



The aim of the course is to uncover the origins and development of the four main Victorian art movements – the Pre-Raphaelites, the Aesthetic Movement, Arts & Crafts and English Impressionism.

I hope this will help dispel the myth that France was the only place where artists innovated and the misconception that English art was wholly derived from French art. This myth first arose in the early twentieth century because of a small number of commentators and art historians. I demonstrate that English art was lively, innovative and exciting reflecting the history and culture of Victorian England.

The course shows how art reflects the history and culture of the period, and considers the role of artists in changing social and cultural assumptions. The nineteenth century was a time of enormous change and the art is related to these socio-economic trends. We see how Britain's lead in the industrial revolution and its growing population and wealth led to new markets for art. It also led both to a new confidence offset by a nostalgia for times past. The gradual emancipation of the poor, workers and woman was reflected in various art works of the period. The course will examine the latest art historical ideas regarding the key artists and artistic movements.

Recommended Books

General

Lionel Lambourne, *Victorian Painting*, Phaidon, 2004 (Amazon used £14 + delivery). A large and comprehensive summary of Victorian art.

Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

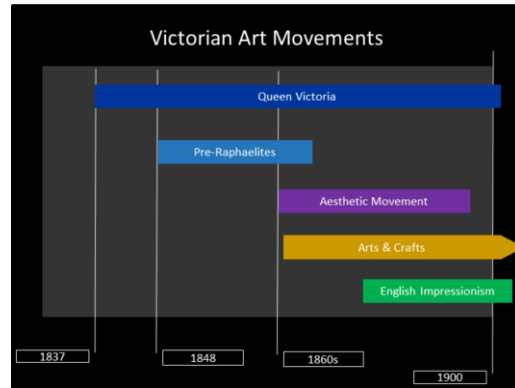
Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art of the Pre-Raphaelites*, Princeton University Press (Amazon £13.95 new). An excellent and well-written summary.

Aesthetic Movement

Elizabeth Prettejohn, *Art for Art's Sake: Aestheticism in Victorian Painting*, Paul Mellon Centre (Amazon £34.70 new, £24 used). An excellent history of the movement but expensive.

Arts & Crafts Movement

Elizabeth Cumming and Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts and Crafts Movement*, Thames and Hudson (World of Art) (Amazon, £8.95 new). A useful summary of the movement.



Queen Victoria

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

Art Movements

- **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**, founded by a group of three (Millais, Holman Hunt, Rossetti), then four more (Woolner, Stephens, W. M. Rossetti and Collinson), in 1848. They rejected laziness in painting and wanted to return to nature and

represent its intense colours, complexity of form and infinite detail. It caused an enormous impact and the style influenced artists through the rest of the century but as a brotherhood the artists had gone their separate ways by 1853.

- **Aesthetic Movement**, also called 'art for art's sake', emphasized the aesthetic rather than making a moral point or telling a story. It can be considered the British equivalent of **French Symbolism** and it led to the **Decadent** art movement at the end of the century. Artists include Whistler, Leighton, Albert Moore and Edward Burne-Jones. In the 1880s and 90s it became very fashionable to have Aesthetic domestic interiors and it was satirized in cartoons and plays.
- **Arts & Crafts**, a movement that combined the fine and decorative arts and which had an enormous international influence at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is associated with William Morris but as we shall see it had many other precedents. It also became fashionable.
- **English Impressionism**, in this category I include schools, such as the Newlyn School (Stanhope Forbes), the Glasgow School and artists influenced by French Impressionism such as John Singer Sargent. However, English Impressionism took its own path and is associated with the New English Art Club, the Camden Town Group and Whistler's pupil, Walter Sickert, although this takes us into the twentieth century.

Artistic Controversies

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

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

MAIN THEMES

- Britain's lead in the industrial and agricultural revolutions, the growing population and wealth and the rise of the middle class.
- The growth of the British Empire to almost a quarter of the Earth's total land area.
- The gradual emancipation of the poor, workers and woman



The Great Exhibition of 1851

The Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, view along what is now called South Carriage Drive.

- It demonstrated Britain's growing power and reputation, the new industrial goods and the new middle-class wealth that could afford them.
- Note the man is riding the wrong side of the lady riding side-saddle.
- It was 1,851 feet long and 454 feet wide, there were 6,039,195 visitors between 1 May 1851 and 11 October 1851. There were 13,000 exhibits including the Koh-i-Noor diamond, a precursor of the fax machine, the world's first voting machine, America's Cup yacht race began, the world's first public toilets costing 1d. The entry price went down from 3 guineas (£300 today) to one shilling (£4.78 today).

Main political themes of nineteenth century

- Britain's lead in the industrial and agricultural revolutions, the growing population and wealth and the rise of the middle class.
- The growth of the British Empire to almost a quarter of the Earth's total land area.
- The gradual emancipation of the poor, workers, woman and black people.
- The Victorian period was a time of enormous change resulting from the industrial revolution and the growth of the British Empire and Britain as a world power.

Key Facts about the Nineteenth Century

- **Corn Laws 1815 to 1846** forced high prices for corn and so bread.
 - **1832 Reform Act**
 - **1834 Poor Law Amendment Act**
 - **1845-8 Great Irish Famine, Hungry Forties**
 - **1848 Chartists near revolution**
 - **1851 Great Exhibition**
 - **1853-5 Crimean War**
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- **Life expectancy** increased from 38 in 1837 to 48 by 1901. Rural people lived longer, the rich lived longer and men lived longer than women. Life expectancy for a city labourer or servant was 22.
 - In 1840, 1 in 6 children died before the age of one and one third before 5 (in slums it was a half).
 - Surprisingly, if we remove child mortality then **life expectancy at age 5 was similar to or better than today**. Taking the mid-Victorian period (1850-70) degenerative disease was very low (10%) compared to today (e.g. heart diseases, cancer, dementia, diabetes, arthritis). The reason was a lot of exercise and a healthy diet. People died of infections that can be cured today. From 1850 to 1880 British people (excluding children) enjoyed the best standard of health ever enjoyed by a modern state. **They were healthier, fitter and stronger than we are today**. (See 'How the Mid-Victorians Worked, Ate and Died', 2009).
 - Things had got better than in earlier periods. In the early 18th century the death rate was 80 per 1,000 (i.e. each year on average 80 died out of every 1,000 people) but by 1840 it had reduced to 23 per 1,000. For comparison purposes the worst country in world today is Sierra Leone with a death rate of 22.1 per 1,000 and the UK is 8.8 per 1,000.
 - The population of the UK was roughly **16 million in 1801** (incl. Ireland until 1922), the year of the first census, 27.5 million in 1851, **41.6 million by 1901**, 50.2 million in 1951 and 58.8 million in 2001.
 - A live-in maids £10 to £25 a year, bricklayer £35 a year, bank clerk £50 a year. The article, 'Life on a Guinea a Week', *The Nineteenth Century*, 1888 made it clear it was difficult for a single professional man to live on a guinea a week as smart clothes had to be bought. It often meant no meat. Note that servants were paid 'commission' by tradesmen, had 'perquisites' (e.g. candle ends, old bottles, old clothes, old wheels, the cook's right to dripping and bones which could be sold to dealers), had all living expenses paid and were paid a month's notice on dismissal. These, of course, led to abuses such as stabbing meat and wasting food. In 1851, there were a million servants employed, the second largest occupation after agriculture.
 - The main cause of poverty was low wages and extreme poverty the death of the breadwinner. From 1906 poor children were given free school meals,

from January 1909 old age pensions were paid (5 shillings a week, i.e. £13 a year) and from 1911 sickness benefits.

- **Extreme poverty** was described by Henry Mayhew in 1849 (*London Labour and the London Poor*). It meant living in a 'rookery' with **open sewers** and drinking water was taken from the open sewers. Slums existed in St. Giles, Clerkenwell, the Devil's Acre Westminster, the Mint Southwark. Many cases of **death by starvation** were reported, in some cases whole families would starve to death. Many destitute children lived on the streets, an estimated 30,000 round London. In the 1880s **slumming** became popular (visiting slums incognito, a form of urban tourism) and guidebooks were produced. This sometimes involved 'guilty pleasures' and sexual intimacy with the poor.
- Many thought the poor wasted money on drink and gambling or were lazy or that it was ordained by God and nothing could be done. But there was a lot of charity work with the poor and philanthropy was common.

