

A STROLL THROUGH TATE BRITAIN



This two-hour talk is part of a series of twenty talks on the works of art displayed in Tate Britain, London, in June 2017.

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A STROLL THROUGH TATE BRITAIN

1. The Pre-Raphaelites, 1840-1860
2. **The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1890**
3. Late Victorians, 1890-1900
4. The Edwardians, 1890-1910
5. The Great War and After, 1910-1930
6. The Interwar Years, 1930s
7. World War II and After, 1940-1960
8. Pop Art & Beyond, 1960-1980
9. Postmodern Art, 1980-2000
10. The Turner Prize and Summary



West galleries are 1540, 1650, 1730, 1760, 1780, 1810, 1840, 1890, 1900, 1910

East galleries are 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

Turner Wing includes Turner, Constable, Blake and Pre-Raphaelite drawings

Agenda

1. A History of the Tate, discussing some of the works donated by Henry Tate and others.
2. From Absolute Monarch to Civil War, 1540-1650
3. From Commonwealth to the Start of the Georgian Period, 1650-1730
4. The Georgian Period, 1730-1780
5. Revolutionary Times, 1780-1810
6. Regency to Victorian, 1810-1840
7. William Blake (1757-1827) and his Influence
8. J. M. W. Turner (1775-1851)
9. John Constable (1776-1837)
10. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1840-1860
11. The Aesthetic Movement, 1860-1880
12. The Late Victorians, 1880-1900

13. The Edwardians, 1900-1910
14. The Great War and its Aftermath, 1910-1930
15. The Interwar Years, 1930s
16. World War II and After, 1940-1960
17. Pop Art and Beyond, 1960-1980
18. Art in a Postmodern World, 1980-2000
19. The Turner Prize
20. Summary

THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT: 1860-1890

- Art Movements
 - Aestheticism or 'Art for Art's Sake' (1870s)
 - Arts and Crafts (1880s)
 - English Impressionism (1880s)
 - Decadence (1890s)



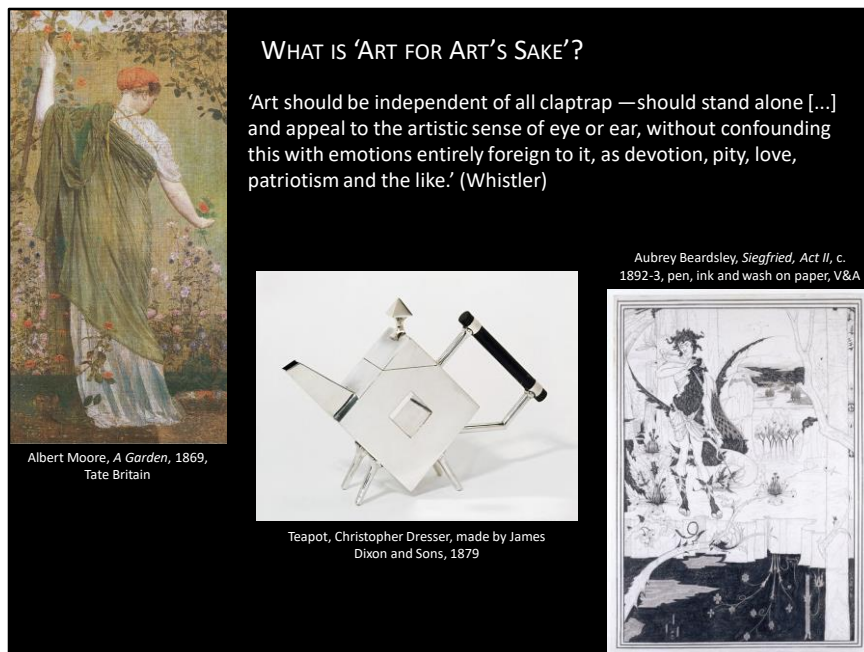
Art Movements

- **Aestheticism also known as 'art for art's sake'** - James McNeill Whistler, Albert Moore, Frederic Leighton, Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
- **Arts & Crafts** - William Morris, Augustus Pugin, John Ruskin. Anti-industrial, craft-based, called for social reform.
- **English Impressionism** – Whistler's pupils Walter Richard Sickert (1860-1942) and Wilson Steer developed a form of English Impressionism which was promoted by the New English Art Club founded in 1886. In 1889 Sickert and Steer organised the exhibition London Impressionists. Meanwhile in 1885 John Singer Sargent arrived from France and settled in London. Influenced by the French artist Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884, aged 36).
- **Decadence** - Aubrey Beardsley, Simeon Solomon and Oscar Wilde. A form of symbolism which emphasized the spiritual, the morbid and the erotic. Decadents were inspired partly by a disgust at the corruption and rampant materialism of the modern world and partly by a related desire to escape it into realms of the aesthetic, fantastic, erotic or religious.

References

<https://www.quora.com/Was-Britain-as-powerful-in-the-19th-century-as-the-USA-is->

[today/answer/Mark-Jeffrey-15?srid=nUpE](https://www.facebook.com/Mark-Jeffrey-15?srid=nUpE)



Albert Moore, *A Garden*, 1869, Tate Britain

Teapot, Christopher Dresser, made by James Dixon and Sons, 1879

Aubrey Beardsley, *Siegfried, Act II*, c. 1892-3, pen, ink and wash on paper, V&A

What is the Aesthetic Movement?

- **The Aesthetic Movement** (also known as 'Art for Art's Sake', or Aestheticism or the Cult of Beauty) was not a group of artists like the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but more a **shared view** of the **role of art** in society. No longer should artists try to instruct by painting moral lessons but it was their job to produce beautiful things. Their beauty was their sole justification. It was also known as the 'art for art's sake' movement. It became very fashionable during the 1870s and 80s and was satirized by the use of stereotypes such as fey men, masculine women, the love of blue china vases and peacock feathers. **It was an important art movement but it is one that few have heard of.** One of its leading proponents, Albert Moore, is hardly known and his work, when seen, is often dismissed as sexist and trite. It was a **rejection** of painting as a way to convey a **moral message** or any **narrative meaning**. This left the aim of artists as the **creation of beauty**. Artists' aim was to create beautiful objects with no narrative or moral meaning.
- **Pierre Jules Théophile Gautier** (1811–1872) was the **first** to adopt the **phrase as a**

slogan. Gautier was not, however, the first to write those words: they appear in the works of **Victor Cousin**, Benjamin Constant, and Edgar Allan Poe.

- It was **in defiance of John Ruskin** and later socialist realism painters who thought the value of art was to serve a moral or didactic purpose.
- The phrase **first appeared in England** in two works of **1868** – **Walter Pater's** review of William Morris's poetry in the *Westminster Review* and in *William Blake* by **Algernon Charles Swinburne**.

Aestheticism

- The literary roots of aestheticism can be traced back to the term 'aesthetics', defined by Alexander Gottlieb **Baumgarten** in 1735 and to French Romanticism. Its French origins are generally traced to Victor Cousin's 1818 Sorbonne lecture series but the first use of the term "l'art pour l'art" ('art for art's sake') was by **Théophile Gautier** in 1833.
- **Samuel Taylor Coleridge** introduced the word aesthetic in 1821 but it was still relatively unknown in 1846. **John Ruskin objected** to the term as it implied beauty is in some way sensual. Ruskin regarded beauty as moral not sensual or intellectual and disliked the term 'aesthetic' as it implies sensual so he coined the term Theoretic. The Theoretic faculty enables a deeper transcendental reality to be seen that is deeper than everyday reality and is invoked by beautiful objects. Ruskin also thought that art must serve a moral purpose.

The Modern Rejection of Beauty

- **'Art for art's sake' was rejected by Marxist art historians in the 1970s as they thought art always had a political role.** They rejected the idealist aesthetics of beauty and art for art's sake was considered reactionary (i.e. a return to a previous state) in art and political terms. **Ironically, one hundred years previously the terms were considered politically radical as they rejected the need for a moral purpose.**
- The term was associated with **art's autonomy** and freedom from any ideology. It was believed that art does not need to justify itself by making a moral point or telling a story, its sole aim is the creation of beauty, which itself is determined by the artist.
- James McNeill Whistler wrote,
 - *'Art should be independent of all claptrap — should stand alone [...] and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism and the like.'* The term aesthetics became widely used in the 1860s and 70s and signalled a new way of looking at art.

Aestheticism and Decorative Art

- Such art is complete in itself (known as **autotelic**) as it does not refer to an

external story. For this reason **fine art merges with decorative art** and design (think about decorative art such as wallpaper design to avoid any confusion with utility and functionality).

- In the 1860s it was associated with a collaboration between fine art and design by Whistler and the architect E. W. Godwin (1833-1886) who was influenced by Ruskin and the Gothic, then Japanese art and Whistler. Godwin influenced the Arts and Crafts Movement.
- In the 1870s it was associated with **Whistler, Leighton, Albert Moore and Burne-Jones** and the combination of colour, harmony and mood.
- The opening of the **Grosvenor Gallery in 1877** gave it a glamorous showcase and the attack by John Ruskin on Whistler's work also gave it publicity.
- Aesthetic painting and decoration became **fashionable** among the wealthy and intellectuals.
- It was associated with '**The House Beautiful**' and interior decoration and artists such as **William Morris, Walter Crane, Christopher Dresser** and most famously by **Oscar Wilde**.

Aestheticism and Decadence

- In the 1880s and 90s it was **satirized** by Gilbert and Sullivan's opera ***Patience*** and by George du Maurier in *Punch*.
- It entered its final **Decadent stage** and the work of **Aubrey Beardsley**.
- Note that **Decadent** art (a word known from the 16th century meaning a decay in standards and morals and applied to the Aesthetic Movement by hostile critics), **Degenerate** art (a term that was related to Darwin's theory of evolution and used by Max Nordau in his 1892 book *Degeneracy*) and **Fin-de-Siècle** art and art of the **Naughty Nineties** are often used interchangeably but can be distinguished. The French expression the ***Belle Époque*** is from 1871 to 1914 and refers to a 'golden age' of optimism, peace and new scientific discoveries. Within this optimism in England there was a strong feeling that the good times could not last and that society must guard against falling standards. Physical and mental fitness were linked and became part of the cultural reaction.

Notes

Albert Moore (1841-1893)

- In the late 1860s Albert Moore was one of the first artists to paint without a subject. His paintings were decorative and subtly coloured. The poet Algernon Charles **Swinburne** (1837-1909, nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature every year from 1903 to 1907 and 1909) said such paintings are the '**worship of things formally beautiful ... their reason for being is simply to be**'.

Christopher Dresser (1834-1904)

- Known as the 'father of industrial design' as he designed for the mass market. His

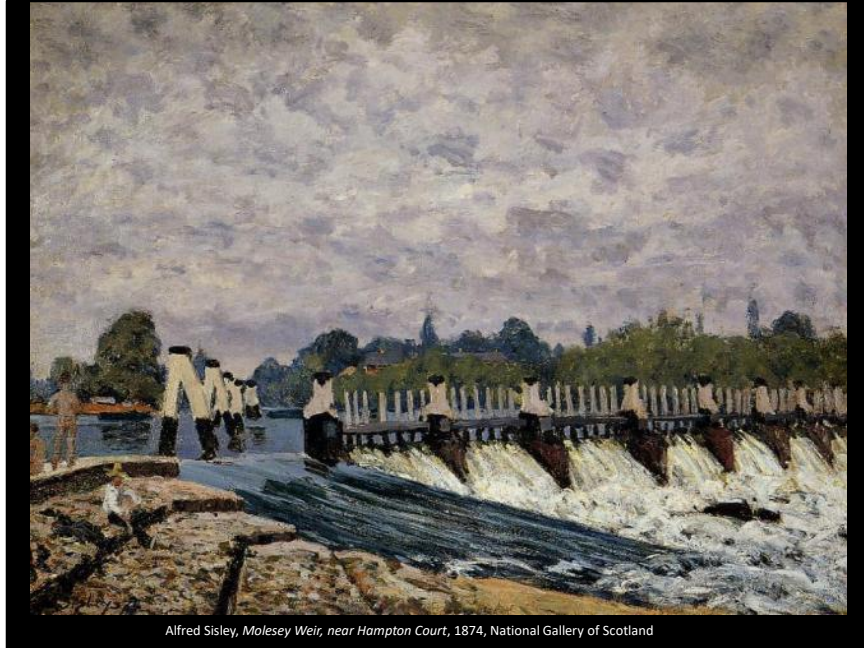
ceramics and glass are often derived from organic forms but his metal objects are fully abstract. In the catalogue it was described as 'English Japanese'. The surfaces were often left plain and the designs were angular rather than organic. His designs were often considered so ahead of their time they were not put into production.

Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898, died aged 25 of TB)

- This drawing is an illustration relating to Act II of Richard Wagner's opera Siegfried. It was published in the first issue of the art magazine *The Studio* in April 1893. It is very finely detailed and has echoes of Andrea Mantegna and other Renaissance artists and Edward Burne-Jones. Burne-Jones was an important mentor and hung it in his drawing room alongside prints by Albrecht Dürer.

