic Movement as it is not a portrait, makes no moral point and represents female beauty.

- Rossetti adds a number of symbols, such as the marigolds and the apple, which suggests we need to interpret the painting like a coded message. Conventionally a marigold, in the language of flowers, signified grief, pain, and chagrin, that is, vexation resulting in humiliation or disappointment. In Christian symbolism, an apple represents temptation
- Rossetti broke new ground with *Bocca Baciata* as the painting marked a distinct change in his style, and it does not fall into any established genre. It was generally admired but Holman Hunt described the painting as advocating '**the animal passion** to be the aim of art'.
- Although the interpretation of the painting in aesthetic terms sees it as a simple representation of beauty it is clear that it has multiple social, cultural, political interpretations.
- In terms of the role of women it raises question about,
 - **Femme fatale** – dangerous woman who will seduce and ensnare her lovers. A common figure in the European Middle Ages inherited from the Biblical Eve. The trope became popular during the Romantic period and was used by the Pre-Raphaelites. It became fashionable in the late nineteenth century and was reinvented by Oscar Wilde as Salome who used her 'Dance of the Seven Veils' (invented by Wilde) to demand the head of John the Baptist. It is, of course, a phantasy, the projection of illicit male desires. The term was used in France with this meaning in 1800 or earlier but not in England until the late nineteenth century.
 - **Fallen woman** - In a moral sense: That has lost purity or innocence; ruined. a fallen woman : one who has surrendered her chastity (OED). The idea relates back to Eve and Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Lord Byron and William Blake. It is also often linked to Hunt's *the Awakening Conscience*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (Peggotty and Emily) and Rossetti's *Found*. The term was used by Josephine Butler when writing about the Contagious Diseases Act of 1864.
 - **'Angel in the House'**, wife and mother and carer. The term is a narrative poem by Coventry Patmore first published in 1854. It only became popular in the late nineteenth century. It idealised his wife Emily whom he believed to be the perfect woman. The roles for a respectable woman were wife and then mother or unmarried carer of her ageing father.
- Rossetti broke most of the conventions associated with female representation in contemporary 'books of beauty' by painting the woman in *Bocca Baciata* with fuller, more voluptuous lips, a less pinched face, unrestrained hair and exotic jewellery, in a more compressed space so we feel physically closer to the head and body, which are pressed close to the picture plane. Also significant were his use of

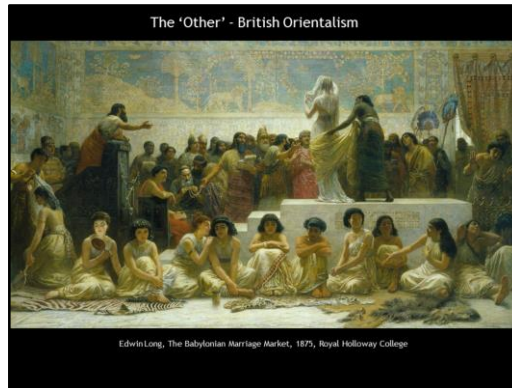
thick oils and sensual Venetian colours.

