



1880-1901 The Late Victorian Period

- **Decline of Royal Academy Monopoly**
 - By the late Victorian period the importance of the **Royal Academy** and the old **academic style** of painting had **declined**. With the decline of the Royal Academy artists in various geographic locations were able to form substantial and influential groups of like minded artists.
- **Pessimism and Decadence**
 - It was a time of **contradictions**. It was a time of **prosperity** (although the 'Long Depression' was from 1873-79) and the **Empire was the largest** it had ever been yet among intellectuals there was a **feeling of pessimism** and **impending doom**. **Max Nordau** expressed this well in his book ***Decadence***, in which he made the surprising claim that art, starting with the Pre-Raphaelites, was the product of diseased minds. The disease was mysticism and irrational thinking that he thought would lead to the collapse of civilization. From an art historical perspective, this shows that the **Pre-Raphaelites** had begun a **profound change**, which indicates that they should be regarded as an early vanguard (an 'avant garde') of what we now call the modern art movement.
 - A related concern was **physical health**. The 1880-81 and particularly the 1899-1902 Boer Wars were a shock to public confidence in the Empire. Britain used 450,000 troops to defeat 35,000 Boers. During the Boer War a **half of all the young men** conscripted were in too poor health to serve. In some towns **90% of men were rejected**. It was found to be caused by **poor diets** and in 1906 schools provided meals to their pupils. There was a movement to improve the health of the nation both physically and mentally. It was related to 'muscular Christianity' where godliness was equated with manliness, and Thomas Arnold's educational system at Rugby School.

- **Orientalism and Fairy Painting**
 - **Orientalism** was concerned with representing scenes from the Middle East but **more generally** there was an interest in other societies, sometimes called **the 'Other'** (Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 1979). This included what were known as **'primitive' societies** that were **geographically remote**, such as **fishing villages** like Newlyn and exotic societies such as **Japan** as well as those that were **remote in time** such as **classical and medieval** societies.
 - The idea of other worlds also included literary and fantasy worlds that included **fairy painting**.
- **New Art Movements**
 - The stranglehold of the Royal Academy was being broken by art movements, such as the Pre-Raphaelites and by artists, such as Whistler, that were outside the establishment.
 - It was further weakened when the **Grosvenor Gallery** opened in **1877** and promoted **'modern' art**.
 - British attitudes to modern art were **"polarized"** at the end of the 19th century. **Modernist movements** were both cherished and vilified by artists and critics; Impressionism was initially regarded by "many conservative critics" as a **"subversive foreign influence"**, but became "fully assimilated" into British art during the early-20th century.
 - The **New English Art Club (NEAC)** started in **1885** and became another alternative to the Royal Academy and led to other groups including:
 - **English Impressionism** was influenced by Jules Bastien-Lepage.
 - **Newlyn School**, was founded by Stanhope Forbes and it became a large artistic community.
 - **Glasgow School** which includes the **Glasgow Boys and the Glasgow Girls**.
 - **Walter Sickert, the Fitzroy Street Group and the Camden Town Group** developed an English style of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism with a strong strand of social documentary. They combined with the **English Vorticists** in 1913 to form **The London Group** and artist-led organisation that still holds exhibitions.
 - There were also smaller artistic communities, such as:
 - **Staithe Group**, an art colony in North Yorkshire, 25 artist, inspired by Monet, Cezanne and Renoir. It included Laura Knight.
 - **Cullercoats**, Winslow Homer spent two years there 1881-2.

Notes

- **Royal Academy** became increasingly **ossified**; the unmistakably **late Victorian** figure of **Frank Dicksee** was appointed **President in 1924**.

- The NEAC conveniently used the Egyptian Hall opposite the Royal Academy. Today the NEAC remains figurative and the Royal Academy is mostly abstract and conceptual art. Early members included Thomas Cooper Gotch, Frank Bramley, **John Singer Sargent**, **Philip Wilson Steer**, George Clausen and **Stanhope Forbes**
- Jules Bastien-Lepage had a profound effect upon a group of young Scottish painters who came to be known as the “Glasgow Boys”, who included Sir John Lavery and George Henry. They straddled Impressionism, and Art Nouveau, Japonisme and the Celtic Revival in design, with the architect and designer **Charles Rennie Mackintosh** now their best-known member. Painters included Thomas Millie Dow, George Henry, Joseph Crawhall and James Guthrie.
- The Camden Town Group included Walter Sickert, Harold Gilman, Spencer Frederick Gore, Charles Ginner, Robert Bevan, Malcolm Drummond and Lucien Pissarro (the son of French Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro).
- The **Scottish Colourists** indeed mostly used bright light and colour; some, like Samuel Peploe and John Duncan Fergusson, were living in France to find suitable subjects. They were initially inspired by Sir William McTaggart (1835–1910), a Scottish landscape painter associated with Impressionism.
- Victorian art also includes **British Orientalism** (John Frederick Lewis, Holman Hunt, David Roberts, Edward Lear) and **Fairy painting**.
- Important artists not mentioned include:
 - Samuel Palmer, mystic landscape artist in the tradition of William Blake
 - James Tissot, French painter of middle-class social scenes.
 - Gustave Dore, engraver of scenes including the London poor
- In photography **Pictorialism** aimed to achieve artistic indeed painterly effects; The Linked Ring (founded 1892) was founded by Henry Peach Robinson, George Davison, and Henry Van der Weyde with the aim of bringing art back into the science of photography.
- The American **John Singer Sargent** was the most successful London portraitist at the start of the 20th century, with **John Lavery**, **Augustus John** and **William Orpen** rising figures. John's sister Gwen John lived in France, and her intimate portraits were relatively little appreciated until decades after her death.
- The London-born Irish artist **Jack Butler Yeats** (1871–1957), was based in Dublin, at once a romantic painter, a symbolist and an expressionist.
- In the early 20th century, **Vorticism** was a brief coming together of a number of Modernist artists in the years immediately before 1914; members included **Wyndham Lewis**, the sculptor **Sir Jacob Epstein**, David Bomberg, Malcolm Arbuthnot, Lawrence Atkinson, the American photographer Alvin Langdon Coburn, Frederick Etchells, the French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Cuthbert Hamilton, **Christopher Nevinson**, William Roberts, Edward Wadsworth, Jessica Dismorr, Helen Saunders, and Dorothy Shakespeare.
- The early 20th century also includes The **Sitwell's artistic circle** and more notably the **Bloomsbury Group** a group of mostly English writers, intellectuals,

philosophers and artists, including painter Dora Carrington, painter and art critic **Roger Fry**, art critic **Clive Bell**, painter **Vanessa Bell**, painter **Duncan Grant** among others; very fashionable at the time, their work in the visual arts looks less impressive today. British modernism was to remain somewhat tentative until after World War II, though figures such as Ben Nicholson kept in touch with European developments.