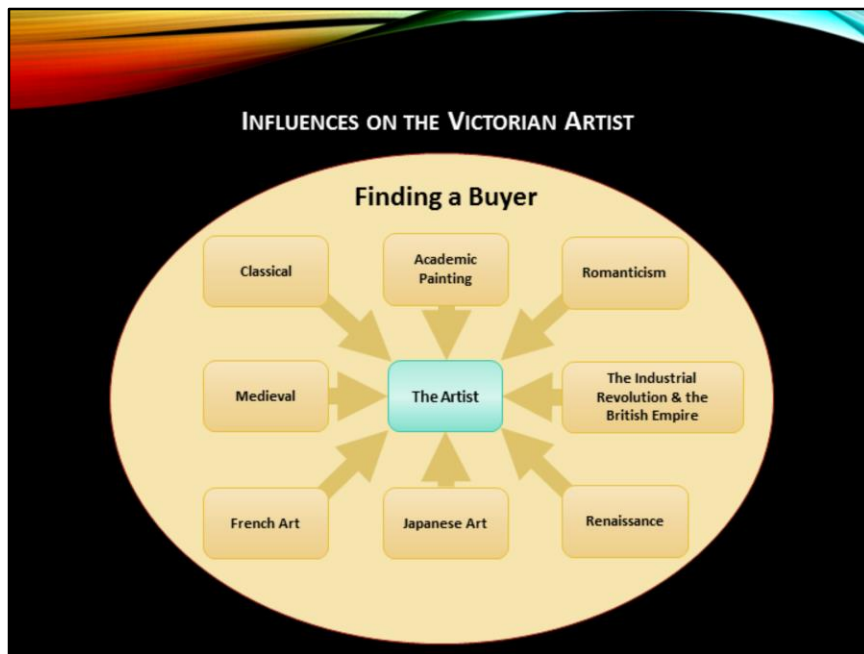
Emancipation

- Alexandrina **Victoria** (b. 1819, 1837 Queen, 1840 married, d. 1901). Started her reign with the 'Hungry 40s'. The **new Poor Law resulted** in riots in 1837 and 1838 and led to the rise of **Chartism**. The poor were largely ignored or subject to patronising charity, exemplified by Samuel Smiles pamphlet *Self Help* (1859). The Great Exhibition of 1851 was organised by Henry Cole and Prince Albert. Prince Albert died in 1861 leading to Queen Victoria retiring from public life. In 1866 she again re-opened Parliament for the first time. Significant events during her reign:
 - 1842 and 1844 Railways Act
 - 1846 Repeal of the **Corn Laws**
 - 1847 Factory Act
 - 1848 **Chartists** March, Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood
 - **1851 Great Exhibition**
 - **1853-1856 Crimean War**, Russia lost to France, Britain and the Ottoman Empire. The immediate cause was Christian rights in the Holy Land (including orthodox Russians). France and Britain supported the Ottoman Empire ('the sick man of Europe') to prevent Russia extending its territory and influence in the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire declared war on Russia then lost the Black Sea to Russia, the key was control of Sevastopol on the Crimean peninsula. So a large French and a small British army tried to capture Sevastopol to control the Black Sea. It was the first war to be photographed and the Charge of the Light Brigade is symbolic of the logistical and management failures and mismanagement. Florence Nightingale demonstrated what professionalism could achieve.

- 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act established divorce courts
 - 1862 International Exhibition
 - **1867 Second Reform Act** extended franchise to most working men.
 - 1860s Aesthetic Movement, radical, anti-Victorian, how we live our lives, anti-materialistic
 - **1877 Grosvenor Gallery opens**
 - 1878 Whistler v Ruskin trial
 - 1882 Married Women's Property Act
 - 1884 Third Reform Act extended franchise to most adult males
 - 1888 County Councils Act
 - 1897 Women's Compensation Act
- **William IV** (b. 1765, King 1830, d. 1837), the '**Sailor King**'. Was King when a New Poor Law (1834) created **workhouses** (note: poverty was not seen as a social problem: destitution was felt to be the result of character weakness. It was believed that those in dire need would accept the workhouse and the Law would work wonders on the moral character of the poor). The child labour Factory Act (1837) said that children under nine were not allowed to work, between 9 and 11 they could work for 8 hours a day and between 11 and 18 a maximum of 12 hours a day. The **Slave Abolition Act of 1833** abolished slavery in the British Empire (the better known date of 1807 was the **Slave Trade Act** which outlawed trade but not slavery) with exceptions and the **Reform Act** (1832) gave seats to new cities and abolished 'rotten boroughs' and increased the electorate to 1 in 6 adult males. There were protest against pay cuts leading to the **Tolpuddle martyrs of 1834**. Terrible conditions in the countryside led to the burning of haystacks and the destruction of farm machinery. These were known as the **Swing Riots** and were led by a fictitious Captain Swing. The causes included enclosure and the taking of common land, abject poverty - the worst in Europe, poor harvests but high grain prices because of the Corn Laws, the church's 10% tithe and an oversupply of labour. Conditions were made worse by the introduction of automation (such as threshing machines) and the terrible harvests of 1828-29. The following acts were passed:
- 1829 Metropolitan Police established
 - **1832 Reform Act**
 - **1833 Factory Act and the abolition of slavery**
 - **1834 Poor Law Amendment Act (PLAA)**. The PLAA was intended to reduce the poor rates; it was not intended to help the poor who suffered as a result of the legislation. The PLAA replaced the existing poor laws and was responsible for the establishment of workhouses throughout the country. The poor were treated as criminals and people starved rather than apply for poor relief because that meant

that they would become inmates of the dreaded 'poor law bastilles'.

- **George IV** (b. 1762. Regent 1810, King 1820, d. 1830), **dissolute, wasteful, disliked** and influenced by his favourites. The Royal Pavilion was built for George IV between 1787 and 1823 and it was revered by fashionable Regency society. In 1820, the **Cato Street** conspiracy was an attempt to assassinate the entire cabinet following the death of George III.
- **George III** (b. 1738, King 1760, d. 1820), French Revolution followed by the war with France known as the Napoleonic Wars. In later life the king suffered from mental illness and his son George, Prince of Wales, took over as Regent in 1810. From the 1790s there were a succession of bad harvests. The Napoleonic Wars led to famine because of the poor harvests and the French blockade and following the War Corn Laws were introduced that fixed a high price for corn and therefore bread and workers wages dropped because of over supply of workers caused by the soldiers returning to work. There were riots and in 1819 the **Peterloo Massacre** took place in St. Peter's Field Manchester when people were calling for parliamentary representation. 1811-1816 was a bad time leading to dissent and the '**Gagging Acts**' which made it illegal to hold a meeting of more than 50 people. After 1815 the labourer's struggle turned to crisis and recession.



- The changes in society led to influences on artists

Finding a Buyer

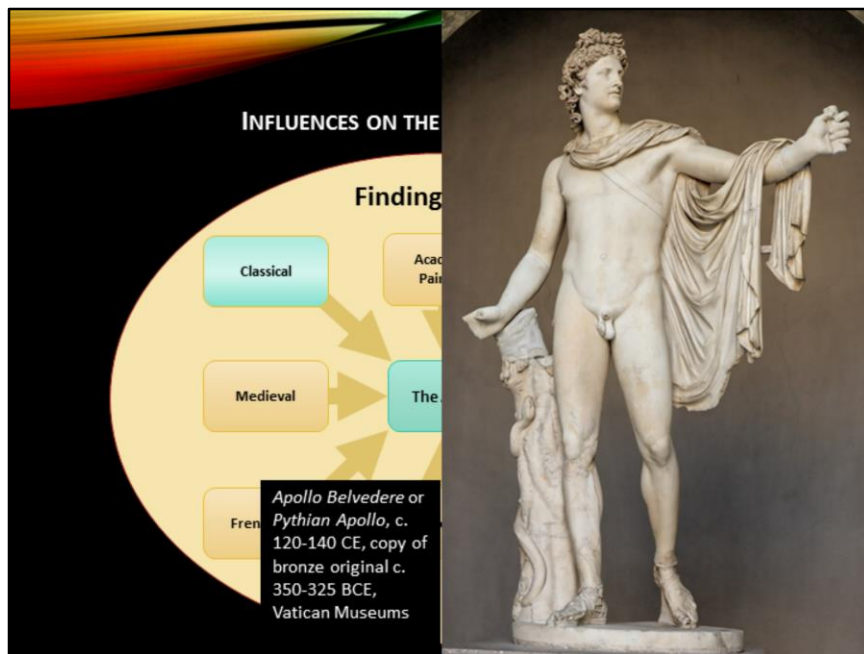
- Surrounding all these influences the artist had to make a living which involved selling their paintings.
- In the eighteenth-century the **wealthy patron** was the main way to earn a living.
- In 1768 the **Royal Academy** was founded and it became the most important route to market for the artist.
 - An artist was more highly regarded if they trained at the **RA School** and they went through a disciplined but uninspiring training programme involving copying Old Masters, drawing casts and then life drawing
 - Any artist could submit a painting for the **Summer Exhibition** (about 1,000 were displayed from 3,000 entries, today 10,000 entries). The Royal Academy took 30% of all sales.
 - An artist could be voted as an Associate Royal Academician (abolished in 1991) and then full **Royal Academician (RA)**. The number was originally limited to 40 RAs (today 80). An RA is entitled to exhibit six works at the Summer Exhibition.
- There were also:
 - **Dealers and galleries** both shops and public galleries although the later only showed Old Masters. Retail shops included Colnaghi (pronounced 'col-naa-gi') and the French Gallery (managed by the well known dealer Ernest Gambart), and others that clustered around the Haymarket and the Eastern end of Pall Mall, close to Trafalgar Square (then the home of the Royal Academy). When the Royal

Academy moved to Piccadilly in 1867 art dealers moved to Bond Street which became the prestigious address for art dealers that it is today.

- **Engravings** enabled artists to reach a wide audience as an engraving could be purchased for a shilling although art works normally sold for one or two guineas as a coloured lithograph or mezzotint.
- **One-man shows** held by the artist and their studio
- Other **art societies** which held exhibitions, such as the Royal Society of Painters in Watercolours, the Society for British Artists on Suffolk Street, and to the British Institution on Pall Mall.
- **Annual exhibitions**, in particular the Grosvenor Gallery opened in 1877 for more avant garde art, such as Burne-Jones and Walter Crane.
- **International exhibitions**
- The Pre-Raphaelites began to break the hold of the Royal Academy. For example, Rossetti had private patrons and never exhibited at the RA.

Influences on the 19th Century Artist

- The assumption that the **Classical** period represented the **high point** of art
- **Academic painting**, the Old Masters, history painting, promoted by the **Royal Academy** from **1768** onwards
- Science and **industrialisation brought about change** (Great Exhibition, decorative art)
- **Romanticism**, in broad terms the rejection of the Age of Enlightenment's assumption that reason could solve all problems, emphasised humanity, **sensibility** and feeling.
- **Renaissance, Raphael**, Michelangelo, Leonardo, Titian and their rejection by the PRB
- The formal properties of **Japanese** art such as unusual angles, edges cut off and flat areas of colour. Foreign merchant ships began visiting in 1848, Anglo-Japanese influence from 1862
- **French art** (Aesthetic movement, **through Whistler** and others but not Impressionism until later)
- **Gothic honesty** and the romanticism of the **pseudo-medieval** period, **anti-science**.



