

# An Introduction to Manchester Art Gallery

---

## Information for educators

The following booklet has been formulated to provide you with ways of working with groups in the Gallery. The information is provided as an introduction to Manchester Art Gallery and supplies practical and theoretical approaches to using artworks. You could use the artworks and suggested activities as a starting point to further study or for a new class project, developing the ideas to suit your yearly or termly planning. Ideas can be photocopied directly from the pack or adapted into worksheets for your pupils to explore independently, in pairs or as part of a group discussion.

The theme has been chosen to give educators and their pupils an introduction to the Gallery and the collection, which includes an array of paintings, prints, photography, decorative arts, sculpture and multi media interpretations.

Four artworks have been selected that will target specific areas within the Gallery, whilst also allowing time to explore the building generally and grasp the various destination Galleries and breadth of study that can be conducted using the collection.

Manchester Art Gallery is a fantastic resource for engaging with many subjects across the curriculum. Art and Design, History, Drama, Literacy, Numeracy and PSHE can be easily addressed within one visit and provide a framework for further visits. The education team use many artworks in a cross-curricular approach, which can be adapted to suit individual pupil, teacher and school needs. Some of these techniques will be explored through the information that follows to create a focal point to your visit and to provide inspiration for related classroom or studio activities and future practise.



© Manchester City Galleries



## Gallery of Craft and Design

**Artwork:** *Parade Chair*

**Place Made:** Venice, Italy

**Date made:** 1680

A chair made from giltwood with red silk velvet upholstery.

Earliest chair on display.

Over 300 years old.

The piece has been made by hand.

It is said to have belonged to the flamboyant Cosimo III de Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He was famous for his luxurious entertainment.

Manchester Art Gallery presents a chair line; this is a great opportunity to explore the evolution of design from the 17th century until today. A selection of the chairs can also be used, which allows pupils to touch real objects within the Gallery.

## Ways In

Ease pupils into the Gallery environment by looking at the chair within a recognisable context, consider chairs used at home and school. Then discuss:

What do you think the chair would have been used for? What type of occasion? Marriage, banquet, a formal situation.

What sort of person would own this chair? King or Queen, consider fairy tales and fantastical imagery.

What does this chair say about the owner? Shy person or flashy person?

It is very grand; address the unique qualities that could associate to characteristics within individuals.

The wood will have been carved by hand, but today how is material cut? Consider machinery methods.

How much do you think the chair would have cost? Being handmade even today would mean it would be expensive.

## Follow Up

Pupils could produce sketches of the chair in the gallery and consider the detail of the woodcarving, shown in the image above. The sketches could influence pattern work, using print techniques back at school.

Considering construction, pupils could make 3d models of chairs using materials such as cardboard. They could design a chair to suit their personality by readdressing the discussion surrounding the Parade Chair and who may have owned it.

## Further Research

1000 chairs. Ed. by Charlotte J. Fiell.

The Chair: Rethinking Culture, Body and Design. Ed. By Galen Cranz

<http://www.bizchair.com/>



© Manchester City Galleries

### Gallery 5

**Artwork:** *WORK*

**Date Made:** 1852-1865

**Artist:** Ford Madox Brown

**Oil on canvas**

The painting is a street scene with varying representations of people who have to work, those who can't and those who do not need to. Ford Madox Brown has many paintings featured within the Gallery's collection and this is a very famous piece, exploring society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It took the artist 13 years to complete the painting, which demonstrates the attention to detail and accuracy of the depictions of the time period. It is a real street and a depiction of an actual incident that the artist had seen. The Gallery also own a small painting the artist made of the street in London as a sketch.

### Ways In

It is a very busy piece so concentrate on some of the following, that address a cross curricular approach to using the artworks:

Who are the central figures? Look at the men working in the centre.

Consider the use of the social Pyramid. The two figures on horses at the top of the painting, the well-dressed ladies passing by on the left and the two gentlemen talking on the right, with the 'workers' contained in the centre. What does the placement of these individuals tell you about the painting?

To address Numeracy within the piece count how many women, men, children and animals the pupils can see.