What Was the State of the British Economy During the 19th Century?

The agricultural economy was dependent on the weather and the import and export laws. The manufacturing economy depended on the availability of capital, a skilled workforce, political stability and the availability of raw materials.

1814 the last 'Frost Fair' held on the Thames. The 'Little Ice Age' started in 1350 and ended in the 1850s, with three particularly cold periods from 1650, 1770 and 1850.

1815 Implementation of the 'Corn Laws' to artificially fix the price of corn. The start of an agricultural depression leading to the Swing Riots of the 1830s.

1816 Terrible harvest, the 'Year Without a Summer'

1825 Banking crisis

1840s 'The Hungry Forties'

1846-49 Great Irish Famine

1846 the repeal of the 'Corn Laws' by Robert Peel, a Conservative with the support of the Whigs against his own party.

1847 Rail stock crash

1873-79 the Long Depression, particularly in the US where it extended into the 1890s.

1877-95 agricultural depression caused by wet summers, US imports and animal diseases

1870-1914 foreign trade tripled

1880-1913 the 'Golden Age' for international finance

1900-1914 the Edwardian Era was a time of peace and prosperity with no depressions and widespread prosperity.

1913 US overtook the UK as the largest economy in the world. London became the world's financial capital and the export of capital became the basis of the UK economy.

UK Population

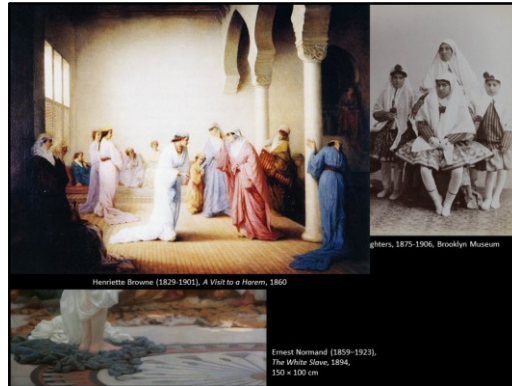
- From 1801 to 1901 the UK population increased from 10.5m to 40m (fourfold in a century). The population in 1701 was estimated to be 6.5m.
- In 1700 only 17% of the population lived in urban areas, by 1800 it was 25.5% and by 1900 it was 77%. That is, during the nineteenth century roughly half the population moved from rural to urban areas. This was to meet the demand for labour and because of the 'agricultural revolution' that pre-dated 1750 and was a

combination of good harvests, crop rotation and increased mechanisation.



Notes

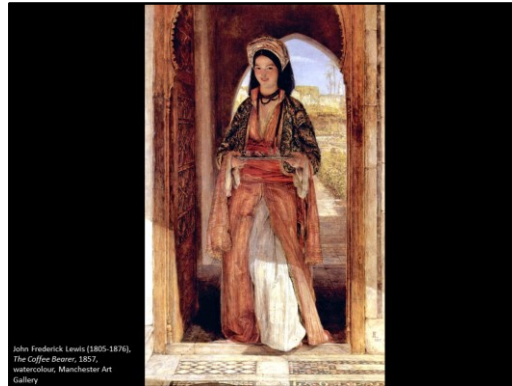
- Orientalism was a common and popular theme for Victorian painting. Like the medieval and the classical it provided a view of another world.
- This was a world that was constructed to satisfy the Victorian expectations of the orient. The models were often western women and although the settings were drawn in the Middle East they did not reflect the reality of life there.
- Edward Said wrote in *Orientalism* (1978) of the West's patronizing perceptions and fictional depictions of "the East". It often involved seeing Arab culture as exotic, backward, uncivilized, and at times dangerous. Said defined it as the acceptance in the West of "the basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny and so on." "The West" constructed "the East" as extremely different and inferior, and therefore in need of Western intervention or "rescue".



Ernest Normand (1859–1923), *The White Slave*, 1894, 150 × 100 cm
 Anon, *Harem Scene with Mothers and Daughters*, 1875-1906, Brooklyn Museum
 Henriette Browne (1829-1901), *A Visit to a Harem*, 1860

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- Common topics for painting was the slave market and the harem. Both were presented as decadent, exotic and primitive which provided a counterpart to the Europeans' construction of their own identity and enabled Europeans to portray themselves as the opposite: civilized, moral and powerful. Both also allowed European men to project their fantasies upon Oriental women and enhance the fantasy by granting it the power of reality.
- You may associate Victorian oriental art with pictures of slave markets and nude figures but the nude figure was unusual in English art. It is a very common theme in French art by artists such as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) and Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904).

- An exception is this artist, Ernest Normand (1859–1923), a notable English Victorian painter. He painted history and orientalist paintings, and also undertook portraits. His work was influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites. In 1884 he married the painter Henrietta Rae (1859–1928) and they had two children. They both painted the nude in lush settings, and were criticised for an apparent tendency towards an excess of sensuality in some of their paintings. He and his wife were based in London from the early 1890s, where he had his studio and received support from the circle around Lord Leighton. Henrietta Rae was one of the leading late Victorian female artists particularly as part of the classical revival and she was the foremost painter of the female nude in the pre-modern period.
- One artist who was allowed inside the harem was **Henriette Browne** (1829-1901, French orientalist painter). They show fully clothed women and their children standing around chatting. Henriette Browne was the pseudonym for Mme Jules de Saux, née Sophie Boutellier. She specialised in genre scenes, especially Near-Eastern and religious subjects, as well as portraits. She also worked as an engraver. She started exhibiting at the Salon in Paris in 1853 and exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, between 1871 and 1879. She used the pseudonym as she was the daughter of a Count and painting was not regarded as a suitable occupation for an upper-class French woman.