Classical: ***Apollo Belvedere*** or *Pythian Apollo*, c. 120-140 CE, copy of bronze original c. 350-325 BCE, Vatican Museums

- From the mid-18thC this was considered the greatest ancient sculpture.
- Found in central Italy during the Renaissance (note that nearly all the bronze originals were melted down except for those lost at sea, such as the Riace bronzes).
- Apollo is depicted as an archer who has just shot an arrow.
- The lower part of the right arm and the left hand were restored by Giovanni Montorsoli (1506-63), a pupil of Michelangelo.
- It is thought he has just slain.
 - the subterranean **serpent Python that guarded Delphi** who sat at the centre of the earth (Gaia) and this made Delphi famous,
 - or the giant Tityos who attempted to rape his mother Leto (Tityos was punished by two vultures who fed on his liver every night and it grew back the next day, like the Titan Prometheus's punishment of his liver being eaten by an eagle),
 - or all the (from 4 to 20) Niobids because their mother boasted she had more children than Leto.
- The most famous ancient Greek sculptors were from the Classical period (500BCE to 300BCE) and included **Myron** and his *Discobolus*, **Phidias**, the designer of the Parthenon, the statue of *Zeus at Olympia* and *Athena Parthenos* and **Praxiteles**

nude female sculptures such as *Aphrodite of Knidos*. The Victorians considered many later works from the **Hellenistic period** (200BCE to 100BCE) to be decadent although the *Laocoön*, *Nike of Samothrace* and the *Pergamon Altar* were regarded as great works. Most Roman statues are copies of Greek originals and by 200BCE most sculptors in Rome were Greek. Roman statues represented the individual or Imperial conquests.

- The **classical period** was considered as the **high point** of culture, particularly ancient Greece. This was linked to the way public schools valorised Latin, ancient Greek, Euclid, Greek philosophers and the Roman and Greece poets.
- The beauty and skill of ancient Greece was reborn in the **Renaissance** and artists were trained to maintain this high standard by first learning from the **Old Masters**, which included seventeenth century artist such as **Claude Lorrain** (1600-1682) and **Nicolas Poussin** (1594-1665).



- Academic Painting: Titian (1488/90-1576), *Diana and Actaeon*, 1556–1559, National Gallery, a classic history painting, showing a dramatic moment in a mythological story, with elements of figure painting, landscape painting and still-life
- Success in art revolved around the Royal Academy. Its School laid down a strict process for learning art and divided art into a hierarchy:
 - **History painting** at the top
 - Portraiture
 - Genre painting
 - Landscape
 - Animal painting
 - Still life
- **The Renaissance** emphasized **realism**, except **Michelangelo** who argued for **idealising** (Neoplatonism). **Brunelleschi** invented **perspective**. **Leonardo** emphasized **painting** over sculpture as it has to represent three dimensions rather than just copying them.
- Artists discussed **disegno** (design or drawing) opposed to **colorito** (colour). Venetian colour and Florentine design.
- **Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)** described disegno as the father and foundation of all the visual arts. Vasari wrote *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* in 1550 dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici. He is regarded as the **first art historian**. He describes the lives of about 180 artists with a bias towards Florentine

artists. He was the first person to talk about the importance of competition as he thought this is what made Florentine artists the greatest as there was the most competition in Florence.

- Titian's painting of *Venus and Adonis* shows an emphasis on colorito: a mass of golden touches represents the pearls and highlights in the goddess's blond hair, and the subtle modulations of tone across her back suggest **flesh without sharp edges**. In his dialogue on painting, Dolce champions Titian for his naturalism over Michelangelo (Vasari's hero).

Titian

- Tiziano Vecelli. Trained in workshop of Gentile, later Giovanni Bellini, the leading artist in Venice.
- 'The Sun amidst small stars' (from Dante's *Inferno*).
- A master of colour, loose brushwork, subtlety of tone.
- From 1550 he worked for Philip II, an insatiable perfectionist, he painted a series of large mythological works or 'poesie', mostly from Ovid. Painted when he was 66-70

Diana and Acteon

- Acquired by the National Gallery and national Gallery of Scotland in 2008-9 for £50 million.
- Bought in 1798 by the coal-magnate Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater.
- William Hazlitt wrote "**I was staggered when I saw the works ... A new sense came upon me, a new heaven and a new Earth stood before me.**"
- Lucien Freud wrote about this painting and *Diana and Callisto*, '**simply the most beautiful pictures in the world**'.



- J.M.W. Turner, *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last Berth to be broken up*, 1839, National Gallery
- Romanticism, a complex movement that developed in poetry at the end of the eighteenth century. It emphasizes the feeling of one person rather than objective reason. The primary British Romantic painters were Turner and Constable.
- The *Temeraire* (téméraire is French for bold or reckless) was a **second-rate ship** of the line at the Battle of Trafalgar. This did not mean second best, it meant **fewer guns and a cheaper** ship than a first rate ship. They both fought in a line that sailed past the enemy firing broadsides.
- It is being **towed to Rotherhithe** to be broken up. By then it had no masts. The word 'tugged' was used for the first time by Turner.
- Voted the **nation's favourite** painting in 2005 (BBC Radio 4 poll).
- It is very **unlikely Turner saw the ship** being towed but it had received a lot of press coverage and Turner was very patriotic.
- The off-centre triangular composition is unusual.
- It is about the **fading of formerly heroic strength** with the dawning of a new era as the sun sets on the old.
- The position of the sun and Moon means **it is sunset**. From this position the ship is being towed westwards upstream and so the sun would actually be rising in the east (sunrise).
- Turner called it **his 'darling'** and the ship may symbolize Turner contemplating his old age and death.
- The ship was called **'Saucy'** by her crew not 'Fighting'.

- There were **two steamboats** pulling not one but a second paddle wheel tug can be seen in the distance.
- It was praised when shown at the Royal Academy. He did not sell it but displayed it in his studio. He is reputed to have received an offer for £5,000 and then '**blank cheque**', which he **turned down** as he wished to leave it to the nation.



Philip James de Loutherbourg (1740-1812), *Coalbrookdale by Night*, 1801, Science Museum. This shows Madeley Wood (or Bedlam) Furnaces, which belonged to the Coalbrookdale Company.

- This painting has come to symbolize the birth of the industrial revolution and Coalbrookdale the place where the industrial revolution started.
- At first glance it looks like a positive image but one art historian (Stephen Daniels) argues it likens Coalbrookdale to hell and the Last Judgement. Coal is black, a colour, or the absence of colour associated with death and sadness.
- Loutherbourg was a set designer and the painting looks like the design for a stage play.
- It was a tourist sport in the early nineteenth century because of the excitement of the furnaces invoking the changes taking place and the power of human endeavours.

The Sublime

- In the eighteenth century (1757) **Edmund Burke** wrote *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.
- The sublime has the power to destroy and invokes awe. Burke describes the passion associated with the sublime as astonishment.
- The preference for the sublime marked the change from the **neoclassical to the Romantic**. The cause of the sublime is the passion of fear (especially the fear of death). The material cause is aspects of certain objects such as vastness, infinity, magnificence, etc. It is also enhanced by the dark, uncertain and confused.
- According to the first writer on the sublime, pseudo-Longinus in 100CE, it inspires awe and

vation.

Philip James de Loutherbourg

- Born in Strasbourg the son of a Polish miniature painter.
- Known for large naval works and set designs for London's theatres.
- Invented a mechanical theatre called the Eidophusikon. Opened in Leicester Square in 1781.
- Interested in faith healing and the occult. In 1789 he gave up painting briefly to pursue alchemy and a follower (Mary Pratt) claimed he had healed 2,000 people.
- Studied in Paris and elected member of the French Academy below the minimum age limit. 1771 settled in London and paid £500 a year by David Garrick.

Coalbrookdale

- In the Ironbridge Gorge, one of the earliest sites for iron and steel production. It is probable there were ironworks in 1572 and there is a painting of a blast furnace in 1658. By 1801 it was a major producer of iron and steel.
- The Ironbridge was constructed in 1777-1781.

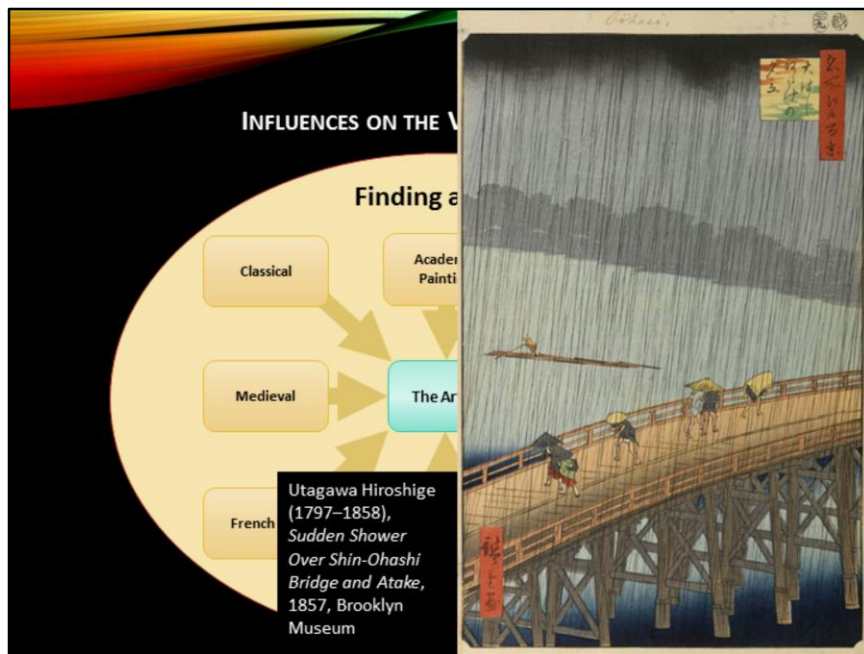


Raphael (1483-1520), *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, c. 1515-6, bodycolour over charcoal underdrawing on paper, mounted on canvas, 3.19m x 3.99m, Royal Collection, on loan to the V&A since 1865.

