

Secondary Schools Worksheet

VIEW OF CORK John Butts (1728-1765)

John Butts was born in Cork. He was a talented painter of the local landscape. He spent much of his youth sketching and painting scenes of Cork and copying romantic scenes from local works. He taught art in Cork and two of his pupils were Nathaniel Grogan the Elder (to whom this painting was for some time attributed) and James Barry. James Barry later described John Butts as an inspirational teacher. In 1757, Butts moved to Dublin but was not met with success. He had a large family to support and found he had to work at sign painting, copying and any jobs he could find, to sustain himself. He worked as a forger for a time and produced excellent forgeries, but his own, signed work is very rare. He died young and poor in 1765. His work is to be found in Tate Britain and in the Crawford Art Gallery.



View of Cork is a panoramic view of the city seen from an elevated position to the north of the River Lee. It was painted in the later half of the eighteenth century. It is actually an amalgamation of two separate viewpoints and it is a measure of the artist's talent as a landscape painter that he managed to weld them together in a convincing way. Two travellers look down at the prosperous city, one pointing out the landmarks and drawing our attention to St Ann's Tower in Shandon. The painting is an important

record of the city's history, of a time when Cork played an important role in trade with the influential Dutch in the North Atlantic. The Dutch appearance of the quayside houses was echoed in New York and other towns of New Netherlands. On the left we see one of the waterways that coursed through the marshy land over which the city expanded in the eighteenth century. We can trace its route by the broad curves of the city's main street. In the centre of the painting is the Old Custom House, now the Crawford Art Gallery.

DISCUSSION

- What is the first thing you notice in the painting? What stands out?
- Would you say the painting has a mood that is immediately obvious, what is it? What has the artist done to create this mood?
- Is there a focal point in the painting? Is there a specific emphasis or is the city as a whole the focus? Who do you think might commission such a painting?
- Butts uses line to pick out detail in the painting, where is this most obvious? Can you see this in the detail of the background?
- What are the colours used in the painting? Are these the colours we usually associate with cities? How would you describe the colours used?
- The landscape painter Claude Lorrain had a specific formula for creating his beautiful, idealised landscape paintings; the foreground should be dark, getting lighter towards the background. What is the result of this technique?

- Butts used light and dark tones very cleverly to mould this landscape. In what areas of the painting is this most successful?
- The composition is also very cleverly designed; as well as following the pointed finger of the man in the foreground, there are sweeping lines that take us into the painting. Landmarks stand out to lead us over and back the canvas to examine each detail. Show the eye-path that leads us through the painting?
- This painting is made up of two separate viewpoints, which the artist composed to create this painting, why do you think he did this?
- Only in the 17th century did it become acceptable to have landscape as the subject of a painting. Why might this have been the case?

WORK IN THE GALLERY

Find this James Barry painting. Barry was a student of John Butts. What similarities in composition, colour and technique can you see?

Barry also uses outlines in his painting, where can you see this? What purpose does it serve?

Do you think the landscape plays an important part in this Barry painting? Why?

How can you tell that Barry studied landscape painting?



HANDS ON

Consider what imagery and colour you would use to portray your nearest town or city. Using a black ink pen, plot on paper the composition of the town centre, putting in everything you can remember. Try to show if your town is hilly or flat etc... If possible use watercolours and paint your work using your chosen colour scheme.

In the painting there is a great contrast between the homes of the wealthy along the quay and the little one-windowed shacks of the poor on the hillside. Carry out some research on life in Cork in the mid 18th century. Choose a rich merchant, a worker or a peasant and draw this person in traditional dress in an appropriate setting.

Discuss your findings in class.

EACH DAY Eilis O'Connell (Born 1953)

Eilis O'Connell was brought up in Donegal and studied at the Crawford College of Art, in Cork and Massachusetts College of Art. O'Connell hoards objects as diverse as gourds and discarded agricultural tools and through her drawings transforms them to enjoy a new existence in her sculpture work. She has built her reputation on large-scale public sculpture, sensitive to its environment in Ireland and the UK. She takes inspiration from archaeology, architecture and the human body to create her unique forms that can be at the same time intimate and monumental.



Each Day is a sculpture in bronze that occupies the courtyard of the Crawford Art Gallery. It stands two and a half metres tall and echoes the form of a cloak, cowl, or folded cloth. The form curves gracefully around and upwards, it tapers at the top to a point. There is a human presence evoked by the shrouded form, a strong, immovable, protective force that seems ancient and magical. The dense, bronze surface is gently curved and encompassing and at the same time reassuringly robust and impermeable.

DISCUSSION

- How would you describe the lines and shapes in this sculpture? What sort of form does it take?
- This sculpture is abstract in form; do you think it looks organic or mechanical? Or what do you think it might relate to?
- Do you think the sculpture is made from one piece or more than one?
- How would you describe the texture and surface? Does the surface appear natural or mechanical?
- The colour of the work is quite subdued, do you think this is in keeping with the form of the work? Would you describe the piece as subdued?
- What words can you think of to describe the form and presence of the sculpture?
- This piece was made in 2003, yet there is an ancient, primitive quality to it, where does this come across?
- The sculpture is sited in the courtyard of the Crawford Gallery, is this good location? Are there any elements in the sculpture that are echoed or reflected in the surrounding area?