John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876), *The Coffee Bearer*, 1857, watercolour, Manchester Art Gallery

Key point: the 'Orient' was an exotic location onto which artist could project their fantasies

John Frederick Lewis

The son of an engraver and landscape painter (Frederick Christian Lewis 1779-1856) he learned to paint animals with Edwin Landseer. He travelled to Switzerland and Italy and lived in Spain and Morocco. He lived for 10 years in Cairo from 1841 to 1851 where he adopted local costume and stayed away from the Western community. He painted in watercolours and recorded the life of the people in Cairo and the landscape around Egypt and Sinai. He returned to England to discover his work was appreciated in England and France and died in Walton-on-Thames in 1876.

The Western view of the Middle East has changed. In the nineteenth century it was a land of hedonism and it is now seen as a land of violence and puritanism. The artist who portrayed the most sexual view was Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) a French Orientalist painter, draftsman and sculptor with views of slave markets, harems and female slaves. Orientalists portrayed captive women at the disposal of men and their works became popular. They encouraged the male spectator to become a voyeur because female slave scenes became a convenient vehicle for showing titillating nudes. In England Oriental nudes were less prevalent and the classical period was used to justify the representation of the nude.



John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876), *The Siesta*, 1876, Tate Britain

- **French Orientalism** in the early nineteenth century was often propaganda in support of French imperialism, depicting the East as a place of backwardness, lawlessness, or barbarism enlightened and tamed by French rule. Some later paintings sometimes appear to be no more than a search for a plausible location to show **naked women** with a theme of **male control** and subjugation. Common subjects for French artists were **slave markets**, **harems** and the **Oriental sex slave** or odalisque.
- **British Orientalism** was often concerned with representing Islamic culture or adding authenticity to a **religious subject**.
- **John Frederick Lewis** (1804-1876) lived for several years in a traditional house in Cairo. He painted **realistic genre scenes of Middle Eastern life** and more idealized scenes in upper class Egyptian interiors. His careful representation of **Islamic architecture** and furnishings set new standards of realism, which influenced other artists. He "**never painted a nude**", and **his wife modelled for several of his harem scenes**. Leighton described his 'harem as a place of almost English domesticity, ... [where]... women's fully clothed respectability suggests a moral healthiness to go with their natural good looks'.

Notes

British Orientalism

- The definitive book is Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979), in which he wrote Orientalism is '**a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the orient**'.
- The art historian Linda Nochlin wrote in *The Imaginary Orient* (1983), 'Another important function, then, of the picturesque – Orientalizing in this case – is to certify that the people encapsulated by it, defined by its presence, are **irredeemably different** from, **more backward than**, and **culturally inferior** to

those who construct and consume the picturesque product. They are irrevocably "Other."

- The French artist James Tissot, who worked in England, used the Middle East landscape for Biblical subjects but with little regard for historical accuracy. **Jean-Léon Gérôme** (1824-1904) exhibited *For Sale; Slaves at Cairo* at the Royal Academy in London in 1871, it was "**widely found offensive**".

John Frederick Lewis

- John Frederick Lewis (1805-1876) was the son of an engraver and landscape painter who specialised in Oriental and Mediterranean scenes.
- He was a club man and dandy in his youth, handsome and rather aloof and completely dedicated to his art.
- Lewis lived in Spain between 1832 and 1834 and was nicknamed 'Spanish' Lewis. He lived in Cairo between 1841 and 1850, where he dressed and lived as an Ottoman nobleman and avoided the European community.
- He made numerous sketches that he **turned into paintings even after his return to England** in 1851.
- He corresponded regularly with John Ruskin and others in the London art world, including Millais and Edward Lear, both of whom visited Walton, he lived in seclusion at Walton-on-Thames, where his wife would set out his brushes each morning.
- He lived in 'The Holme' in **Walton-on-Thames from 1851** until his death in 1876, aged 71. He is buried in Frimley but there is a plaque in St Mary's Parish Church.
- Lewis became an Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) in 1859 and a member (an RA) in 1865.
- After being largely **forgotten for decades**, he became extremely fashionable, and expensive, from the 1970s and good works now fetch prices into the **millions of pounds** at auction. In 2009 Christie's sold *The Arab Scribe, Cairo* for just over £2 million and *The Mid-Day Meal, Cairo* for £1 million. They are bought by Arabs, mostly by women for the home, and a premium is paid for those paintings that are historically accurate.



William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *A Street Scene in Cairo; The Lantern-Maker's Courtship*, 1854–61, Birmingham

Key point: Hunt presents a Middle Eastern street scene from a Western perspective

This is a rare contemporary narrative scene, as the young man feels his fiancé's face, which he is not allowed to see, through her veil, as a Westerner in the background beats his way up the street with his stick.



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

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

See

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

- **William Holman Hunt** was inspired by a religious agenda and made many trips to the Middle East. His *The Finding of Christ in the Temple* (1860; Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery), uses an Orientalist setting, and *The Scapegoat* (1854–55; Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port Sunlight), is a Christian allegory set and painted in the Palestinian landscape.

The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple

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

Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His

mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

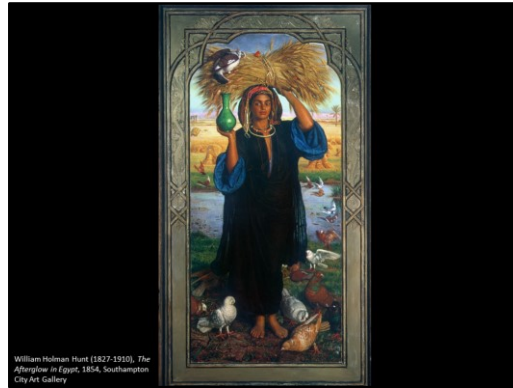
- Hunt depicts the moment at which Mary and Joseph find Jesus, while the rabbis in the temple are reacting in various contrasting ways to his discourse, some intrigued, others angry or dismissive. This depiction of contrasting reactions is part of the tradition of the subject, as evidenced in Albrecht Dürer's much earlier version. Hunt would also have known Bernardino Luini's version of the subject in the National Gallery (at the time ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci).
- Hunt was obsessed with the idea of revitalising religious art by emphasising ethnographical accuracy combined with detailed Biblical symbolism. Hunt travelled to the Middle East to create the picture, using local people as models and studying ancient Judaic customs and rituals. Progress on the painting was delayed by difficulties with models, and eventually Hunt postponed it to work on another project, *The Scapegoat*. He eventually completed it in 1860, back in England. His friend Frederic George Stephens wrote a pamphlet containing a detailed explanation of the content and the characters.
- The subject was begun during Hunt's visit to Palestine in 1854 but completed back in London, with the interior of the Temple being composed from the Alhambra Court at the Crystal Palace. It was then shown in a series of popular travelling exhibitions at which visitors could buy the pamphlet and subscribe to an engraved reproduction. These were organised by the dealer Ernest Gambart, and proved a great financial success. George Holt paid 1200 guineas (£1,260) for the work in 1888.