Historical Background to Art for Art's Sake

- George Sand in 1872 thought *L'art pour l'art* was an empty phrase as the artist had a duty to find a message and convey it to as many people as possible. Sand's real name was Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin, known as 'Aurore', and she married 'Baron' Casimir Dudevant. She was known as a feminist, for her affairs with artists and for wearing men's clothes for their convenience and for the access they gave to men-only establishments.
- Walter Benjamin discusses the slogan in his seminal 1936 essay "*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*" and describes it as part of the 'theology of art'. The final realisation of 'art for art's sake' he thinks is the gratification of the sense of perception changed by technology and he uses the link with fascism and Futurism (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti) as an example.



Alfred Sisley, *Molesey Weir, near Hampton Court*, 1874, National Gallery of Scotland

- Before considering **English Impressionism** we need to briefly consider the interaction between French and British artists during the Victorian period.

The history of nineteenth-century French art with respect to England

- The influence was two-way. French artists were inspired and influenced by the naturalistic approach of **John Constable** at the **1824** Paris Salon.
- From the 1840s onwards many **British artists** studied in the **ateliers** in Paris.
- In the spring of **1829**, **Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot** came to **Barbizon** to paint in the Forest of **Fontainebleau**. He returned to Barbizon in the autumn of 1830 and in the summer of 1831, where he made drawings and oil studies, from which he made a painting intended for the Salon of 1830; 'View of the Forest of Fontainebleau'. While there he met the members of the **Barbizon school**; Théodore Rousseau, Paul Huet, Constant Troyon, **Jean-François Millet**, and the young Charles-François Daubigny.
- During the Revolutions of **1848** artists gathered at **Barbizon** to follow **John Constable's** ideas, making nature the subject of their paintings. The French landscape became a major theme of the Barbizon painters. They were formed as a

reaction against Romanticism and it was part of the Realism art movement.

- During the late 1860s, the Barbizon painters attracted the attention of a **younger generation of French artists** studying in Paris. Several of those artists visited Fontainebleau Forest to paint the landscape, including **Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Alfred Sisley** and Frédéric Bazille. and it led in the 1870s to **Impressionism**.
- In **September 1870**, the **Franco-Prussian war** caused **Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro** and Charles-François Daubigny to flee to London.
- French Impressionists found it **hard to sell their paintings in France** and hoped they might sell to English industrialists.
- The dealer **Paul Durand-Ruel** held **10 exhibitions** in his gallery in New Bond Street **between 1870 and 1874** entitled 'Society of French Artists'. Durand-Ruel co-ordinated the careers of atheist republican Claude Monet, Jewish anarchist Camille Pissarro, curmudgeonly anti-Semite Edgar Degas and reactionary misogynist Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Durand-Ruel lost his wife and never remarried and brought up his five children alone. He came close to bankruptcy while supporting the Impressionists. Despite his belief that there was a market in London it was **slow to materialize** and the artists returned to France after the war. He continued to show French art in London and it was a favourite for young artists such as George Clausen. In the end they were saved not by English buyers but by **American buyers**, Durand-Ruel said, 'Without America,' he said, 'I would have been lost, ruined'.
- **In England, artists continued to paint in the Pre-Raphaelite style and new, young artists chose the style and it became an indicator of the 'avant garde' in London.** The term 'avant garde' is derived from a small group of troops that leads the main army and it has become used to describe the French artists that created new styles of painting in France. The exhibition at the Tate 2012-13 used the title *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Avant Garde* to emphasize the new view that the Pre-Raphaelites were innovative and revolutionary and created a style that led to change.
- The debate is whether it led to '**modern art**' which depends how you define the term. **At the beginning of the twentieth century art historians rejected all Victorian art as reactionary, sentimental, representational and old-fashioned** and their view was that modern art started with Manet and French Impressionism (although it is not clear that Manet was an Impressionist).
- In the last quarter of the twentieth century views have changed again and a more inclusive art historical analysis has seen the work of the Pre-Raphaelites as revolutionary in their time with symbolic references that predate Symbolism. This painting and other, such as Hunt's *Our English Coast*, show a clear recognition of the effects of light and the **colours of shadows** that is found, later, in the works of the Impressionists. The **Impressionists** were capturing a **fleeting view** of a scene

and as the light is changing all the time Monet often worked on multiple canvases. Brown captured the same moment but with the detail representing a **photographic snapshot** of the scene in high definition.

- The importance with which Impressionism is regarded today was far from inevitable at the time. Artists worked in many ways with different motives and there was **no clear school of Impressionism**.
- The first exhibition of 'impressionist' work **in France** was **not until April 1874** in Nadar's studio on the Boulevard-des-Capucines ('Street of Nasturtiums') **after** Durand-Ruel's 10 exhibitions in London. It was at the first exhibition that Monet showed *Impression, Sunrise* ('Impression: soleil levant') and the critic Louis Leroy satirized the exhibition with a review in the French equivalent of *Punch* (*Le Charivari*) entitled 'The Exhibition of the Impressionists'. There were eight exhibitions over the next 12 years (1874-1886).
- **Alfred Sisley** made an important **visit to London** in the **spring of 1874**. He stayed in the Castle Inn, East Molesey, one of the most famous inns on the Thames.
- In **1877** Sir Coutts-Lindsay opened the **Grosvenor Gallery** and in 1880 he had a small retrospective exhibition of the works of **Bastien-Lepage**. His prominence in Britain dates from this point.
- Whistler won the **Whistler v. Ruskin trial of 1878** but it was a pyrrhic victory and collectors remained cautious about buying his work.
- But by the **end of the 1870s** English artists were becoming exposed to trends in French art and **accurate reproductions** became possible for the first time.

Realism, Naturalism, Impressionism and Aestheticism

- It is difficult to separate these terms as there is a large overlap between them.
- **Realism** and naturalism in art are often used as synonyms but Realism was a school of French art exemplified by Gustave **Courbet** (1819–1877) and Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) which depicted the everyday lives of working people. Courbet said that 'painting is essentially a concrete art and can only consist in the representation of real and existing things'.
- **Naturalism** as a philosophy is based on natural laws and opposed to the spiritual or supernatural. In painting it is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions, implausible, exotic and supernatural elements.
- **Impressionists** painted realistic scenes of everyday modern life, generally outside (*en plein-air*). Monet, Sisley, Morisot, and Pissarro are the 'purest' Impressionists, in the sense their art was spontaneous and captured the scientifically accurate effects of sunlight and colour. Degas rejected much of this, as he believed in the primacy of drawing over colour and considered the practice of painting outdoors

unimportant. Renoir turned away from Impressionism for a time during the 1880s, and never entirely regained his commitment to its ideas. Édouard Manet, although regarded by the Impressionists as their leader, never abandoned his liberal use of black as a colour, and never participated in the Impressionist exhibitions.

- **Aestheticism** or the 'Cult of Beauty' or 'art for art's sake' was concerned with creating a beautiful effect rather than accurately representing the natural world. It supported the emphasis on aesthetic values more than social-political themes and was associated later with decadence and the Symbolists in France. British decadent writers and artists were influenced by the work of Walter Pater.



Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884), *Potato Gatherers (Saison d'octobre, récolte des pommes de terre)*, 1878, Melbourne National Gallery of Victoria
 Camille Pissarro, *Potato Harvest*, 1893, private collection
 Jean-François Millet, *The Potato Harvest*, 1855, 54 × 65.2 cm, The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

- Bastien-Lepage was an **influential French artist** who introduced the idea of **naturalism** in art, a style that emerged at the end of the Realist movement.
- This perhaps his most famous painting and he was awarded the **Legion de Honour**. The almost **overnight emergence** of Bastien-Lepage followers led one critic said, 'In each room, on each wall, everywhere you turn- Bastien-Lepage! Everywhere, constantly, and incessantly. **The whole world paints so much today like Mr. Bastien-Lepage that Mr. Bastien-Lepage seems to paint like the whole world.**' A friend wrote, 'his success at the last Salon has put him in the first rank of painters. **All Europe talks of him, Paris resounds with his name.**'
- However, he was **not universally admired** one critic described him as 'a **sly trickster who fakes naturalism** in order to please', and another critic 'Bastien-Lepage has neither ideas, nor style, nor a personal point of view; his vision is ordinary and myopic ... **there's art here but of the smallest kind.**'

- Bastien-Lepage started to be criticized for being **too photographic**. One wrote, 'the truth of art is not that of photography, as so many apparently believe these days.'
- He became extremely influential as he combined Jean-François **Millet's realism with Monet's Impressionism**. He was seen to overcome the weakness of Impressionism, that it often failed to transform impressions into something greater.
- For younger painters disenchanted with the excesses of both the conservative and the radical schools the '**juste milieu**' approach of Bastien-Lepage seemed the way forward.
- His botanical detail and luxuriant foliage were **influenced by the Pre-Raphaelite** painters. He was equally conscious of emerging currents in the **seventies** – **Impressionism, proto-Symbolism**, new strains of **Realism**, and the advancements in **photography** – that were vying for recognition with the prevailing Academic hierarchy.
- Roger Fry credited the **public's wide acceptance of Impressionism to Bastien-Lepage**. Today he is little known except as a stepping stone towards the widespread acceptance of Impressionism.
- This painting marked the emergence of a style called Naturalism that combined **scientific accuracy with moral truth**. It was also used as a **catch-all term** to mean **anything outside of Impressionism and Academic art**.

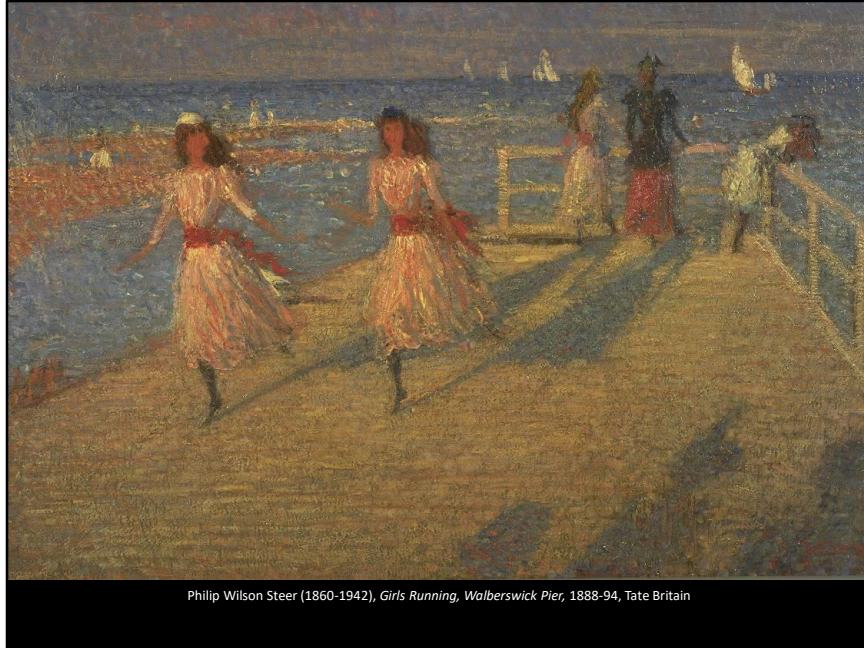
Notes

Jules Bastien-Lepage

- His father operated a small farm and vineyard and was an artist. Jules started as 'Jules Bastien' but soon added his mother's name 'Lepage' to improve his credibility.
- He obtained a degree and trained at the École des Beaux-Arts, whilst working as a postal clerk in Paris. In 1868 he entered the prestigious studio of Alexandre Cabanel. His first painting to be accepted by the French Salon was in 1870 but the Franco-Prussian war started and he joined up and was wounded in the chest. In 1875 he came second in the prestigious Prix de Rome competition to an older but less gifted artist, another student of Cabanel. Bastien-Lepage returned to his native village to reassess his art and from then on focused more on his rural scenes and portraits rather than academic works. He again exhibited at the Salon and in 1879 won the Legion of Honour for *Portrait of Mlle Sarah Bernhardt*.
- His strength was not in academic paintings but in paintings of the countryside. His farm labourers are not downtrodden, like Millet's, but resolute despite their weariness. His success enabled him to travel to England, Switzerland and Italy.
- He was **avidly collected** in England and America and had a **tremendous influence** which made Naturalism the dominant movement in the Paris Salon of the 1880s and 1890s.
- He visited London from 1880 to 1882 because of his disappointment at the

reception of *Joan of Arc* at the Paris Salon in 1880. In 1880 and 1883 he travelled to Italy.

- He became extremely ill and died of stomach cancer in 1884 **aged 36**.
- Zola called him 'the grandson of Millet and Courbet'.
- Bastien-Lepage became **famous** and won **many prizes** in France and England through the **public's love of his paintings**. The influential English art critic Roger Fry thought that **Monet's sincerity** and innocence were taken by the public as '**audacious humbug**' and that Bastien-Lepage, by compromising between the truth and accepted conventions brought the world round to seeing the countryside in Monet's way, so he was provided a **more acceptable route to Impressionism**.



Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), *Girls Running, Walberswick Pier*, 1888-94, Tate Britain

- At the beginning of the 1890s **Philip Wilson Steer** was the **leading follower of French Impressionism in England**. However, he has a Post-Impressionistic technique that produced a balance between the formal properties of the surface and the naturalistic representation of the subject. He had been influenced by **Whistler** and **Degas** but from about 1895 he began to reassess the work of the Old Masters such as **Constable and Turner** and he started to paint the English countryside.
- Steer made many visits to Walberswick in Suffolk (south of Lowestoft). *Girls Running, Walberswick Pier* was one of the most authentic Impressionist works in Britain and was regarded as either uncompromisingly avant garde and according to one critic 'evil'. The painting captures the warmth of late afternoon sunlight but unlike Monet there are darker elements. **At first** it appears **carefree** with two girls dancing down the pier in the sunshine but there is a closeness and a feeling of **claustrophobia** accentuated by the **three shadows** in the foreground. The girls **hold hands** in the shadow but they have parted perhaps signifying a friendship breaking apart. The long shadows at the end of the day suggest **night falling and**

death but the flat perspective and the **heavily worked paint surface** bring us back from meaning to seeing paint on a flat surface. The painting balances precariously between **abstract pattern and profound meaning**.