- Most sculpture sits on a plinth in art galleries, but this sculpture stands outside on the ground beside you. Do you think you relate to it differently because you occupy the same space? How might it be different looking at a work on a plinth?
- What considerations would the artist have to take into account when making a piece of sculpture for an outdoors public space? Has this piece of sculpture been designed well to consider these?
- Scale in sculpture, especially sculpture in an outdoor space, is very important for the work to have resonance. Do you think the scale of this piece is appropriate?
- Imagine this piece smaller or much bigger; on what other scale might it work?

In the gallery find these objects in the display case for the Gibson Bequest. Can you find forms that would make interesting elements for a large scale sculpture? What else in the case might be of interest in terms of form, material, or texture?



HANDS ON

This is your design brief, take one of these following theme words as a starting point for an abstract sculpture, protect, nurture, strive, conquer. Your sculpture is to be sited indoors at a junction in a modern shopping mall. It will be viewed from all sides but will not be accessible by the public. The finished piece will be cast in bronze. Use fine wire mesh to create your structure and chose from plaster, clay, paper mache or wax for surface and detail. Consider scale, form, surface texture, and reflection from all directions and note these decisions.

Find some organic or mechanical forms that interest you. (Parts of engines, old machines, bones, exotic fruits etc... are all good to explore.) Make drawings of the more interesting elements, looking at different angles. Design a sculpture based on this investigation. Decide on scale, medium, texture. Show the piece from different angles. If you have the opportunity, make a maquette of the piece.

ST. BRENDAN AND THE UNHAPPY JUDAS

Harry Clarke RHA (1889-1931)

Born in 1889, Harry Clarke was the son of a Dublin craftsman; he worked with his brother in the family studio from an early age. At a time when medieval-style stained glass was enjoying a revival, Clarke was one of its greatest innovators. He was a member of **An Tur Gloinne**, a studio established by Sarah Purser which raised the standard of stained glass design in Ireland.

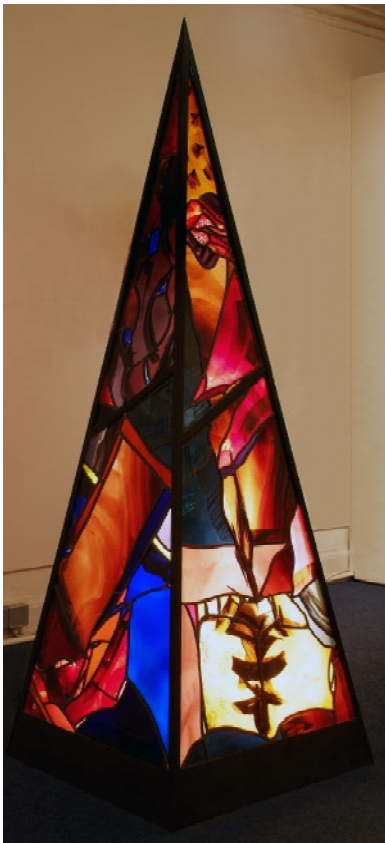


Clarke won many awards and commissions for both clerical and secular work: the windows of the Honan Chapel in Cork and *The Eve of St. Agnes* are just some of the 130 glass pieces he created. As well as stained glass, Clarke also illustrated 6 major books.

St. Brendan and the Unhappy Judas shows St. Brendan and his men in their boat just as they encounter Judas. Judas is being punished for his betrayal of Jesus. Part of Clarke's technique was to make the leading (this joins the pieces of glass together) become part of the drawing. The strong painterly look of the panel, the texture of the waves and intense colours show Harry Clarke's skill.

DISCUSSION

- In stained glass, each piece is worked on separately, often fired in the kiln again and again. How many individual pieces of glass do you see in this panel?
- Clarke has managed to make Judas look very solid and three dimensional, how has he done this?
- Can you read the expressions on the faces of the men? What can you tell from their expressions?
- Harry Clarke was an expert craftsman working in the tradition of medieval-style stained glass. His blending of ancient techniques with modern developments in glass production led to his very unique work. Do any pieces of glass from *St. Brendan and the Unhappy Judas* look as though they have been crafted differently from the others, what different marks or techniques can you see?



In the gallery, look at this abstract stained glass work by artist Maud Cotter. It is called *Straight as Lemons Meet Fish* and dates from 1987. Can you see any similarities between these works in terms of colour, movement, and mark making? What differences do you see?

Look at the series of watercolours that Clarke did as prep-work for his *Eve of St Agnes* window. Can you tell by the style that the drawings are for stained glass? What marks are similar?

Look at the image of the completed window; do you think the drawings translated well to stained glass?

This work has been described as a 'revel in blue', is that a good description? Follow the movement of blue through the window; what other words could you use to describe it.