From F. G. Stephens Pamphlet

- Stephens wrote a helpful guide through Hunt's cast of characters.
- 'Nearest of the Rabbis is seated an old priest, the chief, who, blind, imbecile, and decrepit,' clutches the Torah to himself 'strenuously yet feebly; his sight is gone, his hands seem palsied . . . He is the type of obstinate adherence to the old and effete doctrine and pertinacious refusal of the new.' Thus, he not only is the representative symbol of those Pharisees who refused to believe in Christ — in the Messiah for whom they had been waiting — but he also prefigures all men who resist Christianity. 'Blind, imbecile, he cares not to examine the bearer of glad tidings, but clings to the superseded dispensation.'
- The second Rabbi is, 'a good-natured, worldly individual, with a feminine face, who, holding the phylactery-box, that contained the promises of the Jewish dispensation in one hand, touches with the other that of the blind man, as though to . . . express a mutual satisfaction in their sufficiency, whatever may come of this

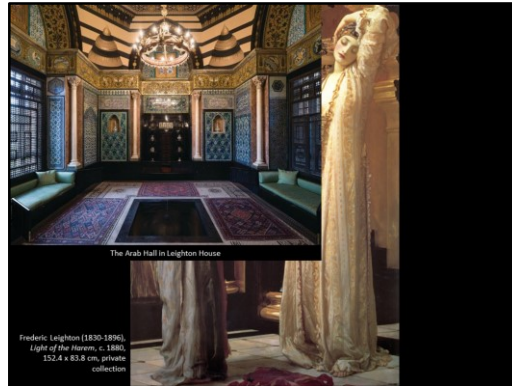
new thing Christ in conversation has suggested'. Whereas the older man represents what the painter took to be an exhausted, feeble tradition and is himself psychologically incapable of entertaining any new ideas, this good-natured man will not allow himself to be troubled by any venturesome thought. He is a good member of the Establishment of any age and place, and although he chiefly explains the nature of those who opposed Christ in his own time, for Hunt he is also analogous to many an Anglican clergyman as well.

- Their neighbour, a man 'eager, unsatisfied, passionate, argumentative,' represents a far different kind of person, for 'his strong antagonism of mind will allow no such comfortable rest as the elders enjoy'. He has been arguing with Christ when the entrance of Mary and Joseph interrupts the debate.
- In contrast, the fourth Rabbi, a haughty, self-centered man 'assumes the judge, and would decide between the old and new. He is a Pharisee of the most stiff order. Beyond even the custom of the chief Rabbis and ordinary practice of his sect, he retains the unusually broad phylactery bound about his head.'
- Between these last two figures appears one of the musicians, who 'seems to mock the words of Christ upon some argument that has gone before, and, with one hand clenched and supine, protrudes a scornful finger, hugging himself in self-conceit. He is a levite, a time-serving, fawning fellow ... who would ingratiate himself with his seated superiors.'
- The fifth Rabbi 'has a bi-forked beard, like that of a goat, reaching to his waist,' and this 'good-natured, temporizing' fellow makes himself comfortable upon his divan 'and would willingly let every one else be as much at ease'.
- Again employing the principle of contrast, Hunt has made the sixth Rabbi 'an envious, acrid individual, a lean man' who has arrived late at the Temple and stretches forward to see the face of the Virgin.
- The seventh and last of the Rabbis is a 'mere human lump of dough . . . a huge sensual stomach of a man, who squats upon his own broad base, and indolently lifts his hand in complacent surprise at the interruption'.
- These seven men and their attendant musician provide a gallery of psychological as well as physical portraits of the Pharisees of Christ's time and of all ages. As Stephens explains, the painter leads us through 'many forms of character, from the blindness of eye and heart of the eldest Rabbi, through the simple reposing confidence of the second, to the eager championship of the third, the self-centred complacency of the fourth, the indolent good-nature of the fifth,' the envious hostility of the sixth, and the sensual complacency of the last.



William Holman Hunt (1827-1910), *The Afterglow in Egypt*, 1854, Southampton City Art Gallery

Two versions, one in the Ashmolean with a basket of pigeons on her head and this one.



Frederic Leighton (1830-1896), *Light of the Harem*, c. 1880, 152.4 x 83.8 cm, private collection

- **Frederic Leighton** was interested in Islamic design and in his home in London he constructed an **Arab Hall** which was based in his trips to Damascus and La Zisa, Palermo Sicily, a Sicilio-Norman Palace. The Arab Hall was designed by architect **William Aitchison** and was worked on by **William De Morgan** (potter), **Walter Crane**, Edgar Boehm (sculptor) and Randolph Caldecott (artists and illustrator). Many of the tiles are **Izaik tiles** from Damascus, end 15th to 17th century, and some are by De Morgan. Izaik tiles are made at a lower temperature than porcelain and are made from 'frit', silica and other substances used to make glass, Fritware is also known as stonepaste and faience.



- The possibility of the existence of fairies in the past was taken seriously by a small number of intellectuals. One argument was that such stories are widespread across Europe, have a similar form and we know of pygmy people in Africa. So, thousands of years ago there could have been a race of tiny people that lived in remote areas and interacted occasionally with humans.
- However, Victorian fairy painting was more inspired by creating an alternative world which, like the Orient, was 'Other', that is different in strange and exotic ways that could be explored through your desires and imagination.
- Enthusiastic admirers of fairy painting included Queen Victoria, Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens and John Ruskin.
- We shall look at three different types of fairy painter.



