A guide for young people visiting the Fitzwilliam Museum either with their family or as independent visitors. It offers young people a taste of the collection in each of our main first floor galleries. With:

- Ideas on how to ‘read’ art
- Conversation starting points
- Connecting the collection with studies in Art, History, English, Religious Studies
- Themes to explore
- Creative practice

Information about our young people’s programme:
www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/learning/youngpeople
The fragility of life • Christianity • Classical scenes • Architecture

Artists you like in this gallery

Art materials and techniques used

Identify the main characters in this painting.
There are many symbols in this painting associated with death. See if you can find some of these:
- fish
- hippopotamus
- carved heads
- bubbles
- fireworks
- knife
- owl
- weeds
- faded flowers

There are two small butterflies located by the skeleton's knee. The butterfly is often used in Christian art to symbolise the soul's eternal life in heaven. The artist Rosa added these as a glimmer of hope to this tragic scene; the souls of the woman and her child will pass up to heaven.

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Draw a set of studies of the skull, the skeleton's hand and wing.

Try using a range of HB, 2B and 4B pencils to create light and tone.

Create a word moodscape, here are a few to get you started: beauty, gothic, gloomy, faded, knowing, hope, spirit … put your selected words into either the skull or butterfly on the next page.

Montage and collage, using cuttings of people from magazines. Replace the images of these figures' head and hands with your own drawn skulls and skeleton hands, if you like add some wings. Experiment with acrylic brush pens and markers, or paints and fine brushes for details. You could stick these collaged images onto a canvas or mount board and extend your artwork out into a larger scene.