

# Tate Britain

## People and Places in the Nineteenth Century

12:00-12:45

Laurence Shafe

# People and Places in the Nineteenth Century

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## Guidelines

The title and artist are mentioned followed by a description of the work, any relevant anecdotes and a description of how it illustrates the 'people and places' theme such as 'the role of women in Victorian society'. If possible the talk about each work finishes with a link to the next work. The complete talk for each work lasts about 3 to 5 minutes so a maximum of 10 can be covered in the 45 minutes. The notes are provided to answer possible background questions. The section 'Visual Aids' towards the end contains additional images that may be used to make a point or show related works or ideas. The summary can be printed as a crib. Optional points are shown in square brackets, quotations are in bold and names are underlined. In general, avoid dates, movements and 'isms' unless directly relevant and only refer to other artists, works or historic events if it is essential to help explain the work being presented or the theme. Do not take any knowledge of history, the artist or an art movement for granted.

## Introduction

1. Welcome to Tate Britain. My name is Laurence and I am your guide for the next 45 minutes.
2. I have a hearing loop for anyone that requires it and if you need a seat there are folding stools over there.
3. Tate Britain is named after Henry Tate (see below) and this is his bust produced by Thomas Brock, perhaps best known for the Queen Victoria Memorial in front of Buckingham Palace. Henry Tate was a wealthy nineteenth-century entrepreneur who started life working in a grocery store. He grew the business until he owned six stores and then sold out to build a sugar refinery in Silvertown, East London. Previously sugar was brown and came in large blocks and he made a fortune by refining white sugar and selling it as sugar cubes. In later life, he gave a great deal to charity including libraries and hospitals. He decided to donate his collection of 65 paintings to the nation on the condition they would be displayed. The National Gallery said it did not have the space and so Tate donated a further £80,000 to build this building on a marshy site called Millbank that previously was the site of a prison. There are now three associated galleries in London. The National Gallery houses international art prior to 1900. This building, Tate Britain, houses all British art to the present day and Tate Modern houses international art since 1900. There are, of course, many exceptions. [The original front part of this building was designed by Sidney Smith and opened on 21 July 1897].



Thomas Brock (1847-1922), *Henry Tate* (1819-1899), 1898.

Tate Britain was originally called the National Gallery of British Art and that is a good description of what it is today. It contains British art from 1545 to the present day and has large collections of key British artists such as William Blake, John Constable and J. M. W. Turner. We have managed to keep our permanent collection free by charging for temporary exhibitions, some Government funding and the use of volunteers like me. Please help us remain free by having lunch here, buying a book or giving a small donation.

4. This tour is called 'People and Places in the Nineteenth Century' and I will be talking about the massive social changes that took place during the nineteenth century and the key artists that represented them. I will touch on the industrial and agricultural revolutions, the class system and the role of women but I shall mostly concentrate on the artists and their lives.
5. I am happy to take questions as we go around so let's get started in the first room.

## Notes

- **The Founder.** Henry Tate (1819-1899) was the son of a clergyman and set up his own grocery shop in 1839 when he was 20. He expanded this to a chain of six shops which he sold and became the owner of a sugar refinery in 1859. This was 26 years after slavery had been abolished in the British Empire (1833) and 52 years after Britain had abolished the slave trade (1807). In 1872, Tate bought a German patent for making sugar cubes from Eugen Langen and it was this that made his fortune. The same year he opened a refinery in Liverpool. Towards the end of his life he gave money to many colleges, hospitals and founded Streatham, Balham, South Lambeth and Brixton libraries. In 1897, he spent £150,000 (some say £80,000) on building the National Gallery of British Art ('Tate Gallery' in 1932), endowed it with his personal art collection of 65 contemporary paintings and gave it all to the nation. The famous portico was designed by the architect Sidney Smith. It was separated from the National Gallery in 1954. Tate Britain was extended twice by Joseph Duveen, an art dealer who also paid for an extension at the British Museum, and in 1987 Charles Clore funded the Turner wing.
- **Attendance.** According to Wikipedia Tate Modern is the eighth most visited art museum with 5.8 million visitors in 2016. The top eight are the Palace Museum China (16m), National Museum of China (7.6m), Louvre (7.3m), British Museum (6.8m), Metropolitan Museum of Art (6.7m), National Gallery (6.2m) and Vatican Museum (6m) making Tate Modern the most visited gallery of modern and contemporary art in the world. In 2014-15 the Tate as a whole had 7.9 million visitors. *Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs* at Tate Modern attracted a record-breaking 560,000 visitors.
- **Management.** The Director of the Tate is Maria Balshaw who was previously Director of the Whitworth (University of Manchester) and Manchester City Galleries, and Director of Culture for Manchester City Council. The previous Director, since 1988, was Sir Nicholas Serota (b. 1946). The Director of Tate Britain is Alex Farquharson and of Tate Modern is Frances Morris.
- **Women artists.** According to the Tate Report 2015/16 36% of the works on display in the Blavatnik Building, Tate Modern are by women and half the rooms devoted to individual artists are by women such as Rebecca Horn, Ana Lupas, Louise Nevelson and Phyllida Barlow. There are few women artists in Tate Britain, the problem, as Tate Modern Director, Frances Morris said, is that **"You can rewrite history but you can't reinvent it. We are highlighting the great contributions of women but there is an imbalance in the history."**

## All Nineteenth-Century Works

All the works on display in June 2017, listed chronologically from 1800 to 1900.

### 1780 Room

1. Sir Henry Raeburn, 'Lieut-Colonel Bryce McMurdo', c.1800–10
2. Paul Sandby Munn, 'Bedlam Furnace, Madeley Dale, Shropshire', 1803
3. Sir Thomas Lawrence, 'Mrs Siddons', 1804
4. Sir David Wilkie, 'The Blind Fiddler', 1806
5. NO IMAGE, Richard Westmacott, Jupiter and Ganymede, 1811
6. Henry Fuseli, 'Lady Macbeth Seizing the Daggers', ?exhibited 1812

### 1810 Room

1. John Constable, 'The Mill Stream. Verso: Night Scene with Bridge', c.1810
2. John Constable, 'Stoke-by-Nayland', c.1810–11
3. John Linnell, 'Kensington Gravel Pits', 1811–2
4. James Ward, 'View in Tabley Park', 1813–8
5. John Constable, 'Flatford Mill ('Scene on a Navigable River')', 1816–7
6. Joseph Mallord William Turner, 'The Field of Waterloo', exhibited 1818
7. COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS Joseph Gandy, Jupiter Pluvius, 1819
8. Henry Thomson, 'The Raising of Jairus' Daughter', exhibited 1820
9. Edward Francis Burney, 'Amateurs of Tye-Wig Music ('Musicians of the Old School')', c.1820
10. Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, 'The Colosseum from the Esquiline', 1822
11. Thomas Woodward, 'The Rat-Catcher and his Dogs', exhibited 1824
12. Richard Parkes Bonington, 'French Coast with Fishermen', c.1825
13. John Simpson, 'Head of a Man (?Ira Frederick Aldridge)', exhibited 1827
14. Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, 'A Scene at Abbotsford', exhibited 1827
15. William Dyce, 'Madonna and Child', c.1827–30
16. John Constable, 'Sketch for 'Hadleigh Castle'', c.1828–9
17. Edward Hodges Baily, 'The First Duke of Wellington (after Joseph Nollekens)', c.1828–30
18. Edward Hodges Baily, 'George Canning (after Joseph Nollekens)', 1829
19. David Roberts, 'The Porch of St Maclou, Rouen', 1829
20. Benjamin Robert Haydon, 'Punch or May Day', 1829
21. Samuel Palmer, 'Coming from Evening Church', 1830
22. John Frederick Herring, 'Birmingham with Patrick Conolly Up, and his Owner, John Beardsworth', 1830
23. James Ward, 'The Moment', 1831
24. Joseph Mallord William Turner, 'Caligula's Palace and Bridge', exhibited 1831
25. Samuel Palmer, 'The Gleaning Field', c.1833
26. Thomas Webster, 'Late at School', 1834, exhibited 1835
27. William Etty, 'Standing Female Nude', c.1835–40
28. James Pollard, 'The 'Tally-Ho' London - Birmingham Stage Coach Passing Whittington College, Highgate', 1836
29. John Gibson, 'Hylas Surprised by the Naiades' 1827–?36, exhibited 1837

### 1840 Room

1. Francis Danby, 'The Deluge', ?c.1840
2. Sir David Wilkie, 'His Highness Muhemed Ali, Pacha of Egypt', 1841
3. William Mulready, 'The Ford ('Crossing the Ford')', exhibited 1842

4. Theodor von Holst, 'The Bride', 1842
5. Sir Edwin Henry Landseer, 'Shoeing', exhibited 1844
6. NO IMAGE, Richard Redgrave, 'The Sempstress', 1846
7. Joseph Mallord William Turner, 'Queen Mab's Cave', exhibited 1846
8. William Holman Hunt, 'Cornfield at Ewell', 1849
9. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin', 1848–9
10. Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'Christ in the House of His Parents ('The Carpenter's Shop')', 1849–50
11. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)', 1849–50
12. Richard Dadd, 'The Flight out of Egypt', 1849–50
13. William Holman Hunt, 'Claudio and Isabella', 1850
14. Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, 'The Escape of Francesco Novello di Carrara, with his Wife, from the Duke of Milan', exhibited 1850
15. Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'Mrs James Wyatt Jr and her Daughter Sarah', c.1850
16. Charles Allston Collins, 'May, in the Regent's Park', 1851
17. Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'Mariana', 1851
18. Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'Ophelia', 1851–2
19. John Martin, 'The Plains of Heaven', 1851–3
20. Ford Madox Brown, 'Take your Son, Sir', ?1851–92
21. Ford Madox Brown, 'Jesus Washing Peter's Feet', 1852–6
22. William Holman Hunt, 'The Awakening Conscience', 1853
23. Ford Madox Brown, 'The Hayfield', 1855–6
24. Thomas Woolner, 'Alfred Tennyson', 1856
25. William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–58
26. Ford Madox Brown, 'Chaucer at the Court of Edward III', 1856–68
27. Emily Mary Osborn, 'Nameless and Friendless. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc." - Proverbs, x, 15', 1857
28. Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present, No. 1', 1858
29. Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present, No. 2', 1858
30. Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present, No. 3', 1858
31. William Dyce, 'Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858', ?1858–60
32. John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, 'Thoughts of the Past', exhibited 1859
33. Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'Lieder ohne Worte', exhibited 1861
34. Joanna Mary Wells, 'Gretchen', 1861
35. George Elgar Hicks, 'Woman's Mission: Comfort of Old Age', 1862
36. Walter Greaves, 'Hammersmith Bridge on Boat-race Day', c.1862
37. George Elgar Hicks, 'Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood', 1863
38. James Abbott McNeill Whistler, 'Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl', 1864
39. John Brett, 'Lady with a Dove (Madame Loeser)', 1864
40. John Frederick Lewis, 'Study for 'The Courtyard of the Coptic Patriarch's House in Cairo'', c.1864
41. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Beata Beatrix', c.1864–70
42. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Beloved ('The Bride')', 1865–6
43. Simeon Solomon, 'A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies', 1870
44. Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'The Boyhood of Raleigh', 1870
45. Alphonse Legros, 'Rehearsing the Service', c.1870
46. COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS, Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'Flowing to the River', 1871
47. George Mason, 'The Harvest Moon', exhibited 1872
48. Cecil Gordon Lawson, 'The Hop-Gardens of England', 1874
49. James Tissot, 'The Ball on Shipboard', c.1874
50. Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt, 'Frieze of Eight Women Gathering Apples', 1876
51. John William Inchbold, 'Gordale Scar, Yorkshire', exhibited 1876
52. Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'An Athlete Wrestling with a Python', 1877
53. John Robertson Reid, 'A Country Cricket Match', 1878

54. Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt, 'The Golden Stairs', 1880
55. George Frederic Watts, 'Psyche', 1880
56. Albert Moore, 'Blossoms', 1881
57. Sir Alfred Gilbert, 'Perseus Arming', 1881–3
58. Amelia Robertson Hill, 'Percy Bysshe Shelley', 1882
59. William McTaggart, 'The Emigrants', 1883–9
60. John Singer Sargent, 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose' 1885–6
61. George Frederic Watts and assistants, 'Hope', 1886
62. John Singer Sargent, 'Portrait of Mrs Robert Harrison', 1886
63. Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'Needless Alarms', 1886
64. Sir William Quiller Orchardson, 'The First Cloud', 1887
65. Philip Wilson Steer, 'The Swiss Alps at the Earl's Court Exhibition', 1887
66. William Logsdail, 'St Martin-in-the-Fields', 1888
67. Sir John Lavery, 'The Glasgow Exhibition, 1888', 1888
68. Sir William Blake Richmond, 'Portrait of Mrs Ernest Moon', 1888
69. Philip Wilson Steer, 'Boulogne Sands', 1888–91
70. Stanhope Alexander Forbes, 'The Health of the Bride', 1889
71. John William Waterhouse, 'Saint Eulalia', exhibited 1885
72. Frank Huddlestone Potter, 'A Music Lesson', 1887
73. Atkinson Grimshaw, 'Liverpool Quay by Moonlight', 1887
74. Henry Alfred Pegram, 'Ignis Fatuus', 1889
75. Sir George Clausen, 'The Girl at the Gate', 1889
76. Walter Richard Sickert, 'Café des Tribunaux, Dieppe', c.1890
77. Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt, 'Vespertina Quies', 1893
78. Matthew Ridley Corbet, 'Val d'Arno: Evening', exhibited 1901

## 1890 Room

1. Sir George Clausen, 'Brown Eyes', 1891
2. Sir William Rothenstein, 'Parting at Morning', 1891
3. Sir Luke Fildes, 'The Doctor', exhibited 1891
4. Sir Alfred Gilbert, 'Model for 'Eros' on the Shaftesbury Memorial, Piccadilly Circus', 1891, cast 1925
5. Walter Richard Sickert, 'Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford', 1892
6. Arthur Hacker, 'The Annunciation', 1892
7. Henry Scott Tuke, 'August Blue', 1893–4
8. Aubrey Beardsley, 'Caprice. Verso: Masked Woman with a White Mouse', c.1894
9. Briton Riviere, 'Beyond Man's Footsteps', exhibited 1894
10. Walter Richard Sickert, 'Interior of St Mark's, Venice', 1895–6
11. Elizabeth Forbes, 'Volendam, Holland, from the Zuidende', ?1895
12. Robert Brough, 'Fantaisie en Folie', 1897
13. Ralph Peacock, 'Ethel', 1897
14. Norman Garstin, 'Mount's Bay and Tolcarne from Trewidden Farm Footpath with Alethea and her Mother', c.1898

## Key Works

Works that illustrate an important point about people and places that visitors might be interested in and which are large and easily visible. They are listed in the order they are hung proceeding clockwise in each room. The ten works that are covered in this tour are marked with an asterisk.