Richard Dadd (1817-1886), *Fairy Fellers' Master-Stroke*, 1855–64, 54 x 39.5 cm, Tate Britain

- **Leading early Victorian fairy painter.**
 - **Richard Dadd** was the **first Victorian artist** to experience **positive critical recognition for his fairy paintings.**
- **Commissioned by 'Bedlam'.**
 - In **1842 (aged 25)**, while traveling up the Nile by boat, Dadd underwent a **dramatic personality change**, becoming delusional, increasingly **violent**, and believing himself to be under the influence of his true father the Egyptian god **Osiris**. He was diagnosed as of unsound mind and cared for by his family in Kent. He became convinced that his father was the Devil in disguise and in 1843 killed him with a knife and fled for France. On the way he tried to kill a tourist with a razor but was overpowered and was arrested by the police. Dadd confessed to the killing of his father and was returned to England, where he was committed to the criminal department of Bethlem psychiatric hospital (also known as **Bedlam**) at the age of 27. Here and later at the newly created **Broadmoor** Hospital, Dadd was cared for and encouraged to continue painting. Hospital notes are sparse but Dadd probably suffered from a form of **paranoid schizophrenia or bipolar manic depression**. Two of his six siblings were similarly afflicted, while a third had "a private attendant" for unknown reasons.
 - This painting by Richard Dadd took nine years to complete and was **commissioned** by George Henry Haydon, head steward at the Bethlem Royal Hospital or **Bedlam** (Bethlam is the world's oldest psychiatric institution, founded in 1247 by the Bishop-elect of Bethlehem in the reign of Henry III). Dadd used a layering technique to achieve a three-dimensional effect and even after nine years he considered it unfinished which he signified by adding 'Quasi' to its title. He wrote a long poem

called 'Elimination of a Picture & its Subject—called The Fellers' Master Stroke' naming and describing every character in it to show that it was well considered and not just a random assemblage of figures.

Notes

Richard Dadd

- Dadd showed an aptitude for drawing at a young age and entered the Royal Academy School when he was 20 where he was awarded the medal for life drawing.
- With **William Powell Frith, Augustus Egg, Henry O'Neil** and others, he founded **The Clique**, of which he was generally considered the **leading talent**.
- In the hospital he was allowed to continue to paint, and it was here that many of his masterpieces were created, including his most celebrated painting, *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke*, which he worked on between 1855 and 1864.
- Dadd wrote a long poem to explain the painting but it helps very little with the interpretation, for example,

Above Clod-hopper sits and like the sod –
He's brown in colour, also he's well shod.
A satyr's head has, buckles in his shoes.
Nurses one foot upon his knee amuse with him
Yourself he's modern fay.

Fairy Painting

- Rooted in the literary influences of Romanticism. Henry Fuseli painted *Titania and Bottom* c. 1790.
- Artists were inspired by Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. Other literary works, such as Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Alexander Pope's mock-heroic *The Rape of the Lock*. Mostly it was fantasy with dream elements and sometimes eroticism.
- In the 1840s the Scottish painter **Joseph Noel Paton** (1821-1901) was a well-known fairy painter who painted *The Reconciliation of Oberon and Titania* (1847) and *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania* (1849).
- By the 1870s, **Richard 'Dicky' Doyle** and **John Anster Fitzgerald** (1823?-1906, 'Fairy Fitzgerald') were well-known fairy painters and illustrators. By the end of the century, many artists painted and illustrated works with fairy themes, such as Arthur Rackham (who illustrated many fairy tale stories), Edmund Dulac (who illustrated *The Little Mermaid*), Walter Jenks Morgan and Laurence Housman.
- Many well-known artists painted a few fairy paintings, such as Edwin Landseer (1802-1873, 'the Victorians favourite painter'), John Everett Millais, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Arthur Hughes and William Bell Scott.



John Anster Fitzgerald (1819–1906), *The Fairy's Lake*, 1866, 15.2 x 20.3 cm, Tate

- John Anster Christian Fitzgerald (1823? – 1906) was a Victorian era fairy painter and portrait artist. He was nicknamed "Fairy Fitzgerald" for his main genre. Many of his fairy paintings are dark and contain images of ghouls, demons, and references to drug use; his work has been compared to the surreal nightmarish scenes of Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel.
- Not much is known about Fitzgerald. He is generally remembered today for his pictures of fairyland, this one probably being the example shown at the Royal Academy in 1866. Other paintings by him depict humans deep in sleep, conjuring up in their dreams a fantastic world of elves, sprites and devils similar to the creature shown here astride the wings of a bat, attempting to spear an innocent water-sprite.
- He was born in London and was largely self-taught. His work was first shown at the Royal Academy in 1845 and he exhibited at other societies. His work used brilliant colours and was rarely based on any literary theme. He was reclusive by nature and had little contact with other artists. Twentieth-century art forgers have been active in creating phony Fitzgerald fairy pictures. Brought to public attention by the 1998 exhibition of Victorian fairy paintings at the Royal Academy of Arts his paintings have since sold for up to £500,000, although most sell at prices between £30,000 and £120,000.



Joseph Noel Paton (181-1901), *The Fairy Raid: Carrying Off a Changeling, Midsummer Eve*, 1867, 90.5 x 146.7 cm, Glasgow Museums

- **Some fairy paintings had dark themes**

- Fairy paintings were not all semi-naked women fliting in the sun. Some fairy paintings had a dark element to the story. **Changelings** were thought to be the offspring of a fairy, troll, elf or other legendary creature that has been secretly left in the place of a human child. Sometimes the term is also used to refer to the child who was taken.
- The **Fairy Queen's** route is lined by fairy ladies, knights, elves, a Puck, goblins and a jester with an animal face. They are moving towards a clearing marked by standing **megaliths**.
- The large fairies are conventionally beautiful but the smaller attendants are **grotesque**. The horror of the scene is suggested by the **knight** on the right about to plunge his **lance** into something that looks like a **monster maiden** holding a lantern. **Black-hooded creatures** attempt to climb out of a pit and several fairies are riding demonic devil's mounts.
- The **stolen child** has its thumb in its mouth and stares out of the picture while its royal abductress ignores the child.
- Three **three human children dance** in the foreground but the sinister implications only become clear when we notice the **thin chain round their ankles**. They are a captives monitored by a tiny elf between their legs. The ostensibly pretty picture is actually of slave owners and the slaves they have stolen.

- **Meaning.**

- Paton is dealing with the **anxiety of child abduction** and the folklore of changelings. The primitive other world at the edge of society still lurked and could take children or young girls for evil or unnatural purposes. As the century developed the fear of fairy abduction was replaced by a fear

amongst middle-class families of abduction by gypsies, another form of outsider.