HANDS ON



Much of Harry Clarke's graphic work was for book illustration. This pen and ink drawing is an example of his gothic drawing style, it illustrates a scene from *The Pit and the Pendulum* by Edgar Allen Poe.

Select a poem or story that you like. Think of an image from it that is dramatic and appeals to you visually. Try styling your image after Clarke's graphic work. (Stylised and elongated figures, patterned and embellished clothes and background, stark black and white contrasts.) Use pen and ink for the project.

Experiment with design in line and shape using black ink and drawing pens. Draw eight squares on an A3 sheet and draw one random shape in each square, using these shapes as a basis for your designs, add line and marks to explore the possibilities of pen and ink.

OFF THE DONEGAL COAST Jack B. Yeats (1871-1957)

Jack Butler Yeats was born in England but spent most of his childhood in Sligo with his grandparents. He was the son of the painter John B. Yeats and brother of poet and playwright William B. Yeats. Ireland, and in particular the West of Ireland and the people of the West, was his favoured subject. He painted fishermen and horse dealers using these subjects to deal with larger issues of nationality and humanity. Over the years his strong drawing-style and watercolours developed into a more loose painterly style. His later paintings were a riot of expressive colour slashed on with a palette knife, with the subject emerging from the shimmering surface of the canvas.



Off the Donegal Coast is based on one of Yeats' favourite subjects, the West Coast. The sailors in their little currach are being rocked by giant waves, the fear clearly showing in their eyes. The unusual diagonal composition gives a sensation of displacement, and places the viewer on the side or above the rescue ship. The painting style is vigorous with strong outline drawing in the boat and the figures. The figures are painted in muted tones. Yeats uses energetic brushstrokes, and blues and purples to capture the movement and texture of the sea. One of his great talents is to capture the moment of greatest tension, and here, Yeats takes us immediately to the heart of the story.

DISCUSSION

- Off the Donegal Coast; Does Yeats capture the tension of the moment? How does he do this?
- The colours used are generally harmonious, what contrasting colours can you find? What do they do in the painting?
- If this image were a photograph, where would the photographer have to be? What sensation do you get from the angle at which this was painted?
- Diagonals in a composition add movement and energy to a painting, what else do you find interesting about the composition?
- Look at the brush marks that make up the stormy sea, how do you think they were made? How are they different to the painting of the figures? Why do you think they are painted in different ways?

IN THE GALLERY



Find the paintings, *The Small Ring* and *Returning From The Bathe, Mid-Day*. what changes in the way the artist uses paint and colour?

There is a very strong atmosphere in this painting; how has Yeats created this?

Describe the character of the crowd watching the fight, what do you think they will do next?

The Small Ring (1930)

In this painting *Returning From the Bathe, Mid-Day*, Yeats has used colour straight from the tube and mixed directly on the canvas using a palette knife.

Would you describe this painting as sentimental? What feeling do you get from this painting?



Returning From the Bathe, Mid-Day (1948)

HANDS ON

Take the sea as a theme, then brainstorm to decide on three “stories” you want to tell about the sea. Using the three styles shown here by Yeats as a guide, plan your three sketches. Consider various viewpoints to make an exciting composition. (Use a viewfinder to change the framing of your sketches, or cut and paste elements of the composition to find one you like.) Try different painting techniques; try painting with a palette knife or a strip of cardboard. Paint with dry brush and thick paint, use colour mixed or straight from the tube to create different surface textures in each of the three images.

Pick a character you think typically irish, then draw, paint or collage a scene that shows them at their best.

PORTRAITS OF BARRY AND BURKE IN THE CHARACTERS OF ULYSSES AND HIS COMPANION FLEEING FROM THE CAVE OF POLYPHEMUS James Barry (1741-1806)

James Barry was a protégé of John Butts in Cork when the statesman, Edmund Burke, spotted his talent. Burke became the young artist's patron and helped him travel and study in London, Paris and Rome. He took his inspiration from the colours of Titian and the composition of late classical works that he had the opportunity to see in Rome. Barry believed he could combine the high ideals of history painting with contemporary issues to revive history painting for a new time. Despite the fact that history painting was out of fashion. His greatest work was a series of neo-classical paintings, *The Progress of Human Knowledge and Culture*, for the Royal Society of Arts in London. Barry was appointed Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy in 1779. His paintings were hailed, but he was expelled in 1799 because of his radical political views and his continuous disagreements with the Academy. He died in 1806 and was then honoured for his life's work by his old adversaries.



Portraits of Barry and Burke in the Guise of Ulysses and his Companions Escaping from the Cave of Polyphemus is a complex work. It shows in beautiful detail the classical tale of Ulysses, hidden under a sheep, escaping from the cave of the blinded Cyclops. While it is also a comment on the political situation that existed in England at the time; America was pushing for Independence while England was forcefully retaliating, both Barry and Burke were against the British response, but in this portrait Burke is cautioning the more outspoken Barry.