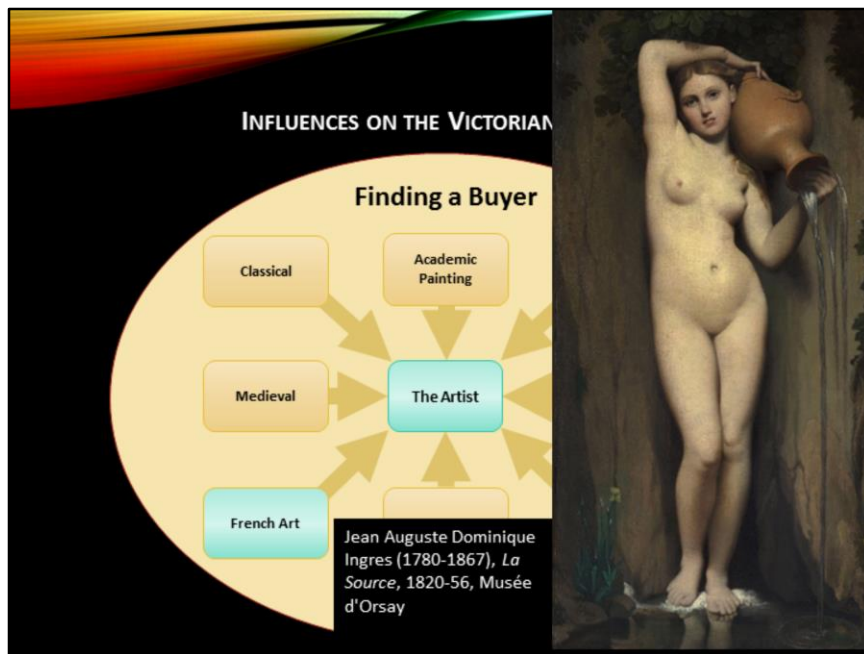
- Full name Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino.
- Renaissance artists were regarded as the masters of painting and the leading artist during the Victorian period was Raphael not Michelangelo or Leonardo.
- Pope **Leo X** commissioned Raphael to design **ten tapestries** for the **Sistine Chapel** in 1515. They were made in Pieter van Aelst's workshop in **Brussels** between 1516 and 1521. The total cost was five times more than Michelangelo was paid for the decoration of the ceiling. Seven cartoons were bought by **Charles I** when Prince of Wales and are on permanent loan to the V&A.
- The tapestry was woven as **one yard wide strips** by individual weavers and then sewn together. Rulers throughout Europe commissioned their own versions including Charles I who bought the by then damaged cartoons for £300 and commissioned the weavers of Mortlake to produce a set. The cartoons were displayed at Hampton Court until 1865. The **paintings** now at **Hampton Court** were painted by **Henry Cooke** (1642-1700) in the 1690s. Many copies were painted including one by Sir James Thornhill now at Columbia University.
- Christ chose fishermen as his first disciples – Simon, Peter and Andrew. He saw

them fishing unsuccessfully on the **Sea of Galilee** and told **Peter** to let down his net into **deeper water**. They made a miraculous catch and their boat overflowed with fish. In another boat **James and John** struggle to pull up the **huge catch** while their father **Zebedee** tries to keep the boat steady. Since early times Christ has been personified as a ship and the disciples **fishers of men** and the **fish** was a **symbol for Christ** as well as representing the souls that have been saved.

- According to Pliny the Elder, the **crane** is the most **vigilant** of birds and one would always stand guard while others slept. It would hold a stone in its claw so when it finally fell asleep it would drop and wake another bird to stand watch. So it became an **emblem of papal authority** symbolising the Pope watching over his flock.
- The **raven** had a **bad reputation** as they fed on corpses and when Noah sent out the raven it did not return. As the ark represented the church the raven came to represent **sin and corrupt priests**. But they also represented the bounty of God as Christ said, 'Consider the raven: for they neither sow nor reap'. The ravens appear near **swans**, which represented **pride and deceit**, and together they may represent the contemporary proverb about the difficulty of converting sinners - 'one may as well try to make ravens white or swans black'. In the Sistine Chapel tapestry the ravens have white feathers and may represent seagulls which also represent **sin** and the renunciation of religion (apostasy).
- The **crab** in the foreground represented **greed, cunning and covetousness** and it was thought to feed on the distress of others. Crabs hunt **oysters** and were thought to wait until the oyster opened its shell and then prop it open with a pebble before eating the hapless oyster.
- The underdrawing is by Raphael's sure hand.
- 50 re-editions of the tapestries have been traced.
- The Acts of the Apostles (more accurately Episodes from the Lives of St. Peter and St. Paul).
 1. The Miraculous Draught of Fishes
 2. Christ's Charge to Peter
 3. The Healing of the Lame Man
 4. The Death of Ananias
 5. The Stoning of St. Stephen
 6. The Conversion of Saul
 7. The Blinding of Elymas, Before the Proconsul
 8. Paul's Sacrifice at Lystra
 9. St Paul Preaching on the Areopagus at Athens



- **Utagawa Hiroshige** (1797–1858), *Sudden Shower Over Shin-Ohashi Bridge and Atake*, 1857, Brooklyn Museum.
- Pronounced 'ootagawa hero-she-gay'
- Print depicting Ōhashi Bridge (original) over the Sumida River
- Part of the series *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo*, no. 58, part 2: Summer
- **Hiroshige** was the **last great ukiyo-e** ('pictures of the floating world') artist who painted **medieval scenes of everyday Japan** including beautiful women, sumo wrestlers, scenes from history, travel scenes, flora and fauna and erotica.
- They were painted during the **Edo period** (1615-1868) and are woodblock prints later coloured woodblock prints. Their production involved a quartet of publisher, designer, block cutter and printer. The **floating world** refers to the **licensed brothels and theatres** as the courtesans became the style icons of the period. The Edo period was centuries of peace and a sophisticated highway network developed and a culture of **mass travel**. Many prints are cheap **souvenirs** of these travels. Ukiyo ('floating world') is an **ironic** reference to the homophone ukiyo ('sorrowful world') the **earthly plane of death and rebirth** from which Buddhists sought release.
- Had an influence towards the end of the century but **Whistler's** *The Princess from the Land of Porcelain* was **1863-65**.
- American commodore **Marshall C. Perry** played a leading role in opening up Japan in **1854** with the Convention of Kanagawa. Perry was father of the US steam-powered navy.
- Japanese prints were used to **wrap goods** sent to Europe and were bought by discerning artists in the **1860s**.



Jean Auguste Dominique **Ingres** (1780-1867), *La Source*, 1820-56, 1.63m x 80cm, Musée d'Orsay

- She represents a spring which in classical literature is sacred to the Muses and a **source of poetic inspiration**. She stands between two flowers, vulnerable to males who wish to pick them and surrounded by **ivy, the plant of Dionysus (Bacchus)**, god of the grape harvest, disorder and ecstasy and everything that escapes human reason.
- He started the torso in 1820 when he was 40 and did not complete the head, arms and legs until 1856 when he was 76.
- It is generally regarded as bringing about a change in the presentation of the nude in England but *The Art Journal* of 1862 only mentions it in passing as a minor work.
- It was exhibited at the **1862 World Expo London International Exhibition on Industry and Art**, Royal Horticultural Society, South Kensington, London on the site of what is now the Natural History Museum. It attracted 6.1 million visitors. The building faced Cromwell Road and contained 12,000 tons of cast iron and the largest domes ever built. The building was later sold and the material used to build Alexander Palace. The exhibition was a major success for William Morris's company Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. At the opening ceremony an MP fell through a gap and later died of gangrene.
- **Kenneth Clark** in his book *Feminine Beauty* (1980) observed how *The Source* has been described as "**the most beautiful figure in French painting**." (p. 153)
- The **model** was the young daughter of **Ingres's concierge**. In his *Confessions of a Young Man*, Irish novelist George Moore wrote, with relation to the morality of artistic production, "What care I that the virtue of some sixteen-year-old maid was the price for

Ingres' *La Source*? That the model died of drink and disease in the hospital is nothing when compared with the essential that I should have *La Source*, that exquisite dream of innocence."

- In response Gustave Courbet painted an unflinchingly naturalistic nude in *La Source* in 1862 showing a back view of a female nude with her arms in a spring.

Ingres

- Neo-classical French painter.
- When he completed *La Source* he was 76 and famous, two of his students helped with the background and the water jar.
- The pose is similar to Ingres, *Venus Anadyomene* (1848) and is a re-imagination of *Aphrodite of Cnidus* (*Venus Pudica*)



Carlo Lasinio (1759-1838), *Pitture a fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa*, 1828 edition

Pre-Raphaelites

- Lasinio moved to Pisa in 1807 and was responsible for protecting the Camposanto frescoes from ruin.
- The Pre-Raphaelite movement was inspired by Carlo Lasinio's folio of engravings depicting the frescoes adorning the walls of the Camposanto in Pisa.
- **Rossetti acquired** a copy of the **1828 edition of Carlo Lasinio's *Pitture a fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa***. A 15thC fresco attributed to Giotto, Memmi, Gozzoli and other early Italian masters.
- Also the medieval period and its legends inspired a lot of late nineteenth-century art.

Gothic Revival

- I also include the Gothic as a major influence from the medieval period. Gothic revival architecture was selected to represent the nation when Charles Barry and Augustus Welby Pugin were commissioned to rebuild the Palace of Westminster following the Great Fire of 1834.
- Barry's Gothic design had a major influence on later architects and buildings. Pugin later designed many Catholic churches based on the Gothic architectural style.

Medieval Romanticism and 'Merrie England'

- The medieval was also a source of romantic, anti-scientific feelings based on medieval stories and ballad, such as Sir Thomas Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* published in 1485 by

William Caxton. Mallory led a life of crime (attempted murder, rape, extortion, theft, cattle rustling) and spent long periods in prison where he is alleged to have written the poem.