- **Changelings**

- The legend of the changeling is widespread across societies from Cornwall, Ireland, Scotland, Scandinavia, Spain and Africa and it may have been a psychological defence against the shock of giving birth to a child with a genetic disease.

Notes

Joseph Noel Paton (1821–1901)

- A Scottish painter and a friend of Millais (a fellow student at the Royal Academy), he had a kinship with the Pre-Raphaelites early in his career.
- He painted mythological and historical scenes and later gained great success with rather portentous and sentimental religious pictures such as *The Man of Sorrows* (1875, Laing AG, Newcastle upon Tyne). They were much reproduced in engravings, and some of them went on tour and were even made the subject of sermons.

Bridget Cleary ('last witch burned in the UK')

- In 1895 **Bridget Cleary** was **murdered by her husband** but his defence was that **she was a changeling** and that he was simply trying to get his wife back. His wife had been ill and at the trial he was accused with eight others of the 'wounding'. His wife had been burned before or after her death. It is possible the story was concocted by the husband to avoid or mitigate the murder charge but the involvement of other villagers suggests not. The trial was at a time when Irish home rule was being debated and it was used as an example of the Irish people's inability to govern themselves, and worries were expressed about the credulity and superstition of rural nationalist Catholics. The coroner who examined Bridget's corpse claimed that "amongst Hottnots one would not expect to hear of such an occurrence." Her husband Michael Cleary was found guilty of manslaughter and sentenced to 15 years. He emigrated to Montreal on his release in 1910.

References

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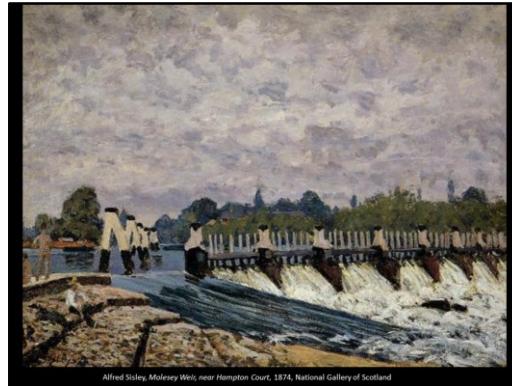
Elsie Wright (1901–1988), *Frances Griffiths with Fairies*, 1917, first published in 1920 in *The Strand Magazine*

- During the later part of the nineteenth century fairies were considered by some to have a **scientific basis**. For example, David MacRitchie, the Scottish antiquarian argued that they were rooted in a real diminutive or pygmy-statured indigenous population that lived during the late Stone Age across the British Isles, especially Scotland. The **Cottingley Fairy photographs** were cited by Conan Doyle as evidence but the photographs were later discredited when both sisters, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, confessed to the fraud.
- The Cottingley Fairies were photographs taken by Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths using their father's camera. He didn't believe their story and stopped them using his camera but Elise's mother did believe them and presented them at a local Theosophical Society meeting. One of the central beliefs of theosophy is that humanity is undergoing a cycle of evolution, towards increasing 'perfection', and it was believed that fairies could be the beginning of the next cycle of evolution so they were displayed at their annual conference. From there they reached Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who believed they were genuine and published them as part of an article he was writing for *The Strand Magazine*. The girls maintained they were genuine until old age when they admitted the trick. They had cut cardboard figures from magazines and supported them with hatpins. After Conan Doyle had become involved they were too embarrassed to change their story which was initially just done for fun. The fifth and last photograph was more controversial as Frances maintained it was genuine and both girls said they have taken the picture. The most likely explanation is that both did take the picture and it was an accidental double exposure, one of some fake fairies taken by Elsie and the other of some grass in which Frances believed she had seen fairies.
- Cottingley is a village near Bradford where the photographs were taken.

- Some historians, such as Jeremy Maas, see fairy paintings as a profound **reaction against industrialization and science** but others see them as '**just about fun**' (Andrew Stuttaford).
- **Serious interest in fairy painting died** with the **First World War** but continued in illustrations for children's books and interest was **revived in the 1970s** and fairies now form part of **fantasy art**.

ENGLISH IMPRESSIONISM





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'.
- 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**. 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.**'
- He became extremely influential as he combined **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**.



Jules Bastien-Lepage (1848-1884, aged 36), *Haymaking (Les Foins)*, 1877, Musée d'Orsay

- 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.**'
- 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.**'
- It was **quasi-scientific** as it played on the word 'naturalist' and the accurate representation of **biological specimens**.
- 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.'
- **(Click)** The success of the painting ultimately hinged on the viewers interpretation of the **look of the woman**, was she a **realistic worker** or an **model playing a part** created by the artist? Was she a humble, earthy, hard-working peasant, the critics asked, or was she a repugnant, slack-jawed beast? See the Marnin Young article at Academia.edu in which he argues that if the moment of absorption convinces and the peasant woman and her world persist outside of 'measured time' then a timeless rural scene has been created. On the other hand, if it fails to convince, as it increasingly did after 1878, it becomes a moment in time and the myth of the countryside becomes irrelevant. The kind of rural worker becomes irrelevant as she must have been a model posing, playing at being a peasant. Later critics saw this as a fatal flaw in his work. From 1879 he was increasingly accused of being **too photographic** and one historian claims he used photographs. Whether this true or not, fin-de-siècle artists increasingly used the poses people

put on when having their photograph taken.

Notes

- *Haymaking* is inspired by a poem by Andre Theuriet:
"The reaper stretched out on his bed of fresh grass
Sleeps with clenched fists while
The tedder, faint and fuddled, tanned by the sun,
Sits vacantly dreaming beside him [...]."
- (a 'tedder' is someone who spreads hay to assist with drying).
- It is daringly photographic with an unusually high horizon.