- In 1927 he began to **lose his sight in one eye** and started to paint almost exclusively in watercolour with a looser style sometimes verging on total abstraction. He continued **to teach at the Slade until 1930**.
- Other artists who painted in the Impressionist style include **John Singer Sargent** (1856-1925) with *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* (1885-6) and *Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood*, ? (1885), George Clausen and Walter Sickert.
- In **1886 the New English Art Club** was founded by a group of about 50 young British artists many of whom had studied in **Paris** and at the **Slade School of Art**. It was set up by **15 founding members**, sought to establish an **exhibiting society** along French lines and all the artists were influenced by **Jules Bastien-Lepage** and the **Barbizon School (1830-1870)**. The NEAC decided to mount an exhibition **opposite the Royal Academy** in Piccadilly. The members included:
 - **Philip Wilson Steer** (the leading English Impressionist),
 - **John Singer Sargent** (the leading society portraitist),
 - **George Clausen** (the leading landscape painter),
 - **Stanhope Alexander Forbes** (the founder of the Newlyn School),
 - **Frank Bramley** (the leading realist painter),
 - **Henry Scott Tuke** (painter of maritime scenes and naked young men),
 - **Laura Knight** (the first woman to become an Academician),
 - **The Glasgow School**, including **Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh** and her husband **Charles Rennie Mackintosh**, **Bessie MacNicol**, **John Lavery** and **James Guthrie**,
 - **Walter Sickert** and **Augustus John**, **Wyndham Lewis** and **Lucien Pissarro** of the **Camden Town Group**.

Notes

Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942)

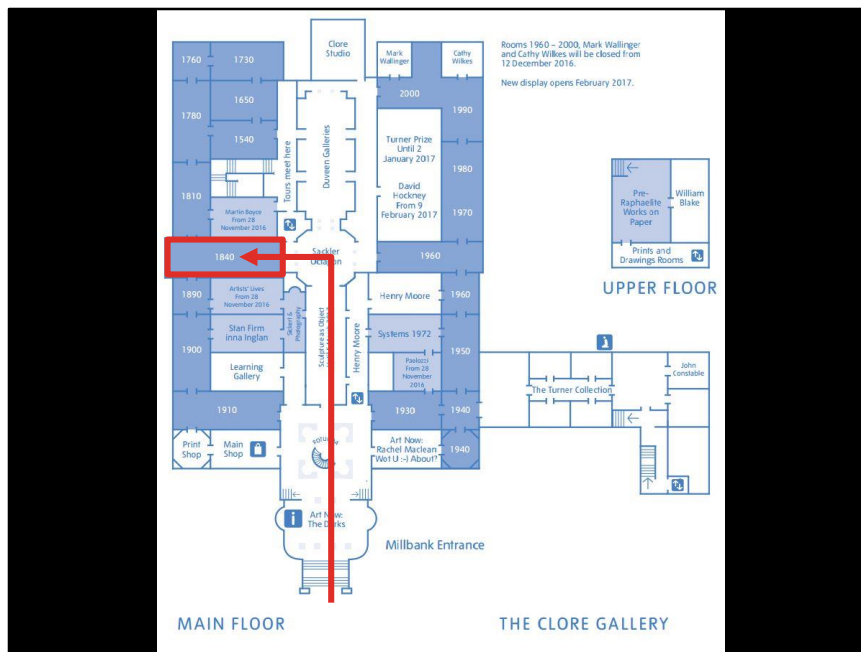
- British **landscape and portrait painter** and **leader of the Impressionist movement in England**.
- He was born in Liverpool, the son of a portrait painter. From 1880-1 he studied at the South Kensington Drawing School. He was rejected by the Royal Academy and went to Paris to study at **Académie Julian**, and then in the École des Beaux Arts under Cabanel.
- Between 1883 and 1885 he exhibited at the Royal Academy and in 1886 became a **founder of the New English Art Club**.
- In 1887 he spent some time at the **Etaples art colony in Northern France** and later painted a number of works at **Walberswick**.
- He was influenced by Whistler, Boucher, Gainsborough, Constable and Turner.
- He was a WWI painter of Royal Navy scenes. His self-portrait is in the Uffizi Gallery,

Florence.

References

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

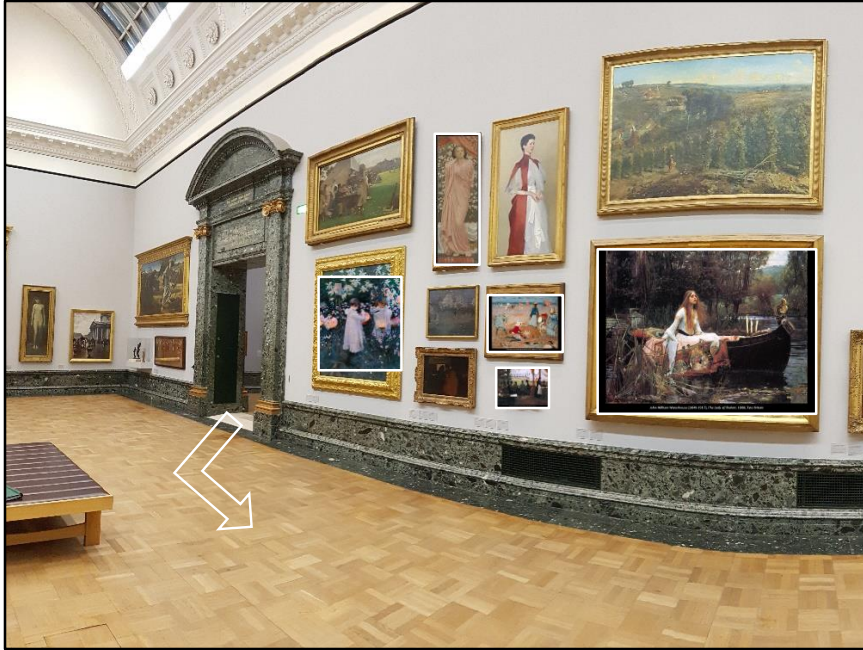
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/steer-girls-running-walberswick-pier-n06008>



1840 Gallery, Works from 1860-1890

- **Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'Lieder ohne Worte', exhibited 1861**
- Joanna Mary Wells, 'Gretchen', 1861
- **George Elgar Hicks, 'Woman's Mission: Comfort of Old Age', 1862**
- Walter Greaves, 'Hammersmith Bridge on Boat-race Day', c.1862
- **George Elgar Hicks, 'Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood', 1863**
- **James Abbott McNeill Whistler, 'Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl', 1864**
- John Brett, 'Lady with a Dove (Madame Loeser)', 1864
- John Frederick Lewis, 'Study for 'The Courtyard of the Coptic Patriarch's House in Cairo'', c.1864
- **Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'Beata Beatrix', c.1864-70**
- **Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 'The Beloved ('The Bride')', 1865-6**
- **Simeon Solomon, 'A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies', 1870**
- **Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'The Boyhood of Raleigh', 1870**
- Alphonse Legros, 'Rehearsing the Service', c.1870
- Copyright restrictions Sir John Everett Millais, Bt, 'Flowing to the River', 1871
- George Mason, 'The Harvest Moon', exhibited 1872
- Cecil Gordon Lawson, 'The Hop-Gardens of England', 1874

- **James Tissot, 'The Ball on Shipboard', c.1874**
- Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt, 'Frieze of Eight Women Gathering Apples', 1876
- **John William Inchbold, 'Gordale Scar, Yorkshire', exhibited 1876**
- **Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'An Athlete Wrestling with a Python', 1877**
- **John Robertson Reid, 'A Country Cricket Match', 1878**
- **Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt, 'The Golden Stairs', 1880**
- **George Frederic Watts, 'Psyche', 1880**
- **Albert Moore, 'Blossoms', 1881**
- Sir Alfred Gilbert, 'Perseus Arming', 1881–3
- Amelia Robertson Hill, 'Percy Bysshe Shelley', 1882
- **William McTaggart, 'The Emigrants', 1883–9**
- **John Singer Sargent, 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose' 1885–6**
- George Frederic Watts and assistants, 'Hope', 1886
- John Singer Sargent, 'Portrait of Mrs Robert Harrison', 1886
- Frederic, Lord Leighton, 'Needless Alarms', 1886
- **Sir William Quiller Orchardson, 'The First Cloud', 1887**
- Philip Wilson Steer, 'The Swiss Alps at the Earl's Court Exhibition', 1887
- William Logsdail, 'St Martin-in-the-Fields', 1888
- Sir John Lavery, 'The Glasgow Exhibition, 1888', 1888
- Sir William Blake Richmond, 'Portrait of Mrs Ernest Moon', 1888
- **Philip Wilson Steer, 'Boulogne Sands', 1888–91**
- **Stanhope Alexander Forbes, 'The Health of the Bride', 1889**
- **John William Waterhouse, 'Saint Eulalia', exhibited 1885**
- Frank Huddleston Potter, 'A Music Lesson', 1887
- **Atkinson Grimshaw, 'Liverpool Quay by Moonlight', 1887**
- Henry Alfred Pegram, 'Ignis Fatuus', 1889
- **Sir George Clausen, 'The Girl at the Gate', 1889**
- Walter Richard Sickert, 'Café des Tribunaux, Dieppe', c.1890
- Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Bt, 'Vespertina Quies', 1893
- Matthew Ridley Corbet, 'Val d'Arno: Evening', exhibited 1901



1. John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*, 1885-6
2. Albert Moore (1841-1893), *Blossoms* 1881, 147.3 x 46.4 cm
3. Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), *Boulogne Sands*, 1888-91, 61 x 76.5 cm
4. John Lavery (1856-1941), *The Glasgow Exhibition, 1888*, 1888, 23.5 x 34.9 cm
5. John William Waterhouse, *The Lady of Shalott*, 1888, was part of the 64 works donated to the nation by Henry Tate. Other works included J. E. Millais, *Ophelia*, 1851-52 and works by Lady Butler, Stanhope Forbes, Sie Edwin Landseer and Sir William Quiller Orchardson.



1. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *Beata Beatrix*, c.1864–70, 86.4 x 66 cm
2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *The Beloved ('The Bride')*, 1865–6, 82.5 x 76.2 cm
3. George Elgar Hicks (1824-1914), *Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood*, 1863, 76.2 x 64.1 cm, is one of three paintings. The Tate has *Woman's Mission: Comfort of Old Age*, 1862, 76.2 x 63.8 cm but *Woman's Mission: Guide of Childhood*, 1863, is lost.
4. Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833–1898), *The Golden Stairs*, 1880
5. Frederic Leighton (1830–1896), *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1877, 174.6 x 98.4 x 109.9 cm, 290 kg



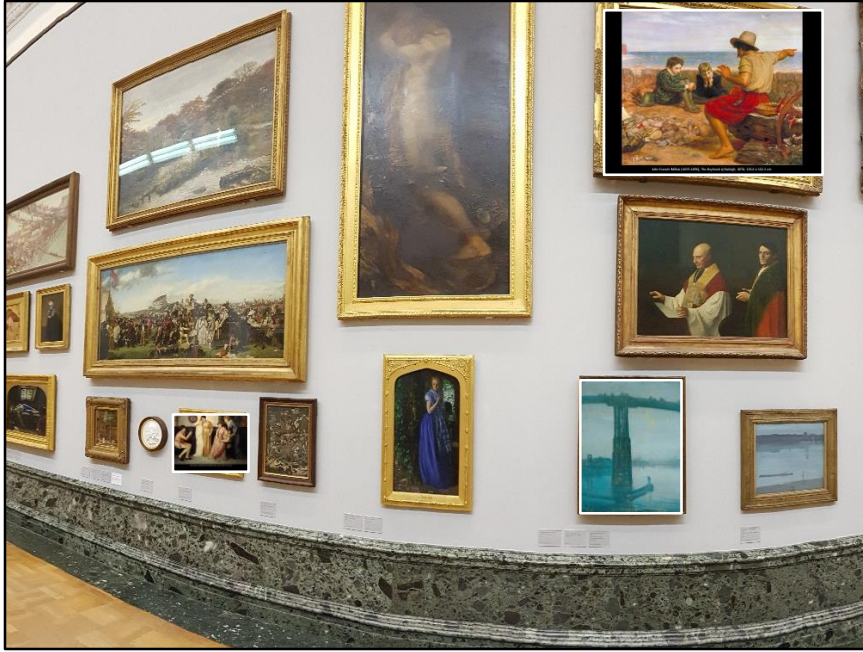
1. James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl*, 1864, 76.5 x 51.1 cm
2. Frederic Leighton (1830-1896), *Lieder ohne Worte*, exhibited 1861, 101.6 x 62.9 cm





1. William McTaggart (1835-1910), *The Emigrants*, 1883–9, 94.6 x 141 cm





1. Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), *A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies*, 1870, 35.5 x 53.4 cm
2. John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *The Boyhood of Raleigh*, 1870, 120.6 x 142.2 cm
3. James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Nocturne: Blue and Gold - Old Battersea Bridge*, c. 1872-75