### 1780 Room

1. Paul Sandby Munn, *Bedlam Furnace, Madeley Dale, Shropshire*, 1803
2. Thomas Lawrence, *Mrs Siddons*, 1804
3. David Wilkie, *The Blind Fiddler*, 1806

### 1810 Room

4. \* John Constable, *Flatford Mill (Scene on a Navigable River)*, 1816–7
5. \* Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Field of Waterloo*, exhibited 1818
6. \* Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Punch or May Day*, 1829
7. Samuel Palmer, *Coming from Evening Church*, 1830
8. John Constable, 'Sketch for 'Hadleigh Castle'', c.1828–9

### 1840 Room

1. \* John Singer Sargent, *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, 1885–6
2. John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott*, 1888
3. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848–9 (no longer on display)
4. \* John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, 1849–50
5. \* John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851–2
6. William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853 (no longer on display)
7. \* William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–58
8. \* Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc."* - Proverbs, x, 15', 1857
9. Augustus Leopold Egg, *Past and Present, No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3*, 1858
10. William Dyce, *Pegwell Bay, Kent - a Recollection of October 5th 1858*, ?1858–60
11. George Elgar Hicks, *Woman's Mission: Comfort of Old Age*, 1862 and *Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood*, 1863
12. James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl*, 1864
13. \* Richard Redgrave, *The Sempstress*, 1846
14. \* James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c.1872–5
15. Philip Wilson Steer, *Boulogne Sands*, 1888–91
16. Stanhope Alexander Forbes, *The Health of the Bride*, 1889

### 1890 Room

17. \* Luke Fildes, *The Doctor*, exhibited 1891
18. Alfred Gilbert, Model for *Eros* on the Shaftesbury Memorial, Piccadilly Circus, 1891, cast 1925
19. Walter Richard Sickert, *Minnie Cunningham at the Old Bedford*, 1892

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *'The Field of Waterloo'*, exhibited 1818



J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1799



Joseph Mallord William Turner, *The Field of Waterloo*, exhibited 1818

- **Description.** This is *The Field of Waterloo* by Joseph Mallord William Turner. He exhibited the painting three years after the battle took place when he was 43 and well established. We can see a group of women searching through the dead bodies left after the battle. The scene is lit by their torch and by a flare in the background. On the right is the burning remains of the Château of Hougoumont. This building was regarded by both the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte as the key to the battle and so Wellington threw resources at it to hold it and Napoleon sent his best troops to capture it.
- **Looting.** The women are holding babies and are looking through the pile of bodies of English and French soldiers for their loved ones. In reality, looting was a major problem and within hours many corpses had been stripped of valuables, weapons and clothing, and even their teeth. The blood-soaked artefacts were later sold as memorabilia to the tourists who flocked to the scene. The teeth were sold for years afterwards as false teeth known as 'Waterloo teeth' and worn with pride. The bright flares were sent up after the battle to discourage looting.
- **The Battle.** England had been at war with France, on and off, for over twenty years when the Battle of Waterloo took place. It ended the war but the cost was enormous, it is estimated that on this single day about 50,000 (42,000-53,000) men were killed or seriously wounded and 15,000 horses. Turner is showing us not the heroism and glory of war but the horror and pain.
- **Anti-war?** Turner is our greatest British artist and he was recognised as such in his lifetime both in Britain and abroad. He was a shrewd businessman and became very wealthy. Later in life he started to paint what he wanted to paint and although he was not a revolutionary many of his paintings comment on the flaws of society. When Turner exhibited this painting, he quoted from Lord Byron's anti-war poem 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage'. One line reads, '**Rider and horse—friend, foe, in one red burial blent!**' In other words, the dead belong to no nation.
- **Criticism.** Many saw the victory at Waterloo as vindicating traditional British social values and the class system over meritocracy and the ideals of the French revolution. This painting though was one of the first to display the horrors of war rather than heroic deeds. As a result, when it was exhibited the painting was controversial and the press divided. Some papers thought it showed a '**drunken hubbub**' and made fun of what they described as '**kitchen wenches looking with torches for a lost lodger**', others thought it was an 'abortive attempt'. On the other hand, many thought there was grandeur and that it was an honest portrayal of anxious wives searching for slaughtered victims.
- **War wounded.** After the war, many ex-soldiers returned home wounded and jobless having lost limbs and eyes. There was no social care system and only the antiquated Elizabethan Poor Laws so many resorted to begging. Most were looking for work in the countryside so let us look next at how that was represented.

## Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Field of Waterloo*, exhibited 1818

- **The Battle of Waterloo** was fought on Sunday, 18 June 1815, near Waterloo in Belgium. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) had been deposed the year before and exiled to Elba but he returned, took Paris and ruled for a Hundred Days. He decided to go on the offensive and take Brussels in what was then the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, resulting in the Battle of Waterloo and his exile to the remote island of St. Helena where he died six years later of either stomach cancer or arsenic poisoning.
- **Joseph Mallord William Turner** was born in 1775, a year before John Constable. He was the son of William Turner, a barber and wig maker and was born in Maiden Lane, Covent garden. He was a child prodigy and sold drawings placed in his father's shop window. Around 1786, aged 11, he was sent to Margate where he produced a series of drawings of the town and surrounding area. His first watercolour painting *A View of the Archbishop's Palace, Lambeth* was accepted for the Royal Academy summer exhibition of 1790 when Turner was 15. He entered the Royal Academy School aged 14 and was admitted to the life class in 1792, aged 17. He was elected Associate of the Royal Academy in 1799 and Academician in 1802 and was recognised as a prodigy who promised to be the outstanding painter of his generation. He travelled widely around the country and specialised in topographical landscapes and architecture. He also travelled around Europe and studied at the Louvre and in Italy. His mother died, probably in Bedlam in 1805. He grew more eccentric as he grew older and he few close friends except for his father. At the Royal Academy he could be bumptious, pushy or rude, at times trading insults with colleagues. His father looked after him and died in 1829. Turner never married but had a relationship with an older widow, Sarah Danby and it is believed he fathered two daughters. He died of cholera in the house of his lover Sophia Caroline Booth in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea.
- Turner travelled to the continent two years after the Battle of Waterloo and spent a day on the site of the battle sketching in 1817.

### Biography Turner

Turner was a child prodigy who was mostly self-taught and became full Academician in his twenties. He was born a Cockney and retained the accent through his life. He loved to travel, first in Britain and then across Europe. He was a compulsive artist who had to draw or paint all the time and he was extraordinarily prolific leaving over 20,000 paintings. He cultivated an air of mystery and would often break off mid-sentence with a wink. He was very private and painted only one self-portrait. He was short with a red, blotchy face and he disliked his appearance. He was very close to his father who he called 'Daddy'. His unwillingness to marry has been linked to his mother's mental illness. The two best known female relationships are with Sarah Danby, a widow of a musician, and his landlady in Margate, Mrs Booth. He fell ill when he was 70 and during his last years he turned to alcohol and his dress and home became increasingly squalid.

<b>1775</b>	0	Birth of Turner in Maiden Lane, possibly on 23 April, baptised at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, on 14 May. His father William was a barber and wig maker.
<b>1783</b>	8	Death of younger sister, Mary Ann, aged 4.
<b>1789</b>	14	Starts attending classes at the Royal Academy Schools.
<b>1790</b>	15	Watercolour accepted by the Royal Academy for the first time: <i>The Archbishop's Palace, Lambeth</i> .
<b>1791</b>	16	Travels to Bristol, later in the 1790s to the north of England, Wales and Scotland.
<b>1793</b>	18	Outbreak of war between Britain and France.
<b>1796</b>	21	Oil painting accepted by the Royal Academy for the first time: <i>Fishermen at Sea</i> .

<b>1799</b>	24	Elected an Associate member of the Royal Academy. Moves from his father's house in Covent Garden to Harley Street.
<b>1800</b>	25	Mother admitted to Bethlem ('Bedlam') Hospital.
<b>1802</b>	27	Elected a full member of the Royal Academy and presents <i>Dolbadern Castle</i> as his 'Diploma picture'. Makes the first of many visits to France and Switzerland.
<b>1804</b>	29	Death of Turner's mother in Bedlam. Turner opens a gallery in his own house to show his pictures
<b>1807</b>	32	Elected Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy. Starts issuing his <i>Liber Studiorum</i> ('Book of Studies'), 70 landscape engravings in 14 parts until 1819.
<b>1809</b>	34	Moves round the corner from Harley Street to Queen Anne Street West, retaining his gallery.
<b>1812</b>	37	Paints <i>Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps</i> .
<b>1815</b>	40	Paints <i>Dido building Carthage</i> and <i>Crossing the Brook</i> . Defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and return of peace to Europe.
<b>1817</b>	42	First of several visits to the Low Countries and Germany.
<b>1818</b>	43	<i>The Field of Waterloo</i> exhibited.
<b>1819</b>	44	First of several visits to Italy.
<b>1820-1</b>	45-46	Creates a new gallery at his house.
<b>1828</b>	53	Uses a studio in Rome and exhibits three paintings there which were 'much visited, ridiculed and hooted'.
<b>1829</b>	54	Paints <i>Ulysses deriding Polyphemus</i> . Death of Turner's father.
<b>1834</b>	59	Witnesses the burning of the Houses of Parliament.
<b>1835</b>	60	Makes a tour which includes Copenhagen, Berlin and Prague.
<b>1836</b>	61	Criticism of Turner's art in the press arouses the anger of the 17-year-old John Ruskin.
<b>1839</b>	64	Paints <i>The Fighting Temeraire</i> .
<b>1843</b>	68	Ruskin begins publishing <i>Modern Painters</i> in Turner's defence.
<b>1844</b>	69	Paints <i>Rain, Steam, and Speed</i> .
<b>1845</b>	70	Last trip abroad, to the north French coast.
<b>1845-6</b>	71-71	Serves as Acting President of the Royal Academy during the illness of the President.
<b>1850</b>	75	Exhibits for the last time at the Royal Academy.
<b>1851</b>	76	Death of Turner in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, on 19 December. Buried in St Paul's Cathedral on 30 December.

## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-the-field-of-waterloo-n00500>
- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/jmw-turner/joseph-mallord-william-turner-1775-1851-r1141041>

John Constable, *'Flatford Mill' ('Scene on a Navigable River')*, 1816–7



John Constable (1776-1837), *Self-Portrait*, 1806, his earliest dated drawing



John Constable, *Flatford Mill ('Scene on a Navigable River')*, 1816–7

## John Constable, Flatford Mill ('Scene on a Navigable River'), 1816–7

- **Description.** This is *Flatford Mill* by John Constable. What can we see? An idyllic scene of a summer's day in rural Suffolk. In the foreground two boys are untying two barges from the tow horse to pole them under Flatford bridge to the left, just out of the picture. We see a wonderful Constable sky with scudding cumulus clouds against a pale blue sky. Unlike earlier artists Constable showed real places, the bright colours of nature and natural skies and sunlight.
- **Hunger.** However, the scene is misleading as 1816, the year it was painted, was known as the 'Year Without a Summer'. The previous year, the Indonesian volcano Mount Tambora exploded in the largest eruption in recorded history. Forty-one cubic kilometres of ash were sent into the upper atmosphere, blocking the sun and cooling the planet. In England, this resulted in a cold summer, heavy rains, bright yellow skies and the failure of the harvest. Thousands of ex-soldiers returning from Waterloo added to the families travelling across the UK begging for food and famine was common in the north and southwest Ireland.
- **Corn Laws.** To make matters worse, following the end of the Napoleonic War, Corn Laws were introduced and these fixed the price of corn and therefore the price of bread at an artificially high level. This favoured farmers and millers like the Constables as it meant their prices could not be undercut by cheap foreign imports. The result was famine, dissent and riots which led to the Peterloo massacre, a suspension of habeas corpus, restrictions on press, new Poor Laws which introduced the workhouse, and in the 1830s the Swing Riots and the Tolpuddle Martyrs.
- **Marriage.** In 1816, Constable has other things on his mind. In 1809, he had fallen in love with his childhood friend Maria Bicknell but their engagement was opposed by her grandfather as Constable's allowance was insufficient to maintain her and he considered the Constable's socially inferior. In 1816, Constable's father and mother died and he inherited a sixth of the estate. The marriage was approved and they married in October [at St Martin-in-the-Fields]. Their honeymoon was a tour of the south coast including Weymouth and Brighton and it was during his honeymoon that he developed a new technique of using brighter colours and freer brushwork. The summers of 1816 and 1817 were the last time he lived in East Bergholt for an extended period and the last time he painted the Suffolk countryside direct from nature.
- **A New Realism.** I have been talking about what it was like in the countryside but this painting was not intended to be about the social conditions of the rural poor and such paintings were unusual. Constable had a different aim. He had enjoyed an idyllic boyhood that he wanted to capture that feeling. He wrote that for him '**painting is but another word for feeling**'. These childhood scenes, in his own words, '**made me a painter, and I am grateful**'; '**the sound of water escaping from mill dams etc., willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork, I love such things.**' He wrote, "**When I sit down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture**", by which he meant an Old Master with their prescribed composition and brown foliage and grass. Although he eventually became a Royal Academician he was not commercially successful and sold only twenty paintings in England in his lifetime. Critics found his colours too bright and objected to '**spotting the foreground all over with whitewash**' and his '**snow**'. However, he won a gold medal in Paris for *The Hay Wain* in 1824, had a profound influence on the French Romantic painters and sold twenty paintings there in just a few years.
- We have looked at rural life so let us turn now to life in the city.