Naturalism and Realism

- As general terms, 'realism' and 'naturalism' in art are synonymous and refer to the accurate depiction of nature. Such artworks are generally painted outdoors or *en plein air*.
- Realism was a movement in French painting that followed the 1848 revolution. Key artists were Gustave Courbet, Jean-François Millet and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. **Realist painters rejected Romanticism**, which had dominated art since the 18th century, and wanted to represent **subjects truthfully** without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions. This specifically meant representing **common labourers** and it overlapped with **Social Realism**. **Naturalism took it further** and looked for illusionism, **the most accurate representation of nature**.
- In terms of realism or naturalism we might think of Francisco Goya's (1746-1828) portraits of Spanish nobility or Northern European fifteenth century representations of Christ suffering on the cross, such as Rogier van der Weyden (1399 or 1400-1464, *The Descent from the Cross*, c. 1435, Museo del Prado). There is a conflict between naturalism and ideal beauty or flattering the subject. In late nineteenth century France Naturalism distinguished itself from Realism by avoiding politics and social issues.

Roger Fry and Clive Bell

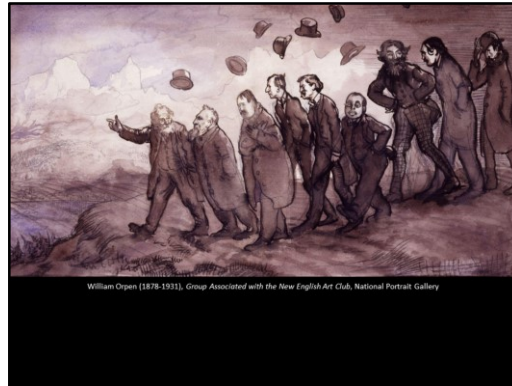
- Fry was an artist and art historian who coined the term 'Post-Impressionist' and arranged the first exhibition of 'Post-Impressionism' in England in 1910 and again in 1912. He is well known for promoting the term 'significant form' although the term was coined by Clive Bell (1881-1964) an English art critic. Bell married Vanessa Stephen, sister of Virginia Woolf and both he and Fry were closely associated with the Bloomsbury Group.
- **Fry was a formalist**, that is he believed it is a work's formal properties that make a work of art. Clive Bell wrote, 'to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions.' **Significant form** is the combination of lines and colours which make an object a work of art and the key aspect is its ability to create an aesthetic emotion.

Bell thought that the artist sees ordinary objects in the world as pure form: the experience one has when one sees something not as a means to something else, but as an end in itself. He believed that works of visual art were among the most valuable things there could be as 'there is no state of mind more excellent or more intense than the state of aesthetic contemplation'.

References

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jules_Bastien-Lepage

http://www.academia.edu/7062337/The_Motionless_Look_of_a_Painting_Jules_Bastien-Lepage_Les_Foins_and_the_End_of_Realism



William Orpen (1878-1931), *Group Associated with the New English Art Club*, National Portrait Gallery

- That brings us to **1886 when 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 artists I shall look at are
 - **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**.

The New English Art Club (NEAC)

- The origin of the Club was in the studios of a group of fifty young London artists in **1886**. These painters had studied and worked in Paris, and felt a dissatisfaction with the exhibition potential of the very academic R.A. which was under the

presidency of Sir Frederick, later Lord **Leighton**. They saw themselves as **Anglo-French painters** and at the first exhibition the majority of works were **rural naturalism**.

- It was decided to mount a **rival show**, so in **April 1886** the first exhibition of the **New English Art Club** was organised at which about fifty artists were represented, including **George Clausen, Stanhope Forbes, J.S. Sargent, Frank Bramley and Philip Wilson Steer**, Fred Brown, and Thomas Cooper Gotch.
- William Orpen's drawing is a **satire** on the most influential artists, teachers and critics of his early years and the **French influence** on British art as **taught at the Slade** and **exhibited at the NEAC**. **Alphonse Legros** (1837-1911), Slade Professor of Fine Art from 1876 to 1892, is seen with the **sculptor Auguste Rodin** (1840-1917) leading members of the English avant garde along a windy cliff top. Orpen joined the NEAC in 1900. Rodin first visited England in 1881 to see his friend Alphonse Legros.
- Left to right:
 1. Alphonse Legros (1837-1911), painter, sculptor and etcher, encouraged by Whistler to come to London in 1863, Professor at the Slade 1875-92 where his insistence on the quality of line laid the foundation of its teaching.
 2. Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), sculptor
 3. Philip Wilson Steer (1860-1942), trained in Paris, became the leading British Impressionist painter, taught at the Slade and later explored the landscape tradition of Constable and Turner.
 4. Henry Tonks (1862-1937), painter; doctor and teacher, became Principal of the Slade School of Art.
 5. Frederick Brown (1851-1941), painter and teacher, Head of Westminster School of Art, Slade Professor.
 6. William Rotherstein (1872-1945), artist and teacher of art.
 7. Augustus John (1878-1961), remained largely independent of trends and became a leading portraitist.
 8. Charles Edward Conder (1868-1909), second from right with his hands in his pockets, a friend of Toulouse-Lautrec and Aubrey Beardsley.
 9. Dugald Sutherland MacColl (1859-1948), critic, painter and gallery director of the Tate and Wallace Collection, the leading advocate of Impressionism in *The Spectator* and *Saturday Review*.



Photograph of the Egyptian Hall (built 1812, demolished 1905), Piccadilly, opposite the Royal Academy, now offices at 170-173 Piccadilly

- **Walter Sickert's** arrived at the NEAC in 1887 (the year after it was founded) and his arrival crystallised a split within the group between the more **conservative artists** and those who looked to the example of **French impressionism**.
- The latter appeared as a **breakaway group**, the '**London Impressionists**', in an exhibition at the Goupil Gallery in December 1889, and included, as well as **Sickert**, **Philip Wilson Steer**, Frederick Brown, Theodore Roussel, and Sickert's brother, Bernhard.
- I will discuss one painting from each of the **leading artists** of the NEAC – **Steer**, **Sargent**, **Clausen** and **Forbes**.

Notes

- The Egyptian Hall was the first building in England to be influenced by the Egyptian style. It was built in 1812 at a cost of £16,000 as a museum of natural history. It was commissioned by William Bullock to house his collection of curiosities from Central America and the South Seas. It was almost opposite Burlington House and the replacement building contains an arcade leading to Jermyn Street.
- It was also referred to as the London Museum or Bullock's Museum. It was the only London venue that could display very large works. Admittance was one shilling.
- In 1820, ***The Raft of the Medusa*** by Théodore Géricault was exhibited overshadowing **Benjamin Robert Haydon's** (1786-1846) painting, *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*. This was typical of his lack of commercial success. In 1844, he exhibited *The Banishment of Aristides from Athens* at the Egyptian Hall (the painting sold at Christies in 2011 for £2,750). The American dwarf Charles S. Stratton, who was known as (General) 'Tom Thumb' was also appearing and over

the Easter week 12,000 people paid to see him, while only 133½ visited Haydon's exhibition (the half was a little girl). This failure led to further decline, he was £3,000 in debt and wrote 'Stretch me no longer on this rough world' and he attempted suicide by shooting himself in 1846. This failed to kill him so he cut his throat leaving a widow and three children who were supported by his friends including Sir Robert Peel and Lord Carlisle.

