

## TIME FLIES William Gerard Barry (1864-1940)

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 which has a strong tradition of landscape painting; Corot had painted there in 1863 and an artists' 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. In the painting 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 name of this painting is *Time Flies* does this mean:

- (a) A time machine will land on the grass
- (b) Someone is about to throw an alarm clock
- (c) Time goes by very quickly

Look at the shadows, what time of day is it when shadows are so long?

Do you think the artist is saying that days go by, or childhood goes by, or seasons go by too quickly?

The old lady in the painting sees that time is going by quickly, do the children notice? Why?

The colours in this painting are mostly yellows, browns, oranges. Do the colours make you feel warm or cold?

The colours give a certain feeling and mood to the scene, what sort of mood do these colours create?

Look at the light coming through the trees, the artist hasn't painted flat areas of the same colour, instead he has placed dabs of different colour close together. How does this look different to flat colour?

Do the children look happy? How can you tell?

What do you think the children are talking about?

Have you had sunny days like this with your friends? Did those days have the same feeling this painting gives you?



### **Compare and Contrast**

Look at the painting *The Breadline*, 1916, by Muriel Brandt, what are the children doing in this painting?

Here the artist has painted using flatter areas of colour, how does the way it is painted look different to *Time Flies*?

### **HANDS ON**

Does the grass where the children are lying look soft? How did the artist paint it to make it look like this? Look carefully, does he paint every blade of grass?

Using crayons or pastels, mix the colours that you see on the grass. Try putting thick blobs of the colours beside each other to get the same look as in the painting. Rub thick layers of crayon or pastel on different coloured paper, scratch and draw into the crayon with the back of your pencil.

Try using your pastels in different ways. Stab them on the paper to get different textures. Draw colours over each other. Draw colours side by side and blend them together with a little squished up piece of paper. Draw very lightly on different coloured and textured paper. Experiment with your own techniques.

Draw a picture of one of your favourite things to do on sunny days, put friends or toys or pets in the picture if you want. Use some of the techniques you have experimented with, pick the techniques that best suit the mood of your picture.