

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Do- It- Yourself

The Real Me

Key Stage 2

This is one of our range of DIY resources, which aim to provide you with what you need to teach your pupils in the galleries. We hope that the following teaching ideas include some which are suitable for your needs. As we do not know your pupils, or the specific aims of your visit, these ideas may need adapting, but we hope they will act as a springboard. Each idea includes signpost sequences all of which point to pupil interaction with the exhibits, *example prompt questions written in italics*, and information. Many are followed by suggested extension ideas that can take place in the galleries. 'Into Action' sheets, which are linked to these teaching ideas, are available for pupils to use in the galleries.

When you are talking in front of the painting, or any work of art in the Museum, be very careful not to touch it yourself. Also, as the children sit down in front of the painting, make sure that they can all see the painting – the gallery lighting can make this difficult if the children sit too close. Often it is better to sit the children a little further back to give them a good view.

Aims of 'The Real Me' session

- To help pupils understand that costume and clothing can help identify people in terms of class, gender, group, job, etc.
- To help pupils understand that the face, pose and gesture can reveal character and status, and that the artist can control these.
- To demonstrate how artists create the illusion of a face in both 2D and 3D media by using light and colour.

- To demonstrate that when trying to achieve a likeness, an artist can show how we think and feel on the inside, by being very careful about how they show the outside.

Galleries used in this session:

Galleries 31, 2, 3, 5 and 1

You will need to bring:

- One clipboard for each pupil
- Paper and pencil for each pupil
- Photocopied 'Into Action' sheets

Teaching Idea: Helmets in the Armoury



Aim: To look at group identity and how crucial faces are for personal identity.

Approximate timing: 15 minutes

Location: Gallery 31

No: M.19-1938

This session is all about identity – what makes me me and what makes you you. *When I stand in front of the class, how can I tell who it is who puts their hand up?* By their face. Go on to explore how we recognise each other, not only from our faces, but also our voices, the way we walk, the way we stand, the size we are – we are all different and unique. *As well as being different there are ways in which we are the same – can you think of any?* Age, school, where we live, uniform, etc. Today we are going to be looking at how artists have attempted to show in paintings what someone really looks like, and also what kind of person they are, but before we do that, I want you to look at this helmet.

Look at a helmet with a visor. *Imagine a soldier standing in front of you wearing this helmet. What part of the body would it cover? What is this part of the helmet (pointing to visor) designed to hide? Face. How would that make you feel? Scared? Could you tell what the soldier was thinking? Would the expression on the helmet ever change – is that the same with a face?* Go on to explore how it is unsettling not to be able to see someone's face. How we can hide behind a mask and not show what we feel. You could explore whether you need to wear something to hide, or whether you can hide behind a blank expression. That can be a way of protecting yourself. How you look into someone's eyes to see if they are telling the truth. *So what is the helmet for? Protection. Why is it important to protect the head?* It holds the brain – the core of you – helmet like a skull. *What does it protect you from?*

Weapons. *How does it do that?* It covers the face and neck, its hard, etc (explore all the qualities of the helmet and how it protects).

What people wear can give you lots of information about what groups they belong to and what jobs they do. But they don't tell you much about the individual person who wears them.

Teaching Idea: Its All In The Pose



Aim: Teaching idea to show how artists compose portraits to reveal the comparative status and relationships within a group of people.

Approximate timing: 15 minutes

Location: Gallery 2

The Braddyll Family, 1789

Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1723 - 1792

No: PD.IO-1955

These people aren't wearing a uniform, but what do their clothes tell you about them? Rich, formal. There are three people in this painting, what kind of group are they? Family. How do we know that? Looks like a Mum, Dad and child. Can you see any family likeness between the son and either of his parents? Mother and son. Name the different members of the family - mother (Jane), father (Wilson) and child (Thomas).

Who is the most important person in this family? Man. Tell me why you think that? Because of his height in the painting, his confident pose, the way he stares out of the painting making eye contact with everyone, the red colour of his jacket - all these are deliberate devices or tricks used by the artist to make us look at Wilson first. Look at the way the Dad is standing and what he is wearing. Who else looks like him? Son (Thomas) looks like father in dress and pose and looks out of the painting at us- Wilson's heir.