## Notes John Constable, Flatford Mill ('Scene on a Navigable River'), 1816–7

- This is Constable's largest exhibition canvas to be painted mainly outdoors, the first of his 'six-footers' and the first in his *Stour* series which later included *The Hay Wain*.
- The barges are called lighters and were used to move goods and passengers from moored ships. They were moved and steered using long oars called 'sweeps'.
- Constable used a sheet of glass on his easel on which he painted the lines of the scene he could see through the glass. This was then transferred to a piece of paper placed on the glass and drawn over. The paper was then squared up and the drawing transferred to the canvas.
- Constable's mother Ann died on 9 March 1815, aged 67. Constable's father Golding died on 14 May 1816, aged 77, and divided his estate into six equal shares. Constable's younger brother Abram ran the farm generating an annual income of £200 for each sibling. Mary Bicknell's father was the Prince Regent's lawyer and the Constables were 'trade'. Constable became an Associate Royal Academician (ARA) in 1819 and a full Academician in 1829 when he was 52 and he died aged 60. Turner was made an ARA in 1799 and a RA in 1802 when he was 26 and he died aged 76.
- **Peterloo Massacre**, 16 Aug 1819, cavalry charged 60,000-80,000 people, killed 15 and injured 400-700, which resulted in the *Manchester Guardian* and the **Six Acts** (which made any meeting for radical reform treasonable, speeded up court cases, radical newspapers were gagged, weapons could be seized and unauthorised military training was made illegal).
- **Pauperism**, during the 1820s Poor Law expenditure decreased, rural crime increased by 30%, mostly food thefts, and 1828, 1829 and 1830 were poor harvests. Many Victorians struggled to understand and explain poverty. Was it a result of personal misfortune, was it caused by social conditions beyond an individual's control, or was it the direct result of a person's character, their laziness and having too many children? Were the poor, therefore, 'deserving' or 'undeserving' and who was responsible for those who became so poor that they could not maintain themselves?
- **Swing Riots**, 1830, agricultural workers did not disguise themselves but descended on farms in their hundreds demanding higher wages. 2,000 farm labourers were arrested and imprisoned and 19 were hung. Reform was needed but the Duke of Wellington, the Prime Minister thought the British system was ideal. His Tory government fell and Earl Grey's Whig government came into power. Grey's bill was rejected, the Whigs were re-elected, it was again opposed by the House of Lords leading to riots across the country and Dorset, Somerset and Leicestershire became ungovernable. Grey requested King William IV to create 100 new Whig peers, he refused and Grey resigned. William called on the Duke of Wellington but even he admitted the country was ungovernable and he resigned. The Great Reform Act was passed.
- **Tolpuddle Martyrs**, in the early 1830s a group of six men formed a friendly society (which was now legal following the repeal of the Combination Act in 1824-5). They refused to work for less than 10s a week when the local rate was 7s a week and were prosecuted under an obscure law of 1797 prohibiting people from swearing oaths to each other. They were transported to Australia and became popular heroes; 800,000 signatures were collected and they were released in 1836 (James Hammett was released in 1837 as he had a previous conviction for theft). Four of the six returned to England and later emigrated to London, Ontario where they are buried.

## Biography Constable

Constable was an emotional and affectionate man who was also capable of sarcasm and over-sensitivity. He was a notoriously difficult person. He saw painting as the representation of feeling and he had a well-developed theory of art. Like the Impressionists he tried to capture the fleeting effects of light. He never travelled overseas. He was from a prosperous family and had little time for the poor and he was concerned

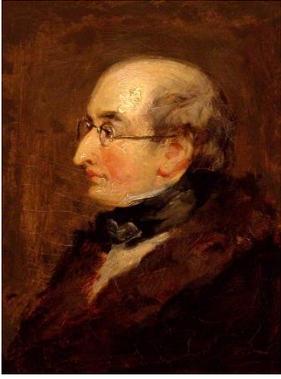
about beggars reaching East Bergholt. The world was in transition during Constable's life yet he remained a reactionary High Tory. When his wife died he became depressed and subdued for the rest of his life.

<b>1776</b>	0	Born East Bergholt, 11 June. Father prosperous mill owner.
<b>1799</b>	23	Persuaded father to let him study at Royal Academy School.
<b>1809</b>	33	Fell in love with Maria Bicknell who suffered from TB. Opposed by her grandfather Dr Rhudde.
<b>1816</b>	40	Painted <i>Flatford Mill</i> , first large painting. Parents both died. Married Maria Bicknell.
<b>1819</b>	43	Sold his first important painting <i>The White Horse</i> . Elected Associate RA.
<b>1821</b>	45	Exhibited <i>The Hay Wain</i> at the Royal Academy.
<b>1820s</b>	44+	Visited Brighton for Maria's health.
<b>1824</b>	48	<i>Hay Wain</i> won a gold medal in France.
<b>1828</b>	52	Devastated by Maria's death.
<b>1829</b>	52-53	Elected Royal Academician aged 52.
<b>1837</b>	60	Died 31 March in Hampstead.

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- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-flatford-mill-scene-on-a-navigable-river-n01273>

Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), 'Punch or May Day', 1829



Self-portrait, c. 1845, NPG



## Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), 'Punch or May Day', 1829

- **Making Money.** This is *Punch or May Day*. It captures a moment in the day-to-day life of Regency London and is by Benjamin Robert Haydon. He would probably have been appalled to see this painting on display in a national gallery as he dedicated his life to raising the standards of British art by promoting large-scale history paintings of noble subjects. He was driven to paint subjects like this to pay the bills. He sold another of his fancy pictures, called *Mock Election*, for 500 guineas to George IV and he was hoping for a similar success with this one. The King asked for it to be sent to Windsor Castle but it was returned unsold. Haydon never found out why but he blamed on the Keeper of the King's Pictures [William Seguiet].
- **Description.** So, what is the subject of this picture? We are in New Road, Marylebone and it is a little past noon as we can see from the clock of Marylebone church. On the left a Punch & Judy show is in progress. Punch is beating his wife and this has drawn the crowds and blocked the road resulting in a marriage coach nearly colliding with a hearse. A farmer is so engrossed by the Punch and Judy he does not notice his pocket being picked by a small hand. A child chimney sweep with his broomstick over his shoulder is amused by the Punch and Judy and on the left a bare-foot fruit seller has laid out her meagre wares. On the right three figures are performing a May Day Morris dance. One is dressed as a tree, the other has a blackface and the third is a woman in a red dress holding a spoon or ladle. The figure dressed as a tree is the Green Man, or, Jack-in-the-Green, a popular participant in traditional May Day festivals in which a person covers themselves in a tree-like costume, sometime pyramidal or conical in shape. The boy with a black face is an ancient Morris dancing tradition thought to represent a chimney sweep or a miner or some say a north African pirate who settled in England.
- **Haydon and Debt.** Haydon was born in Plymouth and showed great intellectual ability as a child. He studied anatomy when he was young and wanted to be a painter. He attended the Royal Academy in London and was successful but he always seemed to be able to upset important people and although he often sold his paintings it was too sporadic and he ended up in debtor's prison. He spent his life campaigning for public buildings to be decorated with inspiring history paintings showing the nations glories but he never convinced enough people and ended up £3,000 in debt. Rather than go into debtor's prison again and because he knew his sight and mind were deteriorating he decided to commit suicide. He bought a gun and wrote a will but even this failed. He shot himself in the head but the ball failed to penetrate his brain so with characteristic determination he slit his throat to kill himself. He left his diary open at the last entry read '**Stretch me no longer on this rough world**', a line from Shakespeare's *King Lear*.
- So, we have an apparently happy event but with a dark story behind it. I would next like to show you the first painting that shows the plight of one group of the Victorian poor.

## Notes on Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), *Punch or May Day*, 1829

- Tate display caption, “Haydon had ambitions to be a history painter, but after some early successes struggled to find patrons or public support for his huge canvases of noble themes from history or scripture. In the late 1820s, after repeatedly falling into debt and even being imprisoned, he painted several subjects of contemporary life that he hoped would be more commercial. This richly detailed composition is intended to capture the energy of contemporary London. A crowd mingles with a costumed procession in the Marylebone Road. Haydon thought of calling this picture simply ‘Life’, suggesting that he retained a sense of ambition even in painting such a lowly subject.”

### Biography Haydon

Haydon was an enthusiast who always spoke his mind and so gained many enemies. He had a volatile personality and although he was very bright he was tactless and upset patrons. John Keats was a great admirer and wrote poems about him. His many enemies were as unworthy as he was high-minded. He was described by Dickens as a poor painter but so dedicated to art that he almost persuaded Dickens to admire his work. He had many people in high places who admired his courage and honesty but they could not prevent him from over spending on art and ending up in debtors’ prison.

<b>1786</b>	0	Born 26 January in Plymouth the son of a prosperous printer and publisher.
<b>1804</b>	18	Left home for Royal Academy School. Their most enthusiastic pupil.
<b>1807</b>	21	Exhibited <i>The Repose in Egypt</i> at the Royal Academy which was sold.
<b>1810</b>	24	Father stopped £200 allowance, financial problems started.
<b>1814</b>	28	Finished <i>Judgement of Solomon</i> which sold for £600 but not enough to pay his debts. Visited Paris with David Wilkie.
<b>1821</b>	35	Married Mary Hyman, a widow with two children.
<b>1823</b>	37	Spent two months in debtors’ prison.
<b>1825</b>	39	Started portrait painting and was successful until a savage review.
<b>1827</b>	41	Entered debtors’ prison again. Painted <i>Mock Election</i> bought by George IV for £500.
<b>1834</b>	48	Completed a picture of the Reform Club banquet on commission with 597 portraits. Visited the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, three days after Palace of Westminster to argue for supporting the arts in the new building.
<b>1835</b>	49	Travelled the country campaigning for history paintings in public buildings.
<b>1844</b>		Exhibited <i>The Banishment of Aristides</i> in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly but only 133 paid to see it and 12,000 paid to see General Tom Thumb next door. Debts of £3,000, failing eyes and mind led to suicide. He shot himself and cut his throat. His widow and three children were supported by friends including Sir Robert Peel and Lord Carlisle.

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



Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), carte de visite, 1860s



Richard Redgrave, *The Sempstress*, 1846

- **Description.** This painting is the fountain head of a whole tradition of social realist painting in Victorian England. It is called *The Sempstress*, that is the seamstress and is by Richard Redgrave. We see a seamstress [or sempstress] sewing a shirt and looking up to heaven like a modern-day saint. You can see from the clock that it is 2:30 in the morning and the sky is streaked with moonlight and her only light is one small candle. Her eyes are swollen and inflamed and because of the dim light and close work many seamstresses went blind. The lit windows opposite indicate that the same thing is happening all over London. 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. The original painting which is now lost was painted in 1843 and this was painted three years later.
- **The Poem.** The painting was accompanied by the lines from Thomas Hood's popular poem *The Song of the Shirt* which had appeared in the Christmas edition of *Punch*, "**Oh! men with sisters dear/Oh! men with mothers and wives,/ It is not linen you're wearing out,/But human creatures' lives'.**" The poem 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"*

- It is impossible today to understand the enormous impact the poem had. William Makepeace Thackeray, known for writing *Vanity Fair*, described it as '**the most startling lyric in our language**'. It was set to music, it was the subject of a play and of many sermons.
- **The Deserving Poor** Sewing was one of the few professions a single woman could undertake to avoid prostitution. Many of the women were delicate middle-class women and the nation was shocked by the way they were ruthlessly exploited and often died in misery. This gave rise to the idea of the 'deserving poor' as opposed to the 'undeserving poor' who were lazy or giving to drunkenness. There were campaigns to help the deserving poor and articles appeared saying British citizens were being subjected to a form of slavery. 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.
- **Acceptance.** This is one of the first paintings in which art was used to campaign for the poor and Redgrave realized that he needed to make the subject respectable for it to be accepted and by copying a 17<sup>th</sup> century Dutch interior and by referencing Baroque images of swooning saints he succeeded brilliantly.
- Let us next look at another painting that was controversial but for a very different reason.