DISCUSSION

- This painting was painted in 1776, when there was a renewed interest in all things from ancient Greece and Rome. What in the painting looks particularly classical?
- Is the artist most interested in portraying himself and the statesman Edmund Burke or in telling this story of Ulysses? Why do you think this?
- The artist has created a great sense of depth in this painting, his strong colours are in the foreground and colours get paler as they recede, in what other ways has he created a sense of distance?
- Barry has taken great care to paint soft skin textures here, what other textures do you think he has captured well?
- Do you think that the colours used on the clothes of the two main characters could be symbolic? What could they mean?

- The artist is looking up at Burke, as Burke cautions him, what do you make of the expression on Barry's face?
- Knowing that both of these men opposed England's reaction to the American struggle for Independence and neither therefore were very popular at this time, what could this painting mean?

IN THE GALLERY

Find the painting *The Prince of Wales in the Guise of St George*. In this painting Barry has again used a mythological theme. What comment is he making on the character of the prince?

Look closely at the paintings, can you see any brush-marks? Is the paint thickly applied in the textured areas or are the textures created by colour alone?

What do you think of the scale of these paintings? Does it suit the subject matter?

Can you imagine these paintings being much bigger or smaller? Would they have the same effect?



HANDS ON

Brainstorm ideas for a drawing that has these elements of James Barry's painting:

- (1) It is based on a mythological story (think costume and setting)
- (2) It contains a portrait of you and someone well known (in politics or generally)
- (3) There is some comment on a current social or political issue.

Set up a still life with a variety of textures (wool, various fabrics, metal, bone etc...).

Sketch and paint the composition or take sections of it and concentrate on creating the textures.

Trace an area (or the whole composition) of the Ulysses painting and using magazines or mixed-media collage, re-create the image in your own way.

GROUP OF POTS John ffrench (Born 1919)

John ffrench helped to shape the field of design in Ireland and was honoured by the Crafts Council of Ireland in 2007 with a lifetime achievement award. ffrench was born in Dublin to Irish and Italian parents. He lived in Castlefrench in Galway as a child and cites the colourful imagery of



birds and symbols from his home as a constant inspiration in his work. He studied in Dublin and Italy. When he returned from Italy the loose, playful style that he had developed was in total contrast to the dun coloured pots being produced in Ireland and England at the time. ffrench worked with fellow ceramicist Peter Brennan in Kilkenny, where his pots were hand built and had a Mediterranean feel. Bright colours and playful patterns were constant features. Travelling and living in India informed both his design and work ethic. In 1962, he founded Arklow Studio Pottery and also worked with Kilkenny Design Workshops as part of an initiative to advance design for industry. Currently, ffrench divides his time between studios in America and Galway.

This *Group of Pots* shows the unique characteristics of ffrench's style. They are hand built rather than thrown, they are irregular and brightly coloured. We see the influences of Matisse and Miro in the colour and design.

Pattern is important, showing influences from India, from the modernist style he encountered in Italy, ancient Ogham script and his childhood home. Fifty years on, the eclectic group of pots look as fresh and cheerful as ever.

DISCUSSION

- In the area of design there is an expression that “form follows function”, what do you think this means?
- Does John ffrench work primarily with form or with function?
- If you could own one of these pieces, would you use it as a vase or food dish or would you keep it as something beautiful and interesting to look at?
- Colour is very important in the work of John ffrench, which colours and types of pattern are used here?
- Can you find design elements that run through this work, such as shapes, form, textures, patterns etc...
- John ffrench travelled a great deal and he trained and worked in Florence and India. Are there elements in his work that seem inspired by foreign lands? What are they?
- These are very individual pieces, but can you see any elements in these designs that seem typical of his style? What are they?

- Do you think it is important to have attractive as well as functional design in your life or does it matter? For example, how would it affect your bedroom, if only one of these aspects was used?



- Do the pots look built by hand or thrown on the wheel? How can you tell?
- Hand built pots are built from the base up, do you think John Ffrench followed a design plan for the pots or do you think he started at the base and the pot grew and changed as it was being built. Why do you think so?
- Some of the work of John Ffrench is very sculptural, where can you see that in this group?

IN THE GALLERY

Find as many different styles as you can. Try to find pots that you could put into pairs. Do any of the designs seem very Irish to you? do some seem definitely to have a foreign influence? Which ones?

HANDS ON

Paint a picture of your dinner table as you see it when sitting down for dinner. Try to remember the shapes, colours and designs of your plate, bowls, cutlery etc...

Using air drying or ceramic clay, make some 'pinch pots' by pressing your thumbs into rolled up balls of clay and then squeezing the clay between fingers and thumbs as you 'pinch' the clay all the way around. Decorate the pots by pressing objects into the clay, adding clay, scratching the surface or any other way. When clay is dry or fired, paint on colours and patterns that will be fun to live with.

Have a look at works by Matisse or Juan Miro in an art book and create a hand built pot inspired by the forms or colours you see, allow your design to evolve as your pot grows.