What is different about the way Jane, the Mum is shown? She is seated, she is not making eye contact with the spectators, passive pose. You could explore the role of women in 18th century society.

Is anyone touching anyone else in this picture? No. The dog on Jane's lap is the only living thing being touched in this picture. Sometimes you find things in paintings which are there to represent something else as a symbol. Dogs often represent fidelity in a painting. Perhaps it's there in the middle of the picture to represent the faithful love in the family which you would not know from their formal pose. EVERYTHING in the picture tells you something.

Extension Idea for *Its All In The Pose* - Make Your Own Group Pose

A drama activity to explore pose and composition

Approximate timing: 10 minutes

Divide class into groups - each group to be given a pre-written card which gives:

- a) Type of group
- b) What they are doing together

For example:

You are a group of friends, at a birthday party, watching the party boy or girl blowing out the candles on the cake. Or you are a five a side football team and you have just won the league. You are posing for a press photo with your trophy.

For five minutes, each group, with their helper, will need to work on their composition, thinking of pose and expression, and imagine that someone presses the pause button on the remote control and then they FREEZE. Bring the class back together and get each group to act out their group pose in turn. The rest of the class work out the answers from the pose, facial expression, gestures, etc. - just like the painted portraits.

Teaching Idea: What Can Clothes Tell You?



Aim: To show how a costume can dominate a portrait and give you all sorts of clues about the identity and status of its wearer.

Approximate timing: 20 minutes

Location: Gallery 3

Elizabeth Vernon,
Countess of Southampton (b. 1573) c. 1603
Anonymous painter

No: PD.6.1984

Seat the children carefully, check they can all see the whole picture, especially the top.

Let's think about clothes. Can you think of different sorts of people who wear special clothes to do their jobs? Police, fire service, nurses, soldiers etc.

Let's have a careful look at what this woman is wearing, what can you see? Long dress, odd shape, white silk, pearls, crown, fur lined cloak, white silk shoes, white stockings, ruff, etc. If necessary help the children to observe more closely, ask them to examine parts of the painting. What can you tell me about her feet? Is vocabulary extension needed to help them verbalize their observations?

Look at her collar, do we wear collars like that now? ... *She called it a ruff.*

Listing their observations is useful for developing the discussion. The children can now move on from observation to deduction prompted by questions like:

What can all these things you have noticed tell us about this woman. Is she wearing modern clothes, the sort your mum wears? So when do you think she was alive?

Would it have been easy for this woman to work in those clothes? Why not? So what sort of person is she?

The children will think she is a queen – fair enough – the clues in the painting all point to that conclusion. She was actually a countess dressed in her robes for the coronation of James I.

If you want to move the children towards thinking about this woman as an individual, and the function of the painting, focus them on her face.

Her clothes have told us lots. What about her face? Look carefully, what do you notice? Very pale (she is wearing thick white make-up called ceruse made fashionable by Elizabeth I) little detail, little modelling in light and shade, the face is flat and expressionless, almost mask like. Do you think the painter took more care painting the face or the clothes? Now why would that be?

This portrait is a painting all about status, the clothes give this information, the face is just a face.

Teaching Idea- Eavesdropping On A Painting



Aim: To show how colour, gesture and setting can all point to the story behind the painting.

Approximate timing: 15 minutes

Location: Gallery 5

Au Café, c. 1877-80

Hilaire-Germain-Edgar Degas, 1834-1917

No: 2387

How many people are in this picture? Two. What kind of people? Young/old? Male/female? We don't know their names so we have to use our imagination. You may find that the children have quite different perceptions of who the people are - there are no right answers here and it is a chance for pupils to have their own view and say why.

Whereabouts do you think they are? Inside/outside? Standing/sitting? What are they sitting behind? Table at outside café with trees in background. Give the two characters names - it will make the following easier.

So what are these two people doing? Talking? What about? Can we tell how they are feeling? Look at faces and where they are looking, the gestures of hands, the symbolism of the colour of the faces. Who is sad? Who is concerned? Can we imagine why? What's the story behind this conversation.

Extension Idea for Eavesdropping On A Painting – Say What?