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

- Richard Redgrave (1804-1888, ARA 1840, RA 1851) was born in Pimlico and worked in his father's manufacturing company. He painted part-time and was admitted to the Royal Academy School in 1826, aged 22. He made a living teaching art, for some time at the Government School of Design, and became a head-master and then art superintendent, then inspector-general. He was first Keeper of Paintings at the South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert) and his income enabled him to live at Hyde Park Gate, one of the most prestigious addresses in London. His children became well-known painters. He was surveyor of crown pictures and produced a 34-volume catalogue. He was offered and declined a knighthood.
- There may also be a personal aspect to the painting. 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.

### Biography Redgrave

Redgrave was born into a well-to-do family and was never a avant garde artist. His work was appreciated but above all he did more than anyone to reform art education in Britain.

<b>1804</b>	0	Born 30 April in Pimlico the son of a manufacturing company owner.
<b>1826</b>	22	Admitted to the Royal Academy.
<b>1830</b>	26	Left his father's company and worked as an art teacher and designer.
<b>1837</b>	33	<i>Gulliver on the Farmer's Table</i> made his reputation. Specialised in landscape and genre.
<b>1840</b>	36	Elected Associate Royal Academician.
<b>1847</b>	43	Started at Government School of Design, first as botany lecturer then head-master then superintendent in 1852 and inspector-general in 1857. With Henry Cole was the driving force behind the reform of art education in Britain.
<b>1851</b>	47	Elected Royal Academician.
<b>1855</b>	51	Awarded Legion of Honour for serving on British section of Paris Exhibition.
<b>1856</b>	52	Surveyor of crown pictures until 1880 produced 34-volume catalogue. With Cole persuaded Prince Albert to name South Kensington and open first museum (later called the Victoria & Albert).
<b>1869</b>	65	Offered and declined a knighthood.
<b>1888</b>	84	Died at 27 Hyde Park Gate.

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John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, 1849–50



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Self-Portrait*, 1881, Uffizi Gallery



John Everett Millais, *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, 1849–50

John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, 1849–50

- **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.** This painting enables me to introduce the equivalent of a Victorian boy band although in this case they did not make music but paintings. In 1848, three young artists—the slim, blond child-prodigy, John Everett Millais, the red-haired, intellectual womaniser, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and dark-haired, muscular boxer, William Holman Hunt—together with four colleagues, formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. They rejected the art of the Royal Academy and sought inspiration from the early masters who worked before Raphael, that is before about 1500.
- **Description.** This was painted the following year and was one of their most controversial works. You might be wondering why. Let us look at it closely, it shows the Holy Family at work in a carpenter's shop. Jesus has just cut his hand on a nail and the blood has dripped onto his foot foreshadowing the crucifixion. He is comforted by the Virgin Mary in blue while Joseph holds his hand and St Anne, Mary's mother, looks on. A young boy, later identified as John the Baptist brings in a bowl of water to wash the wound. An assistant representing the future Apostles witnesses the event. There are other symbols such as the ladder representing Jacob's Ladder, the dove representing the Holy Spirit and the sheep the future Christian flock.
- **Revolutionary.** The painting was revolutionary although it is not clear that Millais intended to shock. The public were appalled and Charles Dickens review [in *Household Words* on 15 June 1850] indicates the widespread feeling, '**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'. Dickens described Mary as '**horrible in her ugliness**' and Christ as '**hideous, wry-necked, blubbery**' and the whole painting '**mean, odious, repulsive, and revolting**'. Such terms were rarely used by critics to describe fine art as they knew the artist reputation depended on good reviews and artists had a living to make. The reason for all this anger and these insults is made clear by the *Art Journal* [Ralph Wornum] which wrote '**the most beautiful soul must have the most beautiful body**'. Society would only accept an idealised Holy Family as their beauty indicated their moral worth. So, an ugly Holy Family was blasphemous although no one would have used that word as blasphemy was a serious crime. As late as 1921 someone was imprisoned for blasphemy and it was an offence until 2008.
- **Modernism.** The attack on social and religious conventions is an indication of the beginning of a new type of painting. Previously, paintings were mostly portraits, landscapes, still life or amusing genre paintings. The idea of a painting attacking social conventions was demonstrated fourteen years later, in Paris, when Edouard Manet caused a similar reaction with his painting *Olympia* (1863, exhibited 1865). This time it was not an attack on religion but on bourgeois notions of respectability. Impressionism is often seen as the first revolutionary modern art style yet British art was shocking the nation 25 years before the first Impressionist exhibition.
- By the way, don't worry about Millais's career. He was made an Associate Academician three years later and he became part of the art establishment eventually becoming President of the Royal Academy.

## Notes on John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, 1849–50

- Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine wrote that this painting contained '**Ricketty children, emaciation and deformity**' and '**we can hardly imagine anything more ugly, graceless, and unpleasant**'. 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**'. By the end of the nineteenth century society had changed and it was '**passionately admired, and even loved**'.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Towards the end of the nineteenth century Max Nordau, in his book *Degeneration* singled out the Pre-Raphaelites as the beginning of the disease of mental instability and degeneration that he believed had swept the modern world.
- There were seven members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, the other four were the writer and critic William Michael Rossetti, the artist James Collinson, the art critic Frederic George Stephens and the sculptor Thomas Woolner. The members went their own ways and by 1853 it had ceased to exist as a brotherhood but their work continued to influence artist such as Edward Burne-Jones and John William Waterhouse for the rest of the nineteenth century. The only one of the original brotherhood who stayed true to the aims was Holman Hunt.

### Biography Millais

Millais was, above all, an artistic prodigy who from an early age could paint and draw in any style. He was honest, sincere and other artists were awed by his talents and charmed by his personality. He was committed to art and according to Hunt he never wasted a moment in his dedication to painting. He was sociable and loved by everyone. He claimed never to have read a book and was easy going but could be very intense. He was sporty and jovial and in later life he enjoyed field sports. He was a straightforward English country gentleman, described as a 'good sort'. He became financially extremely successful and an accepted member of the art establishment.

<b>1829</b>	0	Born 8 June in Southampton, the son of a prominent Jersey family.
<b>1839</b>	10	Child prodigy who attended Sass's (a prep school for the Royal Academy) but only needed one year there.
<b>1840</b>	11	The youngest person ever to enter the Royal Academy School.
<b>1848</b>	19	Founded Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with Holman Hunt and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
<b>1850</b>	21	<i>Christ in the House of His Parents</i> highly controversial.
<b>1851</b>	22	John Ruskin defended the PRB.
<b>1853</b>	24	Elected Associate RA. Travelled to Scotland with Ruskin and met Effie Ruskin.
<b>1854</b>	25	Effie filed a suite of nullity, caused a scandal and married Millais the following year and eventually had eight children. He began to paint in a broader style – sell out or new found confidence?
<b>1863</b>	34	Elected Royal Academician. <i>Eve of St. Agnes</i> influenced by Whistler and presaging the Aesthetic Movement.
<b>1871</b>	42	Painted historical subjects, e.g. <i>Boyhood of Raleigh</i> and <i>The Northwest Passage</i> (1874).
<b>1885</b>	56	Made a Baronet.
<b>1886</b>	57	Painted children such as <i>Bubbles</i> notorious for Pears soap advertisement.
<b>1896</b>	67	Elected president of the Royal Academy when Leighton died but he died the same year from throat cancer.

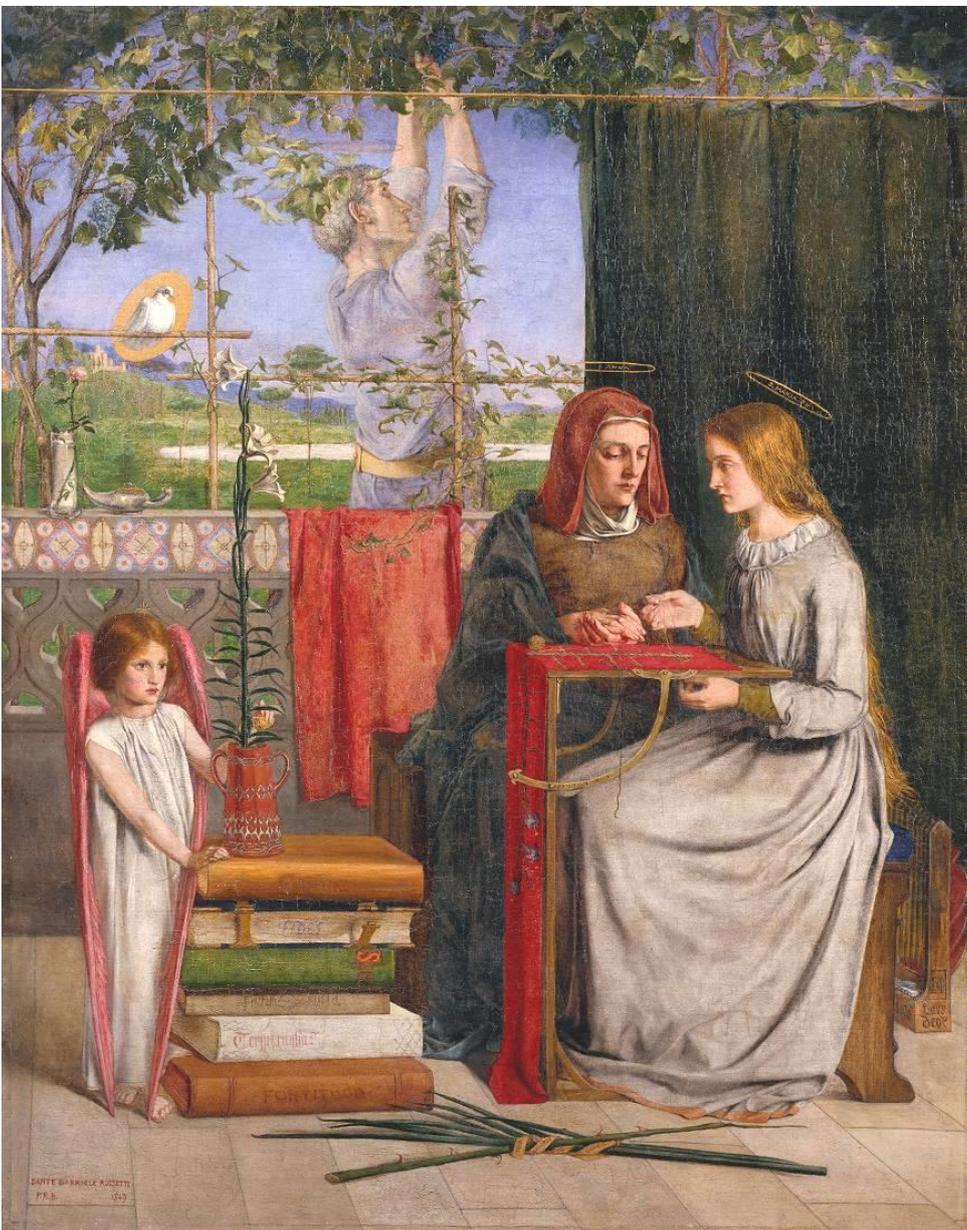
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Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *'The Girlhood of Mary Virgin'*, 1848–49 (not on display)



Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *Self-Portrait*, March 1847, pencil and white chalk on paper, National Portrait Gallery



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848–49

## Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848–49

- Dante Gabriel Rossetti was one of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and he was also a poet and to explain the symbolism in this painting he wrote two sonnets that he inscribed on the frame.
- We see the Virgin Mary embroidering a lily guided by her mother St. Anne. In front of her an angel holds a lily as a model. Mary and Anne are typically shown reading a book but he chose embroidery as something less commonplace and a type of art likely to be done at the time. In front of them is a pile of volumes symbolising spiritual virtue and the top one is Charity. The lily symbolizes purity, the vine Truth, the lamp piety, the rose the Virgin Mary and the dove the Holy Spirit. Near Mary's feet are the seven-leaved palm and the briar twig with seven thorns symbolising Mary's sorrows and Christ's Passion. In the background is St Joachim, Mary's father, who is not mentioned in the Bible but is accepted by the Catholic and Anglican churches. In the distance is the Lake of Galilee. The books represent the three theological virtues gold for charity, blue for faith, green for hope and three of the four cardinal virtues, buff for Prudence, white for Temperance and brown for Fortitude, Justice is omitted. The passion of Christ is represented by the red cloth and the trellis forms a cross.
- There is no evidence Rossetti had any religious beliefs, he was a Victorian agnostic. His deepest belief was that women enshrine the meaning of existence. He wrote in 1852 to F. G. Stephens, '**that picture of mine was a symbol of female excellence. The Virgin being taken as its highest type.**'
- This is his first oil painting and he used an unusual technique. He first primed the canvas with white until it was as smooth as cardboard and then used thinned oil paints that he applied using watercolour brushes. The result is that every tint is transparent and it looks like a watercolour.
- Rossetti was worried about rejection all his life and so he did not submit this painting to the Royal Academy but exhibited it at the Free Exhibition at Hyde Park Corner. The exhibition was 'free' in the sense that the artist was free to exhibit as long as he or she paid. It was mostly used by women who suffered discrimination at the Royal Academy.
- We will next look at the third member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, William Holman Hunt.