1. William Quiller Orchardson (1832-1910), *The First Cloud*, 1887, 83.2 x 121.3 cm
2. James Tissot (1836-1902), *The Ball on Shipboard*, c.1874, 84.1 x 129.5 cm
3. Atkinson Grimshaw, *Liverpool Quay by Moonlight*, 1887, 61 x 91.4 cm
4. Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *The Health of the Bride*, 1889, 152 x 200 cm
5. John William Waterhouse (1849-1917), *Saint Eulalia*, exhibited 1885, 188.6 x 117.5 cm
6. George Frederic Watts (1817–1904), *Psyche*, 1880, 188.6 x 59.7 cm

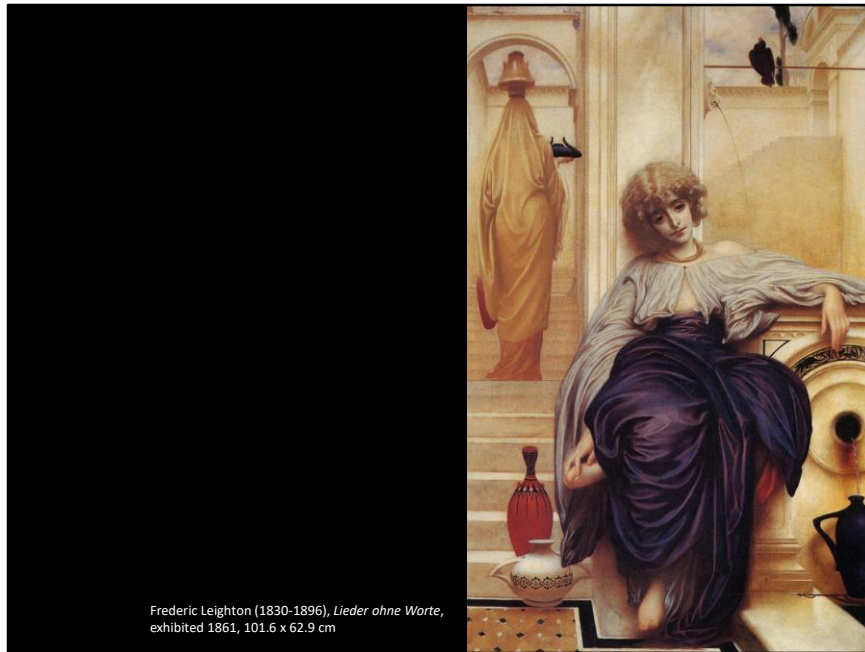
Other works include:

- Théodore Roussel (1847–1926), *The Reading Girl*, 1886-87, 152.4 x 161.3 cm. Roussel was a French artist who moved to London. He was a close friend of Whistler and shared his love of things Japanese. The girl is Hetty Pettigrew, his favourite model, who also posed, with her sisters, Rose and Lily for Millais and Whistler. Hetty became his mistress and gave birth to his daughter and continued to model for him until he re-married in 1914. In the 1880s British artists were moving towards a new form of natural representation of the nude which some regarded as a threat to moral standards. When first exhibited at the New English Art Club it caused a mild scandal and the *Spectator* wrote, 'It is realism of the

worst kind ... No human being ... could take any pleasure in such a picture as this; it is a degradation of Art'.

- Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833–1898), *King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid*, 1884, 293.4 x 135.9 cm. 'Burne-Jones's painting of the African king Cophetua and his love for the beggar Penelophon was based on an Elizabethan ballad and Tennyson's poem *The Beggar Maid*. The painting became famous for its technical execution and theme of love and beauty transcending power and material wealth. It was regarded as one of the finest paintings ever produced by a British artist and was widely admired on the Continent. The picture's egalitarian story has also been connected with the socialism of Burne-Jones's close friend William Morris.' (Tate display caption)





Frederic Leighton (1830-1896), *Lieder ohne Worte*, exhibited 1861, 101.6 x 62.9 cm

- 'This was the **first significant work Leighton painted** after he returned to London from studying in continental Europe. The title refers to the 'Songs without Words' the girl is listening to: the sound of the gently trickling water and the singing of the blackbird behind her. Leighton knew many of his viewers would connect the painting with **Mendelssohn's set of piano pieces of the same title**, which were very popular in England at this time. The subject's 'timelessness', and the harmony of composition and colouring, suggest the power of music to evoke specific moods.' (Tate display caption)
- It was probably started in the second half of 1860 when he returned from the Continent to set up permanent home in London. It can be compared with the series of portrait studies he did of the model **La Nanna** which he did during his stay in Rome in 1859.
- Leighton wrote to his father that he **intended to make it realistic** but from the moment he started he realised this was a **mistake** and strove to **create the opposite**. He wrote, "... I have endeavoured, both by colour and by flowing delicate forms, to translate to the eye of the spectator something of the pleasure which the child receives through her ears. This idea lies at the base of the whole

thing, and is conveyed to the best of my ability in every detail...'

- The title was adopted at the last minute before submission to the Royal Academy and was suggested by a friend's wife. It is also the title of Felix Mendelssohn's forty-eight short piano pieces, composed between 1829 and 1845 and also called 'Lieder ohne Worte' and better known in English as 'Songs without Words'.
- It has been suggested that the face is based on a Leighton sketch of a young boy. Leighton's biographer saw the sketch, recognised the face and saw Leighton's 'quick look of surprise'. We have the sketch which shows similarities. Leaving aside Leighton's sexual inclinations he may have seen the boy's face as an 'ideal beauty' that he wanted to capture.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/leighton-lieder-ohne-worte-t03053>



George Elgar Hicks (1824-1914), *Woman's Mission: Comfort of Old Age*, 1862, 76.2 x 63.8 cm

George Elgar Hicks (1824-1914), *Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood*, 1863, 76.2 x 64.1 cm

George Elgar Hicks (1824-1914), *Woman's Mission: Guide of Childhood*, 1863, painting missing

- 'These two paintings make up two scenes in a **triptych** (three-part picture) called ***Woman's Mission*** which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in **1863**. The missing section is *Guide of Childhood*. As a group the pictures represent the **same woman** in her role as **mother, wife and attentive daughter** or, as one critic of the time put it: 'woman in three phases of her duties as ministering angel'. The woman in both pictures bears a **striking resemblance to the artist's depictions of his own wife, Maria**.' (Tate display caption)
- Together they echo prevailing views of woman's role in the Victorian home and reinforce the desired image of the '**fairer sex**' as **pure and submissive**, as conveyed by **Coventry Patmore** in his popular poem '**The Angel in the House**' (1854-63). The picture also anticipates John Ruskin's discussion of the relationships between men and women in his essay '**Of Queens' Gardens**', from *Sesame and Lilies* (1865).

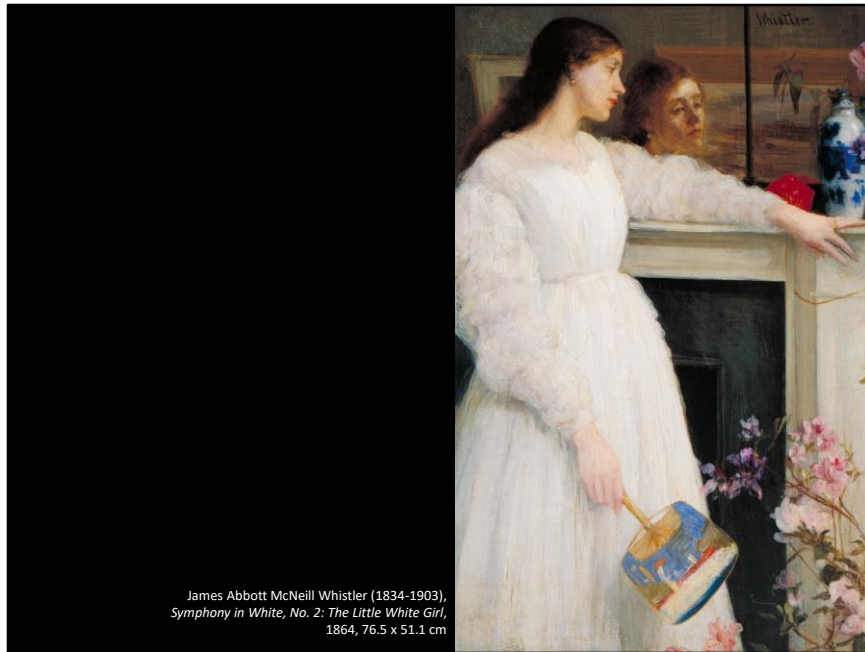
Ruskin recommends that the education of girls should lead to '**true wifely subjection**' on the part of 'her who was made to be the helpmate of man'.

- In the *Companion of Manhood* the important detail is the discarded black-edged envelope. He has **just received news of the death** of someone close to him and his wife, the 'companion of manhood', comforts him in his grief. She is clearly a dutiful and supportive wife who runs a comfortable home as we see from the **neatly laid table** and the **fresh flowers** on the mantelpiece. She is **attractive** and **well-groomed** but **not frivolous**.
- John Ruskin, the leading Victorian art critic wrote:
 '... the woman's power is for rule not battle - and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement and decision. Her function is praise. By her office and place she is protected from all danger and temptation. This is the true nature of home - it is the place of Peace, the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt and division. And whenever a true wife comes, the home is always round her.'
- **George Elgar Hicks** was an English painter who became the main imitator of William Powell Frith's large genre paintings. He studied as a doctor before deciding to become an artist and became successful later in life with his large genre paintings. When the popularity of these works declined in the late 1860s he focused on historical subjects and society portraits.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hicks-womans-mission-comfort-of-old-age-t14037>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hicks-womans-mission-companion-of-manhood-t00397>



James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), *Symphony in White, No. 2: The Little White Girl*, 1864, 76.5 x 51.1 cm

- 'This painting has a **dream-like atmosphere**: the woman is pensive and the reflection of her face in the mirror is silhouetted against a picture. There is **no story**; viewers were intended to appreciate the **picture's design, colour and mood**. Whistler's **enthusiasm for Japan** influenced the composition and the selection of objects. It inspired the poet Algernon Swinburne to write *Before the Mirror* and his verses, written on sheets of gold paper, were pasted onto the original frame. **Whistler's lover, Joanna Hiffernan, was the model** and it was painted at Whistler's house in Chelsea.' (Tate display caption)
- Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1865. The reflected image is **sad and careworn**, and one is tempted to draw some kind of link with the **wedding ring** so prominently displayed on her left hand. Whistler may also have intended to evoke Velasquez's *Rokeby Venus* (National Gallery, London), where the reflection of the woman's face is similarly at odds with her own idealised image.

Notes

- The poet Swinburne wrote a **poem** which Whistler had pasted to the **frame** he

thought it so appropriate to the mood of regret and thoughtfulness. :

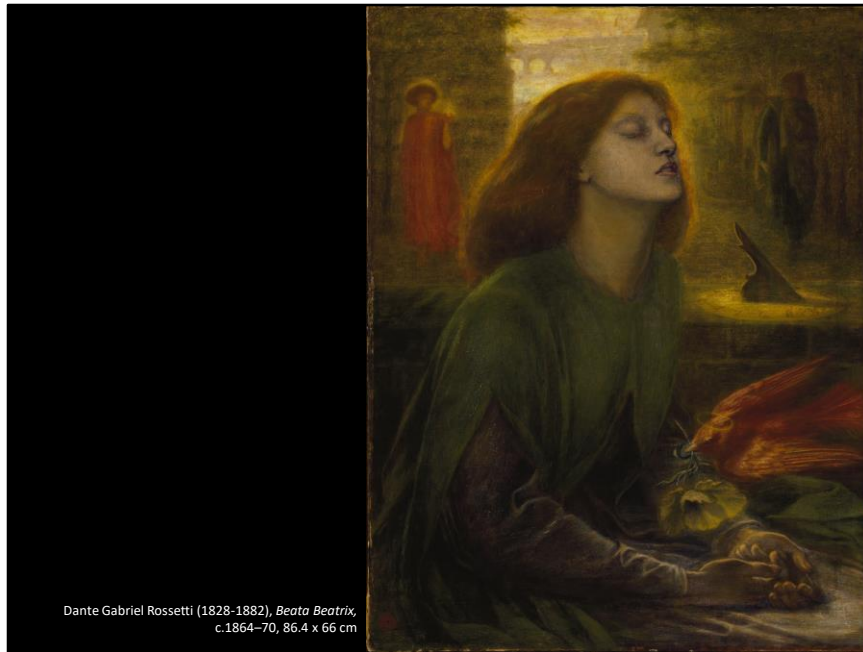
- *Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
Since joys go by;
Sad, but not bent with sadness,
Since sorrows die;
Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass,
And all sweet life that was lie down and lie.*

(Algernon Swinburne, *Poems and Ballads*, London 1866)

- The model for the picture was Whistler's mistress, Jo Hiffernan, and the location the house that they shared in Lindsey Row, Chelsea. She is holding a Japanese fan of the type made for the European market. Whistler was fascinated by Japanese art and culture and collected Japanese objects from an early date. The loose clothing, the Japanese fan, the red pot and blue and white vase on the mantelpiece, and the spray of pink azalea are interior decorative elements that would soon sweep the country in a fashion for Aestheticism.
- In 1887 Whistler exhibited *Symphony in White No.3* (Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham) and retrospectively added 'Symphony in White, No. 2' to the title of *The Little White Girl* and 'Symphony in White No. 1' to *The White Girl* (1862, National Gallery of Art, Washington).