Focus on people and choose one character. Select one pupil to tell the rest of the group something about that person, by describing them - appearance, dress, role, work, etc.

### Follow Up

Pupils will have formed opinions around the painting and focused on individuals, therefore stories could be created surrounding the characters, what happened before and after the painting was produced?

Comparisons could be made to a street in Manchester today, looking at the different types of workers? Pupils could explore roles through PSHE, considering how children worked from an early age in Victorian times.

### Further Research

The following websites will provide further information to be explored:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/victorians/>

<http://www.victorians.org.uk/>

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/Jford.htm>



© Manchester City Galleries

### Clore Interactive gallery

**Artwork: Figure of a Dragon**

**Made: Asia, Japan**

**Date Made:**

The dragon is a decorative art piece, made from iron and is riveted and articulated.

The piece, Fafner, is a dragon made of wrought iron with a fully articulated body and limbs.

The model is highly detailed, demonstrating whiskers on the face, a long scaly body, four jointed legs, each with three claw feet and flames emerging from each leg trailing behind

### Ways In

Initiate discussion by addressing the artwork as three-dimensional and the different types of materials that are used to create such pieces, in this case that it is metalwork made from iron.

Define that the piece is a sculpture and ask the pupils what is sculpture?

If the group have produced any associated class work that brings the groups experience to the piece include this as part of the discussion.

Define that the piece is a dragon by asking the group what they can see and where they have seen a dragon before?

Sketches could be produced so pupils consider the shape, scale and detail.

The piece will move by using the button on the case, this provides an interactive element to the dragon and lets the pupils imagine it has come to life.

Further sketches could be produced allowing pupils to capture the movement of the dragon.

### Follow up

Using the sketches completed in the Gallery as a starting point, ask the pupils to produce further studies of animals as a homework project, this could be through books, magazines, television and film. Cartoons could be researched to look at animation of animals and how they are represented.

With the material collected conduct a sculpture session using soft wire manipulated into the form of one of the animals collected.

### Further Research

Films: Babe, Free Willy, and Lassie.

Animation: Shrek, Chicken Run, Dungeons & Dragons - The Complete Animated Series, Ice Age.

DragonArt: How to Draw Fantastic Dragons and Fantasy Creatures, Ed. by Jessica 'Neon Dragon' Peffer



© Manchester City Galleries

## Gallery 16

**Artwork:** *The Hopes at Home*

**Artist:** Howard Hodgkin

**Date Made:** 1973/77

**Oil paint on plywood**

Colourful abstract painting with smaller colourful shapes, surrounded by a wide dark painted frame.

Hodgkin uses colour predominantly within his work and often they seem completely abstract, although the artist states they are based on events and encounters between people.

Hodgkin uses the title of the painting to complete the scene; it is a major part of his interpretation.

## Ways In

Open up the group to the ideas of abstract imagery and consider the different ways of seeing the painting. It is a colourful abstract painting but what does this mean?

Discuss that abstract means no one definite image, which allows people to explore other possibilities of what the artist is depicting.

Ask the pupils, what do they see?

Let them respond by telling somebody sat next to them, so everybody gets the opportunity to speak, then hands up and select some of the pupils to vocalise to the rest of the group.

Ask the pupils do they feel the painting represents an urban or rural landscape and why they think so?

Considering the title, the artist could be depicting the idea of home and it could be a view out of a window. Pupils could produce sketches of the piece and then be led to look out of a window in the Gallery to see if any comparisons can be made looking at the surrounding urban landscape.

## Follow Up

Using the sketches completed in the Gallery of the painting, pupils could be set homework to draw the view from their bedroom window. Photographs could also be taken to further enhance their observational techniques.

The images collected could be explored further in school using paint techniques to create abstract compositions like Hodgkin, considering colour, shapes and even a title, working as the artist, to encapsulate the image with a series of words.

## Further Research

The following website allows you to listen to a conversation with Hodgkin,  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/audiointerviews/profilepages/hodgkin1.shtml>

Abstract Painting Techniques and Strategies, Ed. by Vicky Perry and Barry Schwabsky