- In the '**Dudley Gallery**' (see photograph) at the Egyptian Hall, the Earl of Dudley's paintings were displayed during the building of his own gallery at Dudley House, Park Lane.
- By the end of the 19th century, the Hall was also associated with **magic and spiritualism**. It was also showed some of the first films. It became known as England's Home of Mystery and many illusions were staged including the exposing of fraudulent spiritualistic manifestations.
- It was demolished in 1903-5.



Philip Wilson Steer (1860–1942), *Seated Nude: The Black Hat*, c. 1900, 50.8 x 40.6 cm, Tate

- Wilson Steer, the most Impressionist of British painters, was devoted to painting the **young female nude**. For his grander paintings he preferred this subject to his more usual landscape. Steer's young women were always posed in a believable setting, and here the model is playfully trying on a hat she has found in the studio. Steer did not exhibit this sketch, and it was chosen for the Tate directly from his studio in 1941, by the then Director Sir John Rothenstein.
- Steer told him '**friends told me it was spoiled by the hat; they thought it indecent that a nude should be wearing a hat, so it's never been shown**'.
- A distinction is often drawn in art between the 'nude' and the 'naked'. The nude is an body without clothes because that is an essential part of the representation, for example, of a naked Greek god. A picture of a naked person shows a body deprived of clothes and it is therefore potentially embarrassing or shameful. One of the characteristic of modern art is the blurring of the distinction between the naked and the nude. The contemporary artist, like Steer, makes the viewer feel uncomfortable because of the implied sexuality of the hat. The distinction between the nude and the naked was discussed by Kenneth Clark in *The Nude: a Study in Ideal Form* (1956) and he maintained that sexuality is part of the attraction of the nude and no nude should fail to arise in some slight way. He said if it does not it is bad art and exhibits false morals. However, artists sometimes judge that their nude may not be suitable for public display, as in this case. In Puritan societies such as America excessively sexual nudes are often relegated to the storage room.
- Lynda Nead points out that the female nude is a construct that controls sexuality. Artists use many conventions to achieve this control such as a reference to classical mythology, a hairless body, a posed and static body and a pure and innocent expression. It is a measure of modern art and the representation of the nude that

the artist breaks or loosens one or more of these hidden controls and so unleashes a potentially uncontrollable or unacceptable sexual force that embarrasses the viewer or makes the viewer feel uncomfortable in a social context. In this way the artist draws attention to some aspect of our society and its norms or expectations.



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

Philip Wilson Steer

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

References

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



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**.

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>



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

- **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.



John Singer Sargent (1856–1925), *Claude Monet Painting by the Edge of a Wood*,
?1885, 54 x 64.8 cm, Tate

- Sargent first met Monet in 1876, but the two artists were closest ten years later. It was probably in 1885 that they painted together at Giverny, near Paris. Sargent admired the way that Monet worked out of doors, and imitated some of his subjects and methods in sketches such as this. It is characteristic of Sargent to give a human view of Monet's practice and of the patience of his wife, who sits behind him. When he settled in London in 1885 Sargent was initially viewed as avant-garde, but came to be the greatest society portraitist of his day.



Henry Herbert La Thangue (1859–1929), *The Return of the Reapers*, 1886, 119 x 69.5 cm, Tate

- La Thangue was born in Croydon, but he trained in Paris and was particularly inspired by French artists. The work of Gustave Courbet and Jules Bastien-Lepage encouraged him to paint realist rural pictures, and he was also influenced by the Impressionists' commitment to painting before nature. In France, La Thangue adopted the 'square brush' technique used here to striking effect. It allowed him to cover the canvas quickly and to capture fleeting light effects. He painted this work in Norfolk, and characteristically placed the figures against a high horizon, flattening the picture space.



George Clausen (1852–1944), *The Girl at the Gate*, 1889, Tate Britain

- **Working-class local model.**
 - Painted at **Crookham Dean** in Berkshire, where **George Clausen lived**. **Mary Baldwin** modelled for the woman at the gate. She was from Cookham Dean village and worked as the Clausen family's **nanny**. Clausen was one of the 'rural naturalists', a young generation of artists who painted **realistic scenes of everyday country life**. Like others in this group Clausen was greatly influenced by **Jules Bastien-Lepage**.
- **Bought by Chantrey Bequest**
 - Clausen exhibited this painting at the **1890 Grosvenor Gallery** exhibition and *The Saturday Review* singled out Clausen for truthfulness observed in the open air. The *Art Journal* admired his skill but criticized the way he **followed the late Bastien-Lepage** (he died in 1884) too closely. It thought the **life-size figure** of a **16 year-old girl** with an **abstracted and joyless look** had been treated from the standpoint of Bastien-Lepage but was '**purely English**'. It was so successful that it was acquired by the **Chantrey Bequest in 1890**.
- **Many possible narratives.**
 - The painting has been arranged to suggest a narrative and shows Clausen's ability to examine a psychological state and create a mood. The girl at the gate looks sad and wistful, as if she has been waiting for a long lost lover or a husband who has gone off to war. Her parents in the background and her mother looks towards her in a concerned way.

George Clausen

- The son of an artist, he attended the South Kensington School and then worked in Edwin Longs studio and **Paris under Bouguereau**. He was an admirer of **Jules Bastien-Lepage**.

- One of the **foremost modern British painters of landscape**.
- Elected ARA in 1895 and full Academician in 1906. He became **Professor of Painting** and gave a series of memorable lectures published as *Six Lectures on Painting* (1906).
- He became an official war artist in WWI and was knighted in 1927.

NEXT WEEK:
NEWLYN SCHOOL,
GLASGOW SCHOOL,
CAMDEN TOWN GROUP

