

Information:  
Taught gallery session  
Exploring Portraits

ASHMOLEAN

Key Stages: 1 & 2

Length of session:  
1 hour and 30 minutes

Maximum group size:  
1 class (no more than 30 pupils)

Session outline

The session is structured into a series of activities that introduce pupils to the different ways artists represent the human form in art.

1. Welcome - What is a portrait?  
Icebreaker activity using props to explore how clothing plays a role in constructing our image and how we feel about ourselves.

2. Looking for clues in a selection of portraits and sculpture and discovering how to read them.

3. Investigating geometric shapes that are the basis of many portraits and sculptures. Thinking about 2D and 3D.

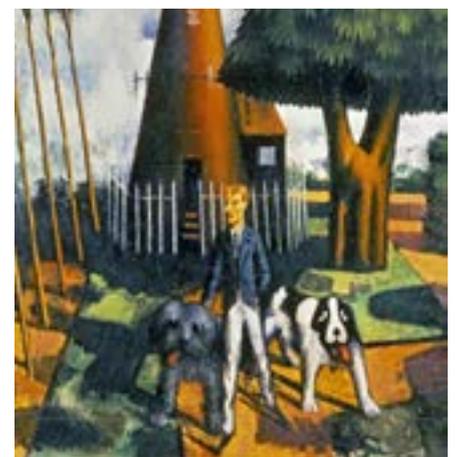
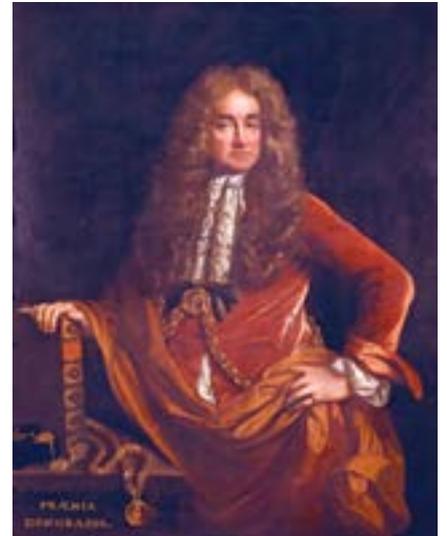
4. Clothes and pose, exploring the role that body language and facial expression plays in the composition of a portrait.

5. Review activity. What would you want a portrait of yourself to look like? Think about shape, composition, pose, expression, clothes and accessories.

For more information and to book:  
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[www.ashmolean.org/learn](http://www.ashmolean.org/learn)

Learning Outcomes

- Appreciation of the different stylistic techniques and conventions used by artists.
- Increased understanding of how to read clues in portraits.
- Awareness and appropriate use of art specific vocabulary - colour, line, shape, form, 2D, 3D etc. to improve visual literacy skills.
- Awareness of how identity is constructed and the choices that we all make in how we portray ourselves including clothes, pose and symbolism.
- Improved speaking and listening skills



## Pre visit activities

- Think of all the places that you see images of people - advertising, money, cartoons etc. Collect images of people from magazines and other sources to create a collage.
- Look at photographs - newspapers, family, friends, holidays etc. How are people portrayed? Where are they, what are they doing and what are they wearing?
- Discover how artists have represented the human body over time, in 2D and 3D.

## Post visit activities

- Create a self portrait. Think about shapes, composition, pose, expression, clothes and accessories and decide what media you would like to use.
- Think about uniform - school uniform, protective clothing, personal adornment and clothing from around the world.
- Create a collage of a painting or sculpture from the Museum that reflects some of the different types of art that you saw on your visit.
- Create role plays/stories/poems or animations that draw on characters in paintings and sculptures you have seen in the Museum.
- Choose somebody famous and give them an image makeover. Explain why you chose them and why you have made the decisions.
- Create a portrait with only objects that tell someone else all about you.

## Resources

Images and interactives to support this session can be found on our website:

[www.ashmolean.org/learning-resources](http://www.ashmolean.org/learning-resources)



Collage inspired by 'Gilbert Cannan and his Mill'  
Oxfordshire Hospital Schools



Wooden spoon characters inspired by paintings in the museum.  
A detail from the 'Oxfordshire Spoon Race' exhibition - a project created by local artist Francesca Shakespeare.