## Notes on Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848–49 (not on display)

- Rossetti was from an intellectual family but he was not a natural painter and spent four years at Sass's (1841-5) from the age of 13 to 17. He went to the Royal Academy in 1845 but his attendance was erratic. He admired William Blake and Robert Browning and was as much a poet as an artist. He dropped out of the Academy and was accepted (eventually!) by Ford Maddox Brown for art lessons in 1848. A few weeks later he saw Hunt's *Eve of St. Agnes*, Keats was a favourite of Rossetti and he approached Hunt and congratulated him and that is how they met. Rossetti was brought up as a High Anglican and his mother and sister were devout Christians.
- The names of the virtues appear on the book spines (Fortitudo (strength), Temperentia (restraint), Prudentia (prudence), Spes (hope), Fides (faith), and Caritas (charity), the cardinal virtues); the gilt haloes are inscribed S. Ioachimus, S. Anna, S. Maria S.V.); a scroll binding the palms and briars bears the legend "Tot dolores tot gaudia" ('So many sorrows, so many joys'); and the portable organ near the hassock is carved with the initial M and has the inscription "O sis, Laus Deo" ('Oh, praise be to God').
- Rossetti's mother modelled for St Anne and his sister Christina for Mary. The bright colour and angular quality made this picture look startlingly archaic and different from other Victorian paintings.

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Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925), 'Nameless and Friendless', 1857



Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925), *Nameless and Friendless*, 1857

## Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925), 'Nameless and Friendless', 1857

- **Description.** This painting illustrates the problems of being a woman artist in the Victorian period. We can see it is a wet, dismal day outside and the woman has come into an art dealer's shop to see if she can sell her work. She is wearing mourning clothes and so we guess her parents have died and she must earn money to look after herself and her brother alongside her. She nervously pulls on a piece of string as the art dealer disdainfully judges her work but this may be just a ploy to get a better price as the young assistant on the ladder looks impressed. Two 'swells' are sizing her up while ogling a print of a ballet dancer whose bare legs suggest they might have other things in mind than helping a desperate young lady.
- **Women's Rights.** The artist was Emily Mary Osborn and it is called in full, *Nameless and Friendless*. "*The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc.*" - *Proverbs, x, 15*. Osborn was one of the most important artists associated with the campaign for women's rights in the nineteenth century. She was a successful artist. She began showing her work at the Royal Academy when she was just 17 and sold a portrait for 200 guineas and another work to the Queen that year and she continued to exhibit over the next 40 years. Despite her success she was never made an Academician as women were banned.
- **Women artists** were at an enormous disadvantage and to try to help them Osborn helped found The Society of Female Artists the year this painting was exhibited. One disadvantage was that there were no life drawing classes for women so they could never learn to paint the most lucrative pictures involving people. This was regarded as an obvious restriction by society. As one journal put it in a review of women artists, '**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**'. In other words, it was accepted that women could never attend life drawing classes and it was thought inappropriate not just for prudish reasons but, as another journal put it, because '**Strength of will and power of creation belonging rather to the other sex [that is, men], we do not of course look for the more daring efforts in an exhibition of female artists**'.

## Notes on Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925), 'Nameless and Friendless', 1857

- **The 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.
- **Mary Brunton (1778-1818).** It has been suggested that this painting relates to 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 to help save her father from financial ruin. Brunton was a Scottish novelist who was taught languages and music by her parents (Colonel Balfour) and eloped to marry a Scottish minister. They did not have children until she became pregnant at 40 and died after giving birth to a stillborn son. She wrote *Self-Control* (1811), *Discipline* (1814) and *Emmeline* (1819). Popular at the time for their strong moral and religious stance combined with sexuality (what Jane Austen called 'vulgarity').
- **Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891)** was a leading artist, educationalist, feminist and activist for women's rights. She was the extra-marital child of a milliner and the Whig politician Leigh Smith. Her summary of the laws concerning women (1854) helped with the passing of the Married Women's Property Act in 1882. In 1857 (aged 30) she married an eminent French physician (Bodichon) and from then on wintered in Algiers. She set up the *English Women's Journal* (1858). In 1866, she helped set up a scheme for giving women university education, first at Hitchin and this developed into Girton College, Cambridge. She studied painting under William Holman Hunt and exhibited at the Royal Academy and showed originality and talent and was admired by Corot and Daubigny. She was George Eliot's most intimate friend.

### Biography Osborn

Her name was variously spelt Osborn or Osborne. She was the eldest of nine and grew up in Tilbury, whose surroundings 'were not such as to develop artistic proclivities' but when she was 14 the family moved to London and she attended the Dickinson Academy and studied under Mr. Mogford and then Mr. Leigh at Maddox Street and then his gallery at Newman Street. He trained her without charge for a year.

<b>1828</b>	0	Born in Essex the eldest of nine children of a parish priest. She was not a child prodigy but was encouraged to draw her brothers and sisters by her mother who had always wanted to be an artist herself.
<b>1842</b>	14	Her father moved to London and she hoped to become an artist and attended evening classes and then studied privately.
<b>1851</b>	23	First exhibited at the Royal Academy and continued to exhibit for 40 years.
<b>1855</b>	27	Received a 200-guinea commission and built a studio. Exhibited <i>My Cottage Door</i> which received 'well-deserved fame' and was bought by Queen Victoria. Her most successful ten years followed during which a few paintings, unusually for the period, represented the 'afflicted and down-trodden classes'.
<b>1857</b>	29	Exhibited <i>Nameless and Friendless</i> which became her most famous work and was purchased by Lady Chetwynd for £250.
<b>1859</b>	31	One of 38 female signatories on a petition to the Royal Academy asking for women to be admitted. The following year Laura Herford was admitted to the School but life classes were excluded until 1893 when some limited access was provided.

<b>1860</b>	32	Exhibited <i>The Governess</i> which was bought by Queen Victoria and labelled her a 'proto-feminist' artist.
<b>1864</b>	36	Exhibited <i>Half the World Knows Not How the Other Half Lives</i> and was awarded £63 at Crystal Palace.
<b>1868</b>	40	Her mother died and she lost a major painting in a fire. She produced no paintings for two years.
<b>1870</b>	42	She and her sister nursed the sick in the Franco-Prussian war. Travelled Europe and lived in Munich.
<b>1873</b>	45	Returned to England and lived and worked in London and Glasgow. She exhibited widely but did not maintain her previous reputation.
<b>1886</b>	58	She lived with her friend Mary Elizabeth Dunn.
<b>1925</b>	97	She never married and died in St John's Wood.

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John Everett Millais (1829-1896), '*Ophelia*', 1851-2



John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-2, 76.2 x 111.8 cm

## John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Ophelia*, 1851–2

- **Criticism.** This is *Ophelia* by John Everett Millais. It is one of the most popular paintings in Tate Britain and it was a popular subject at the time even though it shows a woman driven out of her mind and drowning herself in a stream. Millais's treatment of the subject was not liked by many critics, *The Times* wrote that '**there must be something strangely perverse in an imagination which souses Ophelia in a weedy ditch, and robs the drowning struggle of that lovelorn maiden of all pathos and beauty**'. In other words, they did not like the realism and the lack of idealization.
- **Technique.** The painting was the result of enormous physical effort. The river and bushes were painted in the open-air painting on the banks of the Hogsmill River [near Tolworth in Surrey] about 10 miles from here. Millais was a fast painter and yet he said that he could only paint an area 'no larger than a five-shilling piece' each day. He painted for 11 hours a day, six days a week over a five-month period in 1851 and suggested to a friend that it would be '**a greater punishment to a murderer than hanging**'. In the summer, he was bitten by flies all day and by November it started to snow and Millais had a hut built by the river to enable him to finish the landscape. As the painting took so long to produce, it conflated time, which produced anachronisms in the plants and the painting became an assembly of minutely observed yet disconnected parts.
- **Elizabeth Siddal.** He left the painting of *Ophelia* until he reached his studio. The model was Elizabeth Siddal, who later married Dante Gabriel Rossetti, another of the Pre-Raphaelites. Millais painted her in a bath heated by candles but it is said that one day the candles went out and Millais did not notice she was freezing cold. She developed a severe cold and her father sent Millais a letter demanding £50 for medical expenses, about twice the annual salary of a live-in servant. He eventually accepted a lower sum.
- **'Truth to Nature'**. Millais was promoting a new way of looking at the world in precise, scientific detail. He was motivated by the innocent observation of the artists who worked before Raphael and so the style was called Pre-Raphaelitism. He was supported by the leading Victorian art critic John Ruskin who described the principal role of the artist is '**truth to nature**'. The strength of feeling of the Pre-Raphaelites and their dislike of the Old Masters is shown by their description of the former President of the Royal Academy Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) as '**Sir Slossua**'. They wanted to work directly from nature but took a different approach to Turner and the Impressionists, who came much later. Rather than their free brushwork they represented what they saw in photographic detail. *Ophelia* demonstrates Millais's commitment to this idea through his sheer hard work. Every inch of the canvas is worked on in minute detail producing a flat tapestry of colour that flattens the picture by assigning every object in the foreground, middle ground and background equal prominence. Although controversial this approach influenced many artists for the remainder of the nineteenth century.
- Let us look next at an artist who was not at all controversial and who painted subjects that Victorian audiences loved to see.

## Notes on John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Ophelia*, 1851–2

- Ophelia is a character in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* who drowns herself after Hamlet denies he loves her and kills her father. The relevant lines from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act IV, Scene vii are,

*There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds  
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke;  
When down her weedy trophies and herself  
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,  
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;  
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,  
As one incapable of her own distress,  
Or like a creature native and indued  
Unto that element; but long it could not be  
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,  
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay  
To muddy death.*

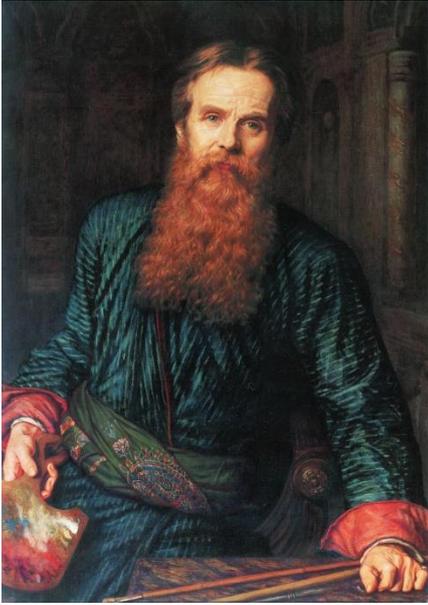
- Millais is now thought to have sat in the 'Six Acre Meadow on the west bank at the bottom of the Manor House garden in Old Malden', as reported by Richard Savill, 'Mystery of Location of Millais' Ophelia Solved' in The Telegraph, 30 June 2010. Holman Hunt worked on his *The Hireling Shepherd* nearby. The studio was at 7 Gower Street which still remains and has a blue plaque outside.
- There was a water rat swimming in the river but in December 1851 relatives of Holman Hunt did not recognize what it was so Millais painted it out.
- The flowers are the one's mentioned in *Hamlet* except for the red poppies which signify sleep and death. The human skull many have seen in the bushes was not intended to be a skull. The roses near Ophelia's cheek and dress, and the field rose on the bank, may allude to her brother Laertes calling her 'rose of May'. The willow, nettle and daisy are associated with forsaken love, pain, and innocence. Pansies refer to love in vain. Violets, which Ophelia wears in a chain around her neck, stand for faithfulness, chastity or death of the young, any of which meanings could apply here. The poppy signifies death. Forget-me-nots float in the water. Millais purchased the dress secondhand for £4.
- Another review in *The Times* said that '**Mr. Millais's Ophelia in her pool ... makes us think of a dairymaid in a frolic**'.
- In 1936 Salvador Dalí wrote, '**How could Salvador Dalí fail to be dazzled by the flagrant surrealism of English Pre-Raphaelitism**'.
- The painting has a cult following in Japan but when it was exhibited in Tokyo in 2008 the gallery was afraid to show the painting on posters in case its power would cause young women to take their own lives.
- It was bought on 10 December 1851 by Henry Farrer for 300 guineas. It was sold and resold and continued to increase in value, it is now estimated to be worth at least £30 million.

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William Holman Hunt, *'The Awakening Conscience'*, 1853 (not on display)



William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *Self-Portrait*, 1867, Uffizi Gallery



William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853

- This was a controversial painting about an important social problem but initially some critics misinterpreted it. One thought it was a brother and sister playing the piano but the real meaning was quickly determined.
- It is a gentleman with his mistress, which we can see as she does not wear a wedding ring. They are sitting playing the piano in the room he has rented for their assignations. As they play the piano and sing Thomas Moore's *Oft in the Stilly Night* together she has a sudden spiritual revelation. She gazes into the sunny garden that we see reflected in the mirror at the back of the room. The garden represents God's work on earth and her redemption is signified by the ray of sunlight in front of her.
- The painting is full of symbolic elements that are intended to be read. The cat toying with the broken winged bird symbolizes her plight, the man's discarded glove warns that the likely fate of a cast-off mistress is prostitution and the tangled skein of yarn signifies the complex situation in which she is trapped.
- The leading Victorian art critic John Ruskin wrote to *The Times* [on 25 May 1854], '**the very hem of the poor girl's dress, at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street**'.
- The painting is about prostitution and the possibility of redemption. Prostitution was seen as a necessary evil by Victorian society and many argued that the Government should not restrict the women's right to work as they pleased. The number of prostitutes in Victorian London astonished foreigners and one French woman was shocked to see prostitutes in every window and doorway in Waterloo Road, many naked to the waist. One issue that was of concern to the Government was to protect soldiers from venereal disease and in 1864 it passed the Contagious Diseases Act. This allowed the police to forcibly examine any women they suspected and all women walking alone became targets. This had the unintended consequence of fuelling the Victorian feminist movement and uniting working-class and middle-class women in a common cause.
- The next painting I selected because it shows a wide spectrum of Victorian society and was extremely popular.