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/whistler-symphony-in-white-no-2-the-little-white-girl-n03418>



Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *Beata Beatrix*, c.1864-70, 86.4 x 66 cm

- 'Rossetti's inspiration was **Dante's Alighieri** (c. 1265-1321) ***La Vita Nuova*** ('The New Life'), which explores the **Italian poet's idealised love for Beatrice and her premature death**. As an omen of death, a bird drops a **white poppy** between her open hands. In the background the **ghostly Dante** gazes towards the **figure of Love**. Rossetti viewed this as a **memorial to his wife** and the model for Beatrice, **Elizabeth Siddall**, who had **died in 1862**. Rossetti had buried the manuscripts of his unpublished poems including *On the Vita Nuova of Dante* with his wife but, in a macabre twist, retrieved and published them in 1870.' (Tate display caption)
- Rossetti's wife is transported in a moment of ecstasy. The grey and green of her dress signify '**the colours of hope and sorrow** as well as of love and life'. In the background the figure of Dante on the right looks across to Love on the left. Love is holding the flickering flame of Beatrice's life. In the distance the **Ponte Vecchio** shows we are in **Florence**, the city where Dante set his story. The dove descends into her lap holding an opium poppy signifying her imminent death. Rossetti's wife died from an overdose of laudanum (tincture of opium, 10% opium dissolved in alcohol) and **Rossetti's pet name** for her was '**The Dove**'. The sundial indicates it is nine o'clock and Beatrice died at **nine on 9th June 1290** which is also shown on the

frame with other references to death and mourning.

Notes

- Beatrice Portinari (1266-1290) was the daughter of a banker and married another banker. Dante first saw her when he was 9 and immediately fell in love. It was a form of courtly love. He wrote poems to her as his muse but he never wrote poems to his wife.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rossetti-beata-beatrix-n01279>



Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), *The Beloved* (*'The Bride'*), 1865-6, 82.5 x 76.2 cm

- 'The bride is described in the **biblical *Song of Solomon***. Rossetti shows her at the moment she takes the veil from her face, transfixing the viewer with her direct gaze and the power of her beauty. The picture's **lush exoticism** is accentuated by the flowers and the bride's luxurious Japanese dress and Chinese headpiece. Her attendants are of **varying physical types and ethnic origin**. Some modern commentators suggest that Rossetti is celebrating the **diversity of beauty**. **Others see it as racist**, a visualisation of the supremacy of the bride's whiteness, in contrast to the darker complexions of her attendants.' (Tate display caption)
- The painting was inspired by the *Song of Solomon* from the Bible.
- Rossetti inscribed the frame:

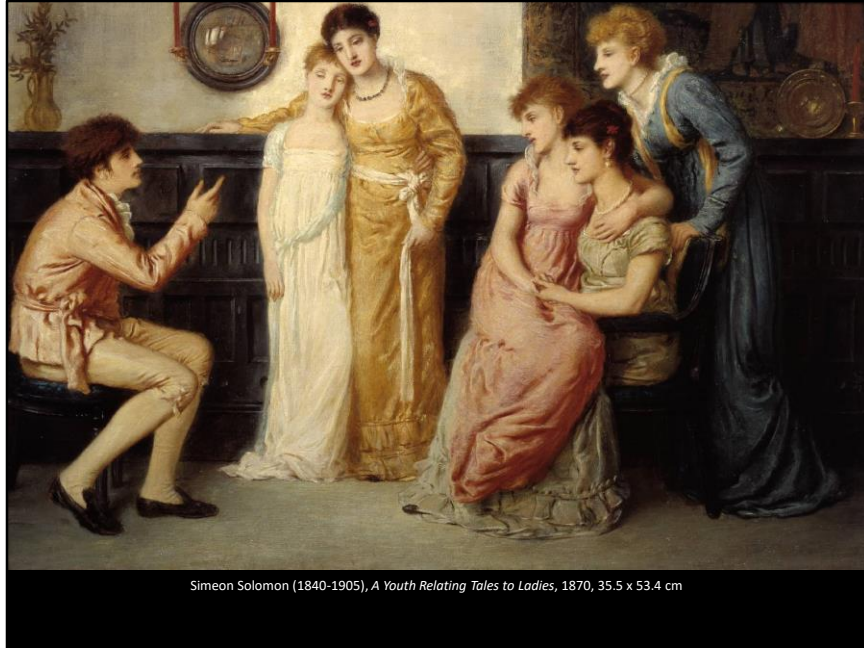
My beloved is mine and I am his. (The Song of Solomon 2:16).
Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.
(The Song of Solomon 1:2).
She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. (Psalms 45:14)
- Her headdress is Peruvian and her dress is made from Japanese kimono fabric.
- It was commissioned in 1863 by George Rae for £300 but was not finished until the

winter of 1865-6.

- The model was **Marie Ford** whose beauty Rossetti admired. The virgin bridesmaid on the left was modelled by **Ellen Smith** and the woman on the right was **Keomi, the gypsy mistress of the artist Frederick Sandys**. The **young boy** was found outside a hotel and was added for his colour to act as a contrast with the bride's skin. The boy replaced a young biracial girl that Rossetti first used. Rossetti may have been inspired by the black servant on Manet's *Olympia*.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rossetti-the-beloved-the-bride-n03053>



Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), *A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies*, 1870, 35.5 x 53.4 cm

Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), *A Youth Relating Tales to Ladies*, 1870, 35.5 x 53.4 cm

- 'The type of **frieze-like arrangement of figures** in a shallow space seen in this picture occurs in a **number of Solomon's works** and may owe something to the example of his friend **Albert Moore** and the aesthetic movement. This style reflected a desire to **move away from narrative or moral content** and to focus instead on pure beauty, compositional balance and 'art for art's sake'. Here the listeners **wear Regency-style dress** rather than classical robes.' (Tate display caption)
- As in the work of other Aesthetic artists of the 1860s and 1870s such as Albert Moore and James McNeill Whistler the subject matter and meaning are irrelevant. The painting is a composition and colour arrangement that conveys a feeling of beauty.
- **Simeon Solomon** was noted for his depictions of **Jewish life** and **same-sex desire**. He was born into a prominent Jewish family and was younger brother to the painters **Abraham Solomon** (1824–1862) and **Rebecca Solomon** (1832–1886). He was successful and a **friend of Dante Gabriel Rossetti**, the poet Algernon Charles **Swinburne** and the painter **Edward Burne-Jones**. In 1873, his **career ended** when

he was arrested in a **public urinal** at Stratford Place Mews, off Oxford Street, in London and charged with attempting to commit sodomy: he was fined £100. He was **arrested again** in 1874 in Paris, after which he was sentenced to spend three months in prison. After his prosecutions he no longer exhibited and was **rejected by his former friends** but Oscar Wilde, John Addington Symonds and Walter Pater all collected his works. In later life he **became an alcoholic** and in 1884 he was **admitted to the workhouse** where he continued to produce some work. In 1905, he died from complications brought on by his alcoholism.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/solomon-a-youth-relating-tales-to-ladies-t03702>



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *The Boyhood of Raleigh*, 1870, 120.6 x 142.2 cm

- 'Sir **Walter Raleigh** was one of the most **celebrated explorers** of the **Elizabethan age**. In Millais's famous painting he is shown as a **boy listening with rapt attention** to 'tales of wonder on sea and land' told by a Genoese sailor. The **toy ship** in the foreground suggests Raleigh's future adventures, while the sharp edge of an anchor on the right may allude to the final words he uttered at his execution: 'Strike, man, strike.' (Tate display caption)
- The painting was **extremely popular** and can be seen as a **celebration of the British Empire** based on **control of the seas** through the power of the **Royal Navy**. An experienced **bare-foot sailor**, who looks younger than one might expect, points out just above the horizon. A model ship lies to one side indicating the boy's interest in sailing. Its **red flag is not a Red Ensign** as it does not contain the small cross of Saint George used before 1707. It is probably the red flag raised to indicate a ship is about to engage in combat.
- The boys' expressions show their concentration and we imagine they are thinking of the exotic worlds conjured up by the sailor. These worlds are indicated by the two exotic birds behind the anchor and the bowl covered in feathers. One of the birds appears to be a **toucan from South America**. The title tells us one of the boys

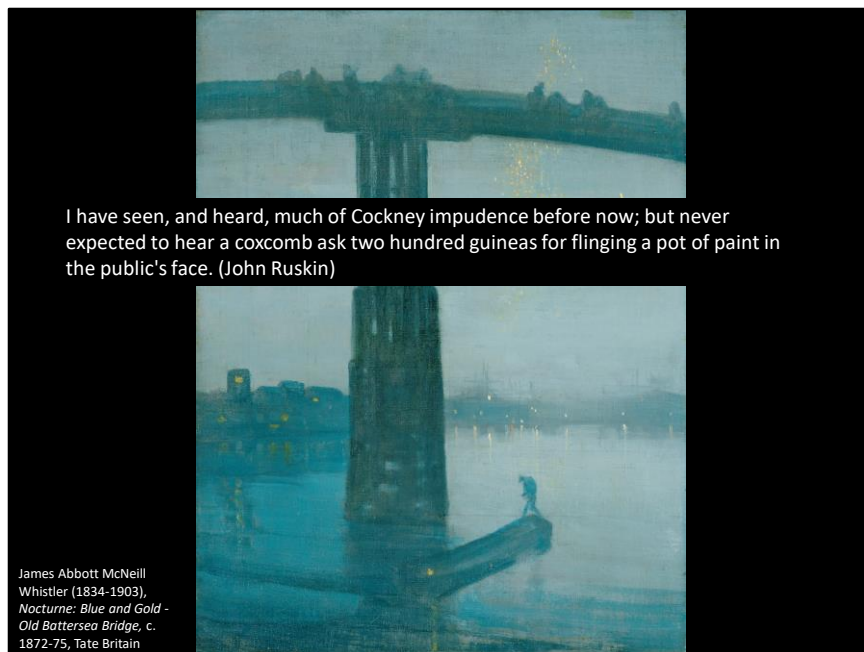
is **Walter Raleigh** and he is **probably the boy on the left** wearing green who has a green hat with pheasant feathers in it.

Notes

- Walter Raleigh (c. 1554-1618) was an English landed gentleman, writer, poet, soldier, politician, courtier, spy and explorer. Knighted in 1585, explored Virginia, married one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting without permission and was sent to the tower. In 1594 sailed to South America to find the 'City of Gold', El Dorado. After 1603, when Elizabeth died, he was imprisoned in the Tower for plotting against James I who did not like him. He was released in 1616 to find El Dorado but ransacked a Spanish outpost violating the terms of his pardon and a peace treaty with Spain. On his return he was arrested and executed. He was voted 93 in the BBC poll of the 100 Greatest Britons.
- The earliest citation for 'red flag' in the Oxford English Dictionary is from 1602 and shows that at that time the flag was used by military forces to indicate that they were preparing for battle.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-the-boyhood-of-raleigh-n01691>



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

- Whistler arrived in Paris in 1855, aged 21, and moved to London in 1859 which he adopted as his home.
- 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.
- Whistler painted several more **nocturnes** over the next ten years, many of the **River Thames** and of Cremorne Gardens, a pleasure park famous for its frequent fireworks displays, which presented a novel challenge to paint. In his maritime nocturnes, Whistler used paint he had thinned with copal, turpentine and linseed oil, creating what **he called a 'sauce'**, which 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. Some of the Thames paintings also show compositional and thematic similarities with the **Japanese prints of Hiroshige**.
- Whistler was short and slim with a curling moustache and he often wore a monocle and dressed like a dandy. He was self-confident, arrogant and selfish and enjoyed shocking his friends. He had a biting wit and on one occasion, young Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) attended one of Whistler's dinners, and hearing his host make some brilliant remark, apparently said, "I wish I'd said that", to which Whistler riposted, "You will, Oscar, you will!" In fact, Wilde did repeat in public many witticisms created by Whistler.

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.'