LAOCOON AND HIS SONS. The Canova Casts (Presented 1818)

In 1818, the gift of the Canova Casts from the Prince Regent to Lord Listowel was a catalyst for the foundation of the first School of Art in Cork. Pope Pius VII had originally gifted the casts to Britain in gratitude for British help with the return of Vatican treasures taken by Napoleon. Some two hundred pieces cast from the finest sculptures in the Vatican arrived in Cork to inspire future



artists such as Daniel Maclise, Samuel Forde, and John Hogan. The famed Italian sculptor, Antonio Canova, had overseen the return of the treasures and supervised the casting of the masterpieces. Some of his works are included in the collection. The casts have had an eventful and chequered history, and a number of the finest remain in the Crawford Collection.

Laocöon and His Sons is a cast made from an original marble sculpture found in Rome in 1506. The find was made in the ruins of the palace of Titus and was one of the major discoveries of the Italian Renaissance. The piece is believed to have been carved in Greece by three sculptors; Hagesandros, Polydoros and Athenkodoros, the original is in the Vatican Museums. The scene of the Trojan priest Laocöon and his sons being strangled by sea monsters is vigorously depicted by writhing, twisting figures. Laocöon had incurred the wrath of the Gods when he tried to warn the people of Troy of his suspicions about the Trojan horse. The God Apollo, who favoured the Greeks, sent the serpents to

attack Laocöon and his sons as they were making a sacrifice at the altar of Neptune.

DISCUSSION

- What is your first reaction to this sculpture?
- Does the violence of the incident come across in the action of the figures? Where do you see this?
- In the figure of Laocöon, look at sections of his legs, his torso, his arms, each section seems to be strained and pained, where is this especially true?
- Look at the face of Laocöon, what do you read from his expression?
- Try making this face and stretching your neck like Laocöon does.
- Does this feel like pain or anger or something else to you?
- The drama of the piece is almost theatrical, can you identify the movements and poses that give this sense of the theatrical to the group?
- The sea serpents bring your eye around the sculpture group, what else draws your eye around?

- The main thrust of the sculptural group is towards the left, with one figure pulling away towards the right, what does this figure on the right do to the balance of the sculpture? Imagine how the sculpture would look without this figure, would it have the same impact?
- Do you think the work was designed to be seen from behind or not?



The original sculpture had to be pieced back together when it was found during the Italian Renaissance. Artists at the time agreed on the version seen before, but later the original arm was found and this more accurate version was assembled.

- How is the dynamic changed by the new arrangement of the sculpture?
- If you stretch into the individual poses, which one seems more real?

IN THE GALLERY

Laocöon and his Sons is one of many classical casts in plaster to be found in this room. One of the great benefits of having these figurative works was that art students traditionally drew from them to study human anatomy. Find an interesting (and comfortable) viewpoint and see how this would work, better still, do some sketching.

HANDS ON

In class, take an example (perhaps from your English play or prose) of conflict between two or three people. Imagine a group acting out this conflict. Chose poses that work to express each individual position and try to show the group dynamic. Create a tableau - a living picture, where you direct a group of pupils in your class to remain frozen in the poses of your characters. Draw or photograph this group and you could also use it as a basis for a sculpture.

COMPOSITION Mainie Jellett (1897-1944)

Mainie Jellett studied at the Metropolitan School of Art in her native Dublin and at the Westminster Art School in London, where she studied with the British impressionist Walter Sickert. It was here that she met her life long companion, Evie Hone and together they went to study at the studio of Andre Lhote. The cubist style taught by Lhote encouraged the study, rather than the rejection of the works the Old Masters. Lhote introduced Jellett to the cubist theorist Albert Gleizes and the three artists met to work together and exchange ideas. Jellett's abstract style was greeted with horror in Ireland; she was described as having been infected with the "malaria" of abstract art. Because of her international acclaim she was eventually accepted as a leader of the modern art movement in Ireland. A fervent exponent of abstract art, Jellett wrote, lectured, and taught art throughout Ireland. She exhibited at home and internationally throughout her life. In 1943, she was a founding member of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art.



Composition, painted in 1935, is an interpretation of the holy family. Jellett was deeply religious and spiritual, and much of her work was inspired by religious themes. Here, shape and colour suggest three figures rising from a central base. The golden arcs around the figures and the use of colour suggest medieval icons. Jellett's particular style of cubism did not require the rejection of either nature or representation, but the delving deep into the subject to find its inner rhythm and harmony. She believed the symbolic power of colour and shape to be universal, and to resonate with all. She sought to extract from her original naturalistic drawings the shapes and colours that spoke clearest on the subject and then, by repeating these elements, to create a work of art complete in itself.

DISCUSSION

- What feeling or mood do you get from this painting?
- Mainie Jellett believed in the symbolic and potentially spiritual qualities of colour and shape, does this seem like a spiritual or religious painting? What are the reasons for your answer?
- Symbolically, some colours have very definite qualities, red for example we take to mean stop, or danger. Red also represents passion. We associate black with death. What other symbolic associations with colour can you think of?
- What shapes do we associate with different feelings or qualities?
- With what do we associate the shapes in this painting?
- The colours used are muted with lots of white in them, what effect does this have on the mood of the work?
- The artist has used gold paint, how does the use of gold effect what you feel about the work?