## Notes on William Holman Hunt, *The Awakening Conscience*, 1853

- William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) came from a poorer family and his father, a warehouse manager, was against his career as an artist so he worked, trained in the evenings at the Mechanics Institute and spent his salary on lessons with a portraitist. He met Millais at the British Museum in 1844 and Millais encouraged him to apply for the Royal Academy training, and on the third attempt he was accepted at the end of 1844. Hunt was hard working, religious, unconventional in his approach to art, easily offended, much liked and very jovial (he was called the 'Maniac'). He married Fanny Waugh in 1865 after his relationship with Annie Miller ended. They left for the Middle East in 1866 and she died in childbirth in Florence.
- The inspiration for this painting was Proverbs: 'As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart'.
- Hunt hired a room at Woodbine Villa, 7 Alpha Place, St John's Wood to provide an authentic interior.
- The model is Annie Miller (1835-1925), a barmaid Hunt met when she was 15. He fell in love with her and wanted to marry her but only if she educated herself. He left her money when he was away in the Middle East but contrary to his instructions she sat for Dante Gabriel Rossetti and this caused a rift between them on Hunt's return. She was also involved with 7th Viscount Ranelagh (pronounced ran-er-lah) and Hunt broke off their engagement. She was going to sue Hunt for breach of promise but Ranelagh's cousin Captain Thomas Thomson fell in love with her and they married in 1863. Years later Hunt met her on Richmond Hill 'a buxom matron with a carriage full of children'. She died aged 90 in Shoreham-by-Sea. It is not known whether she became 'gay' (i.e. a prostitute) but one art historian (Jan Marsh) believes it is likely she remained 'pure'.

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William Powell Frith, 'The Derby Day', 1856–8



William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *Self-Portrait*, 1838



William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–8

- **Popular Victorian Art.** I selected this to show you the type of art that was the most popular with the majority of Victorians. This is *Derby Day* by William Powell Frith. It has been described as ‘**arguably the definitive example of Victorian modern-life genre painting**’.
- **Description.** We can see a cross-section of Victorian Society. On the left is the tent of the Reform Club outside of which rich, city gentlemen surround the table of a ‘thimble-rigger’ who is busy cheating them. Further left, a young country man in smock is being held back by his woman to prevent him from joining in as an accomplice tempts him to play by showing him the note he was just won. In the centre, an acrobat is ready to perform with his son, but the attention of the thin young boy has been distracted by a lavish picnic banquet that is being laid out. Spectators throng behind, drinking champagne in their carriages, with the racecourse grandstand visible in the background. At the far right, a well-dressed man slouches back against his carriage in which his young mistress sits. Echoing her position, a well-known Horse woman called Annie Gilbert, in brown riding clothes is on the extreme left, one of many that could be seen each day riding in Rotten Row, Hyde Park. Their skilful horsemanship led to them being dubbed ‘the pretty horsebreakers’. Many, such as Catherine ‘Skittles’ Walters, were courtesans but it appears Miss Gilbert was a horsewoman. To the right, a thief can be seen stealing a gold watch from a man with his hands in his pockets. Also visible are a group of musicians, and a group of beggars, and street vendors selling their wares. One art historian has identified almost one hundred distinct social types distinguished by Frith by their clothing and physiognomy.
- **Commission.** The painting was commissioned by Jacob Bell, who owned Tattersalls (the race horse auctioneer), to paint a large, five to six-foot canvas for £1,500. Later, Frith painted a smaller version which is in the Manchester Art Gallery. Frith began by hiring models for all the major figures, including a jockey and an acrobat, and paid a photographer to take ‘**as many queer groups of figures as he could**’ from the roof of a cab. Also, many of the female models, such as Annie Gilbert were introduced to Frith by Jacob Bell.
- **Guard Rail.** The painting was first exhibited at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1858, where it became so popular that a rail was needed protect it from the thronging crowds. This was only the second time that a rail was installed at the Royal Academy exhibition: the first was in 1822 for David Wilkie's *The Chelsea Pensioners reading the Waterloo Dispatch*.
- **Too popular?** This painting was controversial only because it was so popular. He was criticized for his artistic philistinism by John Ruskin, Oscar Wilde and James McNeill Whistler. Speaking of Whistler, let us look at one of his even more controversial paintings. Controversial not because it appealed to so many but to so few.

## Notes on William Powell Frith, *The Derby Day*, 1856–8

- William Powell Frith (1819-1909) was born in Yorkshire to a house steward and cook and his parents took a keen interest in art. He was sent to school in Dover where he indulged in drawing. His formal training was at the Sass Academy and then the RA School in 1837 (aged 18). His father died and his mother moved to London and he made money portrait painting (Lincolnshire farmers at 5-15 guineas). He was a member of the Clique, which included Augustus Egg, Richard Dadd and Henry O'Neil and rapidly established himself as a genre painter. His painting was at odds with the RA but his character and incident, sparkling detail and high finish made his work popular and suitable for engraving. 1840 travelled abroad and had his first painting exhibited at the RA. He was made an ARA in 1845 and an RA in 1852 (aged 33). He was friends with Charles Dickens and centre of the literary life of London. In 1851, he visited Ramsgate and decided to take a commercial risk investing in *Ramsgate Sands (Life at the Seaside)* and it was a success and sold to Lloyd then Queen Victoria for £1,000. His second panorama, *Derby Day* was a stroke of genius, few paintings have ever earned such universal acclaim. For *The Railway Station* (1862) Frith was paid an astonishing £5,250. He had a wife with 12 children and a mistress with 7. He was an artist with a well-developed business sense and he remained in the news throughout his life. Six of his paintings had to be railed off and his three most important works, *Ramsgate Sands*, *Derby Day*, and *The Railway Station*. He was criticized for his artistic philistinism by John Ruskin, Whistler and Oscar Wilde, and later Roger Fry and he was a staunch reactionary criticising the Aesthetic Movement, Oscar Wilde and Impressionism.
- One of the best known Victorian courtesans who rode each day down Rotten Row, Hyde park, was Catherine 'Skittles' Walters (1839-1920), a fashion trendsetter and horsewoman who was associated with intellectuals, political leaders, aristocrats and a member of the Royal Family. She was renowned for her horse control and for wearing nothing under her tight-fitting riding habit that was tailored in Savile Row. Such women were known as 'The Pretty Horsebreakers'.
- Fifteen years before Claude Monet (1840-1926) was brave enough to paint a modern-life railway station (*La gare Saint-Lazare*, 1877) Frith was making a fortune from the same daring subject matter. Frith was an astute businessman and knew '**pictures of contemporary life and manners have a better chance of immortality than ninety-nine out of any hundred of the ideal and so-called poetical pictures**'.

### Biography Frith

He received formal art training when young. He married twice and had 12 children by his first wife and seven more with his mistress, who was formerly his ward, and who lived only a mile down the road. He married his mistress Mary Alford in 1880 when his wife died. When he died he had become an anachronism but he recognised as a unique 'historian of his own age' and he had become an institution who was sadly missed.

<b>1819</b>	0	Born 19 January in North Yorkshire, the son of a hotelier who encouraged his artistic career.
<b>1835</b>	16	Moved to London and attended Sass's Academy, then Royal Academy. Started career as a portrait painter. Principal influence was David Wilkie.
<b>1838</b>	19	First exhibited at British Institution. Joined 'The Clique' with Augustus Egg, Richard Dadd and others.
<b>1840s</b>	20s	Illustrated Dickens work. Travelled abroad.
<b>1845</b>	26	Made Associate Royal Academician.
<b>1854</b>	35	Exhibited <i>Ramsgate Sands, Life at the Seaside</i> .

<b>1858</b>	39	Exhibited <i>The Derby Day</i> bought by Jacob Bell for £1,500. So popular it had to be protected by a special rail.
<b>1862</b>	43	Exhibited <i>The Railway Station</i> . Paid £5,250 for copyright and exhibiting rights. Over 21,150 visitors paid 1 shilling to see it on tour and a publisher made over £40,000 from the print.
<b>1880</b>	61	His wife died and the following year he married his mistress who created a rift with the children of his first marriage. With so many children he could not afford to retire and as well as painting he took to writing as well.
<b>1883</b>	64	<i>The Private View of the Royal Academy</i> was his sixth and final painting that needed a guard rail when exhibited at the Royal Academy.
<b>1895</b>	76	His second wife died.
<b>1909</b>	90	Died of pneumonia in St John's Wood.

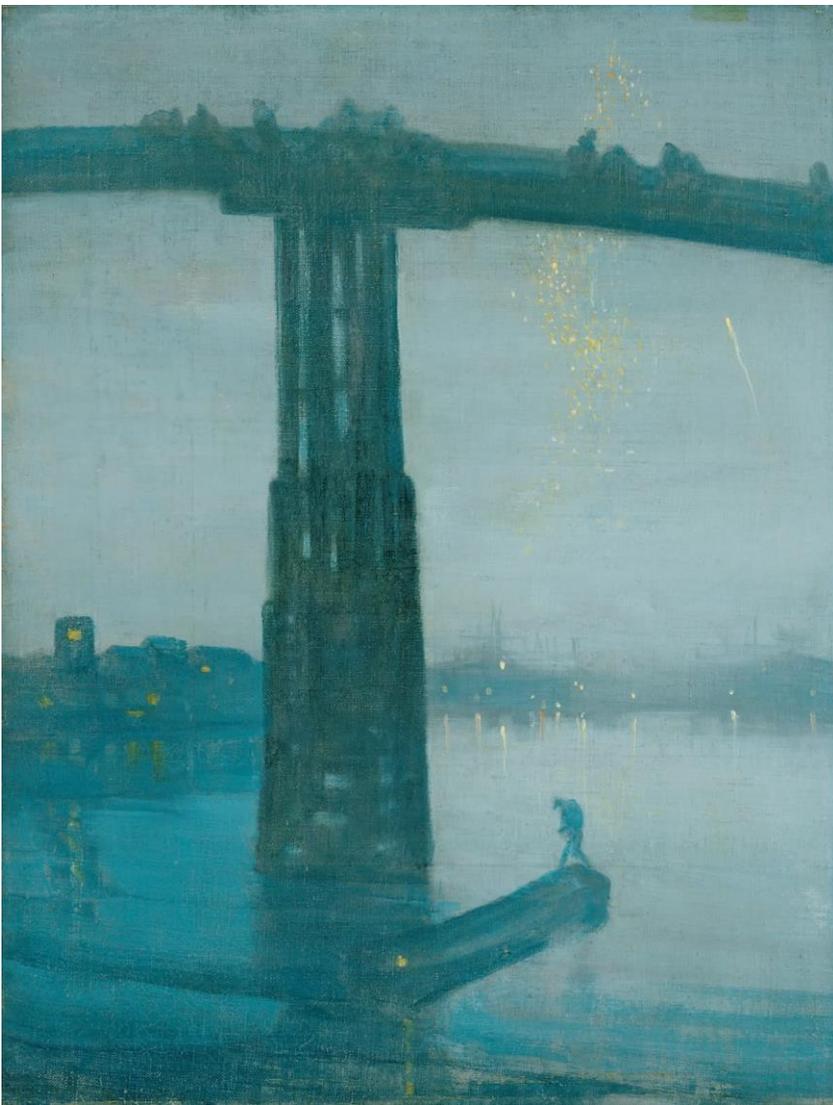
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James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *'Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge'*, 1872–75



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Self-Portrait*, c. 1872



James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c.1872–5

James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c.1872–5

- **Controversial.** This painting represents a complete break with the painting tradition we have seen. I have selected it as it was the centre of a controversy and a libel trial.
- **Technique.** This is *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge* by James Abbott McNeill Whistler. This is a Victorian photograph of what the old bridge looked like (see Visual Aids). To produce this painting Whistler would first be rowed up and down the Thames at night and he forced himself to memorise the scene by turning his back and describing every aspect of the shoreline. If he made a mistake he would start all over again. In his studio, he would use what he called a 'sauce' of very thin paint that he applied in thin, transparent layers, wiping it away until he was satisfied. To this ground he applied lightly flicked colour to suggest ships, lights, and shore line. In this scene, he added lights in the background representing fireworks which were set off every evening from a local pleasure park called Cremorne Gardens. If he was not happy with the result, which was most of the time, he would start all over again so it would take months to produce a few paintings.
- **Ruskin.** This painting was exhibited at the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877 and the leading art critic John Ruskin wrote, **"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."** This type of blatant criticism was very rare as critics knew artists had to make a living and if they did not like a painting they would simply ignore it or made a critical comment alongside some positive points. Of course, we saw another exception just now with Millais's painting but it was very unusual and I have been picking out the controversial paintings.
- **Libel.** Whistler decided to sue Ruskin for libel and this painting gave rise to one of the central artistic controversy of the Victorian period, known as the Whistler versus Ruskin trial. The trial tells us a lot about how the Victorians regarded art and the nature of the changes Whistler helped bring about. Whistler, seeing the attack in the newspaper, sued Ruskin libel. At the trial, Ruskin's barrister asked, **'The labour of two days is that for which you ask two hundred guineas?'** and Whistler replied **"No, I ask it for the knowledge I have gained in the work of a lifetime."** When the judge asked if it was a barge beneath the bridge, Whistler replied **'Yes, I am very much flattered at your seeing that. The picture is simply a representation of moonlight. My whole scheme was only to bring about a certain harmony of colour.'** Whistler added, **'I did not intend to paint a portrait of the bridge, but only a painting of a moonlight scene'**. In the end Whistler won but was awarded only a farthing, a quarter of a penny, in damages and court costs were split. As a result, he went bankrupt and ironically the Fine Art Society of London, which had supported Ruskin, paid for Whistler to visit Venice and exhibit his work on his return, which helped recoup Whistler's costs.