- 'Merry or Merrie England' was a romantic period with brave knights, beautiful ladies and heroic deeds with an essentially English history. Merry England was a utopian stereotype of an idyllic pastoral way of life some time in the Middle Ages. An essential Englishness with thatched cottages, country inns, village ponds, afternoon tea and the Sunday roast. It often contained elves and fairies as well as Robin Hood. Some historians place the creation of merry England between 1350 and 1520, that is, at the end of the medieval period. It was a visionary, mythical world that never existed and is linked to the peasant revolts of Wat Tyler (1381, Peasant's Revolt) and Jack Straw where they invoked a world of Saxon equality and freedom and wished to throw off the 'Norman yoke' of the feudal aristocracy. The Black Death proved everyone was equal before God and the labour shortage gave them a new power.
- The Victorians embellished Merry England as part of the Gothic revival and Gothic, which was essentially international was made English. Jolly figures in ruffs and farthingales (hooped skirt) lived in a 'Merry England' that was not Catholic.



VICTORIAN ART MOVEMENTS

- Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood
- Aesthetic Movement
- Arts & Crafts Movement
- English Impressionism
- Newlyn School, Glasgow School and Camden Town Group

- Last term we covered the whole of nineteenth century art divided into types of art, such as portraits, landscape, social realism and photography.
- This term we focus on the Victorian period and look more closely at art movements and why they happened.
- Each topic is roughly two weeks and we have a summary at the end.



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

- **Pre-Raphaelites**
- The Pre-Raphaelites were controversial and this was one of their most controversial works.
- This is a bit of a trick as when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1850 it was given **no title**, but accompanied by a biblical quotation: *'And one shall say unto him, What are those wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'* (Zechariah 13:6). However, I am looking for either of the two titles normally used for the painting.
- Does anyone know if this was well received when it was first shown and if not why not?
- **Charles Dickens** accused Millais of portraying Mary as an alcoholic who looks, *"...so hideous in her ugliness that ... she would stand out from the rest of the company as a Monster, in the vilest cabaret in France, or the lowest gin-shop in England."*
- Dickens also wrote, *"wry-necked boy in a nightgown who seems to have received a poke playing in an adjacent gutter."*
- The painting made the Pre-Raphaelites famous and started a debate on modernity

and its relationship with **symbolic realism**.

Notes

- **Modernity** typically refers to a **post-medieval** historical period, one marked by the move from feudalism toward capitalism, industrialization, secularization, rationalization, the nation-state and forms of surveillance. Charles Baudelaire is credited with coining the term "modernity" (modernité) to designate the fleeting, ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis, and the responsibility art has to capture that experience.
- Some say **modernism** began in the **1870s** and it includes the activities and creations of those who felt the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, and activities of daily life were becoming **outdated** in the new economic, social, and political environment of an emerging fully industrialized world. The poet Ezra Pound's 1934 injunction to "**Make it new!**" was the touchstone of the movement's approach towards what it saw as the now obsolete culture of the past. Nevertheless, its innovations, like the stream-of-consciousness novel, twelve-tone music and **abstract art**, all had precursors in the 19th century. A notable characteristic of Modernism is **self-consciousness**, which often led to experiments with form, along with the use of techniques that drew attention to the processes and materials used in creating a painting, poem, building, etc. Modernism explicitly **rejected** the ideology of **realism** and makes use of the works of the past by the employment of reprise, **incorporation**, rewriting, recapitulation, revision and **parody**.



1851

William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *The Hireling Shepherd*, 1851, Manchester Art Gallery

William Holman Hunt

- The painting shows a shepherd neglecting his flock in favour of an attractive country girl to whom he shows a death's-head hawk moth. The meaning of the image has been much debated.
- A local girl called Emma Watkins is the model, known as 'the Coptic' by the Pre-Raphaelites because of her exotic features. The male model is not known. It was accompanied when displayed at the Royal Academy by an excerpt from King Lear:

*Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.*

- It was condemned for its vulgarity, showing red-faced and sexually uninhibited country people. Hunt had a much more esoteric meaning. He wrote that he intended the couple to symbolise the pointless theological debates which occupied Christian churchmen while their 'flock' went astray due to a lack of proper moral guidance. The title is therefore a Biblical allusion; in the story of the Good Shepherd (in the King James Version), the Good Shepherd is explicitly contrasted with a hireling shepherd, who has no care for the sheep

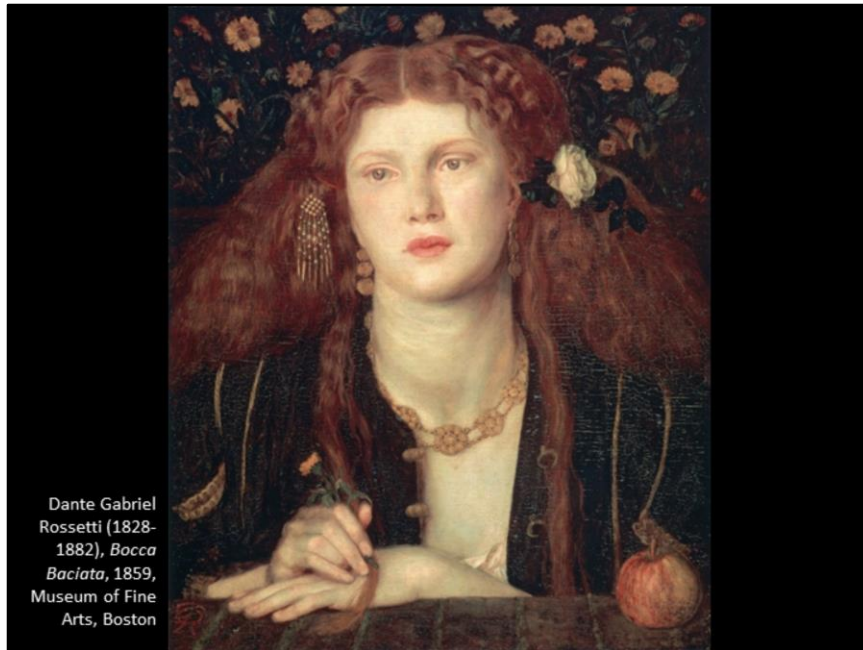
[John 10:11-15].

- Hunt explained in a letter that the unprotected sheep will die from eating grain by becoming what farmers call 'blown'. The lamb fed sour apples symbolize the effects of such pastoral neglect, while the death's-head moth, is a symbol of human mortality. The themes are temptation and fall leading to neglect and death rather than hard work and redemption. The apples are unripe and poisonous to the lamb, symbol of Redemption, and they remind us of the Temptation and Fall. The lamb is a sickly and late-born and covered with a cloth despite the heat. The field is swampy which is bad for sheep as it causes sheep-rot.
- Ruskin wrote an article call ***Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds*** (1851) with a similar theme. The overall message of his article is that internal disputes in the church, which was **splitting** between **High Church and the Evangelical**, had led to the **neglect of the flock**. We do not know if Hunt read the article but the theme of the painting is similar.

References

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

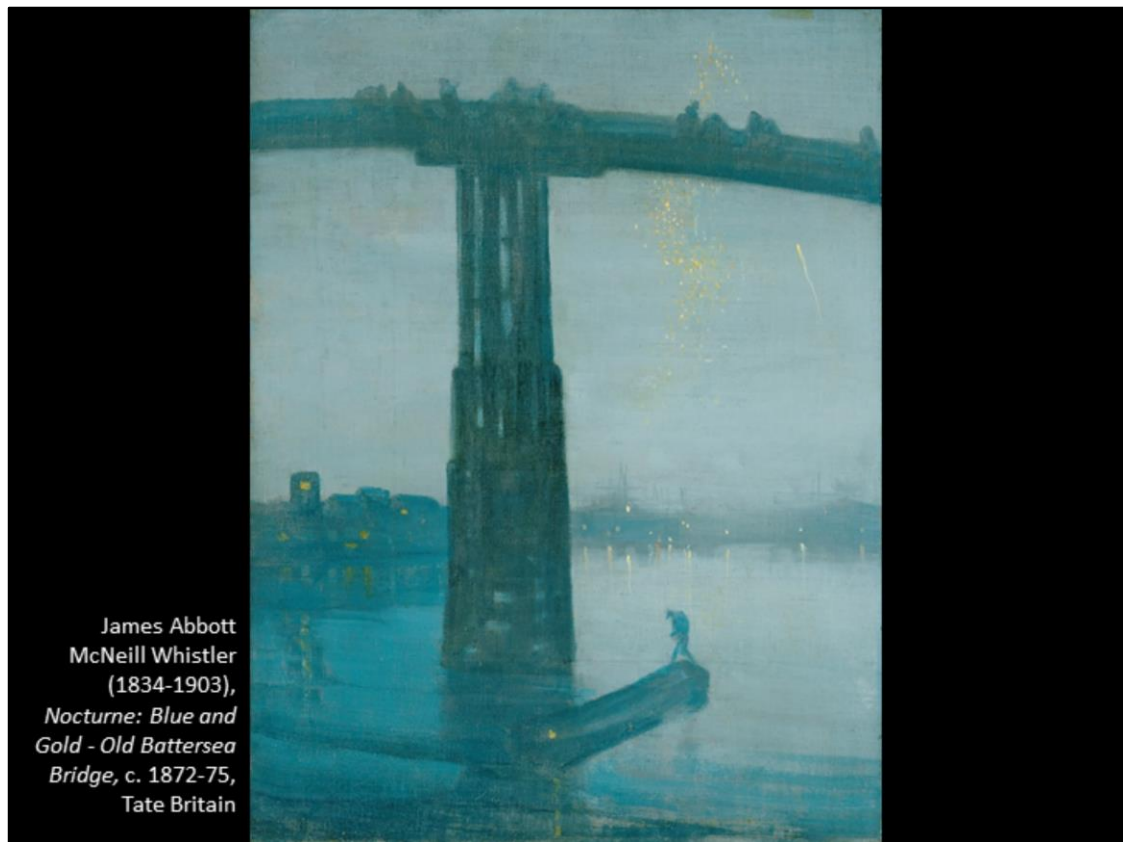
See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hireling_Shepherd



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

- **Aesthetic Movement**
- The Aesthetic Movement believed it was not the job of art to teach a moral lesson or tell a story. The only function of its art was beauty.
- The title is an Italian expression, does anyone know what it means?
- Bocca Baciata means '*mouth that has been kissed*' and it is taken from the last line of a story by Giovanni **Boccaccio (131-1375)** called *Decameron* (Day 2, Story 7) where it is used as the culmination of the tale of **Alatiel**: a beautiful **Saracen** (i.e. Muslim) princess who, despite having had sex on perhaps ten thousand occasions with eight separate lovers in the space of four years, successfully presents herself to the King of the Algarve (Southern Portugal) as his virgin bride. The last line translated reads,

'The mouth that has been kissed does not lose its savour, indeed it renews itself just as the moon does.'