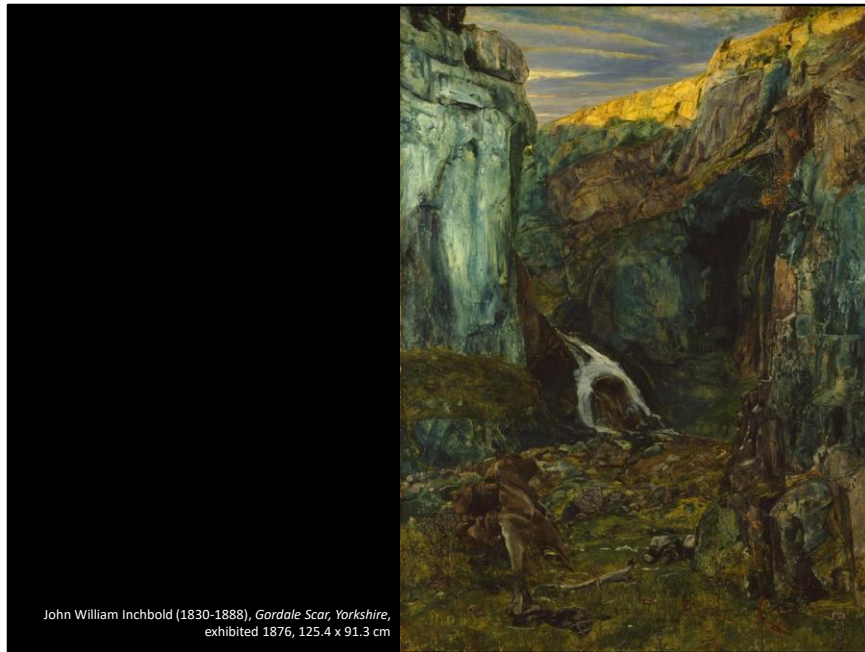
James Tissot (1836-1902), *The Ball on Shipboard*, c.1874, 84.1 x 129.5 cm

- 'Tissot's paintings of **fashionable Victorian social scenes** were **extremely popular** and brought him celebrity and financial success. However some critics complained that their **lack of clear narrative** and moral purpose cut across the grain of British art. **John Ruskin** described them as '**unhappy mere colour photographs of vulgar society**.' Tissot certainly delighted in fashion and the mores of high society as can be seen in this scene which shows men and women relaxing at an event thought to be the annual regatta at Cowes on the Isle of Wight.' (Tate caption)
- Sir Sacheverell Sitwell has suggested that it represents a dance given on board the **Royal yacht during Cowes week in 1873**, and that the young woman standing **by the companion-way, wearing a sailor straw hat tilted up** upon her forehead, may represent **Queen Alexandra, then Princess of Wales**, and that the **old gentleman** next to her may be either the **Czar Alexander II or Lord Londonderry**. However, the picture is discussed at length in various reviews of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1874 and, contrary to what one would expect, **there is no reference to any specific individuals** or occasion.
- *The Times* comments on 'the grace of the girls, the taste of their toilettes, and the capital characterisation of the gentlemen, young and old, yachtsmen and man-of-

war officers, **cannot be praised too highly.**'

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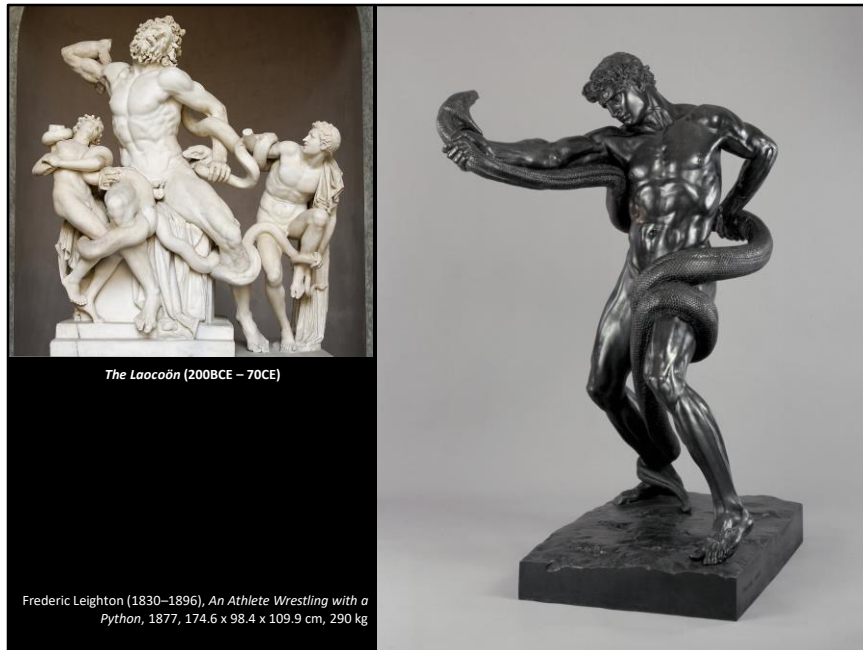


John William Inchbold (1830-1888), *Gordale Scar, Yorkshire*, exhibited 1876, 125.4 x 91.3 cm

- 'Inchbold, who was born in Leeds, came under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites in the early 1850s. He established himself as one of the leading landscapists of the movement but by the end of the decade had adopted a broader, more atmospheric approach, as shown here. When it was first exhibited at the Royal Academy it was accompanied by lines from Wordsworth's sonnet 'Gordale' of 1818: '... when the air/Glimmers with fading light .../Then, pensive Votary!, let thy feet repair/To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair/where the young lions couch; ...'' (Tate display caption)

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/inchbold-gordale-scar-yorkshire-t05467>



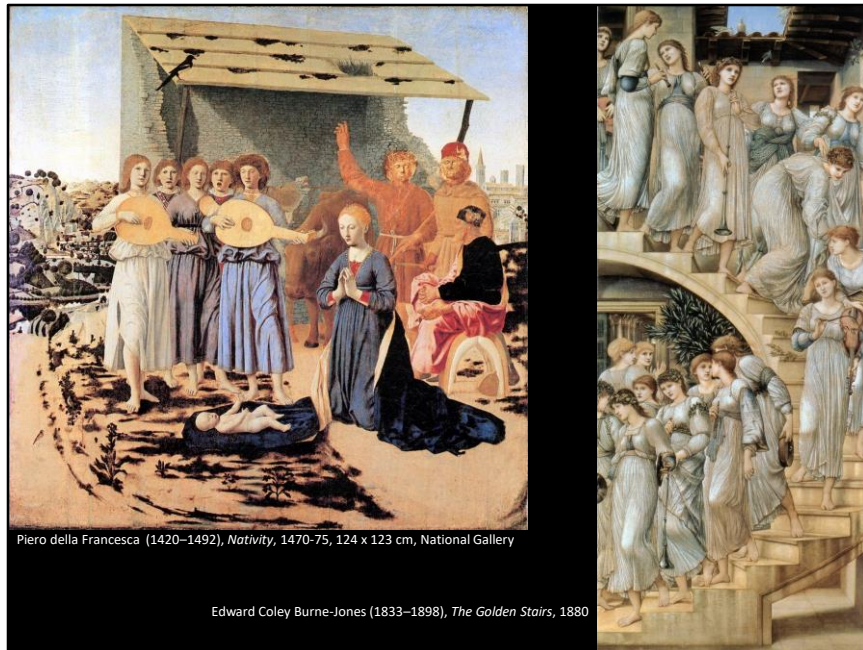
Frederic Leighton (1830–1896), *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python*, 1877, 174.6 x 98.4 x 109.9 cm, 290 kg

- 'This is the earlier of **Frederic Leighton's** only **two life-size sculptures**, both made with the assistance of **Thomas Brock**. In subject and scale it was intended as a **challenge** to one of the greatest classical sculptures, ***The Laocoön***, which shows three men being crushed by sea serpents. Frederic Leighton was a pioneer of what became known as the '**New Sculpture**' movement in Britain. This fresh approach looked back to **classical sculpture** while **focusing on the naturalism** of the body through careful modelling of the surface. This coincided with a revival of interest in bronze, the lost wax technique used here allowing for precision in the treatment of form.' (Tate display caption)
- Thomas Brock (1847-1922) was an English sculptor whose most famous work is the statue of Queen Victoria outside Buckingham Palace. It is said that when it was unveiled in 1911 George V was so moved he called for a sword and knighted Brock on the spot.
- The story of the ***Laocoön*** is told by Virgil in the Aeneid. Laocoön was a priest of Poseidon (Neptune) and was killed with his two sons when he tried to expose the

ruse of the Trojan horse. His famous line is 'Do not trust the Horse, Trojans /
Whatever it is, **I fear the Greeks even bearing gifts.**'

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/leighton-an-athlete-wrestling-with-a-python-n01754>



Edward Coley Burne-Jones (1833–1898), *The Golden Stairs*, 1880

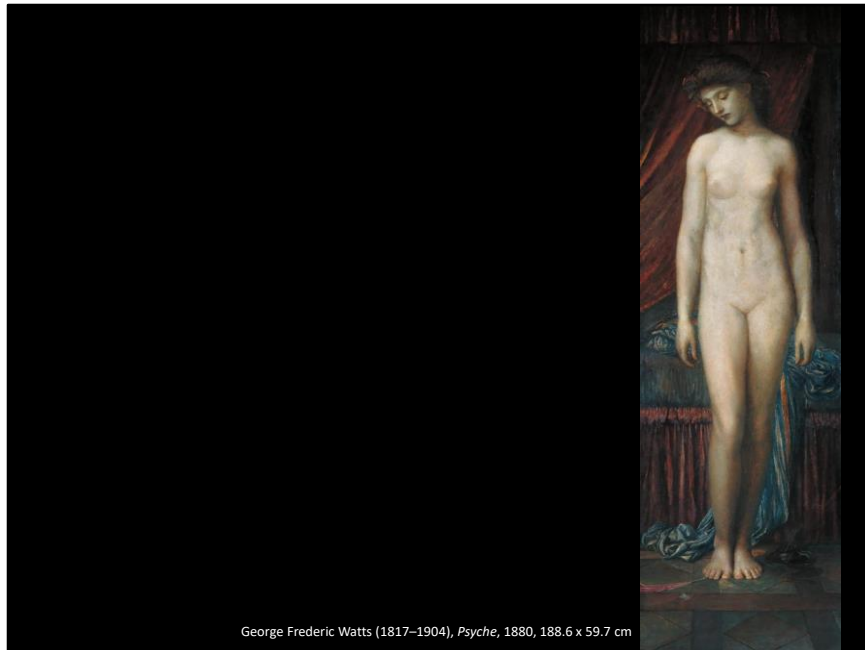
Piero della Francesca (1420–1492), *Nativity*, 1470-75, 124 x 123 cm, National Gallery

- ‘This painting epitomises Burne-Jones’s interest in **investigating a mood** rather than telling a story. He deliberately made his pictures **enigmatic** and the meaning of this painting has provoked much debate. One view is that the **18 women are spirits** in an enchanted dream. The painting might also be **purely decorative**, conveying the idea of endless movement. The underlying idea, popularised in the 1870s by the critic Walter Pater, is that ‘**all art constantly aspires to the condition of music**.’ (Tate display caption)
- It was designed in 1872, the year after he had been inspired by his visit to Italy. He began the canvas in 1876 and it was shown in the Grosvenor Gallery in 1880 after he rushed to complete it on time. Burne-Jones had been inspired by Piero della Francesca which shows in his light golden flesh tones, broad foreheads, small eyes and their fixed look.
- The bodies were studied from professional models such as Antonia Caiva and Bessie Keene and the faces are likenesses of women in his family or friends’ families. Burne-Jones’s daughter Margaret is in profile at the top, William Morris’s daughter May faces us two-thirds of the way down, The daughter of his patron Frances

Graham is at the bottom holding cymbals, behind her is her close friend Mary Gladstone, daughter of W. E. Gladstone, leader of the Liberal Party. Others include Laura Tennant, Mary Stuart Wortly, later Lady Lovelace, and the actress Edith Gellibrand (stage name Chester). Ironically, after all this trouble finding models critics complained that all the heads looked as if they were from the same model.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/burne-jones-the-golden-stairs-n04005>
- Stephen Wildman, Edward Coley Burne-Jones, John Christian, Alan Crawford, Laurence Des Cars, *Edward Burne-Jones, Victorian Artist-dreamer*, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York)



George Frederic Watts (1817–1904), *Psyche*, 1880, 188.6 x 59.7 cm

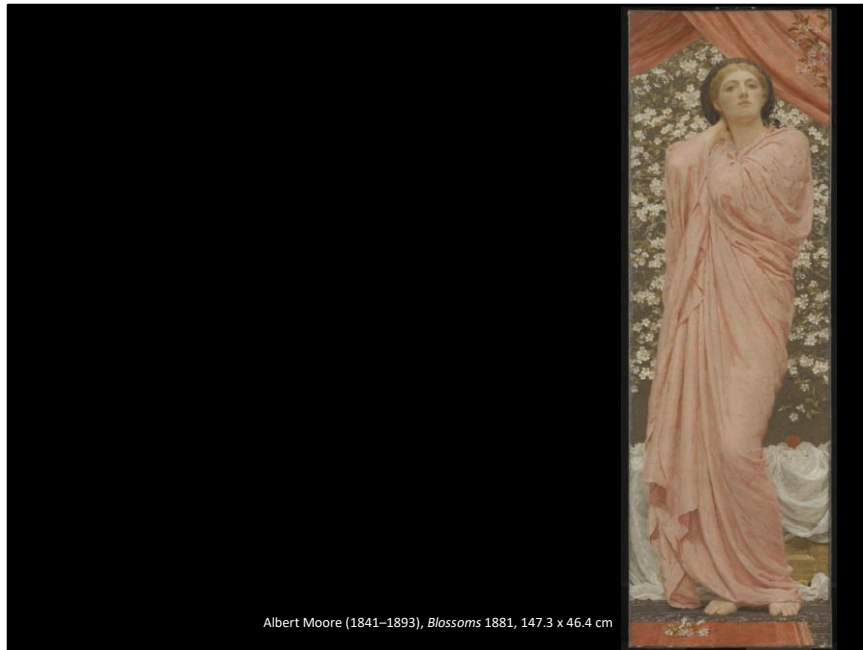
- ‘**Psyche** was a mortal of such beauty that the goddess **Venus** became jealous of this highly praised rival. She sent her son, **Cupid**, to make **Psyche** fall in love with a monster. **Cupid**, however, fell in love with her himself and hid her in a palace where he visited her by night. She was **forbidden to look** at him, but **curiosity got the better of her**, resulting in their separation **until Jupiter reunited them in heaven**. It was the depiction of such stories from ancient mythology which earned Watts and other artists such as Frederic Leighton the title ‘Olympian’, taken from Mount Olympus, the home of the gods.’ (Tate display caption)
- **George Frederic Watts** was born in **London** and his working life spanned the Victorian era. He was born into a **strict evangelical household** which resulted in him **turning away** from **organised religion** as soon as he left home. When he was young his three younger **brothers died**, two of measles and his **mother died** when he was 9. His poor health meant he **never attended school** but he had a **talent for drawing** from a young age. He trained in the studio of a sculptor (William Behnes) and said that ‘**The Elgin marbles were my teachers**. It was from them alone that I learned.’ He entered the **Royal Academy School** but found he had **little to learn**

and the teaching was very poor.