- Rossetti had been **commissioned by George Boyce** to paint a portrait of Fanny Cornforth and the heavy, idiosyncratic features reinforce the fact that a particular person was being depicted. Its sensuousness can be judged from Arthur Hughes's comment: 'so awfully lovely. Boyce has bought it, and will I suspect kiss the dear thing's lips away before you can come over to see it.'
- Rossetti's image has a full face and chin that do not conform to any of the standard types of beauty, and she has a long neck, which, although it was an established attribute of beauty, is so long and wide that it could almost be considered distorted. Rossetti was not painting a conventional 'perfect beauty' but a particular person. However, the title also refers us to a story by Boccaccio suggesting the woman was being used to represent the central character who was described as the most beautiful woman in the world.
- She does not **meet our eye**, and her pose, though conventional, is made **disturbing** by her expression, which is **vacant** and charged with a slight **sullenness**, like a model who has sat for too long. This suggests volition and agency rather than passivity and so it conflicts with the view of the model as an impassive object. Other aspects of agency and female independence are present in the way Rossetti's has represented his model. For example, compared to women in books of beauty, her nose is not slim and pinched and her forehead is narrow, both signs at the time of a lack of refinement. The shoulders are broad, giving the appearance of **physical strength** rather than of a delicate and over-refined drawing-room beauty. With her flowing red hair, exotic and excessive jewellery and **robust features** she could be seen as **coarse and sexually experienced**. The conventions at the time would therefore label her as a **fallen woman**.
- Although conventional Christian symbolism equates the apple with temptation the term 'apple' was not mentioned in the Bible and the fruit in the Garden of Eden was from 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil'. Theologians disagree about whether the term 'knowledge' should be interpreted narrowly or broadly but the Bible goes on to say that Eve decided to eat the fruit to make herself wise. Adam needed no convincing and ate the fruit he was given, which suggests the serpent chose Eve as she was the hardest to convince and her decision could be seen as the first example of female sexual power in the Christian tradition.
- In the Biblical account, God was unaware of Adam and Eve's transgression as he was elsewhere in the garden, but when he found out he constructed a complex curse, which included women, in future, experiencing pain during childbirth and obeying men. The acquisition of knowledge was concerned with the recognition of each other's nakedness and this implies that it became associated with sexual desire, which sexual selection equates with beauty. This loss of innocence was represented as the expulsion from a perfect garden and this has been interpreted in Darwinian terms as the evolutionary moment that humans developed a sense of right and wrong.

- This image is one of those that would have been criticized by Thomas Maitland when he wrote '**The Fleshly School of Poetry: Mr D. G. Rossetti**' in the magazine *Contemporary Review* (October, 1871).

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bocca_Baciata



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) and **Jean-Léon Gérôme** (1824–1904)

- It was inspired by a passage in the *Histories* by Herodotus, and the artist paid attention to historic accuracy and painstakingly copied some of the images from Assyrian artefacts. Herodotus maintained that in ancient Babylon there was an annual market that offered the beautiful women first and then the rest in descending order of beauty.
- The painting was commissioned for 1,700 guineas by Edward Hermon of Henley-on-Thames and was sold at Christies in 1882 to **Thomas Holloway** for the then **record price** for a painting by a living artist of **£6,615**. Ironically, Holloway purchased it to hang in the women's college that he had endowed.
- **Ruskin found it 'of great merit'** and all the journals that criticized Augustus Egg's *Past and Present* praised the painting. Ruskin and W. M. Rossetti pointed out that the painting commented on the **marriage market** that took place in **Paris and London** of eligible and beautiful young maidens.

Notes

- The other well known painter of Oriental subjects was **John Frederick Lewis** (1804-1876) who lived for several years in a traditional house in Cairo. He painted realistic genre scenes of Middle Eastern life and more idealized scenes in upper class Egyptian interiors. His careful representation of Islamic architecture and furnishings set new standards of realism, which influenced other artists. He "**never painted a nude**", and **his wife modelled for several of his harem scenes**. Leighton

described his 'harem as a place of almost English domesticity, ... [where]... women's fully clothed respectability suggests a moral healthiness to go with their natural good looks'.



Joseph Noel Paton, *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, 1849, 99 × 152 cm, Scottish National Gallery

- **Shakespeare's plays** were a common source of material for fairy paintings. This is the scene from *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* where Titania refuses to give the Indian boy she is raising to Oberon. According to Oberon the Indian boy is a changeling stolen from an Indian king but according to Titania she is looking after him after his Indian mother died. This sometimes seen as representing the conflict between a mother and her husband when a son is sent away to school or perhaps Oberon is jealous of their relationship and wants to be the only recipient of Titania's love.
- The painting was judged to be '**picture of the season**' when exhibited in Edinburgh in **1850**. Later it **captivated Lewis Carroll** (the author of 'Alice in Wonderland') who counted **165 fairies**.
- Paton painted **The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania** which won the second prize of £300 in the competition for the decoration of the new Houses of Parliament in 1847 but it was not subsequently executed. This was painted as a response to an earlier study of the *Quarrel* painting which was completed in 1846 and featured as Paton's diploma picture.
- While studying in London Paton met John Everett **Millais, who asked him to join the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**. Paton was made an associate of the Royal Scottish Academy in 1847 and a fellow in 1850. In 1865, he was appointed Queen's Limner for Scotland. Two years later he received a knighthood and in 1878 was conferred the degree LL. D. by the University of Edinburgh.
- **Daniel Maclise and Paton** were the **only artists** working in the genre of fairy paintings with **expertise in folklore**.



