



Paul Larocque, *Captain America*, 1998, silkscreen print, 74 x 62cm.

All Eyes on Us

Secondary resource

What is *All Eyes on Us*?

All Eyes on Us is an exhibition of portraits at Crawford Art Gallery. Exploring ideas of power and agency, the work we've chosen asks an audience to think about what is at stake in the creation of a portrait.

Introduction

This resource is designed for secondary school groups as an introduction to portraiture. Based on *All Eyes on Us*, junior cycle teachers can use these activities as starting points for lesson plans or as supporting material to accompany a visit to the Gallery.

The activities below connect directly with the **critical and visual language** and **visual culture and appreciation** elements of the Visual Art syllabus, but can be used in any other way you think appropriate.

We've split the resource into two sessions, each based around a key question.

Key words

Portrait: A portrait is an artwork that tells a story about a person. It might be a painting, photograph, collage, sculpture, performance or anything in-between.

Sitter: A sitter is the person who has their portrait taken. Sometimes the sitter asks the artist to take their portrait. The artist might also invite someone to sit for them.

Subject: Sometimes the person in the portrait is called 'the subject.' This might be because they are not actually sitting in the image (they could be standing, lying or in any other position!), or it could be because the artist never met them

Session One: What can a portrait tell us?

Portraits tell us a lot. They tell us about people, their stories and the histories they belong to. They can capture an idea of a person or what they stand for; they can explore how someone wants to be seen or communicate their mood. When we think about these things in a portrait, we are 'reading' it. Let's read one together!

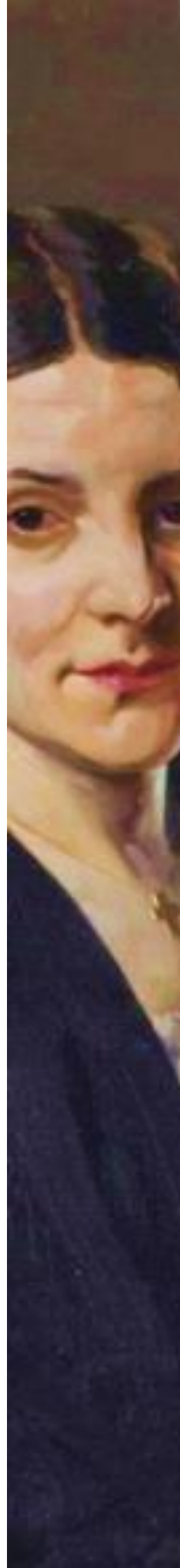
Task A: Imagining a prince

Step one

- Find yourself a partner. Label yourselves A and B.
- Person A is the describer, and Person B is the artist.
- Sit back-to-back, so that only the describers can see the image on the next page.

Step two

- A: turn over the page and describe the image to B
- B: take a plain piece of paper and draw what you hear described
- **You only have two minutes!**





James Barry, *The Prince of Wales in the Guise of St. George*, c.1789-90, oil on canvas, 260 x 170cm

Step three

- Have a look at what you've created together!
- Talk through the following questions...
 - o What did you find difficult about this task?
 - o How 'accurate' is your portrait?
 - o Which details have you captured?
 - o Which bits got less attention?
 - o Why do you think you were drawn to certain sections of the image, and not others?

Activity two: What do we see?

Sometimes, portraits were used to represent power and status. Do we think this is the case here?

- Write down some adjectives (describing words) to capture the mood of this portrait.
- **Challenge:**
 - o Research and write down some key facts about the life of the Prince of Wales in the late 1700s.
 - o Research and write down some key facts about St George.
 - o Once you have your research, prepare a sixty second talk in response to one of these questions:
 - Why might the prince want to be seen as St. George?
 - Why might James Barry have wanted to represent him this way?



Session Two: Why create a portrait?

Portraits aren't always about power and status. They can also shine a light on a person or group of people who are often ignored by history; they might highlight these people's achievements or what was important to them.

Activity one: Telling a story

Step one

Have a look at images A, B and C [included at the back of the resource pack].

After each image, write your response to each of these questions...

- What one word would you use to describe this image?
- In one sentence, describe how this image make you feel
- What three questions would you ask the subjects?

Step two

Now explore the links below to learn a bit more about each of these portraits.



- Portrait 1: [Nano Nagle and Pupils](#)



- Portrait 2: [Untitled \(Hair and Eyes\)](#)



- Portrait 3: [Dylan is Ainm Dom...](#)

After you've had a read, pick your favourite portrait of the three and write a short letter to the subject. You might...

- Ask them any questions you might have
- Tell them why you think their story is important

Activity two: Telling your story

- Pick a person or group of people from your life, community or history who you think need their story told.
- Consider...
 - o Their special qualities that might otherwise be overlooked.
 - o How do you want the portrait to talk to viewers in the future who do not know the sitters?
- Create a portrait of this person or group of people. close to you.
 - o Consider the pose, setting and symbols you want to include that can tell their story.
 - o You could create the portrait in any way you like: photograph, paint or draw them, create a collage or a performance – think creatively!



Activity three: Selling the story

When we put together this exhibition, we were faced with some gaps in the Crawford's collection of portraits.

There are lots of stories that we'd like to see told, that aren't explored in the portraits we have at the Gallery.

Now that you've created your own portrait of a person or group who you feel need their story told, we'd like you to tell us why you think they need representing.

Your challenge is to imagine that, as an artist, you are trying to convince us that your portrait should be in the exhibition.

Write a short **proposal** explaining...

- Why you've chosen your portrait
- Why the subject's story needs to be told
- What you think is missing from the exhibition and why you think your portrait would work well.



Image A



John O'Keefe (attrib.), *Nano Nagle and Pupils*, oil on canvas, 127 x 101cm

Image B



Yvonne Condon, *Untitled (Hair and Eyes)*, undated, acrylic on cardboard, 40 x 50cm

Image C



Stephen Doyle, *Dylan is Ainm Dom...*, 2018, mixed media on board, 120 x 120cm