

Degas to Picasso

Creating modernism in France

10 February- 7 May 2017



Fernand Léger (1881- 1951) Mother and Child (Mère et Enfant), c. 1949 Gouache, 58.5 x 50cm
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From 1800 to the mid-twentieth century, the story of modernism in French art was played out especially in Paris where international artists were drawn by salons and dealers, the creative exchange between poets and painters and the bohemian atmosphere of places like Montmartre and Montparnasse. With over 100 works from a private collection, never before seen in Britain, the exhibition explores Romantic artists such as Ingres and Delacroix, the dramatic artistic transformations of Van Gogh and Cezanne, through to the radical experiments in Cubism by innovators such as Picasso and Braque. The exhibition can be used to explore and experiment with a range of subjects, approaches and techniques.

This is a charging exhibition but FREE for pre-booked UK school groups and for under 12s.

To book a group visit please contact the [Education Department](#):
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t: 01865 278015

Music



ALBERT GLEIZES 1881–1953
Portrait Of Igor Stravinsky, 1914
gouache and black ink on paper

The composer Stravinsky and Gleizes moved in similar circles and had a number of friends in common, notably Cocteau and Picasso. Here the composer's figure is reduced to a kite shape, still recognisable by the black of his jacket and the buttons on his shirt. A sheet inscribed with a few notes evokes the idea of music, also explored by Gleizes in the dynamic and rhythmic use of form.

Theme 1: Music

Music inspired many artists in this exhibition. Compare and contrast how music is represented by showing the musicians, focussing on a musical instrument or by representing the dynamism of music.

Create your own art work inspired by music. Think about what materials would enhance music as a theme such as using musical manuscript for collage, cutting up your drawing or painting of an instrument and rearranging it in a cubist style.

Nudes

Edgar Degas 1834–1917
After the Bath, Woman drying her leg,
1900–05
charcoal, white chalk and pastel on tracing paper

This composition assumes the presence of a bathtub on which the bather is seated. The volume of the figure is emphasised by an outline in charcoal and blue chalk and by the extensive use of white chalk in the highlights. Although drawn on tracing paper, which Degas often used, the image is not a tracing. The evident revisions, particularly in the right leg and head, suggest that the image was improvised on the paper.

Theme 2: Nudes

Compare the poses of the nudes shown in this exhibition. How would you describe the range of poses? Do the figures look comfortable or uncomfortable? How do the levels of detail vary in the depictions of the body. Compare the reclining Ingres nude with bathers by Picasso. Why do you think the nude is such a popular subject matter for artists?



Cubism



JEAN METZINGER 1883–1956

The Yellow Feather, 1912

oil on canvas

Seated holding a blue fan and set against a lacy curtain, a young woman with bright red lips shows off her fashionable hat. The yellow plume is painted in a fairly conventional way, but the lines of her face, neck and shoulders are shattered and multiplied as if seen through a prism. This masterpiece of early Cubism was exhibited at the Salon de la Section d'Or in 1912.

Theme 3: Cubism

Take photographs from magazines and newspapers that show people's faces. Use scissors to cut them up into triangles and strips and rearrange and glue them onto paper to create a cubist-style distorted portrait. Try taking photographs of yourself head on or in profile and cut up and distort these images. These collages can then be used to create drawn or painted studies.

Portraits

Édouard Manet 1832–1883

Berthe Morisot, 1872

lithograph on chine collé

The Impressionist artist Berthe Morisot was a friend of Manet and later married his brother Eugène. The drawing demonstrates Manet's approach to reproducing what he actually saw, as opposed to what he knew. Morisot's face is not carefully modelled with meticulous shading, as if lit in a studio which was the Academy's way of drawing. Instead, the portrait is made up of flat areas of light and shadow in an attempt to reproduce the experience of seeing a face in daylight.

Theme 4: Portraits

Compare and contrast the range of monochrome (black and white) materials used to create portraits. Consider the range of tones and mark making. Which materials are the most effective for capturing someone's facial features? Experiment creating your own portraits and self-portraits using pastels, mono-printing and charcoal. Experiment with different papers such as tracing paper or coloured sugar paper.



Narrative Pictures

Theme 5: Narrative Pictures

A number of paintings in this exhibition use narrative and stories as a subject matter.

- What type of stories are depicted?
- Why might artists have been inspired by pictures? Compare and contrast how these pictures tell different stories.
- How is mark making and colour used?
- How important is detail in telling the story?
- Choose your own story or narrative to illustrate from a newspaper or a book you have read. How can you tell a story visually in one painting or drawing?



Marc Chagall 1887–1985

The Little Fish And The Fisherman, 1927
watercolour and bodycolour on buff paper

Between 1926 and 1930 Chagall worked on a large series of gouache illustrations for a volume of La Fontaine's Fables for the dealer Vollard. Being Russian and having spent only a few years in France by this point, Chagall travelled to central and southern France in order to immerse himself in the countryside described in the 17th-century text. This illustration evokes the fable told in Book V, in which a young carp pleads unsuccessfully for its life.



Fernand Léger 1881–1955
Factory, 1918

Gouache on paper

A figure hurries through an archway towards the inner recesses of a powerful machine in this semi-abstract depiction of a factory. Léger, who served in the trenches, was well aware of the destructive power of modern technology, but despite this, his excitement at the grandeur of industrial machinery and his use of curved, metallic forms continued. This culminated in his experimental animated film Ballet mécanique of 1924 featuring flywheels, cogs, and dancing pots and pans.