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne in Black and Gold The Falling Rocket*, c. 1875, Detroit Institute of Arts

- One of two pictures of Cremorne Gardens, a pleasure garden, and the high point of Whistler's middle period.
- It is painted using mostly blue, green and yellow. He was influenced by Japanese artists like Utagawa Hiroshige. He spent years perfecting his technique of creating a figure with one dab of the brush and his attention to detail went as far as viewing his work through mirrors to ensure nothing had been overlooked.
- Whistler has been quoted as saying 'If the man who paints only the tree, or flower, or other surface he sees before him were an artist, the king of artists would be the photographer. It is for the artist to do something beyond this.'
- Not all paintings of the Aesthetic Movement were beautiful women and this painting by Whistler an American-born, British-based artist shows how far art went in the nineteenth century. This painting gave rise to one of the central artistic controversy of the Victorian period, known as the **Whistler v. Ruskin trial**. The trial tells us a lot about how the Victorians regarded art and the nature of the changes Whistler helped bring about.

The Whistler v. Ruskin Trial

- This painting and the next were exhibited in the **Grosvenor Gallery** in **1877**, the year it opened. John Ruskin reviewed Whistler's work in his publication *Fors Clavigera* on July 2, 1877. Ruskin praised Burne-Jones, while he attacked Whistler:
For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay [founder of the Grosvenor Gallery] ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of Cockney impudence before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's

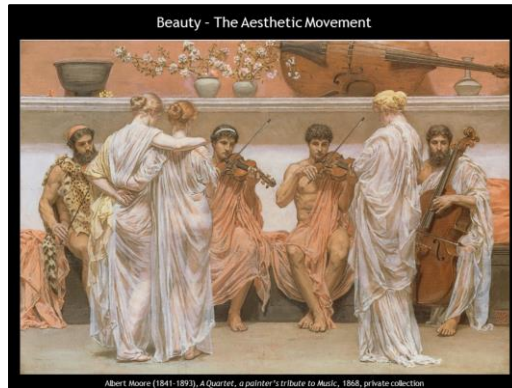
face.

- Ruskin's attack meant that owners of Whistler's work were worried about retaining them as their value was perceived to have gone down. Henry James spoke out against Ruskin and felt he had overstepped the bounds of art critic and had become tyrannical. It has been suggested that Ruskin suffered from CADASIL ('Cerebral Autosomal-Dominant Arteriopathy with Subcortical Infarcts and Leukoencephalopathy') syndrome as he described visual effects that match the illness. CADASIL is a hereditary stroke disorder that Friedrich Nietzsche and Felix Mendelsohn may also have suffered from.
- Whistler, seeing the attack in the newspaper, replied to his friend George Boughton, "It is the most debased style of criticism I have had thrown at me yet." He then went to his solicitor and drew up a writ for libel which was served to Ruskin. Whistler hoped to recover £1,000 plus the costs of the action. The case came to trial the following year after delays caused by Ruskin's bouts of mental illness, while Whistler's financial condition continued to deteriorate. It was heard at the **Queen's Bench of the High Court on November 25 and 26 of 1878**. The lawyer for John Ruskin, Attorney General Sir John Holker, cross-examined Whistler:
Holker: 'What is the subject of Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket?'
Whistler: 'It is a night piece and represents the fireworks at Cremorne Gardens.'
Holker: 'Not a view of Cremorne?'
Whistler: 'If it were A View of Cremorne it would certainly bring about nothing but disappointment on the part of the beholders.
It is an artistic arrangement. That is why I call it a nocturne....'
Holker: 'Did it take you much time to paint the Nocturne in Black and Gold? How soon did you knock it off?'
Whistler: 'Oh, I 'knock one off' possibly in a couple of days – one day to do the work and another to finish it...'
Holker: 'The labour of two days is that for which you ask two hundred guineas?'
Whistler: 'No, I ask it for the knowledge I have gained in the work of a lifetime.'

