

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 provides 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 students to explore independently, in pairs or as part of a group discussion.

The theme has been chosen to give educators and their pupils or students 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 and Citizenship, 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 student, teacher and school/college 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.



A sketch of the chair enhanced using ICT

Gallery of Craft and Design

Artwork: *Red and blue chair*

Artist: Cassina reproduction based on a Gerrit Thomas Rietveld design

Date Made: 1918-23

Dutch furniture designer Rietveld creates a geometric composition. The chair aims to be unique and standardised at the same time. The flat red and blue colours are relevant to the design as they activate the surfaces.

The De Stijl movement inspires the piece. De Stijl, which translated means style, was the title of a journal that presented work by painters, sculptors, designers and architects.

Ways In

The Gallery of Craft and Design presents a chair line. Allow the students to explore the evolution of design from the 17th century until today through the display.

Discuss the differences between decorative arts and fine arts. Can something we use and have at home be considered art?

This chair was originally designed about 90 years ago but looks quite modern. Discuss the ideas surrounding revivals in art.

The De Stijl group shared a common approach to aesthetics based on rectilinear planes. All surface decoration except colour was to be eliminated and only pure primary hues, plus black and white are allowed.

The students could explore this principle in analysing the chair:

Why use primary colours?

How would the aesthetic effect have changed if different colours had been used?

How does the chair compare to current trends, fashion and style?

Follow Up

The design of chairs parallel developments in architecture. Use this theme to compare two of Rietveld designs, the Red and blue chair and the 'Rietveld Schroeder house', which can be sourced via the book mentioned below.

Consider the De Stijl movement and construct a contextual analysis of the effect on the art world. Painter Piet Mondrian, who was part of this movement, stated "there is no distinction between art and life and so the work of art should not be separated from the living" – Discuss the artists statement.

Further Research

1000 chairs. Ed. by Charlotte J. Fiell.

The chair: Rethinking Culture, Body & Design. Ed. by Galen Cranz.

The Rietveld Schroeder house. Ed. by Ida Van Zijl.

Gerrit Th. Rietveld, The Complete Works 1888-1964. Ed by M. Kueper & Ida Van Zijl.

<http://www.droogdesign.nl/>

This Dutch shop sells greatly designed furniture but also presents exhibitions that travel worldwide. The site contains a special section on education.



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Gallery 5

Artwork: *Work*

Artist: Ford Madox Brown

Date Made: 1852-1865

Oil on canvas

This painting is a great example of Victorian life. It celebrates the value of work. The centre is occupied by a group of men digging to provide clean drinking water who are represented as heroes because they are both doing worthwhile work and also preventing diseases like cholera. They are surrounded by an assemblage of deliberately chosen types, the rich and the poor, who demonstrate the negative effects of the lack of work. On the right, we can see two figures representing the brainworkers: they are Thomas Carlyle (with hat and stick) and Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice. Carlyle famously wrote in the book *Past and Present* that 'all work, even cotton spinning, is noble'. Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice started a Working's Men College.

Ways In

This painting reflects the moral value in work. It can be used as a starting point to discuss changes in the working condition brought by the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution connects with the values sought by the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood and the Arts & Craft movement.

This painting can also be used to discuss student's personal views on work. Have working conditions improved today? Are all jobs considered to have the same value in society? People who choose for a 'job' to be famous are a common phenomenon in contemporary society. What are the students' views on this?

Follow Up

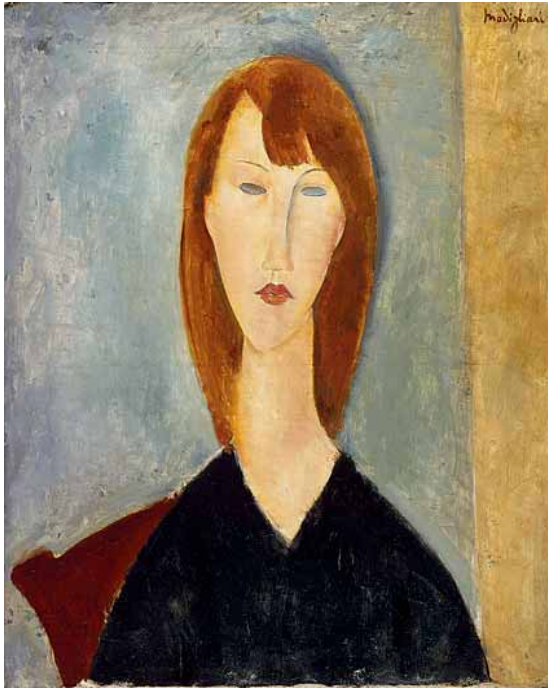
Madox shared many of the interests of the pre-Raphaelite group in early Italian art, painting on the spot and using bright colours. However being an independent spirit, he never joined the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood.