- He earned money from portraits and acquired a number of middle class patrons and an occasional aristocrat. His ambition led him to tackle history painting and he submitted one to the commission whose role was to decorate the new **Palace of Westminster**. He won the **highest prize of £300** which enabled him to **visit Paris and Italy**. He stayed for several years at the **villa of Lord Holland near Florence**. On his return he won another **prize of £500** establishing his status as a history painter. With the **suicide of Benjamin Haydon** the future of history painting looked bleak and he painted a series of social realist works. He became friends with **Thoby and Sara Prinsep** and helped them acquire a **21-year lease on a Little Holland House** from Lord Holland. He moved in with them and **'He came to stay three days; he stayed thirty years'**. He began a project to paint the portraits of all the good and famous in society and continued the project for the next **fifty years**. The collection became known as the **Hall of Fame**. Watts was friends with everyone of note that was concerned with the arts in society. In 1864, aged 47 he **married the 16 year-old actress Ellen Terry** but they separated a year later. He exhibited at the **Grosvenor Gallery** when it was opened in 1877 by his friend **Coutts Lindsay**. He was asked to paint a **self-portrait** by the **Uffizi Gallery** and his reputation continued to grow internationally. In 1880 he wrote 'The Present Conditions of Art' in which he complained about the Royal Academy, an organisation which he had been at odds with most of his adult life. He described his 'poems painted on canvas' which 'lift the veil that shrouds the enigma of being'. When he was **69 he remarried the 37 year-old Mary Fraser-Tytler** who was one of several ladies who worshipped him. In **1890, they bought Limnerlease near Compton** and built a house, studio and later a chapel. For the last twenty years of his life he was one of the **most famous painters in the world**. He produced some 800 paintings as well as sculptures. By the end of life he had many honours but since then his reputation has fluctuated. On his death he bequeathed his retained works to galleries around the country but his wife queried some unclear wording in the will and managed to retain the works and **create the Watts gallery** at Compton. He is a modern artist in the way he achieved international celebrity status as a **guru, genius and hero** but his visual language of universal symbols has not stood the test of time. Today he is admired for his portraits and for the innovative way he transformed history painting into the language of international symbolism.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/watts-psyche-n01585>



Albert Moore (1841–1893), *Blossoms* 1881, 147.3 x 46.4 cm

- 'Moore came under the influence of Japanese art and ancient Greek sculpture in the 1860s as can be seen in the design and subtle colour of this work. *Blossoms* reflects both sources: the pose and rippled drapery of the single female figure are suggestive of an antique statue of Venus, while the delicate colouring and decorative background of flowers is an exercise in 'Japonisme'. It is also a celebration of female beauty and of 'art for art's sake'' (Tate display caption)
- **Albert Joseph Moore** was born in **York**, the youngest of **14 children**. His father was a well-known portrait painter and four of his brothers became artists. In 1857 at the **age of 15** he exhibited two watercolour sketches at the **Royal Academy**. His early work was in the **Pre-Raphaelite style** including *Study of an Ash Trunk* (Ashmolean Museum) but most of his work at this time was decorative. In the **1860s** he began painting the works for which is best known, of figures, predominantly **women, in classical dress**, without narrative or recognisable subject and without concern for historic accuracy. He is concerned with texture, pattern and colour and the creation of a decorative subject of **abstract beauty**. He developed a painstaking system for preparing his work consisting of sketches,

followed by larger-scale drawing following mathematical proportions which were then transferred to the final canvas. He never married and gained a reputation as an eccentric. He lived openly with his mistress and some say this was the reason he was never made an Academician.

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<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/moore-blossoms-n01549>



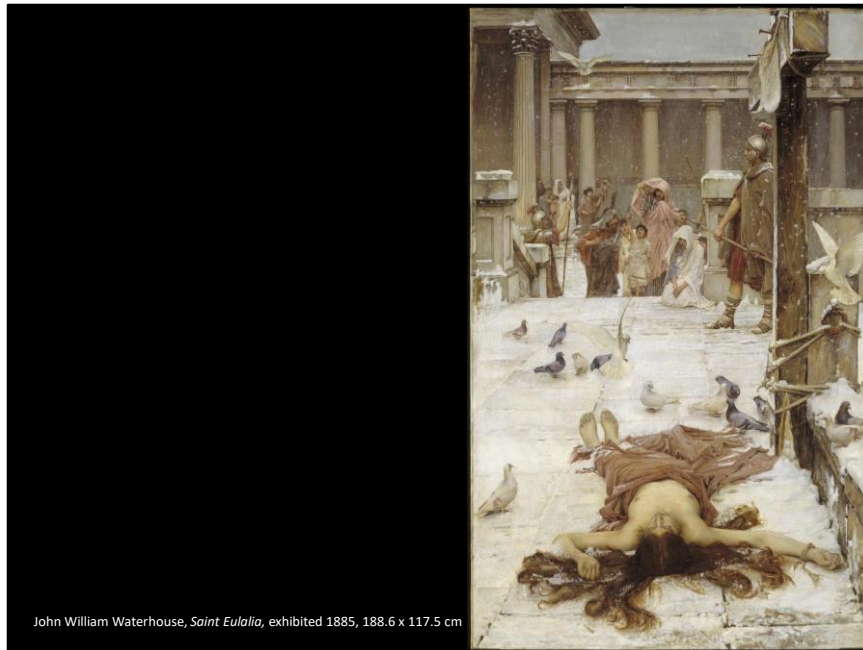
William McTaggart (1835-1910), *The Emigrants*, 1883-9, 94.6 x 141 cm

- 'When **McTaggart** finished his training at the **Trustees' Academy in Edinburgh**, he practised as a **portrait painter** with a **minutely realistic** technique. He became more interested in painting figures in landscape, and by the 1880s his handling of paint was much broader. He painted the sea and coastline, in works that are **reminiscent of Courbet**. The series of 'emigrants' that he painted combine these interests with a subject of **serious social concern** in Scotland, the **emigration of people** from the West Coast to **live in Canada and Australia**. McTaggart had first-hand experience of such emigration in his own family.' (Tate display caption)
- William **McTaggart** was a **Scottish landscape and marine** painter who was influenced by **Impressionism**. The son of a **crofter** he moved to **Edinburgh** aged 16 and won several **prizes**. His early work was mainly figure painting including children but he later turned to landscape. He became a full member of the **Scottish Academy** in 1870. He loved nature and **painting outdoors** and his use of colour and brushwork resemble aspects of the work of Constable and Turner combined with Impressionism. He is often called the '**Scottish Impressionist**'. He second wife was the daughter of a painter and his two sons became painters and

his daughter married an art historian.

References

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John William Waterhouse (1849-1917), *Saint Eulalia*, exhibited 1885, 188.6 x 117.5 cm

- Tate website "Waterhouse exhibited this picture at the Royal Academy in 1885 with the following note: 'Prudentius says that the **body of St. Eulalia** was shrouded "by the **miraculous fall of snow** when lying in the forum after her martyrdom.'" St Eulalia was **martyred in 304AD for refusing to make sacrifices to the Roman gods**. The method of her death was **particularly gruesome**: two executioners tore her body with iron hooks, then lighted torches were applied to her breasts and sides until finally, as the fire caught her hair, she was suffocated. Given the horrific circumstances of her death, and Eulalia's tender age (she is said to have been **twelve years old**), Waterhouse demonstrates **little concern for realism**. The setting for the picture is supposed to be Merida in Spain, which was then under the rule of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, but has been transferred to the Forum in Rome. Eulalia's body appears **totally unharmed**, her exposed breasts and flowing hair giving her a **seductive rather than pathetic appearance**. Although there is snow falling and lying on the ground, **her body is uncovered**. As an explanation for these alterations to the legend, the artist **includes a wooden cross** on the right of the composition, implying that the martyrdom was by crucifixion.

The **composition is extremely daring**: Eulalia's **dramatically foreshortened** body leads the eye towards a **void at the centre** of the picture. A **group of mourners form a pyramid** towards the top of the composition, but the viewer's eye is drawn back down towards the martyred figure by the right-hand soldier's spear, via a zig-zag of ropes, to the young woman's outflung arms. According to the account given by the Spanish Christian poet Prudentius (348-405), at the moment of her death, a **white dove emerged from Eulalia's mouth and flew towards heaven**. Waterhouse refers to this event by **including sixteen doves** in his painting. The youngest mourner points upwards at a single hovering dove towards the top of the picture, a symbol of Eulalia's departing soul. The picture was **well received by the critics** and secured Waterhouse's election as an **Associate of the Royal Academy**. One reviewer approved in particular of the image's **simplicity and idealism** and its avoidance of the grotesque. He wrote, '**the conception is full of power and originality. Its whole force is centred in the pathetic dignity of the outstretched figure, so beautiful in its helplessness and pure serenity, so affecting in its forlorn and wintry shroud, so noble in the grace and strength of its presentment**' (quoted in Hobson, pp.34-7)."

- John William Waterhouse was an English artist who **worked in the Pre-Raphaelite style long after** the original Brotherhood had disbanded. He often portrayed the ancient world, mythological scenes and Arthurian legend. He was **born in Italy to English** painters and moved to England where he **entered the Royal Academy School**. He became a **full Academician in 1895**. He became known as "**the modern Pre-Raphaelite**" and his works were known for their depictions of women from both ancient Greek mythology and Arthurian legend.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/waterhouse-saint-eulalia-n01542>



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

- **This was his first major success.**
 - Sargent's **first major success at the Royal Academy came in 1887**, with the enthusiastic response to ***Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose***, a large piece, **painted on site**, of two young girls lighting lanterns in an Farnham House, Broadway in the Cotswolds. Sargent had moved to the Cotswolds to escape the **scandal of the *Portrait of Madame X* (1884)**. The painting received a mixed reception as some reviewers regarded it as '**Frenchified**' but it was immediately purchased by the Tate Gallery's Chantrey Bequest. They are lighting Chinese lanterns as day turns to night. The children Dolly (left, aged 11) and Polly (right, aged 7), the daughters of the illustrator Frederick Barnard, a friend of Sergeants.
- **He painted it outdoors *alla prima*.**
 - **Every day from 6:35pm to 7pm from August to early November 1885 and again in August/September and late October 1886**, he painted in the very few minutes **when the light was perfect**, giving the picture an **overall purple tint** of evening. He made many preliminary sketches and he would often scrape the paint off the canvas after a day's painting. The flowers in

the garden died as summer turned to autumn, and they were replaced with **artificial flowers**. Sargent resumed painting the following summer at the Millet new home nearby in Broadway, and finally **finished** the painting by the end of **October 1886**. In the course of working, Sargent cut down the rectangular canvas, removing approximately 2 feet (61 cm) from the left side, to leave an approximately square shape. Sargent himself described it 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. This painting possibly takes *alla prima* (wet-on-wet, Italian for 'first attempt') painting to an extreme level that has rarely even been attempted before or since. Cross-sectional analysis of the paint shows that he even painted wet-on-wet for the final touches on the faces, something few other artists would ever attempt.

- **Using Impressionistic brushwork.**
 - These three enlargements of areas of the painting show Sargent's skill drawing with the brush and invoking an effect with the minimal brushwork. A few rapid strokes of the brush create a lily or a rose or a glowing lantern. This ability suggests he worked rapidly but we know from the length of time he spent that he also worked very carefully.
- **There have been many interpretations.**
 - The painting can be 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 larger flowers at the top bring the background forward and flatten the painting.
- **Title.**
 - The unusual title comes from a popular song 'Ye Shepherds Tell Me' (also called 'The Wreath').

Notes

John Singer Sargent

- John Singer Sargent was an American artist who 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 **trained in Paris** before moving to London. His early submission *Portrait of Madame X* caused a scandal rather than the positive publicity he was expecting.
- 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.
- His 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* 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.

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.