At the heart of the criticism was the idea that an artist charged for the number of hours work put into the painting and by implication an expensive picture was expected to be a clear representation of something, should be well finished and should exhibit the hard work put into it through its size, the skill the artist needed to accurately represent something and the attention to detail of its finish.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Abbott_McNeill_Whistler



Albert Moore (1841-1893), *A Quartet, a painter's tribute to Music*, AD 1868, 1868, private collection

- The painting makes little sense to modern viewers but in 1869 it inspired young artists. It is not a recreation of a classical scene because of the anomaly of modern instruments. It is a harmonious, decorative design without a subject, **like a piece of music** itself. Moore revived formal qualities of beauty inspired by the human body and nature.
- Of the last painting Rossetti dismissed critics who tried to evaluate its merits base on historical accuracy. They were missing the point. "Whether or not azaleas were known to Grecian ladies, whether or not they came from America," wrote Rossetti, "are questions not difficult of solution, but of sublime indifference to Mr. Moore". The same applies to the musical instruments in this painting.
- He was influenced by Greek sculpture and **Japanese art**.
- He had a **complex multi-stage process** he used to create his work that consisted of a sketch, a full-size cartoon that was transferred and a method of tearing out sections of tracing paper as he added the colours. He first painted the nude figure and then painted the drapery over the top in order to produce an accurate nude form.
- The painting of the **nude figure** became a central project for artists associated with the Aesthetic Movement from the 1860s onwards.
- Although this painting makes little sense to the modern viewer when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1869, the painting '**fired so many young brains with enthusiasm, which inspired so many sonnets, and furnished so many aesthetic drawing rooms**' (Robin Asleson, *Albert Moore*, 2000). For Moore, producing genuinely authentic ancient settings was of little importance; rather his goal was to produce graceful, elegant paintings without a subject. Known as the quintessential aesthetic painter, Alfred Moore's works sublimate everything to composition and a subdued color palette.

- Moore sought to revive the formal qualities responsible for the beauty which the Greeks had drawn from nature and the human body. Moore was greatly influenced by Greek sculpture and Japanese art. In his biography on Moore, Robyn Asleson comments on Moore's extensive preparatory work.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Joseph_Moore

See <http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/moore/paintings/sawhney.html>



The Aesthete, *Punch*, 5 February 1876

- The **Aesthetic Movement became a fashion and a craze** that encompassed interior design, furnishings and became a way of life. It was associated with effeminate man and manly women. The New Woman smoked, dressed austere and conversed as an equal.
- In 1881 the operetta *Patience; or, Bunthorne's Bride* by W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan was a satire on the aesthetic movement. Bunthorne was a reference to Algernon Charles Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Oscar Wilde was not well enough known when the operetta was first shown.



John Singer Sargent, *Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood*, 1885, Tate Britain

- Tate website, 'Sargent first met Monet in 1876, but the two artists were closest ten years later. It was **probably in 1885** that they painted together at **Giverny**, near Paris. Sargent admired the way that Monet worked **out of doors**, and imitated some of his subjects and methods in sketches such as this. It is characteristic of Sargent to give a human view of Monet's practice and of the patience of his wife, who sits behind him. When he settled in London in 1885 Sargent was **initially viewed as avant-garde**, but came to be the **greatest society portraitist** of his day.'
- Sargent's *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* was 1885-6.
- Sargent completed his move to London in 1886 following the *Madame X* scandal in 1884 which caused his French commissions to dry up.