A creative writing or drama activity

Approximate timing: 10 Minutes

At this point you can get the children to work individually or in pairs. They may have very different ideas about who the two characters in this painting are, and that's fine. In the past we have had many stories of love lost, but we also had one child who insisted that the picture represented two orphans in an orphanage planning their escape. This is their chance to write the dialogue of the two characters in the painting, like the script for a scene in a soap opera.

Alternatively, you could do the same using role play, and get the children to work in pairs or groups, and then to act out their role play in front of the painting for the rest of the class. You can use the adult stools for the children to sit on during this role play.

Teaching Idea: More Than Two-Dimensional



Aim: To compare 2D and 3D portraiture, to examine the role of light, to heighten sensitivity to colour.

Approximate time: 15 Minutes

Location: Gallery I

Self-Portrait, 1939

Stanley Spencer, 1891 - 1959

(No: 2506) and

Albert Einstein, 1933

Sir Jacob Epstein, 1880-1959

No: M.7-1933

Ask the children to look at the Stanley Spencer self-portrait. *What job does this person do? Artist. How can you tell? Paintbrush, palette.* Explore who painted portrait. The artist in picture using mirror - Spencer was right-handed - shown as left handed.

What would you hold in your hands in your self-portrait to tell us about you? Feed off the children's answers, and then return to the painting.

Whereabouts is the light source coming from in this picture? How can you tell? Look for where the artist has painted the highlights (on the parts of his face that stick out- nose, chin, etc). *What has he painted underneath those sticking out parts?* Shadow. Now look at the colours he has used in the face and get the children to observe very closely. If necessary focus on a particular part of the face, and then another. Spencer used light and colour to give his face the illusion of a 3D effect.

Now look at the portrait bust of Einstein. *Is this made of paint and canvas?* No, it is cast in bronze - 3D height, width AND depth. *What colour is it?* Brown. Look more

carefully – is it just brown? No, you can see white, black, green (the children start to see all kinds of colours). *Why are you seeing all these different colours?* Look at the parts of Einstein's face that protrude the most – they will be white, with shadows underneath. *What is making this effect?* The light as it hits the surface of the bronze. Two very different ways of achieving a likeness of a person that we can recognise.

Teaching Idea: Twentieth Century Portraits

This activity is designed for Years 5 & 6 to look at the role of portraiture after photography.

Approximate timing: 15 minutes

Location: Gallery II

Dora Maar, 1940

Pablo Picasso, 1881 - 1973

(No picture available)

Before you begin discussing this painting, make clear that in the 20th century photography was very well established as a portrait medium.

So what can you tell about the person in this portrait? Sex, age, clothes, features. Do you think this is actually what the artist saw in front of him when he was painting? The children will point out that the eyes and nose are not as he would have seen them.

So why did he paint her like this? You could try asking your pupils to just look at one part of the face at a time by blocking out the others with their hand, eg, her eyes, her mouth. Using the same technique, divide the painting vertically and then horizontally. Do all parts of her face show the same aspect of her character? The mouth seems quite normal and relaxed, but the eyes look more disturbed. He is trying to show you what he knows of this woman not just in terms of what she looks like but also her character. You may find this quotation useful.

'Portraits should possess not physical, not spiritual, but psychological likeness.'

Pablo Picasso 1881 - 1973

Do you think he painted this portrait because he was paid to (like Sir Joshua with the Braddyls) or is this a portrait he chose to paint? Does that give him more freedom to paint her as he sees her? At this time, portraits could be as much about

the style of the artist as the appearance of the sitter (try to open this up for discussion if you can). Dora Maar was Picasso's mistress for a time.

Resources for 'The Real Me'

The following "Into Action" sheets are available from the Education Department, and can be found here:

<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/education/schoolscolleges/selfled/realstory.html>

- The Fancy Dress Party
- Be a Portrait Painter for a Day
- The Interview

The following "Fact Sheets" are available from the Education Department, and can be found here:

<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/education/learningresources/learningresources.l.html>

- Armour
- Joshua Reynolds: The Bradyll Family
- Hans Eworth: Lady Jane Grey
- Anon: Elizabeth Vernon
- Edgar Degas: Au Café
- Jacob Epstein: Albert Einstein
- Self Portrait: Stanley Spencer
- Pablo Picasso: Dora Maar

Further information about many exhibits is available on our website Pharos –

www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/pharos