## Notes on James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c.1872–5

- In 1866 Whistler decided to travel to Valparaiso, Chile to fight the Spanish. Scholars have puzzle over his motivation. Whistler stated he was asked by some South Americans as a 'West Point' man and he was very proud of his military training but, unlike his brother, he had never fought. He may have thought this the opportunity to display his military prowess as a swashbuckling Southern gentleman (even though he was born in New England). Whatever the reason Whistler's painted his first three-night paintings while he was there. He later, thanks to the suggestion of his patron Frederick Leyland he re-titled them 'nocturnes'.
- On his return, him contributed *Symphony in White, No. 3* but critics in England and France were not sympathetic and between 1868 and 1870 he showed only a single painting at the Royal Academy and none in France. He experimented with classical nudes in drapes but criticized himself for his lack of formal training in the life class. He had lost his sense of artistic direction. He was short of money, despised the English and began a major family crisis by arguing with his brother-in-law and pushing him through a plate glass window. In 1869 his half-brother George died.
- In 1871, he painted his ailing mother, *Arrangement on Grey and Black, No. 1* (colloquially called *Whistler's Mother*) and this to have been a turning point. At the same time, he was rejecting Realism for Aestheticism and he chose to go out on the Thames at night with Walter Greaves (1846-1930) and paint his *Nocturnes*. Greaves was a neighbour who was a boat builder and waterman and his father had been the boatman for J. M. W. Turner.

### Biography Whistler

His work is subtle and delicate but his personality was acerbic and combative. He insisted his pupils called him 'Master'. His mother was from the South and he adopted 'McNeill', his mother's maiden name and presented himself as an impoverished Southern aristocrat. His biographer wrote, 'In appearance Whistler was slight, small-boned, and extremely dainty. He seemed always to have a sparkling air about him. His complexion was always very bright and fresh; his eyes were keen and brilliant; and his hair, when I knew him, was, save for one snowy lock, of a glossy raven-black. His dress was quaint, and a little different from that of other men, and his whole appearance, even his deportment, was studied from the artistic standpoint.' He broke with the conventions of Victorian artistic representation but his realism conflicted with the onset of abstract art during the First World War. His excessive cult of the artist clashed with modernism's democratisation of art and search for universal values.

<b>1834</b>	0	Born 11 July in Lowell, Massachusetts, the son of a railroad engineer.
<b>1842</b>	8	Father moved to Russia to work on the railway and Whistler entered the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts, St Petersburg aged 10.
<b>1847</b>	13	Lived briefly with his half-sister and the English surgeon and amateur artist Francis Seymour Haden.
<b>1849</b>	15	His father died and his family moved back to America.
<b>1851</b>	17	Entered West Point and he added 'McNeill' to his name. He excelled at drawing but was expelled after two years for failing in chemistry.
<b>1854</b>	20	Worked etching plates in the US Coast and Geodetic Survey.
<b>1855</b>	21	His half-brother's wife's brother became his guardian and financed him to study in Paris. He entered the studio of Charles Gleyre. Influenced for ten years by the realist style of Gustave Courbet. Influenced by the Rembrandt etchings owned by Haden. Met Henri Fantin-Latour and Alphonse Legros. Learned to speak fluent French.

<b>1859</b>	25	Went to London and maintained contacts in France. Visited Brittany in 1861. Exhibited genre and figure subjects at the Royal Academy.
<b>1862</b>	28	Exhibited <i>The White Girl</i> (later <i>Symphony in White No. 1</i> ). Met Algernon Charles Swinburne and was influenced by his 'art for art's sake' theory.
<b>1863</b>	29	Awarded gold medal for his etchings of the Thames – <i>The Thames Set</i> . <i>The White Girl</i> was exhibited at the Salon des Refusés. Leased a house in Chelsea and his mother joined him from America. Dante Gabriel Rossetti introduced him to the patron Frederick Leyland.
<b>1866</b>	32	Visited Valparaíso in Chile.
<b>1867</b>	33	Failed to be elected Associate RA. Haden had him expelled from the Burlington Fine Arts Club for physically assaulting Legros and himself and split the family.
<b>1868</b>	34	Whistler reappraised his own art and worked on oil sketches known as the Six Projects.
<b>1870</b>	36	Parlour maid Louisa Hanson gave birth to a son by Whistler, James Whistler Hanson. In the 1870s he extended the practice of giving musical titles to his work.
<b>1872</b>	38	<i>Arrangement in Grey and Black (Whistler's Mother)</i> was only accepted by the Royal Academy by one vote and thereafter he never submitted again.
<b>1877</b>	43	Whistler extended the <i>Peacock Room</i> commission for Leyland who only paid him half. Whistler exhibited at the new Grosvenor Gallery opened by Sir Coutts Lindsay and received the 'flinging a pot of paint' review by John Ruskin. He sued for libel.
<b>1878</b>	44	Trial of Whistler v. Ruskin. Whistler won a farthings damages and no costs and became bankrupt with debts of £4,500. He had to sell his new house and art.
<b>1879</b>	45	His model Maud Franklin gave birth to Maud McNeill Whistler Franklin who may not have survived but another child Ióne did survive. He left for Venice with a commission from the Fine Arts Society.
<b>1880</b>	46	On his return, he attacked the critics and made them appear ridiculous. He attracted patronage from the <i>nouveaux riches</i> and the aristocracy and cultivated his friendship with Oscar Wilde.
<b>1881</b>	47	His mother Anna McNeill Whistler died in Hastings.
<b>1883</b>	49	Young artists who were turning to France for inspiration regarded Whistler as a leader of modern painting. Over the next 20 years he was influential and widely recognised.
<b>1885</b>	51	Gave his 'Ten O'clock' lectures on art to reclaim his authority particularly as a leader of the aesthetic movement. He condemned the philosophy of progress and art with a moral agenda. He became identified with Impressionism.
<b>1886</b>	52	Elected president of the Society of British Artists and reformed it dramatically.
<b>1888</b>	54	Published 'Ten O'clock Lecture' and broke with Swinburne following a poor review. Awarded medals and honorary titles across Europe. Married Beatrice Godwin.
<b>1889</b>	55	Awarded further honours and made chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.
<b>1890</b>	56	Moved to Cheyne Walk, Chelsea and broke with Oscar Wilde for 'plagiarism'. His work started to sell for high prices.
<b>1892</b>	58	A turning point for his reputation. He moved to Paris to live.
<b>1896</b>	62	Stayed at the Savoy Hotel, his wife died of cancer.
<b>1903</b>	69	He had been receiving accolades and gold medals most years. He moved to Bath in 1902 and died of heart failure on 17 July 1903.

## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whistler-nocturne-blue-and-gold-old-battersea-bridge-n01959>

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose', 1885-6



John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, 1885-6, 174 x 153.7 cm

- **Popular.** This painting is called *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* by John Singer Sargent. The unusual title came from a popular song at the time and the painting became his first major success in England. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887 and although some critics regarded it as too 'Frenchified' it received an enthusiastic response and was immediately purchased by the Tate. It has been one of our most popular paintings ever since.
- **Description.** Sargent had just moved from Paris to a house in the Cotswolds and he decided to paint his friend's daughters in the garden. The two young girls who are lighting lanterns are 11-year-old Dolly [Barnard] on the left and 7-year-old Polly [Barnard] on the right. It is a masterly recreation of the subtle evening glow just before sunset. If you look closely you will see the painting consists of what look like quick, effortless brushstrokes but these were the result of hard work. To capture the right light, he painted outdoors between August and early November over two years in the short period between 6:35 and 7:00 in the evening on the days when the light was just right. He would often scrape all the paint off the canvas after a day's painting. Over the months the flowers died as summer turned to autumn and he had to replace them with artificial flowers. Also, while working on it he changed the shape of the canvas by cutting two feet, about 60 cm, from the left side.
- **Alla Prima.** Sargent described it later as a '**fearfully difficult subject ... Paints are not bright enough & then the effect only lasts ten minutes.**' The seemingly effortless solution is the result of Sargent being willing to scrape off and redo his efforts again and again. The technique he used is called *alla prima*, Italian for 'first attempt' or *au premier coup* (at the first touch) and in this work he has taken it to an extreme level that has rarely been attempted before or since. Cross-sectional analysis of the paint shows that he even painted wet paint directly on top of wet paint for the final touches on the faces, something few other artists would ever attempt.
- Sargent had a natural talent and became the most successful portrait painter. After his death, he was largely ignored by art historians until recently when his reputation has continued to grow.

## Notes on John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, 1885-6

- John Singer Sargent's father was an eye surgeon but when Sargent's older sister died aged two his mother (Mary née Singer) had a breakdown and they travelled through Europe for the rest of their lives. Sargent was born in Florence in 1856. He had no official schooling but grew up speaking fluent French, Italian and German and accomplished in art, music and literature. He began his art studies with Carolus-Duran a French portrait painter with bold techniques and modern teaching methods. He taught painting *alla prima* or *au premier coup* (at the first touch) which involved working directly on the canvas with a loaded brush derived from Diego Velázquez. In 1874, he gained entry to the École des Beaux-Arts at his first attempt and won a silver prize. However, his *Portrait of Madame X* (1884, actually Virginie Amélie Avegno Gautreau) caused a scandal rather than the positive publicity he was expecting. Sargent moved to the Cotswolds to escape the scandal and painted *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*.
- He was considered the 'leading portrait painter of his generation' specialising in Edwardian aristocracy. He was prolific and painted about 900 oil paintings and 2,000 watercolours. He was a master of drawing with the brush and his portraits were painted in the grand manner but his landscapes were influenced by Impressionism.
- Chantrey Bequest. On his death Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey (1781-1841) left £150,000 to the Royal Academy for the purchase of 'works of Fine Art ... executed in Great Britain'. The first purchase was made in 1877 following the death of Lady Chantrey. Although the Trustees of the RA still decide on the selection of the purchases, the exhibition and preservation of the collection has become the responsibility of the Tate Gallery.
- There have been many interpretations of the paintings meaning. It has been read as a botanical allegory of flower-maidens, with subtle sexual overtones of lighting a lantern (slang in French for vagina), and the taper as a symbolic paintbrush (also used to hand-pollinate flowers) used to illuminate the paper of the lantern in the same way that a painter uses a paintbrush to create an image on a canvas.
- The unusual title comes from a popular song 'Ye Shepherds Tell Me' (also called 'The Wreath') by Joseph Mazzinghi.

### Biography Sargent

A natural talent who worked hard with concentration and stamina. He stood out with his fine manners, perfect French and consummate skill and had early success. When he gave up portrait painting he said, **'Painting a portrait would be quite amusing if one were not forced to talk while working...What a nuisance having to entertain the sitter and to look happy when one feels wretched.'** He was a lifelong bachelor and recent research shows he was a complex and passionate man, with his art being shaped by a sexual identity that included affairs with both men and women. His reputation declined towards the end of his life and he was dismissed as an anachronism. Camille Pissarro described him as 'an adroit performer', Walter Sickert talked about 'Sargentolatry'. This criticism of Sargent has been linked to his sympathy towards the Jews and he was criticised as 'the painter of the Jews' in the 1890s. Since the 1950s his reputation has steadily increased.

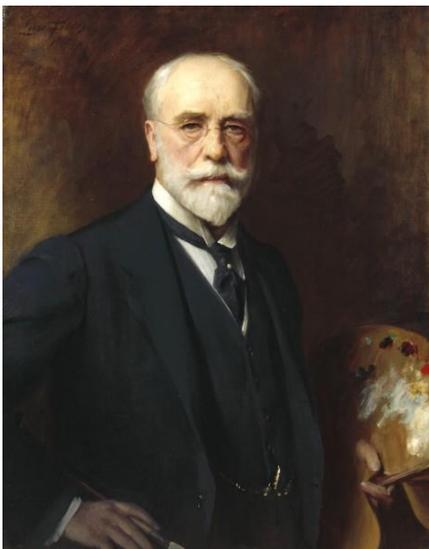
**1856** 0 Born 12 January in Florence of American parents. His father was a doctor from a shipping family and his mother from a family of wealthy merchants. After their first child died they left America and never returned. They moved around Europe and Sargent had no formal education but learnt French, German and Italian and was an accomplished pianist.

<b>1874</b>	18	His mother encouraged his precocious artistic talent, he studied in Florence and in Paris in 1874 and entered Carolus-Durand's studio who taught <i>alla prima</i> or <i>au premier coup</i> (at the first touch), a wet-into-wet painterly style. Passed the École des Beaux-Arts exams at first attempt.
<b>1877</b>	21	First Salon admission drew attention.
<b>1879</b>	23	Portrait Carolus-Duran received public approval. Visited Spain and studied Velázquez with a passion. He exhibited frequently and was admired.
<b>1884</b>	28	<i>Portrait of Madame X</i> (Madame Pierre Gautreau) was controversial and caused a scandal but is now considered his best work and it was his favourite. Commissions dried up and so he moved to London.
<b>1885</b>	29	<i>Claude Monet Painting at the Edge of a Wood</i> showed his Impressionistic style.
<b>1886</b>	30	Moved to London for good, many critics thought him too 'Frenchified' but he soon became accepted.
<b>1887</b>	31	<i>Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose</i> was his first success at the Royal Academy. Travelled to American and received over 20 important commissions.
<b>1890</b>	34	Elected Associate Royal Academician, painted Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth. Started painting about 14 major portrait commissions a year for the 1890s.
<b>1893</b>	37	Elected Royal Academician. He was called the 'Van Dyck of our times'.
<b>1900</b>	44	The height of his fame he started to travel more and paint fewer portraits but between 1900 and 1907 he painted dozens of oil portraits and hundreds of drawings at \$400 each.
<b>1907</b>	51	He closed his studio and started landscape painting. He declined a knighthood and decided to retain his American citizenship.
<b>1917</b>	61	He was considered out of touch with modern art such as Cubism and Futurism. He accepted the criticism and said he preferred Ingres, Raphael and El Greco. He often travelled to America.
<b>1924</b>	68	He died in England on 14 April of heart disease.