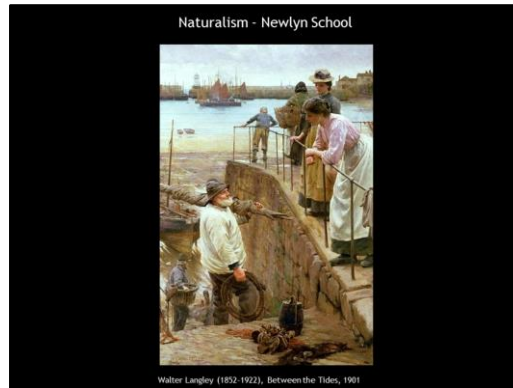
- From Tate website:
 - This picture was strongly attacked by the critics when it was first exhibited in 1887, and dismissed by one as '**either a deliberate daub or so much mere midsummer madness**'. Steer considered giving up painting in the wake of this disapproval. With its exploitation of the creamy fluency of oil paint, its atmospheric lighting and subdued colouring, 'The Bridge' is like Whistler's landscapes he called 'Nocturnes'. It was unusual in London at the time for its **lack of detail**, and for the uncertainty about its subject. The view is probably at Walberswick in Suffolk.

Philip Wilson Steer

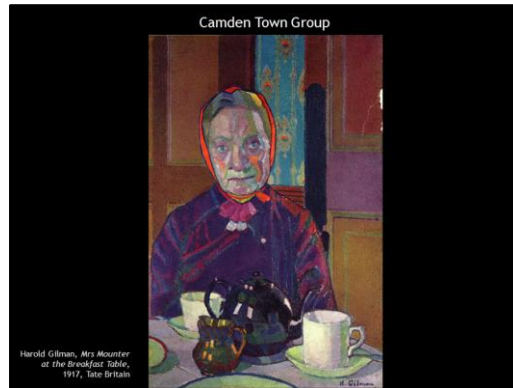
- At the beginning of the 1890s Steer was the **leading follower of French Impressionism in England**. However, he has a Post-Impressionistic technique that produced a balance between the formal properties of the surface and the naturalistic representation of the subject. He had been influenced by Whistler and Degas but from about 1895 he began to reassess the work of the Old Masters such as Constable and Turner and he started to paint the English countryside.
- In 1927 he began to lose his sight in one eye and started to paint almost exclusively in watercolour with a looser style sometimes verging on total abstraction. He continued to teach at the Slade until 1930.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philip_Wilson_Steer



- **Walter Langley** came from a **working class background** and won a scholarship to the **South Kensington School of Design**. He returned to Birmingham and took up painting and in 1881 he was offered **£500 for a year's work** so he moved to **Newlyn** with his family. He was one of the first artists to move to Newlyn and he recorded the lives of the fishing community.
- He was politically left-wing and a supporter of radical socialism. His working class background enabled him to identify with the fishermen and many of his paintings reflect his sympathy with their condition.
- His working class background meant that he was **not recognised as an important Newlyn painter** and until 1892 he painted largely in watercolours.
- His reputation grew, he was praised by Leo Tolstoy and was invited to submit a self-portrait to the Uffizi in Florence. Today his work is regarded as vital to the image of the Newlyn School alongside that of Stanhope Forbes. Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947) moved to Newlyn in 1884, three years after Walter Langley.



Harold Gilman (1876-1919), *Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table*, 1917, Tate Britain
There is a larger version in the Walker Art Gallery with a William Morris chair on the right.

