Take One…Picture
Teacher guidance notes

ASHMOLEAN

Studio of Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691 - 1765):
The Piazza del Popolo, Rome
Oil on canvas; 97 x 133 cm.
Gallery 49, Britain and Italy.

A zoomable image of this painting is available on our website to use in the classroom on an interactive whiteboard or projector
www.ashmolean.org/education/takeonepicture

These guidance notes are designed to help you use paintings from our collection as a focus for cross-curricular teaching and learning. A visit to the Ashmolean Museum to see the painting offers your class the perfect 'learning outside the classroom' opportunity.

Starting questions

Questions like these may be useful as a starting point to develop speaking and listening skills with your class.

- What is the first thing you see?
- What do you think the weather is like? What clues are there?
- What sort of buildings can you see?
- How many domes can you see?
- There are lots of carriages. What sort of person might be travelling inthem?
- Where do you think the roads would lead you?
- What people can you see? What are they doing?
- What animals can you spot?
- If you could step into the scene what would you feel/smell/hear?
- Where would you like to be in the painting and why?
- Where do you think the painting is set?
- What would this scene look like today?

Background Information

The Painting

This scene shows the Piazza del Popolo, the northern gateway to Rome for pilgrims or grand tourists. This was a popular subject for 'view-painting' in the 17th and 18th centuries. The square underwent much reorganisation over the years. For example, the red granite Egyptian obelisk was moved from the Circus Maximus to this square in 1589. Many famous buildings can be seen in the painting. The twin churches of S. Maria di Montesanto on the left and S. Maria dei Miracoli take centre stage. The dome of the Pantheon and the arcaded tower of the Palazzo Palma can be seen in the distance to the right. The three roads leading to the centre of the city tempt the viewer into the scene. Panini has filled the square with people from all walks of life from wealthy travellers in fancy carriages to children playing on a make shift see-saw and a woman washing clothes in the public washpool. The high viewpoint is roughly from the top of the Porto del Popolo itself.

When the painting first arrived in Oxford in 1847 it was attributed to Canaletto but further study has shown that it is from Panini's studio. A similar painting hangs in the Nelson Atkins Museum in Kansas City. It is identical in every detail to the Ashmolean painting except for the clouds and sky as the Kansas scene is at sunset. Our painting is in its original frame which seems to have been modified in the 19th century. View paintings often came in pairs, and the Piazza del Popolo might have had a companion view of St Peter's or another famous site in Rome.

The Artist

Giovanni Paolo Panini or Pannini (17 Jun 1691 – 21 Oct 1765) was an Italian painter and architect. As a young man, Panini trained in his native town of Piacenza, studying perspective and architectural painting under Giuseppe Natali and Andrea Galluzzi, and later with the stage designer Francesco Galli-Bibiena. In 1711, he moved to Rome, where he studied with Benedetto Luti to improve his figure drawing.

In his early career he painted many decorative frescoes with lively architectural and landscape detail for wealthy clients. By 1716 Panini was making real and imaginary views of Rome's ancient and modern monuments, which were extremely popular with tourists. Panini's studio included his son Francesco Panini and the French artist Hubert Robert. His style would influence a number of artists, such as his pupil Antonio Joli, as well as Canaletto and Bernardo Bellotto, who sought to meet visitors' appetites for painted "postcards" showing Italian scenes. To satisfy tourists' demands for his paintings, Panini frequently repeated subjects yet always retained his spontaneity by varying composition and details.

A versatile artist, Panini painted portraits (including one for Pope Benedict XIV) decorative frescoes, and stage sets during the 1720s and 1730s. He also designed architecture, carvings, festival decorations, and ecclesiastical furnishings. All this increased his fame.

Among his most celebrated works are scenes of Roman festivities, and paintings showing imaginary grand galleries hung with views of ancient or modern Rome. His views of indoor and outdoor scenes, such as the interior of the Pantheon, or the Piazza del Popolo, were always popular. But he is perhaps best known for his paintings of ancient Roman ruins and antiquities which include fanciful and playful elements such as the Roman Capriccio which also hangs in Gallery 49.

Panini painted little after 1760 and died in Rome on 21 October 1765.

Roman Capriccio, Gallery 49

Ideas for creative planning across the KS1 & 2 curriculum

You can use this painting as the starting point for developing pupils' critical and creative thinking as well as their learning across the curriculum. You may want to consider possible 'lines of enquiry' as a first step in your cross-curricular planning. Choosing a line of enquiry area may help you to build stong links between curriculum areas.

After using strategies to encourage looking and engagement with the painting and by using questions to facilitate dialogue about the painting you can work with the children to develop lines of enquiry that will interest them.

Here are a few suggestions of possible 'lines of enquiry' using this painting:

- Italy
- Rome
- The built environment/can buildings speak?
- Journeys
- The Grand Tour

Using JOURNEYS as an example of a line of enquiry

Here are a few ideas of how you can develop a range of learning opportunities to engage pupils with this line of enquiry. Each activity can link with the others to build on pupils learning across the chosen theme.

Create model carriages with moving axles.

Use the Internet to discover what the 'Piazza del Populo looks like today. What is similar and what is different? What vehicles are used today?

Research the history of transport. If possible visit a transport musuem to find out more about historic vehicles.

JOURNEYS

If you could make a journey anywhere in the world where would you go? Write postcards, travel journals, and tourist information brochures for a chosen journey or destination.

Think about the different kind of journeys people make. Why do people travel and what modes of transport do they use?

Carry out a travel survey in your local area. Decide how to display your findings. e.g. graphs/pie charts etc

TAKE ONE...

Tips for introducing paintings to a class

- Reveal the painting section by section over a number of days. Eache time a new detail is revealed the children can make predictions about what might be in the rest of the picturebased on what they can see.

- Display the painting in the classroom for a number of days with a tape recorder or

- 'graffiti wall' for children to add comments or questions about the painting. Once the pupils' comments and questions have been gathered a class discussion can follow on.

- Introduce the painting to the whole class in a question and answer session designed to take the pupils into the paintings as outlined on page one.

- Show the painting to the class for a minute or so and then cover it up or take it away. Ask the children to remember what they could see.

- Show the painting to one or two willing volunteers. They should then describe what they have seen to the rest of the class. Pupils could draw what they have heard described to them and then see how well the versions match up.

- Play 'painting eye spy' using the painting.

"I now understand the vast scope that a painting has and I feel able to develop a scheme of work surrounding a painting, using the line of enquiry approach."

Yr 3 ITE student, Oxford Brookes, after a recent TOP course.

Take One...Inspires...

Take One...encourages teachers to use a painting or object imaginatively in the classroom, both as a stimulus for artwork, and for work in more unexpected curriculum areas. Work in many curriculum area can be inspired by using a single image as a starting point.

The challenge is for teachers to use the painting to develop culturally enriching, relelvant and practical learning opportunties across the curriculum.

This detail shows a woman washing clothes in the Piazza del Populo in the afternoon shade.

Please contact us or visit our website for more information about our programmes including training opportunities

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