## References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sargent-carnation-lily-lily-rose-n01615>

Luke Fildes, *'The Doctor'*, exhibited 1891



Luke Fildes (1843-1927), *Self-Portrait*, 1911, Royal Academy



Luke Fildes, *The Doctor*, exhibited 1891

- **Description.** We see a sick child being tended by a doctor as the distraught parents watch. Fildes chose a rustic interior and we see the boy's father resting his hand on the shoulder of his wife whose hands are clasped in prayer. The man is bravely looking into the face of the thoughtful doctor trying to read any sign of recovery. They are poor, there is a scrap of carpet on the floor and the child's makeshift bed is two mismatching chairs pushed together. The parent's clothes are ragged but the child has been given medicine and the bowl and the jug of water used to try to reduce his temperature. The scraps of paper on the floor could be prescriptions made out by the doctor and now taken. Of course, this was before antibiotics when the only hope was the natural immunity of the child. It reminds me of what a famous surgeon once said about the doctor's role, **'to cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always.'**
- **Commission.** In 1890, Henry Tate commissioned a painting from Fildes for the then vast sum of £3,000 and he left the subject to the artist's discretion. Fildes chose to recall a personal tragedy of his own, when in 1877 his first son, Philip Luke, had died at the age of one in his Kensington home. Another of Fildes's sons and his biographer wrote, **'The character and bearing of their doctor throughout the time of their anxiety, made a deep impression on my parents. Dr. Murray became a symbol of professional devotion which would one day inspire the painting of *The Doctor*'**. To make the picture convincing Fildes constructed a cottage interior in his studio. He began work at dawn each day to catch the exact light conditions. The image of an ordinary doctor's quiet heroism was a huge success with the late-Victorian public. A year later it was exhibited at the Royal Academy and an engraving was published that sold more than a million copies in America alone. It became one of the most profitable prints Agnews had ever produced.
- **Interpretation.** So, how should we interpret the painting? Some say its appeal to our feelings is to gain our sympathy for what is a blatant example of the power of the Victorian, male, middle-classes and the medical profession. The implication is that the doctor is a different class, a thinking class, that holds the power of life or death. An alternative view is that it was produced by Fildes in gratitude for the care, all be it unsuccessful, that the doctor provided for Fildes's own son.
- **The Doctor.** Society has always had mixed views about the role and benefit provided by the doctor. In the Middle Ages doctors were massacred for failing to cure the Black Death. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the patient was the primary source of information and the doctor, as an Enlightenment thinker, applied reason to the patient's description of their problem to determine the treatment. Over the course of the nineteenth century the doctor's diagnosis became evidence-based and the stethoscope and thermometer were widely used. It is interesting that neither instrument is evident in the painting. This change altered the relationship between patient and doctor and diagnosis became doctor-based and 'scientific'. This meant there was no longer a need for lengthy vigils by the patient's bedside as the treatment followed immediately from the 'facts'. The painting may therefore hark back nostalgically to the old days when doctor would spend long hours comforting the patient. Though a poor family like this were unlikely to be able to afford so much of the doctor's time.
- This final painting in my tour reminds us of what I told you at the start about Henry Tate as this was one of the 56 paintings that he donated to form the Tate collection. That is the end of my tour but I hope the beginning of your enjoyment of the complete Tate collection.

## Notes on Luke Fildes, *The Doctor*, exhibited 1891

- Why do many critics and art historians find sentimental Victorian art unforgiveable? It might that art historians look down on art that appeals to popular taste or because the emotional themes – childhood and especially child death, forsaken love, animals, sunsets, heart-rending stories and pathetic scenes – now seem hackneyed or trivialised. It is sentimental and so trivialises deep human emotions. Sentiment reduces all emotions to comfort and warmth. In the 18th century sentimentality was the reliance on feelings as a guide to truth and was much in vogue among the polite. By the end of the 19th century however it was seen as false and in modern times, as Oscar Wilde said, 'A sentimentalist is one who desires to have the luxury of an emotion without paying for it'. Alternatively, it could be that we see Victorian subject painting as trying to manipulate us by the use of emotion and manipulative images. We are used to being manipulated by advertising as so Victorian art could be seen as debased by similar motives. In this case not for commercial gain but to persuade us that the religious, social and political systems are in our best interests. For example, the 'deserving poor' are shown in a way that convinces us that everything is being done to correct the situation. Some later critics and art historians even believe that all painting that tries to tell a story is dishonest because it is not the job of the medium. Each type of art should focus on what best suits the medium so story telling is the task of writing and painting should be concerned with putting colours on a flat surface.

### Biography Fildes

Sir (Samuel) Luke Fildes (1843–1927, his name is pronounced to rhyme with 'childs') was an illustrator and genre and portrait painter. He is well known for five large social realist paintings, praised for their realism but criticized as inappropriate subject matter for fine art. Fildes married Fanny Woods the daughter of his friend Henry Woods (1846-1921) and they had six children. He was compassionate, caring and loving. affectionate. He was admired by Van Gogh. He took up portrait painting late in life and his main rival was John Singer Sargent.

<b>1843</b>	0	Born on 18 October in Liverpool, the fourth of ten children and son of a mariner and shipping agent. Grandson of political activist Mary Fildes who was injured at the Peterloo massacre.
<b>1860</b>	17	He trained as an illustrator at the Government Art Training School and RA School and was influenced by Millais. Met Hubert von Herkomer and Frank Holl and all three were influenced by Frederick Walker (1840-1875), leader of the social realist movement in England.
<b>1874</b>	31	Exhibited <i>Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward</i> .
<b>1879</b>	36	Exhibited <i>Return of a Penitent</i> and made Associate Royal Academician.
<b>1887</b>	44	Made Royal Academician.
<b>1891</b>	48	Exhibited <i>The Doctor</i> which had been commissioned by Henry Tate.
<b>1906</b>	63	Knighted.

### References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/fildes-the-doctor-n01522>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/microtate-8>

## Visual Aids

- Study for Christ in the House of His Parents, John Everett Millais, 1849-50
- Édouard Manet, *Olympia*, 1863, 130.5 × 190 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
- Photograph Old Battersea Bridge, 1878, Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive







19/11/81

## Summary of 'People and Places in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century' (12:00-12:45)

**Thomas Brock (1847-1922), bust of Henry Tate (1819-1899), 1898.** Queen Victoria Memorial.

**Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Field of Waterloo*, exhibited 1818.** England had been at war with France for 20 years. On this single day 42,000-53,000 men were killed or seriously wounded and 15,000 horses. Looting and 'Waterloo teeth'. Lord Byron's anti-war poem 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' '**Rider and horse—friend, foe, in one red burial blent!**' Critics were divided, some thought it showed a '**drunken hubbub**' and made fun of what they described as '**kitchen wenches looking with torches for a lost lodger**'.

**John Constable (1776-1837, ARA 1819, RA 1829), *Flatford Mill ('Scene on a Navigable River')*, 1816–17.** Mount Tabor in 1815, 'Year without a Summer' in 1816. Corn Law. Married Maria Bicknell. For him '**painting is but another word for feeling**'. These childhood scenes, in his own words, '**made me a painter, and I am grateful**'; '**the sound of water escaping from mill dams etc., willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork, I love such things.**' He wrote, "**When I sit down to make a sketch from nature, the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture**". Critics found his colours too bright and objected to '**spotting the foreground all over with whitewash**' and his '**snow**'. However, he won a gold medal in Paris for *The Hay Wain* in 1824.

**Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), 'Punch or May Day', 1829.** *Mock Election* sold for 500 guineas. New Road, Marylebone. Punch beating Judy, May Day marriage coach and hearse collide. Chimney sweep and broomstick. Bare-foot fruit seller. Three figures in a May Day Morris dance, the Green Man or Jack-in-the-Green, black face boy and woman with a ladle. Born Plymouth, intelligent, wanted fill public buildings with noble paintings. £3,000 in debt, committed suicide, gunshot to his head failed so he slit his throat. '**Stretch me no longer on this rough world**', a line from Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

**Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), *The Sempstress*, 1846.** Started a tradition of social realism. It is 2:30am one small candle, swollen eyes, medicine, many went blind. Morsel of food. His sister was governess and became ill and died. Original 1843 painting is lost. 1843 Christmas *Punch* poem by Thomas Hood, "**Oh! men with sisters dear | Oh! men with mothers and wives, | It is not linen you're wearing out, | But human creatures' lives**.'" William Thackeray wrote, '**the most startling lyric in our language**'. The 'Deserving poor'. Friedrich Engels wrote to *Karl Marx*.

**John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Christ in the House of His Parents (The Carpenter's Shop)*, 1849–50.** Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood 1848. Charles Dickens's review, '**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**'. Dickens described Mary as '**horrible in her ugliness**' and Christ as '**hideous, wry-necked, blubbering**' and the whole painting '**mean, odious, repulsive, and revolting**'. The *Art Journal* wrote '**the most beautiful soul must have the most beautiful body**'. Modernism, Edouard Manet, *Olympia* (1863-65). By the end of the century it was '**passionately admired, and even loved**'.

**Emily Mary Osborn (1828-1925), *Nameless and Friendless*, 'The rich man's wealth is his strong city, etc.'** - Proverbs, x, 15, 1857. The 'swells' size her up while ogling a ballerina's naked legs suggesting they might have other things on their mind than helping a young orphan. Osborn exhibited aged 17 and sold one for 200 guineas and another to the Queen. Helped found Society of Female Artists in 1857. As one journal but in a review '**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**'. And as another journal said about women artists '**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**'.

**John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Ophelia*, 1851–52.** *The Times* wrote that **'there must be something strangely perverse in an imagination which souses Ophelia in a weedy ditch, and robs the drowning struggle of that lovelorn maiden of all pathos and beauty'**. Hogsmill River, Tolworth. 11 hours a day, six days a week, for five months in 1851 **'a greater punishment to a murderer than hanging'**. Elizabeth Siddal caught cold father charged £50. John Ruskin's **'truth to nature'**. Described Reynolds as **'Sir Sloshua'**.

**William Powell Frith (1819-1909), *The Derby Day*, 1856–58.** Reform Club with 'thimble rigger' outside. Farmer in a smock wants to try. Acrobat in centre but the boy is looking at the food. The 'pretty horse breaker' Annie Gilbert is on the left, she rides down Rotten Row, Hyde Park with the courtesan Catherine 'Skittles' Walters. Thief stealing watch. It has been described as **'arguably the definitive example of Victorian modern-life genre'**. Hired models and paid a photographer to take **'as many queer groups of figures as he could'**. Commissioned by Jacob Bell of Tattersalls for £1,500, smaller version at Manchester. Bell introduced Frith to Gilbert. So popular a rail was needed. Criticised by some other artists as a philistine.

**James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c.1872–75.** Controversial. Exhibited at the opening of the Grosvenor Gallery opened by Sir Coutts Lindsay in 1877. John Ruskin wrote, **"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."** At the trial, Ruskin's barrister asked, **'The labour of two days is that for which you ask two hundred guineas?'** and Whistler replied **"No, I ask it for the knowledge I have gained in the work of a lifetime."** When the judge asked if it was a barge beneath the bridge, Whistler replied **'Yes, I am very much flattered at your seeing that. The picture is simply a representation of moonlight. My whole scheme was only to bring about a certain harmony of colour.'** Whistler added, **'I did not intend to paint a portrait of the bridge, but only a painting of a moonlight scene'**. Awarded a farthing damages and went bankrupt. Ironically, given a commission by the Fine Art Society which had supported Ruskin.

**John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, 1885-6.** Just arrived from Paris, lived in Cotswolds. Painted daughters of a friend 11-year-old Dolly (Barnard, left) and 7-year-old Polly (right). Painted in garden over two years between August and early November between 6:35 and 7:00pm. The flowers died so he used artificial flowers. Cut 60cm from the left side of the canvas. Sargent described it later as a **'fearfully difficult subject ... Paints are not bright enough & then the effect only lasts ten minutes.'** *Alla prima* ('first attempt') or *au premier coup* (at the first touch) a technique he was taught in Paris but which required him to try again and again.

**Luke Fildes (1843-1927), *The Doctor*, exhibited 1891.** Scrap of carpet, makeshift bed, ragged clothes but there is medicine. The doctor's role was, **'to cure sometimes, to relieve often, to comfort always.'** In 1890 Henry Tate commissioned Luke Fildes for the enormous sum of £3,000 and left the subject to the artist. In 1877 Fildes first son Philip Luke had been attended by a wonderful doctor but had died. **'The character and bearing of their doctor throughout the time of their anxiety, made a deep impression on my parents. Dr. Murray became a symbol of professional devotion which would one day inspire the painting of *The Doctor*'.** Engravings were very popular and over one million sold in America alone. So, does it show the Victorian class system and the power of the doctor or was it produced in thanks and gratitude to the doctor who treated his son? Changing role of the doctor from patient centred career to scientific measurement and diagnosis. One of 56 works donated by Henry Tate.