- **Mrs Mounter** was the subject of a number of portraits by **Harold Gilman**. She lodged at the same address as Gilman at 47 Maple Street, off Tottenham Court Road and may have been his **housekeeper**.
- The house was near Fitzroy Street where the Camden Town Group showed their work.
- By the time he painted this he and **Sickert** had become **alienated** as **Gilman's pure colours and bright palette** were not to Sickert's taste. Gilman was influenced by the **colour palette** of **Pissarro**.
- Mrs Mounter is **not glamourized**. **Gilman admired** not only of **Van Gogh's directness** in portraiture but also that of Cézanne and Gauguin.
- 'In this painting her **direct gaze and time-worn features**, highlighted in warm tones and haloed tightly by an orange kerchief, draws the viewer in. The ordinary crockery on the table indicates the unceremonious **sharing of breakfast across social classes** and despite wartime shortages.' (Tate website)

Notes

Harold Gilman

- Harold Gilman's father was a Rector in the Romney Marshes and he was educated in Kent, Berkshire, Rochester and Tonbridge and for one year at Brasenose College, Oxford University which he had to leave because of ill health. He studied at the Hastings School of Art and transferred to the Slade School in London where he met Spencer Gore. He met Walter Sickert in 1907 and became a founding member of the **Fitzroy Group** (1907) and then the **Camden Town Group** (1911). His interest in Post-Impressionism took him further and further away from Sickert. He **died in 1919 aged 43** of the Spanish Flu.

- **Tate:**
 - “Gilman uses a psychologically sophisticated composition to draw us into Mrs Mounter’s space. The foreground consists only of the tea table, cutting the nearest plate in half, and it is as if we are sitting opposite her. Placed against the wooden doors, the lack of background recession further reinforces this personal proximity ... Gilman’s sympathy with ordinary people found expression in socialist beliefs, which reputedly irritated Sickert on occasion. His move to Letchworth Garden City was partly an expression of his political outlook, as it was a model community which attracted a mixed bag of idealists, fresh-air fanatics and vegetarians. Letchworth was built in about 1907, only one tree was felled during its development and it was known as ‘the town with no beer’ as the sale of alcohol was banned (except in the four pre-existing pubs).
 - This meeting of artist and sitter is, as the art historian Andrew Causey has written, **‘a confrontation that dignifies without flattering and is not limited by any class condescension’.**”
- **Liverpool Museums:**
 - “Harold Gilman was born in Somerset to the Reverend John Gilman, a Rector of Snargate with Snave in Kent. After studying at Oxford for a year in 1894 he decided to become an artist. In 1897 he went to study at the **Slade School of Art** alongside Frederick **Spencer Gore** (who became his lifelong friend) under the instruction of Tonks, Wood, and Steer. The strong foundation in **draughtsmanship** encouraged at the Slade is evident throughout Gilman's artistic career.
 - Gore introduced Gilman to **W.R. Sickert** and his circle at Fitzroy Street in 1907 and it was here that the **colour of Lucien Pissarro** began to filter through into Gilman's painting. In 1910 Gilman travelled with Charles Ginner - another member of the Fitzroy Street Group - to Paris where he became familiar with the recent advances in French art made by **Signac, Gauguin, Matisse and Van Gogh**. In particular, he began to admire the work of the Post-Impressionist **Cézanne**. However it was not until **Roger Fry's infamous 1910 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' exhibition** and later **1912 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition' held at the Grafton Galleries** in London that Gilman really began to **admire the art of Van Gogh**, who **became his idol**. Wyndam Lewis said of Gilman: “he was proud to be a man who could sometimes hang his pictures in the neighbourhood of a picture postcard of ...Van Gogh”.
 - After **grievances with** their main exhibiting society, the **New English Art Club**, the informal **group of Fitzroy Street artists formed** themselves into the more progressive **Camden Town Group**. Gilman was a founding member of the group when it began in 1911. His paintings took on **Sickert's**

motifs of working-class cluttered interiors, informal portraits, nudes, shop fronts and eating-places. He began to combine this subject matter with a **brighter palette** and **thickly-applied paint** inspired by **Van Gogh**. However, it was as **president of the London Group**, formed in **1914** when the **Camden Town Group was fragmenting**, that Gilman's confident and argumentative character really came to the fore. This was apparent both in his presiding over of the group, and through his more adventurous use of **vivid colour**. As he **grew apart from Sickert**, his style became more open to the influence of Ginner and his decorative use of thick flat paint and patterning inspired by Post-Impressionist and **Fauve styles** rather than that of Sickert, whose work retained a duller, more dauby Impressionist palette. Gilman **rejected the Impressionist** concept of **painting being like a sketch** in favour of permanence which he achieved using a firm base and strong framing element with thick layers of paint **working slowly from pen and ink sketches**, not from life.

