



UPPER PRIMARY
CHILDREN IN ART

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UPPER PRIMARY | TEACHER'S NOTES



CREATIVE THINKING AT ABERDEEN ART GALLERY

Welcome. This pack has been put together by our experienced learning team to help you explore the building and the collection with your pupils. Every artwork tells a story, giving an insight into a particular culture, society or time in history. Exploring the collection will encourage curiosity, imagination and problem solving.

About Aberdeen Art Gallery

The opening of Aberdeen Art Gallery on 7 July 1885 was made possible by financial contributions from local businessmen including granite and flour merchants, art collectors and civic-minded individuals. The people who paid for this building also donated many of the older paintings that you see on display today. They were philanthropists who wished to give something back to the community by establishing a public venue for the enjoyment and appreciation of art.

Before your visit

You may want to begin with a picture of Aberdeen Art Gallery and ask your learners to set some questions about the gallery and what they might see there.

This will help to de-mystify what an art gallery is, who it's there for and hopefully have them looking forward to their visit.

How to use the teacher's notes

In order to make these notes work for you, we have chosen artworks and activities that are age appropriate. Primary is divided in to Lower and Upper and Secondary is divided in to Junior and Senior phase.

This resource provides you with suggested activities and background information on selected artworks. There are six themes that will direct you to at least three gallery spaces, but you can of course look at more artworks along the way.

As these teacher's notes will be available to download from our website, some images of the artworks are copyright protected and cannot be included in the pack.

Visit our website at www.aagm.co.uk to see images of all the artworks featured in this pack as well as many others from the collections of Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums.

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THEME FOR THIS PACK: CHILDREN IN ART

Children have featured in art throughout history. Since the 19th century there has been a shift in focus from predominately religious themes and noble portraits to children from all levels of society.

Our collection contains artworks depicting childhood and the family unit in its many different forms. By recording the changing perception of childhood in society, artists open a window to the past while encouraging a discussion for the future.

On arrival

Go to the welcome desk and staff there will tell you where to store your coats and bags.

They will also point out where the toilets and lifts are.

Our staff will provide you with any equipment you have booked in advance of your visit.

If you have booked our Learning Centre to use for a snack or lunch, please let our staff know. Eating and drinking in the gallery spaces is not allowed.

Around the Gallery

Explain to your learners that they must not touch any of the art on display (oily hands can damage artworks) unless a label invites them to touch.

You are welcome to sketch with pencils in the Art Gallery but please make sure your learners are creative on their paper only, not on any other surfaces!

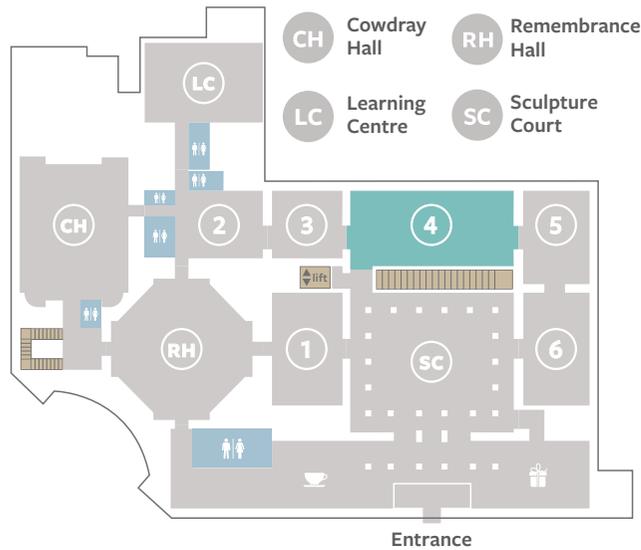
Please supervise your pupils appropriately at all times and ask them to be considerate of other visitors.

We really hope you enjoy your visit to Aberdeen Art Gallery and we welcome any feedback on how to improve the experience for others.