William Quiller Orchardson (1832-1910), *The First Cloud*, 1887, 83.2 x 121.3 cm

- 'This is the last of three paintings by William Orchardson on the subject of an unhappy marriage. The empty space of the parquet floor emphasises the psychological tension between the couple. It suggests that their dispute might lead to more serious problems. When it was first exhibited these lines from a Tennyson's poem *Merlin and Vivien* were published in the catalogue: 'It is the little rift within the lute, That by and by will make the music mute'.' (Tate display caption)
- **William Quiller Orchardson** was a **Scottish painter** who trained in Edinburgh and his first painting was **exhibited when he was 16**. His early work included literary subjects from Shakespeare. In 1862, **aged 30, he moved to London** and he was recognised with his friends as a member of the **new 'Scottish school'**. He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1863, and **travelled to Venice** in 1870 and again in 1873 on his honeymoon. Many of his paintings comment of social conventions and marriage and some are set in the Regency period. His **thinly applied paint** was considered **too sketchy** by some critics but **Whistler admired** his tonally subdued palette. He became a **Royal Academician** in 1877, was a candidate for President

and was **knighted in 1907**.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/orchardson-the-first-cloud-n01520>



Atkinson Grimshaw, *Liverpool Quay by Moonlight*, 1887, 61 x 91.4 cm

Atkinson Grimshaw, *Liverpool Quay by Moonlight*, 1887, 61 x 91.4 cm

- 'Grimshaw was famous for his night scenes, in particular for his views of the docks at Liverpool, Glasgow and Hull. Here he concentrates on the golden glow cast from shop fronts through fog, and reflected on wet cobbles. The omnibus receding from the viewer down a perfectly straight street is a characteristic and effective device, which the artist repeated many times. He was **entirely self-taught**, and had begun life as a railway clerk. He was much **influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites**, but gradually moved towards a more ethereal evocation of light and **atmosphere reminiscent of Whistler**.' (Tate display caption)
- **John Atkinson Grimshaw** (1836-1893) was known for his night-scenes and landscapes and is considered one of the best painters of nightscapes of all time. His **lack of brush marks** and his realism gained him critics who questioned whether **'they could be accepted as paintings at all'**. He worked with **Whistler** who said that he thought he had invented nocturnes 'until I saw Grimmy's moonlit pictures'. He was born in Leeds and married his cousin. When he was 24 he gave up his job as a clerk to become a painter. He started exhibiting in Leeds and started to become successful in the 1870s. Four of his children became artists. He was

influenced by the **Pre-Raphaelites** in terms of accurate colour and vivid realism and he was also able to capture the mood of gas-lit streets and misty scenes. In the 1870s he was influenced by **James Tissot** and the **Aesthetic Movement**. He left behind no letters, articles or papers and so we know very little of his life and motivation.

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/grimshaw-liverpool-quay-by-moonlight-t00902>



John William Waterhouse (1849-1917), *The Lady of Shalott*, 1888, Tate Britain

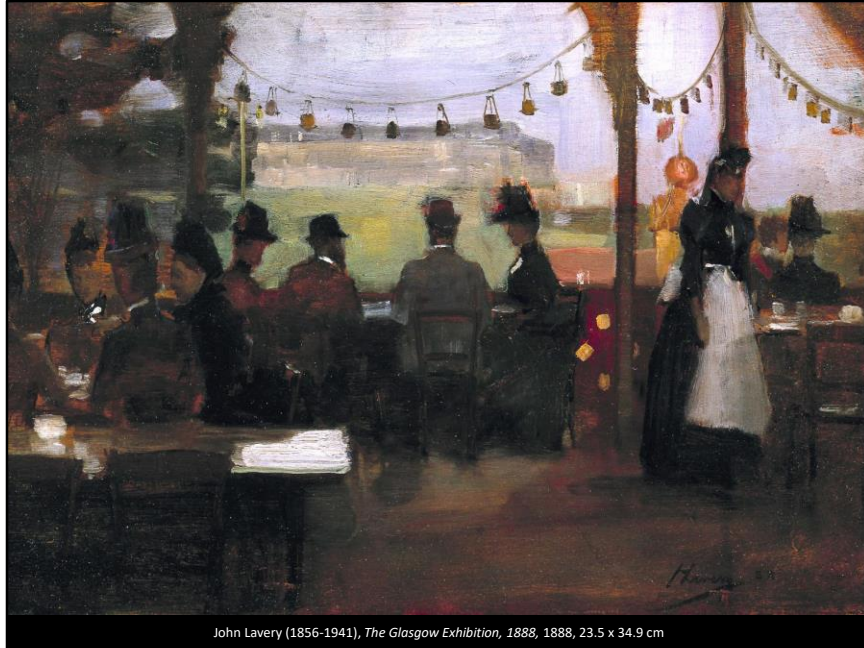
- **This is Warehouse's best known work.** He painted **three different versions** of *The Lady of Shalott*, in 1888, 1894 (tied up in the threads of her loom), and 1916 (wearing a red dress in front of a round window and her unbroken loom). Another of Waterhouse's favourite subjects was Ophelia; the most famous of his paintings of Ophelia depicts her just before her death, putting flowers in her hair as she sits on a tree branch leaning over a lake. Like *The Lady of Shalott* and other Waterhouse paintings, it deals with a woman dying in or near water. He also may have been inspired by paintings of Ophelia by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais.
- *The Lady of Shalott* (1832) was a poem by the Poet Laureate Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892). According to this poem "the Lady of Shalott was forbidden to look directly at reality or the outside world; instead she was **doomed to view the world through a mirror**, and weave what she saw into tapestry. Her despair was heightened when she saw loving couples entwined in the far distance, and she spent her days and nights aching for a return to normalcy. One day the Lady **saw Sir Lancelot passing** on his way in the reflection of the mirror, and **dared to look**

out at Camelot, bringing about a **curse**. The lady escaped by boat during an autumn storm, inscribing 'The Lady of Shalott' on the prow. As she sailed towards Camelot and **certain death**, she sang a lament. Her frozen body was found shortly afterwards by the knights and ladies of Camelot, one of whom is Lancelot, who prayed to God to have mercy on her soul."

- Waterhouse was born the year after the Pre-Raphaelites were founded but he is known for working in the **Pre-Raphaelite style**. He worked several decades after the breakup of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, which had **seen its heyday** in the mid-nineteenth century, leading him to have gained the title of "**the modern Pre-Raphaelite**". His artworks were known for their depictions of women from both ancient Greek mythology and Arthurian legend.
- Born in Rome to English parents who were both painters, he later moved to London, where he enrolled in the Royal Academy of Art. He soon began exhibiting at their annual summer exhibitions, focusing on the creation of large canvas works depicting scenes from the daily life and mythology of **ancient Greece**. Later on in his career he came to embrace the Pre-Raphaelite style of painting despite the fact that it had gone **out of fashion** in the British art scene several decades before.
- Waterhouse painted **three different versions** of *The Lady of Shalott*, in 1888, 1894 (tied up in the threads of her loom), and 1916 (wearing a red dress in front of a round window and her unbroken loom). Another of Waterhouse's favourite subjects was Ophelia; the most famous of his paintings of Ophelia depicts her just before her death, putting flowers in her hair as she sits on a tree branch leaning over a lake. Like *The Lady of Shalott* and other Waterhouse paintings, it deals with a woman dying in or near water. He also may have been inspired by paintings of Ophelia by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais.

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- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/waterhouse-the-lady-of-shalott-n01543>



Sir John Lavery (1856-1941), *The Glasgow Exhibition, 1888*, 1888, 23.5 x 34.9 cm

- 'The International Exhibitions held in Britain's great industrial cities became increasingly sumptuous towards the end of the century. The **first Scottish Exhibition** in Kelvingrove Park in Glasgow attracted **over five million visitors** and led to the building of Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery. Lavery recorded the exhibition in **40 on-the-spot impressionist sketches**. These small scenes provided the background for a commission to paint a commemoration picture of Queen Victoria's State Visit in August 1888.' (Tate display caption)
- **John Lavery** was an **Irish painter** best known for his **portraits** and **wartime paintings**. He trained in **Glasgow and Paris** and was commissioned to paint **Queen Victoria's state visit to Glasgow**. This commission made his name and enabled him to **move to London as a society portrait painter**. In WWI he became a war artist but a car accident prevented him from travelling to the front. After the war he was knighted and in **1921 elected to the Royal Academy**.

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Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), *Boulogne Sands*, 1888-91, 61 x 76.5 cm

- 'In the early 1880s Steer studied in Paris, where he encountered the work of the French impressionists. After his return to England in 1884, he painted a series of luminous and brightly coloured coastal views which relate to Monet's paintings of the same period. The loose brushwork and sparkling colours brilliantly capture the transience and exhilaration of childhood and summer vacations. His use of strongly contrasting colours draws on theories being promoted by the most avant-garde painters in France at this time.' (Tate display caption)
- **Philip Wilson Steer** (1860-1942) was a British painter of landscapes, seascapes plus portraits and figure studies. He was also an **influential art teacher**. His sea and landscape paintings made him a leading figure in the **Impressionist movement in Britain** but in time he turned to a more traditional English style, clearly influenced by both John **Constable** and J. M. W. **Turner**, and spent more time painting in the countryside rather than on the coast. As a painting **tutor at the Slade School of Art** for many years he influenced generations of young artists.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/steer-boulogne-sands-n05439>



Stanhope Alexander Forbes (1857-1947), *The Health of the Bride*, 1889, 152 x 200 cm

- Forbes finished *The Health of the Bride* in 1889 when he was living and painting in Newlyn, Cornwall. The £600 proceeds from its sale enabled him to get married the same year. It was sold to Henry Tate who gave it to the nation in 1897 when the Tate Gallery was founded.
- Forbes depicts **generations of the same family seated around a table at the wedding breakfast.**
- A **sailor raises a toast** to the bride who **stares pensively** into her bouquet, her eyes not meeting the gazes of her admiring onlookers.
- The *Health of the Bride* received an **enthusiastic response** at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1889 (the Tate website says 1899). The critic of the *Art Journal* remarked in 1893 that the '**solemn awkwardness** of the young couple themselves, the **knowledgeable indifference** of the old, and the **innocent unconcern** of the very young - all these are managed with **frankness and skill**' (quoted in Cook, p.168).
- Forbes was praised for his choice of subject, its painterly qualities and his handling of light from two sources. Note that the source on the right is not visible, what looks like a window is the reflection from the glass front of a cabinet.

Notes

- The party is shown toasting the bride with her sail brother. The sailor is a sergeant.
- The picture was painted from the **artist's friends** at his studio in Newlyn, not from professional models, and the setting is the local inn.
- Lord Lever considered buying Stanhope Forbes's *Health of the Bride*. He described how the painting was 'ready' for the purpose of advertising: "Scarcely wants a touch ... I should have put a box of Sunlight Soap in the hands of the best man, who is standing up with a glass in his hand drinking health and prosperity to the newly-married couple. The glass would have been replaced by the soap, with the toast, 'Happy is the Bride that Sunlight Soap Shines Upon.' " However, the painting was already promised to Henry Tate, the sugar magnate who left his collection to what was renamed the Tate Gallery.
- Tate:
 - On 16 July 1889 Stanhope Alexander Forbes wrote to Sir Henry Tate (1819-1899) 'I myself will be rather occupied down here - no less a matter than my own wedding. It was inevitable after painting this picture' (quoted in Cook and Hardie, p.84). Forbes was writing from **Newlyn where he had been staying since 1884**.
 - The small Cornish fishing village attracted a number of artists in the late nineteenth century including **Thomas Cooper Gotch** (1854-1931), **Frank Bramley** (1857-1915) and Walter Langley (1852-1922). Opposed to the insularity of British painting, these artists were **encouraged to paint en plein air**, taking much of their inspiration from the work of French naturalist painters such as **Jules Bastien-Lepage** (1848-1884) and Jules Breton (1827-1906), and often choosing 'working life' subjects.
 - Forbes recalled that the idea for the painting came to him when 'Standing in one of these inn parlours I had first thought of a painting of an anglers' meeting - you will notice one or two cases of fish on the wall - but it occurred to me that a wedding party could be much more picturesquely grouped, even though one had to paint them in the smarter, more conventional Sunday clothes' (quoted in Fox, p.28).
 - The *Health of the Bride* reflects many of the aims of the Newlyn artists at the time. Forbes has chosen to use **non-professional models** and a **recognisable site**, the local inn in Newlyn. In addition, he includes evidence of the local fishing industry, for example the **stuffed fish**, **print** of a painting of a ship and the **masts of ships** seen through the window. This painting can be included amongst a number of works by Forbes, including *Off the Fishing Grounds* (1886) and *Old Newlyn* (1884), which reveal an **unchanging view of life** in Newlyn at a time when rural activities and traditional ways of life were gradually disappearing. **Forbes had a**

monopoly on such subjects in the eyes of the Victorian public, his paintings being characterised by their subdued palette and **square brushwork**.

- The painting was **bought for the large sum of £600 by Sir Henry Tate** in 1889 and was to become part of the collection which he gave to the nation at the foundation of the Tate Gallery. The **profits** from the sale of the painting **enabled Forbes to propose to the artist Elizabeth Armstrong** (1859-1912) who had moved to Newlyn in 1885. Their marriage took place in St Peter's Church in Newlyn a few months after *The Health of the Bride* was completed.



George Clausen (1852-1944), *The Girl at the Gate*, 1889, 171.4 x 138.4 cm

George Clausen (1852-1944), *The Girl at the Gate*, 1889, 171.4 x 138.4 cm, not on display

- 'Clausen painted this picture at the village of Cookham Dean in Berkshire, where he lived. Mary Baldwin modelled for the woman at the gate. She was from the village and worked as the Clausen family's nanny. Clausen was one of the 'rural naturalists', a young generation of predominantly French-trained painters who painted realistic scenes of everyday country life, in the late 19th century. Like others in this group Clausen was greatly influenced by the French painter Jules Bastien-Lepage, who painted in a similar style.' (Tate display caption)

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/clausen-the-girl-at-the-gate-n01612>



Next week: The Late
Victorians 1890-1900