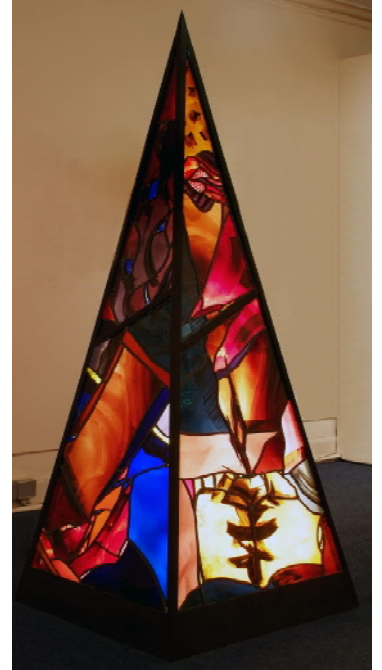
- Do you get a sense of movement from this painting? How do you think the artist has created this?
- The harmony of this painting is created by tones of the same colour being placed close together, where is this harmonious pattern broken, what happens in these areas?

In the gallery, find this abstract, stained glass sculpture by Cork artist Maud Cotter.

The artist enjoys words and poetry, and she gave this work an unusual title. It is called *Straight as Lemons Meet Fish* and was made in 1987.

Stained glass was traditionally used in churches to create a special atmosphere. Here the artist has used stained glass to create a sculpture piece, which is lit from inside.

Maud Cotter has painted, etched and joined the glass to create an abstract composition of expressive marks, colours and shapes.



HANDS ON

Find a photograph or image that has a strong meaning for you. What colours or combinations of colours could you associate with this feeling? Choose rhythms and shapes from the image and repeat them to form a new composition. Introduce the colours and try to balance these colours to enhance the mood.

Rhythm workshop:

The teacher chooses music with a range of rhythms: hip- hop, classical, ballad, reggae etc...The pupils each take an A3 sheet and divide it horizontally into sections. When the first piece of music is played, pupils respond by making 'marks' in the first space.

The next piece of music is 'marked' in the second space and so on.

At the end of the workshop compare sheets. Do the marks and shapes seem to relate to the rhythms? Can you guess what marks went with which piece of music?

ROY KEANE WITH RAVEN'S HEAD Murdo Macleod (Born 1963)

Murdo Macleod was born on the Scottish Isle of Lewis, leaving the island for the first time to go to college in Edinburgh. As a boy he had a great interest in stories and pictures. He saved up for a mail-order russian camera and taught himself to process film from a library book. He now works as a freelance photographer for the Observer, Guardian and other newspapers and publishes his work in magazines and online. One of his most powerful series of photographs documented the Foot and Mouth outbreak in the UK.



Cork's own Roy Keane is portrayed here holding the skull of that most nightmarish of birds, the raven. Murdo Macleod was aware of Roy Keane's reputed 'dark side' and took the opportunity to use the skull. The portrait sets up an interesting dynamic. Roy Keane looks straight ahead, one eye seen through the beak of the dead bird, we, the viewers look straight back, but are drawn also to the empty eye socket of the bird. It is though we are all held, suspended in this triangle of looking and trying to see.

DISCUSSION

What is your immediate reaction to this photograph?

In one or two sentences, how would you describe this work?

Can you look at this photograph objectively in terms of composition, light and shade, etc... without thinking about Roy Keane? Please give reasons for your answer.

If you didn't know Roy Keane, would you still find this photograph interesting? Why?

There is no evidence in the photograph that we are looking at a soccer player. What aspects of the man do you think the photographer is interested in? What comes across about Roy Keane?

How would you describe the expression on Keane's face?

The skull is from a raven (the photographer said it smelled very bad) what do you associate with that bird?

A physical connection has been set up in the image between Keane and the raven, why does this make us feel they are connected in some other way? How else might they be connected?

What words can you find to describe the mood of the image? What part does the composition have in creating this mood?

Is an art gallery somewhere that you might expect to see a photograph of Roy Keane?
Would you be less surprised if it was a painting of Roy Keane?



COMPARE AND CONTRAST

This picture shows a very different kind of portrait. It is a painting is called *Portrait of James Joyce* by Louis le Brocqy.

Do you think that there are qualities that a photographer can bring to a portrait that a painter cannot? What are these qualities?

HANDS ON

Do this test to see how sophisticated you are at reading peoples' expressions: Write a list of feelings or emotions such as 'concerned,' 'overjoyed', 'unsure' 'annoyed'. (Make up new categories as necessary.) On sheets of A2 paper stick down headshots from magazines or newspapers that fit the profile. Do this in groups of 2 or 3 and see if you agree on the words and their corresponding images.