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c. 1872-75, Tate Britain

The Whistler v. Ruskin Trial

- This painting gave rise to one of the **central artistic controversy of the Victorian period**, known as the **Whistler v. Ruskin trial**. The trial tells us a lot about how the Victorians regarded art and the nature of the changes Whistler helped bring about.
- This painting and the next were exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery in 1877, the year it opened. John Ruskin reviewed Whistler's work in his publication *Fors Clavigera* on July 2, 1877. Ruskin praised Burne-Jones, while he attacked Whistler:
*For Mr. Whistler's own sake, no less than for the protection of the purchaser, Sir Coutts Lindsay [founder of the Grosvenor Gallery] ought not to have admitted works into the gallery in which the ill-educated conceit of the artist so nearly approached the aspect of wilful imposture. I have seen, and heard, much of **Cockney impudence** before now; but never expected to hear a coxcomb ask two hundred guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face.*
- Critics by convention **did not criticize** paintings as they knew the artist had to make a living. If they did not like a painting they ignored it or made a critical comment alongside some positive points.
- Whistler, seeing the attack in the newspaper, replied to his friend George Boughton, "It is the most debased style of criticism I have had thrown at me yet." He then went to his solicitor and drew up a writ for libel which was served to Ruskin. Whistler hoped to recover

£1,000 plus the costs of the action. The case came to trial the following year after delays caused by Ruskin's bouts of mental illness, while Whistler's financial condition continued to deteriorate. It was heard at the Queen's Bench of the High Court on November 25 and 26 of 1878.

- Although, we do not have a transcript of the Whistler v. Ruskin trial sufficient reports were published to enable it to be reconstructed.

When asked '**Are those figures** on the top of the bridge intended for people?'

Whistler replied 'They are **just what you like.**'

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 stressed the colour rather than a harmony of form and the form is suppressed by the overall similarity in tone and hue; with the exception of the gold dots the painting is a wash of blue, in places a thin wash that allows the canvas to show. Whistler mixed large quantities of the predominant tone that he called his 'sauce', and although he started on an easel, he often had to throw the canvas on the floor to stop the sauce running off. The sky and water were rendered by 'great sweeps of the brush of exactly the right tone.'



Christopher Dresser (1834-1904), *Teapot*, c. 1870

Christopher Dresser (1834-1904), *Teapot*, c. 1870

- The leading designer of the Design Reform Movement was **Christopher Dresser** who has been described as the father of industrial design.
- Dresser set the scene for the Arts and Crafts Movement but their agendas were different. Dresser was designing for industrial production, William Morris believed all goods should be handmade.
- This teapot by Dresser is 144 years old and it still looks modern. Some of his design were so innovative at the time that the manufacturer refused to make them as they thought they **would not sell**.
- **New ideas about health, hygiene, and design reform** also helped shape the Aesthetic movement from the 1860s through the 1880s. Edward William Godwin (1833–1886), one of the originators of the movement, deplored "**fluff and dust ... two of the great enemies of life**" and designed innovative furniture without excessive carving that could also be readily moved for easy cleaning.

Design Reform Movement

- The mission of the Government Schools of Design was to instil three basic principles:
 - first, that decoration is secondary to form;
 - second, that form is dictated by function and the materials used; and
 - third, that design should derive from historical English and non-Western

ornament as well as plant and animal sources, distilled into simple, linear motifs.

- Although by the late 1850s, the Government Schools were encouraging the emulation of Italian Renaissance design, one former student of the system, Christopher Dresser, a disciple of Owen Jones, adhered to the school's earlier tenets and developed a design methodology that was visually as well as industrially progressive and would influence twentieth-century design.
- The new design philosophy was partly to do with **cleanliness**. **Germs had been recently discovered** and cholera epidemics plagued the century. Bedbugs, which lived in wood bedsteads, walls, and floors, were common to all classes, including the aristocracy, and industrial soot soiled the interiors of urban homes. Design reformers attempted to help a new and rapidly growing generation of middle-class homemakers create artistic yet healthy homes. Among the many advice manuals that were written in the second half of the century, Charles Locke Eastlake's highly influential *Hints on Household Taste* (1868) was widely read throughout England as well as in the United States.

Christopher Dresser

- Dresser was a designer and design theorist, now widely known as one of the first and most important, independent, designers and was a pivotal figure in the Aesthetic Movement, and a major contributor to the allied Anglo-Japanese or Modern English style; both originated in England and had long lasting international influence.
- Dresser was born in **Glasgow** and began attending the **Government School of Design**, Somerset House, London **aged 13**. He took **botany** as his specialization and lectured on a new subject called **Art Botany**. He was awarded a **doctorate for his work by the university of Jena in 1850**.
- From 1850 his design work widened to include carpets, ceramics, furniture, glass, graphics, metalwork, including silver and electroplate, and textiles printed and woven. He claimed to have designed 'as much as any man' at the International Exhibition London 1862.
- As early as 1865 the Building News reported that in the early part of his career he had been active as a designer of wallpapers, textiles and carpets thus the most active revolutioniser in the decorative art of the day. He wrote several books on design and ornament, including *The Art of Decorative Design* (1862), *The Development of Ornamental Art in the International Exhibition* (1862), and *Principles of Design* (1873) which was addressed in the preface to 'working men'.
- In 1899 The Studio magazine found it was possible to quote this book 'page after page and not find a line, scarcely a word, that would not be endorsed by the most critical member of the Arts and Crafts Association today.' In effect Dresser set the agenda adopted by the Arts and Crafts movement at a later date.
- In 1873 he was requested by the American Government to write a report on the design of household goods. En route for Japan in 1876 he delivered a series of three lectures in the Philadelphia Museum and School of Industrial Art and supervised the manufacture of wallpapers to his design for Wilson Fennimore. He was commissioned by Messrs Tiffany of

New York to form a collection, whilst in Japan, of art objects both old and new that should illustrate the manufactures of that country.

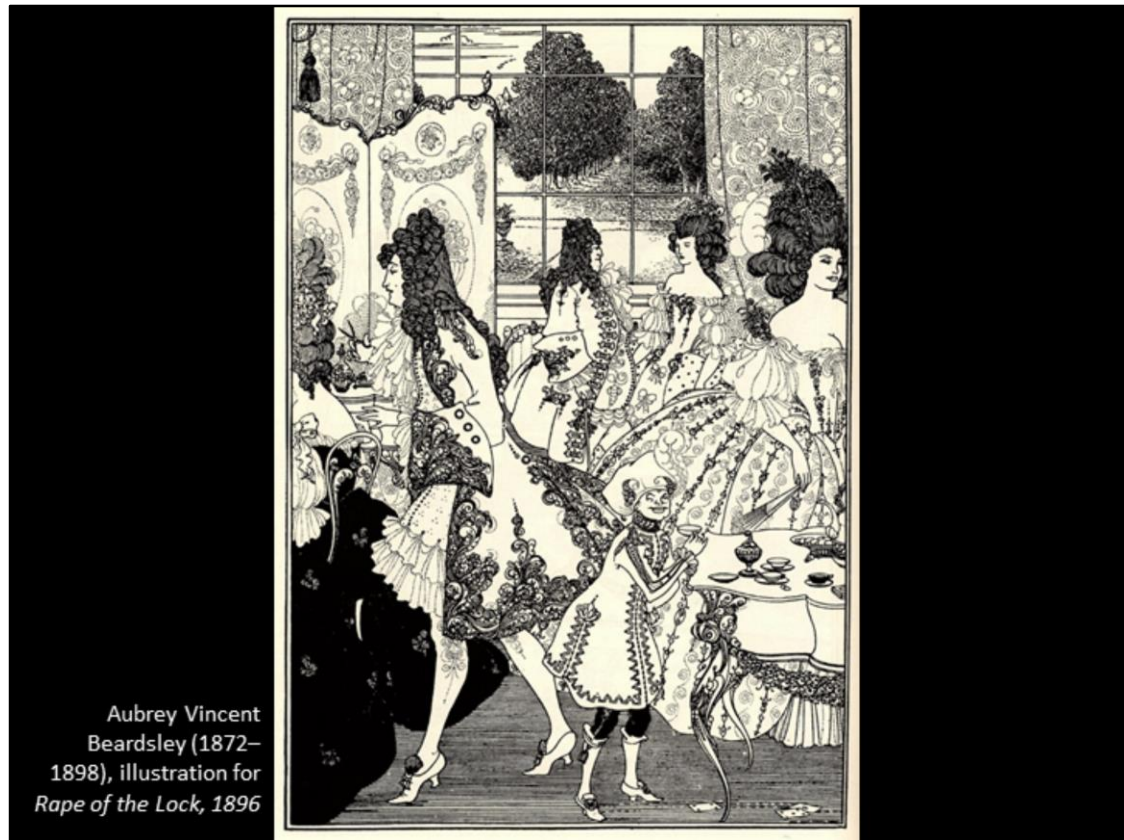
- In four months in 1876/1877 Dresser travelled about 2000 miles in Japan, recording his impressions in *Japan, its Architecture, Art and Art-Manufactures*. He represented the South Kensington Museum whilst in Japan, and was received at court by the Emperor, who ordered Dresser to be treated as a guest of the nation – all doors were open to him. He was requested by the Japanese Government to write a report on 'Trade with Europe'. His pioneering study of Japanese art is evident in much of his work which is considered typical of the Anglo-Japanese style.