Further Research

Ford Madox Brown. Ed by Mary Bennett.

The Pre-Raphaelites Paintings. Ed. By Julian Treuherz.

The Pre-Raphaelites. Ed by Tim Hilton.

 <p>© Manchester City Galleries</p>	<p>Gallery 14</p> <p>Artwork: <i>Portrait of unknown model</i> Artist: Amedeo Modigliani. Date Made: 1916 Oil on canvas</p> <p>Modigliani was a painter of portraits from diverse national, ethnic, religious and class backgrounds. The Pre-Raphaelites, early renaissance and cubist and Japanese prints influenced his work.</p> <p>This portrait presents a woman with languid expression, linear design and soft colours. The eyes are almond-shaped influenced by African and oceanic sculptures.</p> <p>Modigliani was born in Italy, however he made his international reputation in France. It was only after his death, at the age of 35, when his work was recognised in his native country, through two retrospectives at the Venice Biennale.</p>
<p>Ways In</p> <p>This painting can be used to investigate the relationship between modern artists and African and Oceanic art.</p> <p>With post-colonialism, large amounts of African artefacts entered Europe. The influence of such pieces can be seen in Western art movements and artists such as Cubism and Picasso or Fauvism and Matisse.</p> <p>However these works were often presented as 'tribal' objects with disregard for individual authorships and dates. Discuss why this was happening</p> <p>What is the meaning of 'primitivism' in modern art?</p> <p>For older groups Eurocentrism within Art History could be discussed?</p>	<p>Follow Up</p> <p>Modigliani's work presents influences from the different cultures he was in contact with. Students could create artworks that reflect their cultural background or study their family tree. This will enable them to critically think about multiculturalism in societies and cultural hybridisation. Asking question such as, where do they actually come from?</p> <p>Further Research Exhibition <i>20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern</i>. Curated by William Rubin, MoMA (1984). The book illustrates the exhibition that presented 200 'tribal' objects and 150 works of modern western art, looking at how the former influenced the latter.</p> <p>Amedeo Modigliani. Ed by Alfred Werner.</p>



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Gallery 16

Artwork: *Vacuum*

Artist: Steven Pippin

Date Made: 1994

Sculpture made from Perspex, aluminium and a television monitor.

Pippin is an engineer and artist, often associated with the role of the eccentric artist. He is interested in how the mechanical apparatus that we take for granted in life actually work.

This piece was acquired by the Manchester Art Gallery to extend its collection of contemporary art and links the practices of photography and sculpture. It could serve, as a platform to discuss what is contemporary sculpture, how it differs or not from installations and when does photography become art. *Vacuum* was short listed for the Turner Prize in 1999.

Ways In

For this piece the artist has transformed an everyday object, a television, into an unusual feature, by framing it within a Perspex container. The effect is that the television cannot be heard and the reception is poor, thus frustrating the object's function.

What is the artist trying to express? Perhaps he is addressing problems of communication. Could the television be jeopardising communication between people?

This artist is especially good to discuss ideas around the relationship between artists and scientists.

One of the characteristics of contemporary art is the break of boundaries between high art and popular art. The shape of Pippin's sculpture resembles a pair of bunny ears; this could be understood as an example of the use of popular imagery.

Can you think of any others examples? Andy Warhol or Roy Lichtenstein.

Follow Up

Students could be challenged to create an artwork through the use of a 'found object', explaining why they have chosen that particular object and what are they trying to communicate. The aim being to introduce ideas about 'conceptual art'.

Further Research

Installation art. Ed by Claire Bishop
Beck's future 2002. Ed by ICA, UK's largest annual arts award supporting artists early on in their careers.

Other artists: Cornelia Parker, Mark Wallinger or Louise Bourgeois.

-Experiment: conversations in art and science. Ed by Bergit Arends & Davina Thackara.

-Science by artists. Ed by Kathy Rae Huffman.

Other artists: Liam Gillick, Pipilotti Rist, Mark Dion or Olafur Eliasson.