- Gilman developed a **very individual style** that had gone largely **unnoticed** when he **died suddenly during the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1919**. He **sold very few works during his lifetime** and it was not until the **1955 Arts Council exhibition** of his work that he began to **receive recognition** for his short-lived but significant contribution to British modernism."

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/harold-gilman-mrs-mounter-at-the-breakfast-table-r1133436>



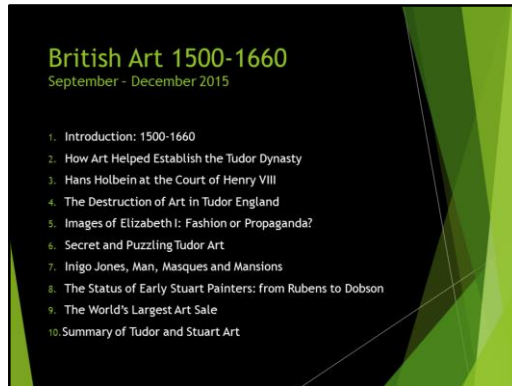
- Innovations that often pre-dated French art
 - John Constable and J. M. W. Turner
 - Pre-Raphaelites
- Original, creative and sometimes outrageous
 - Rossetti's 'Fleshly School' controversy (1871). 'One of the most celebrated literary controversies of the nineteenth century'.
 - Whistler v. Ruskin trial (1878).
- Often controversial
 - Particularly regarding religion, in France there was Manet's *Olympia* (1863) controversial because of the subject matter of prostitution, in England Millais's *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849-50), controversial because of what was regarded as blasphemy.
- Influential on later European art
 - John Constable and English landscape
 - J. M. W. Turner
 - Design Reform Movement
 - William Morris and the Arts & Crafts Movement
 - Whistler and the Aesthetic Movement

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1. Introduction: 1500-1660
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2. How Art Helped Establish the Tudor Dynasty
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4. The Destruction of Art in Tudor England
 - The Reformation
 - Stages of destruction – Henry VIII, Edward IV, Mary I and Elizabeth
 - Destruction and conversion of churches
 - Some Catholic art (architecture) survived
 - Puritanism
5. Images of Elizabeth I: Fashion or Propaganda?
6. The Origins and Functions of the Portrait Miniature
 - See shafe.uk 'Tudor: The Origins and Functions of the Portrait Miniature'
 - Holbein, Mrs Jane Small
 - Simon Bening
 - Lucas Horenbout
 - Nicolas Hilliard, 'Young Man Among Roses', the *Art of Limning*
 - Isaac Oliver, Hilliard's pupil and Limner to Queen Anne of Denmark 1604, Lord Herbert of Cherbury.
 - Levina Teerlinc
7. Inigo Jones, Man, Masques and Mansions
8. The Status and Role of Early Stuart Painters
 - The status of artists
 - Peter Paul Rubens
 - Anthony van Dyck, knighted on his arrival, lived in Blackfriars, *King Charles on Horseback* 1633 (he was 5' 4" and had a stammer), based on Rubens who based it on Titian's equestrian portrait of Hapsburg Emperor Charles V
 - William Dobson (1611-1646), apprentice to William Peake (c. 1580-1639),

portrait of Endymion Porter, c. 1642-5.

- Robert Walker (1599-1658), self-portrait, portraits of Oliver Cromwell and Richard Deane, 1653
- Isaac Fuller (1606?-1672), trained in France, self-portrait. Horace Walpole wrote that 'in his historic compositions Fuller is a wretched painter: his colouring was raw and unnatural, and not compensated by disposition or invention', but praised his portraits, in which 'his pencil was bold strong and masterly'.