Christopher Dresser

“Born in Glasgow, Scotland, to English parents in 1834, Dresser studied from the age of thirteen at the Government School of Design in London under the influence of leading design reformers such as **Richard Redgrave** (1804–1888), **Henry Cole** (1808–1882), **Owen Jones**, and **Matthew Digby Wyatt** (1820–1877). During his studies, Dresser was exposed to the **new scientific discipline of botany** and in 1856 contributed a botanical plate to Owen Jones' celebrated publication ***The Grammar of Ornament***. Continuing to focus on botany, Dresser lectured at the women's School of Design from 1854 and published papers and books on the subject. In 1859, he received a doctorate *in absentia* in the field from the University of Jena, Germany. He was elected a Fellow of the Edinburgh Botanical Society in 1860 and a Fellow of the Linnean Society a year later.” (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

References

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



Aubrey Vincent Beardsley (1872–1898), illustration for *Rape of the Lock*, 1896

The Rape of the Lock

- This was one of Beardsley's **last major illustration projects**. The poem is by **Alexandra Pope** (1688-1744) and it satirises a minor incident by comparing it to the world of the gods and in so doing satirises eighteenth century England. It is based on an **actual incident** and Pope **satirises** the story by structuring it as a classical epic and introducing sylphs, guardian spirits of virgins, and **gods and goddesses**. **Lord Petre** (the Baron in the poem), from an aristocratic, recusant **Catholic family**, **lusted after Arabella** (represented as **Belinda in the poem**) and **cut off a lock of her hair without permission**. This caused a **breach** between the two families. In Beardsley's illustration the Baron can be seen on the left of the picture snipping off a lock of Belinda's hair with a pair of scissors

Aubrey Vincent Beardsley

- Beardsley was an English illustrator and author. His drawings in black ink, influenced by the style of **Japanese woodcuts**, emphasized the **grotesque, the decadent, and the erotic**. He was a leading figure in the Aesthetic movement which also included Oscar Wilde and James A. McNeill Whistler. Beardsley's contribution to the development of the Art Nouveau and poster styles was significant, despite the brevity of his career before his early death from

tuberculosis.

- In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde wrote, 'All art is quite useless'. In this one sentence, Wilde encapsulates the **complete principles of the Aesthetic Movement** popular in Victorian England. That is to say, real art takes **no part in moulding the social or moral identities** of society, nor should it. **Art should be beautiful** and please its observer, but to imply further-reaching influence would be a mistake. The explosion of aesthetic philosophy in *fin-de-siècle* English society, as exemplified by Oscar Wilde, was not confined to merely art, however. Rather, the proponents of this philosophy extended it to life itself. Here, **aestheticism advocated whatever behaviour was likely to maximize the beauty and happiness in one's life**, in the tradition of hedonism. To the aesthete, the ideal life mimics art; it is beautiful, but quite useless beyond its beauty, concerned only with the individual living it.
- At the end of the century there was a **wave of pessimism**. We see this in *The Importance of Being Ernest* (Oscar Wilde) :
 - Algernon: I hope tomorrow will be a fine day, Lane.
 - Lane: It never is, sir.
 - Algernon: Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.
 - Lane: I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.
- The works of the Decadents and the Aesthetes contain the hallmarks typical of *fin de siècle* art. Holbrook Jackson's *The Eighteen Nineties* describes the characteristics of **English decadence** which are: perversity, artificiality, egoism, and curiosity.
 - **Perversity**: a concern for the perverse, unclean, and unnatural. Romanticism encouraged audiences to view physical traits as indicative of one's inner self but the *fin de siècle* artists accepted beauty as the basis of life and so valued that which was **not conventionally beautiful**.
 - **Artificiality**: this belief in beauty in the abject leads to the obsession with artifice and symbolism, as artists rejected ineffable ideas of beauty in favour of the **abstract**. Through **symbolism**, aesthetes could evoke sentiments and ideas in their audience without relying on an infallible general understanding of the world.
 - **Egoism**: a term similar to that of ego-mania meaning **disproportionate attention placed on one's own endeavours**. This can result in a type of alienation and anguish, as in Baudelaire's case, and demonstrates how aesthetic artists chose cityscapes over country as a result of their aversion to the natural.
 - **Curiosity** is identifiable through diabolism and the **exploration of the evil or immoral**, focusing on the **morbid and macabre**, but without imposing

any moral lessons on the audience.

- The term '**decadence**' was adopted by **British Society** in preference to the **French term 'Symbolism'** even though they **embraced the same tenets**. Beardsley's decadence merges with rejection of contemporary society by Rossetti, Morris, Leighton and others but is more extreme. The overtones of 'decadence' **merge into Max Nordau's pseudo-scientific idea of 'degeneration'** and both signal the end of an era and the beginning of modern art.

References

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

See <http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-1/duggan/>

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fin_de_si%C3%A8cle



William Morris, 'Trellis' woodblock printed wallpaper, 1864, Victoria & Albert Museum

- **Arts & Crafts**
- Arts and Crafts was more than a design idea, it was a political movement to bring craftsmanship and beauty back into the lives of ordinary people.
- This is the **first wallpaper** that **William Morris** designed so it may not be familiar. The first wallpaper he **issued** in 1864 was called '**Daisy**'.
- Morris wanted to create art for everyone but insisted that everything should be **handmade** by craftsmen using ancient skills. This meant that they were **expensive** and so in his time they were not widely used and some influential figures, such as **Oscar Wilde**, did not like them. However, they had a long-lasting effect on wallpaper design and design in general.
- Even though it was expensive **Morris**, as a wealthy person, always regarded **wallpaper** as '**makeshift**' decoration and **preferred woven textile hangings** for his own home.
- The Arts & Crafts Movement became internationally influential.



Philip Wilson Steer, *Girls Running, Walberswick Pier*, 1888–94, Tate Britain

- **English Impressionism**
- The name suggests this art was derived from French Impressionist movement but it is best described as Post-Impressionism as the artist had new ideas.
- **Steer's** painting at **Walberswick** are some of the most **authentic Impressionist** style paintings produced in Britain. Steer has reworked the **dashed, broken surface** of the painting to convey a sense of **energy and dynamism**. The girls were originally **holding hands** as you can see from their shadow. The was seen as leading edge, avant garde art. Vitriolic **critics** branded the works '**crudely horrid**', an 'aggressive affectation' or plain '**evil**' and almost nobody wanted to buy them. Lucien **Pissarro** wrote to his father, Camille,
'Here is a real artist! However, he has had doubts because the others laugh at him and no one understands him.'
- Post-dated 1894, the picture has been reworked. The scene was done from **memory** not painted on the spot. Steer was the **first** living artist to be given a **solo exhibition** at the **Tate** gallery. Steer was going **beyond** the **Impressionists** representation of the natural word and combining **Symbolism** and **Realism**. The Symbolists were concerned with the **inner meaning** and the Realists with the **strict appearance** of the world. Steer invokes the appearance of the holiday scene but

works the paint surface to the extent that we are drawn to consider deeper meanings.

Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942)

- British landscape painter, occasional portraits and figure studies. Leading figure in the English Impressionist movement.
- Born in Birkenhead son of a portrait painter.
- Studied at Gloucester School of Art then South Kensington. Rejected by the Royal Academy, studied in Paris from 1882-4.
- Founder of the new English Art Club 1886.
- Influenced by Whistler, Gainsborough, Constable and Turner.
- His self-portrait is in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.



Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, 1885, Plymouth Art Gallery

- Forbes was born in Dublin and studied at Lambeth School of Art and the Royal Academy School. He travelled to Paris and was influenced by *en plein air* painting and by the landscapes of **Jules Bastien-Lepage**.
- Forbes lived in artistic colonies in Brittany and settled in **Newlyn in 1884**. Other artists were attracted to Newlyn, partly because of his reputation and his charismatic character but as the number of artists in Newlyn dwindled, Stanhope and his wife Elizabeth Forbes founded their **School of Painting in 1899**. This was to attract a whole new generation of artists to the area.
- This ambitious canvas, *A Fish Sale on a Cornish Beach*, brought the group to the attention of critics and audiences when exhibited to acclaim at the Royal Academy in 1885.
- Forbes painted the picture **entirely outside over a period of a year** overcoming the problems of **rain, wind, fainting models and rotting fish**. He could paint only when the tide was out and the sky grey.
- It depicts a beach auction of the fish that have just been caught. The auctioneer or 'jowster' would sell the catch to the highest bidder.
- The Newlyn School painters were **not trying to improve the conditions** for the fishermen

and their families. Forbes described Newlyn as a '**dirty hole**' and the artists complained of the continual smell of rotting fish and that the locals charged twice as much as the fishermen and their families in France. They went because of the social activity within the artists' community, it was a cheap place to live and because of the dream of having a painting accepted by the Royal Academy. Harold and Laura Knight ordered 'furniture, linen and silver' from the Harrods catalogue' when they first arrived (Barbara Morden, *Laura Knight: A Life*).

Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947)

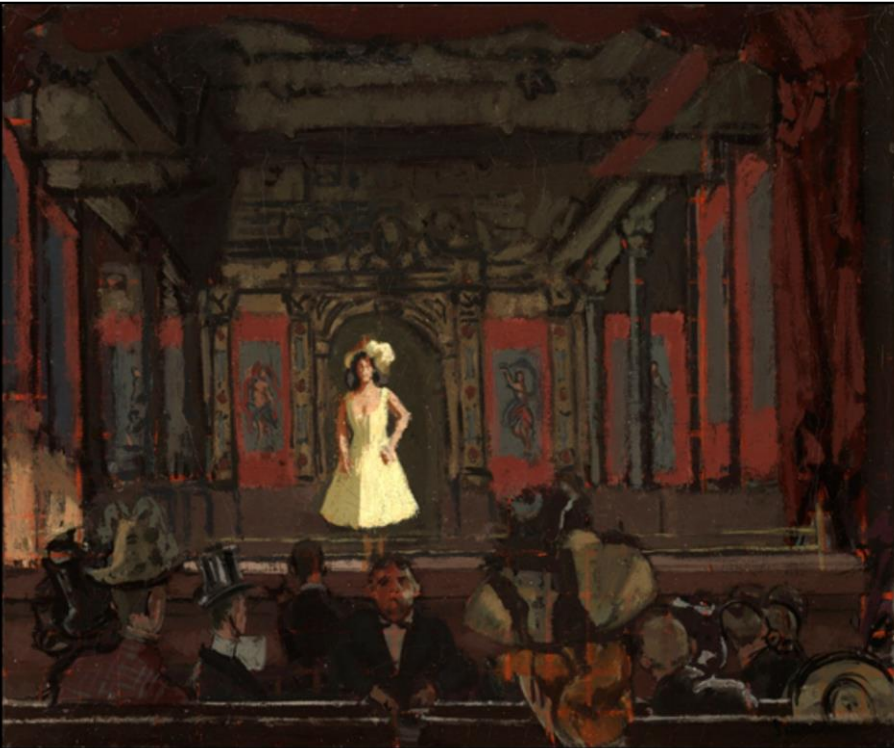
- Founded by Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), '**father of the Newlyn School**'. Forbes became an Associate of the Royal Academy in 1892 and a Royal Academician in 1910.
- Forbes was the son of a French woman and an English railway manager and was educated at Dulwich College and then the Royal Academy School. His uncle was a well-known art collector, James Forbes.
- He married the Canadian artist **Elizabeth Armstrong** (1859-1912) in Newlyn in 1889 and they founded the Newlyn School. She died of cancer when she was only 52 and he remarried a friend and former student called Maude ('Maudie ') Clayton Palmer (1880-1952) in 1915. His son died in WWI and he died in Newlyn, aged 89.
- Forbes and Henry Herbert La Thangue (1859-1929) went to **Cancalle, Brittany** and painted *en plein air*, like Jules Bastien-Lepage, which became a technique that Forbes used throughout his career.
- The Newlyn School grew to 50 artists including **Frank Bramley**, **Henry Scott Tuke**, his wife Elizabeth Forbes, Harold and **Laura Knight** (1877-1970) and Alfred Munnings.

Notes

- Newlyn is a fishing village near Penzance, Cornwall.
- The founding of the School was similar to the founding of the Barbizon School (1830-1870, near the Forest of Fontainebleau).
- Initially Forbes started this painting with a huge canvas 275 x 165 cm but later had to change to a large but more manageable 150 x 120 cm canvas.

The Barbizon School

- Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, and Charles-François Daubigny were inspired by John Constable in 1824 to paint direct from nature and they founded the Barbizon School. It later attracted Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Alfred Sisley.



Walter Richard Sickert, *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties, Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c.1902-3, Yale University Art Gallery

Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942), *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties, Second Turn of Katie Lawrence*, c.1902-3, Yale University Art Gallery

- Sickert was **one of the most influential British artists of the 20th century**. He is often called a **painter's painter**, appealing primarily to artists working in the figurative tradition; there are few British figurative painters of the 20th century whose development can be adequately discussed without reference to Sickert's subject-matter or innovative techniques. He had a direct influence on the **Camden Town Group** and the **Euston Road School**. Sickert's active career as an artist lasted for nearly 60 years and his output was vast. He may be seen as the last of the Victorian painters and as a major innovator and precursor of international developments in later 20th-century art.
- Sickert's music hall paintings were **inspired** by those of his friend **Edgar Degas**. In Paris, Degas and Edouard Manet's pictures of café concerts were greeted with interest and even respected.
- The painting technique used was derived from that used by Whistler and during the 1880s Sickert had been Whistler's studio assistant. The shallow foreground and lack of background recession are typical of Whistler, for example, *Arrangement in Grey and Black No.1, Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, 1871.

- By 1887 he had fixed upon the theme which would occupy him intermittently for most of his career, the world of the **British music hall**, exhibiting his first painting of this subject, *Le Mammoth Comique*, at the Society of British Artists. A natural platform for his work at this time was the recently formed New English Art Club, which Sickert joined that year. His arrival crystallised a split within the group between the more conservative artists and those who looked to the example of **French impressionism**.
- In Britain Sickert faced intense critical hostility when he showed *Gatti's Hungerford Palace of Varieties: Second Turn of Miss Katie Lawrence, 1887–8* (believed destroyed, possibly similar to the painting above) at the New English Art Club in **April 1888**. It represented '**the lowest degradation of which the art of painting is capable**', according to the *Builder*, while the *Artist* believed it symptomatic of 'the **aggressive squalor** that pervades to a greater or lesser extent the whole of modern existence.' Even other members of the New English Art Club were shocked, and the artist **Stanhope Forbes** angrily scorned the picture as '**tawdry, vulgar and the sentiment of the lowest music hall**'.

Notes

- 'No painter before Sickert had dared to consider the music hall as a fitting subject for art, and his production of such pictures was considered wilful and provocative. In Britain the music hall held distinct connotations of immorality. Many of the acts, Minnie Cunningham included, dealt in the currency of ribald, vulgar or suggestive humour, and it was just this waywardness that partly made the music hall so popular. But the halls themselves were considered dens of dissolution by the moral majority. Alcohol was served throughout performances, and volatile audiences were encouraged to join in singing the often bawdy song choruses. Additionally, many of the halls were believed to be venues where prostitutes plied their trade. The Empire in Leicester Square was particularly notorious as a place where, away from the auditorium in its promenade area, clients could meet prostitutes.' (Tate website)

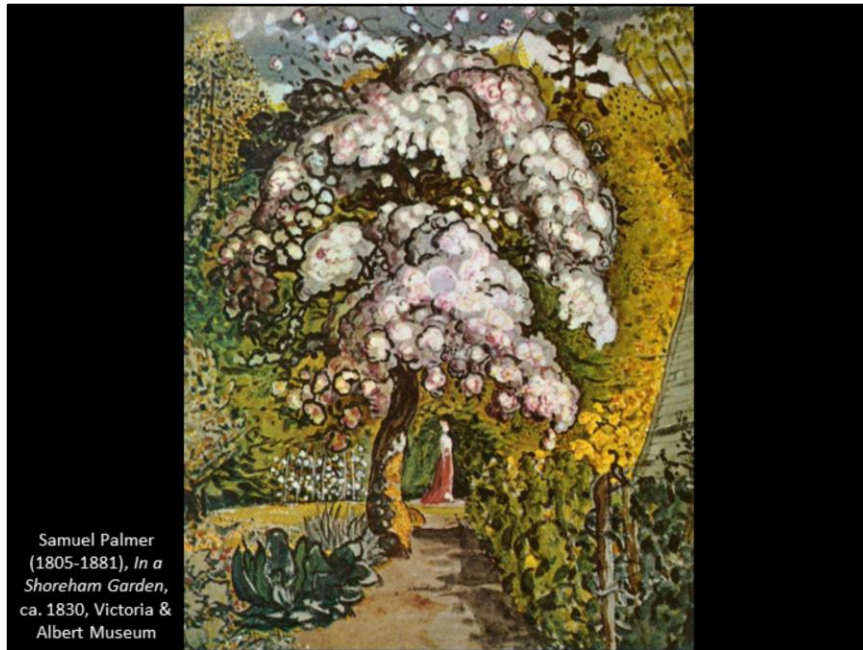
References

See <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/walter-richard-sickert-minnie-cunningham-r1139296>



NEXT:
THE PRE-RAPHAELITE
BROTHERHOOD

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Samuel Palmer (1805-1881), *In a Shoreham Garden*, ca. 1830, Victoria & Albert Museum

This artist had an exhibition at the British Museum to mark the 200th anniversary of his birth. The garden is in a town the artist lived in near Sevenoaks, Kent. Does anyone know which town and why the artist went there?



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up*, 1838, 1839, National Gallery

The second one is also a very well known painting and again if you know the artist and title try to work out the approximate date.



William Maw Egley, *Omnibus Life in London*, 1859, Tate Britain

- Modern life subjects were made popular by William Frith and others during the 1850s.
- It may be inspired by Honore Daumier's pictures of the cramped interior of railway carriages or Charles Rossiter's *To Brighton and back for 3s 6d* (Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery) painted the same year.
- The horse-drawn omnibus was introduced in 1829 and one observer commented that, 'Among the middle classes of London the omnibus stands immediately after air, tea, and flannel, in the list of the necessities of life...the Londoner cannot get on without it.' (M.E. Purgini in *Victorian Days and Ways*, London 1936).
- The National Magazine, thought the work a 'considerable advance on his previous productions' but not a 'genuinely artistic work' as it lacked sweetness of colour and softness of execution. It described the young lady with a veil as angelic and like the expression of the young woman opposite as if to say 'You will not always be such a sylph, my dear'. The young woman getting on the bus is clearly disappointed as she sees the pretty sylph as she expected to have an effect on the young men in the omnibus.
- Egley painted a genuine interior in a coachbuilder's yard and a group of sitters posed on boxes and planks in his back garden. The exterior is Westbourne Grove near where he lived.
- The subject enabled him to paint every class of society from the old country woman with her piles of baggage to the city clerk with his cane. The old woman stares sympathetically at the young women who averts her gaze in a gesture of gentility. The mother was modelled by Egley's wife and the daughter by a twelve-year old girl called Susannah Rix.

- Egley worked in the painting for 44 days and sold it for £52 10s to William Jennings.
- It was described by the *Illustrated London News* as follows: 'a droll interior, the stern and trying incidents of which will be recognized by thousands of weary wayfarers through the streets of London.'
- The above is based on the Tate Britain summary.

William Maw Egley (1826-1916)

- Egley (pronounced 'egg-ley').
- Son of a miniaturist, early works were based on literary subjects. Later influenced by Frith.
- Most of his paintings were 'feel good' or humorous rural or city scenes.
- Often criticized for his hard, clumsy style.
- From the 1860s he produced a large number of saleable romanticised 18th-century subjects.



Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893), *Work* (1852-1865), Manchester Art Gallery

They are getting harder. Can you guess what is being shown and why?



William Dyce (1806-1864), *Pegwell Bay, Kent – a Recollection of October 5th 1858, 1858-60*. Tate Britain

This is one of the paintings in Tate Britain so you might know it. The artist is not very well known. It shows the artist's family gathering shells, a popular Victorian activity but what scientific event does this painting celebrate?