Using the same list as above, look at your expressions in the mirror as you try out each emotion, jot down words relating how your face changes. Choose one emotion to express and, without exaggerating your expression, draw a self-portrait in charcoal. Look especially at the eyes, eyebrows, the curve of the lips and the tilt of the head, share drawings and see if you can read the expressions.

Using the school camera, work with another person to take close-up portraits: Set up a simple dark background and chose one object that you feel will work to provoke your questions or promote an understanding. Experiment with and use whatever lights you can to sculpt form and to create atmosphere, first you compose and ask your friend to take the shot, then swap around.

RIVER TO THE SEA Norah McGuinness (1901-1980)

Norah McGuinness was born in Belfast, but worked for much of her life in Dublin. She was a versatile artist designing sets and costumes for theatre, window displays for major shops in Ireland and America and she illustrated books. But her main love remained painting and she represented Ireland in the Venice Biennale of 1950. She painted landscape and figurative work that developed in style from representational and naturalistic to cubist and semi-abstract. She was influenced in France by the cubist style of André Lhote and by the strong colours of the Fauves. She developed her own, very personal style of semi-abstract painting through her later still life studies, and her studies over many years around the docklands of Dublin.



River to the Sea painted in 1959 has all the vibrancy and colour of McGuinness's mature work: the sharp diagonal of blue and green dissects the painting and the use of outline further fragments the image. Strong contrasts of orange and blue, purple and yellow sing out at us from this magical setting. The familiar landscape with its traditional thatched cottage becomes a new world under the inquiring eye of the artist. The exploration of colour, form and perspective in her cubist manner offers us the opportunity to see again with wonder such traditional scenes.

DISCUSSION

- When you first look at the painting, where does your gaze go? Does your eye follow colour or line in the painting?
- Why do you think the artist uses these strong outlines around shapes?
- How does what is painted inside these dark lines relate to what is outside?
- One of the cubist elements McGuinness uses in this painting is that light and shade are not used to define form? How does she define form in the figure, the house, and the mountains?
- The fragmentation of the surface means we do not 'read' space in the painting through perspective as we usually do. What gives the work a sense of depth? Is this the same throughout the painting?
- What is the narrative of the painting - what is going on?
- This is quite a traditional scene of the Irish countryside, by painting the scene in this style, has McGuinness changed your view of it in any way?
- Can you tell a lot about the place from this painting? Do you get a good sense of what this place is about?

- Look at the vegetation on the right hand side of the painting, how is it different to the rest of the painting? How does it fit into the painting?
- McGuinness does not use colour naturalistically, for what effect do you think she chooses these colours? Look at the areas of strong colour, do you find more warm or cool colours or are they balanced? Overall does the painting seem warm or cool?
- Where are the areas of strongest colour contrasts? How do these areas affect the painting?



IN THE GALLERY

Can you find this painting?

It is also by an Irish artist, called Jack B. Yeats.

Compare this painting with *River to the Sea*. Consider the composition and the way that the artist has applied the paint.

Returning From the Bathe, Mid-Day (1948)

This painting by the Irish artist William Crozier uses colour and shape in a bold fashion.

Can you compare this painting to *River to the Sea*?

Consider the use of colour in all three of these art works.



The Ripe Field (1989)

HANDS ON

For a fauvist approach to painting, take a favourite photograph of a landscape or of figures. Enlarge to A3 or A4 size and trace the main outlines onto paper, keeping your drawing simple. Paint the drawing in strong colour contrasts, avoiding browns, greys and black. Choose not to use naturalistic colour, instead use colour that inspires a mood.

MEN OF THE SOUTH Sean Keating (1889-1977)

Sean Keating studied art in Limerick before winning a scholarship to study at the Metropolitan School of Art in Dublin. He studied painting under the artist William Orpen and Orpen found him an excellent pupil. He painted in a similar realist fashion to Orpen and developed his skills in this area, even at a time when abstract painting was becoming popular in Ireland. A traditionalist, he believed in strong drawing skills and an academic approach to painting. Keating went to London as Orpen's assistant and sometimes model but, as a nationalist, he felt his mission was to help define what nationhood meant through his painting. A trip to the Aran Islands in 1914 greatly inspired him; here was the noble islander who represented the ideal, strong, independent type of man needed for the new nation. For Keating he became the image of national identity.



Men of the South shows a group of IRA men. They are waiting for a British military group to pass. An ambush is imminent but as we see from their staunch profiles these men are not concerned for their own safety, but for the principles they hold. Keating portrays these six men as a coherent group. Strong drawing underlies the figures and the neutral tones create an earthy wholesome attachment of the men to the landscape. Keating has made heroes of these men; this painting is not about the grime and pain of war, but about the

idealism and patriotism behind it.

DISCUSSION

- What do you think is going on in this painting?
- Who do you think these men of the South are?
- Keating has painted the portraits of these six men but this painting is more than a group portrait, what else has the artist captured in this work?
- The artist has composed the group of men so that we see them in profile, looking forward into the distance, why do you think he chose this composition?
- There is strong use of line in this painting, the faces and figures of the men are very strongly defined, and every aspect of the painting seems full of conviction. Do you think Keating is trying to influence our opinion of these men by painting them in this way?
- Do you think the sympathies of the artist lie with these men or with the men they are about to encounter? What makes you think this?
- How might the painting look if the opposite answer was true?
- Do you think it is the job of the artist to show political preference in his/her work?