1. The World's Largest Art Sale (the origins of collecting, Charles I collection, 'The Commonwealth Sale')

- Collecting in the Tudor and Stuart Periods
- The period of the Wunderkammer leading to the Bilderkammern
- **Lord Arundel**, Thomas Howard had a collection to rival the king.
- **Charles I**, French wife Queen Henrietta Maria, Charles tried to emulate the achievements of Prince Henry but never quite achieved it. He collected across Europe from the Low Countries, to Spain and then Italy. Charles created an enormous debt by plunging the country into wars with Spain and then France. His imposition of the Anglican prayer book led to the Bishop's Wars in Scotland. His policies also caused the Ulster Uprising of 1641. In the late 1620s Charles paid £18,000 for the Gonzaga collection from Mantua, one of the greatest collections in Italy. The collection included Mantegna's *Triumph of Caesar*. Charles used collecting to define his royal authority and perhaps to console him for the deaths of his brother, sister and mother and his father in his early twenties. Charles' collection was overseen by van der Doort. Gerrit van Honthorst Duke of Buckingham. Van Dyck the young Duke of Buckingham and his brother (his father George Villiers was reviled and assassinated in 1628). The Stuarts were more connected to Europe, France and Italy than the Tudors and collecting was sweeping the Continent. He followed European taste for Mantegna, Giorgione, Raphael and, above all, Titian. He also collected the new baroque style artists, Rubens, Guido Reni and Orazio Gentileschi. He became one of the most voracious collectors of art the British royal family has ever seen. Charles was a passionate collector but not a connoisseur, he relied on intermediaries to advise him. It was not astronomically expensive, he spent about £8,000 a year and his biggest purchase was £18,000 against his total crown revenues of nearly £1 million a year. He spent far more on buildings, masques and clothes. A fashionable suit cost £500 but a full length Van Dyck cost £50.
- **Buckingham** and Arundel had the only collection to rival the king. Buckingham had 300 paintings at York House including Rubens Caravaggio, Titian, Tintoretto and Bassano overseen by Balthazar Gerbier.
- John, Lord Lumley, collector

- Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, collector
- Anna of Denmark, Van Somer 1617, collector. See p. 36 Somerset House
- Cecil, Lord Salisbury (Elizabeth's advisor), collector, Hatfield, Salisbury House on the Strand, Sir Henry Wotton in Venice (ambassador and purchaser).
- **The last decade.** Charles I's collecting was overshadowed by the bitter **Thirty Years War** (1618-1648) which he used to buy art from bankrupt kings and states. In 1629 Charles dismissed Parliament and embarked on a decade of personal rule. When he left London in 1642 to raise an army against Parliament his palaces at Whitehall, Greenwich, Hampton Court, Richmond and Windsor were crammed with treasures, statues, tapestries, medals, cameos and over 1,000 paintings.
- **The Commonwealth Sale.** On 30 January 1649 Charles was beheaded and Parliament drew up the Act for the Sale of his property and vast art collection. The sale was intended to reduce the magnificence of monarchy to a simple cash value. In terms of the needs of the state, the sale of the paintings raised very little money but some individuals made substantial profits by buying wisely and reselling in Europe. Paintings were increasingly given away to pacify state debtors and Cromwell increasingly retained art works to confer authority and prestige on the new Commonwealth. Royalists rapidly recast Charles as a noble patron who enriched the country with an art collection that rivalled any in Europe and this brief flowering had been destroyed by the barbarous rebels.
- **Restoration.** In the early years of the restoration much of Charles I's collection was forcibly repossessed. The Sale had defined the value of paintings and it created an art market in England for the first time.

1. Summary of the Tudor and Early Stuart Art World



1. Introduction: 1660-1800
2. Beauty, Sex and Power: The Windsor and Hampton Court Beauties
3. The English Baroque in Art and Architecture
4. Social Realism in Georgian art: Hogarth to Gillray
5. The 'Golden Age' of English Painting
6. The Founding of the Royal Academy
7. The Conversation Piece
8. The Romantic Age of English Painting
9. The Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions in Art
10. Summary of Late Stuart and Georgian Art