- Look at the overall colour scheme of the painting, it is very harmonious and uses neutral and natural tones. Does the colour have a calming effect or does it add to the tension of the situation.
- Do you get a sense of the time of day from the light and colour of the painting?
- Could there be symbolic reasons for the choice of colour? What might these be?



In the gallery can you find this painting called *Economic Pressure*, also by Sean Keating? This painting deals with the issues of poverty and immigration in the West of Ireland.

Are there similarities in the style of painting in these two works? Can you see this in the brush strokes and colour use? Where else are there similarities?

Keating had a great love for the people and the landscape of the West of Ireland. How is this evident in this painting?

There is a narrative running through both of these paintings. Keating was interested in getting a story and message across to his audience through his realist painting, what message do you get?

HANDS ON

In the classroom have one of the pupils model for the group in the pose of one of the *Men of the South*. If possible find some oversize clothes and some props that could be used to make the scene more authentic.

Look at how Keating has used line to create such a strong sense of form, in your first drawing use only line.

Do a series of five-minute sketches, just using the lines and contours on the clothes to show the form of the figure.

In a longer study use charcoal and chalk on tan sugar paper, again use line to express form and let the colour of the paper represent the broad areas of colour. Using a viewfinder, find a section of this painting that is interesting in terms of pattern and colour. Trace or draw this patterned area onto a larger sheet of paper and using magazines or fabric or mixed media, interpret the design in collage.

TIME FLIES William Gerard Barry (1864-1941)

William Gerard Barry came from Carrigtwohill in County Cork. He studied at the Crawford School of Art from 1881 to 1883 and then went to the study at the Academie Julian in Paris. The tradition of Irish artists painting in France and Belgium was by then well established.

Artists came from all over Europe and the United States to paint in Brittany and Fontainebleau. Here, they painted in the open air, shared ideas and developed techniques in an atmosphere of solidarity. Barry sent a painting back to Ireland and won the Taylor Award. (It may have been this painting *Time Flies*.) He left what seemed like a blossoming career in Europe for travels in the Americas and the South Seas. He paid his way by painting portraits and landscapes, eventually settling in France.



Time Flies was painted in Grez-sur-Loing, a village in Fontainebleau that has a strong tradition of landscape painting; Corot had painted there in 1863 and an artist colony had grown in the area. The painting shows the influence of French Realism: such themes of youth and age were popular means of exploring the change in seasons, life cycles and figures in the environment. The soft evening sunshine permeates the glade and settles on the group of children. The matron contemplates the idyllic scene, enjoying this moment with the bittersweet realisation that her time is quickly passing. The barefoot

children are too happily engaged in their game to be bothered with such things.

DISCUSSION

- The title of this painting is *Time Flies*, what do you think this refers to?
- Do you think the artist feels optimistic or pessimistic about the notion of time going quickly? How does he convey his mood through the painting?
- Who in the painting represents age? Do you think this person is a benevolent figure?
- What time of day do you think it is? How can you tell? Why do you think the time of day is significant?
- Look at the clothes worn by the children and the matron, what can you tell about their lifestyle from this?
- How can you tell from the landscape that William Gerard Barry painted this in France? Why do you think France was a popular place for artists?
- The French Realists were very interested in working outside in the open air. They wanted to capture scenes of simple peasant life and often explored themes of youth and age.
- Do you know the work of the Impressionists? Can you compare this painting with an impressionist painting you know?

- The scene has a very relaxed air about it. Often horizontal lines in a composition give a feeling of peace and leisure, what horizontals do you see in this painting? Do they help to create this effect?
- Look at the composition of the painting, the trees, the shadows and the figure of the matron form an x that intersects just at the standing child's head, the light radiates outward from the lower angle to embrace the children. What effect does this have on our reading of the painting?



Compare and Contrast

Look at the painting *The Breadline*, 1916 by Muriel Brandt. Where do you think this scene was painted?

Look at the children, how would you compare the way they are composed and the style in which they are painted to the children in *Time Flies*?

HANDS ON

Take the title *Time Flies* and illustrate the words so that they convey the meaning; for example, you could turn the “i” in time into one hand of a clock, the “s” could be flying away, be imaginative!

Have a brainstorming session on how you could interpret the theme of youth and age. Half of the group should use figures in their plan, the other half should use non-figurative interpretations.

Discuss the idea that time flies. Imagine what you might be doing in ten years time, do you think these years will pass quickly? Ten years ago what age were you? Did time fly since then? Make a picture-graph of changes in this time.

Use your ideas to develop a poster on the theme. Use images and lettering from magazines. Work in groups or individually and do a sketch of your composition first. Try to get your layout to work to accentuate your interpretation of the theme. Discuss which are more effective, the figurative or non-figurative posters.