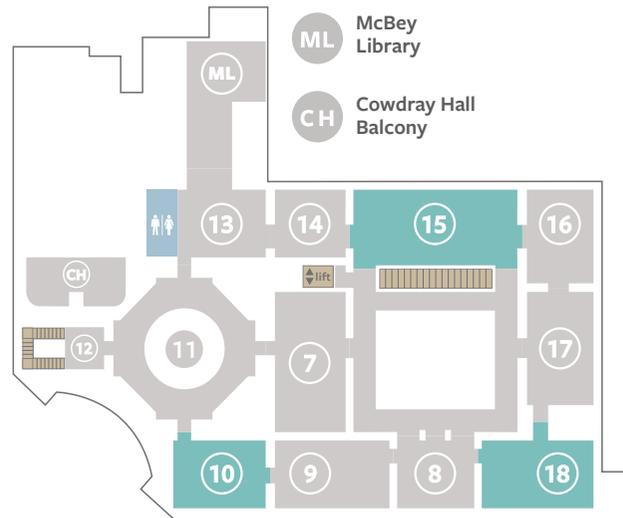
GETTING AROUND THE ART GALLERY



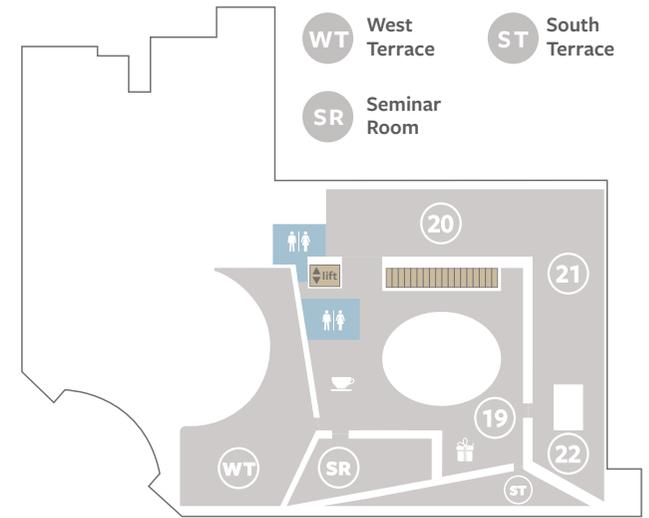
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



start here **10** end here **15**

French Impressions
 Settler Activity
 A Frugal Meal
 Alexander Mackenzie
 A Ground Swell, Carradale
 William McTaggart

4

Human Presence
 Feedback Loop
 Kenny Hunter

18

People and Portraits
 Bright Eyes
 Sir John Everett Millais

15

Paradise Lost
 Family Group No 3 (Angle)
 Henry Moore

SETTLER ACTIVITY

Gallery 10: French Impressions

Gallery 10
French Impressions



When you arrive in Gallery 10 organise your group into a circle. For some it may be their first visit to a gallery and we want them to feel welcome and comfortable in their surroundings.

Ask them to think about people they will see on this visit. This could be the member of the Gallery staff they met on arrival, or a young couple and their baby in to see a special exhibition.

It is important for children to recognise that museums and galleries are places they can visit and enjoy throughout their lives. We want to challenge the old-fashioned attitude that only people of a certain age, or from a certain social background, will visit art galleries.



A FRUGAL MEAL

Alexander Mackenzie, 1888

This painting is typical of scenes of domestic activity which were increasingly popular in Scotland in the 19th century. Therefore it is not surprising that it was exhibited at least four times in the two years after it was painted in 1888.

The artist, Alexander Mackenzie, was born in Aberdeen in 1850 and became a founder member of the Aberdeen Artists' Society in 1885. He exhibited regularly with them until his untimely death in 1890. Between the exhibitions of 1886 and 1887 it is assumed that Mackenzie visited Brittany in France, as the titles of his paintings reflect his new found French subjects. The little girl in *A Frugal Meal* wears traditional European peasant clothing and shoes. With its frank naturalism, Mackenzie was obviously influenced by the work of Jules Bastien-Lepage, the French Realist painter whose work, *Going to School*, is also on display in this room.

The harsh realities of poverty are shown not just by the painting's title but also in the girl's clothing and the crumbling plaster and torn reproduction of a painting on the wall behind her. Despite this we are drawn to look at the young girl, who with downcast eyes, gently blows over a spoonful of her sparse dinner in order to cool it down. Her position at one side of the composition means we give equal attention to the modest soup pot and pieces of bread on the table.

Activity

Please see the following page about the painting *A Ground Swell* for a joint activity with this painting.



A GROUND SWELL, CARRADALE

William McTaggart, 1883-1886

Gallery 10
French Impressions



It is not surprising to learn that the creator of this atmospheric painting, that captures the energy of the sea so perfectly, was raised in Kintyre, a western peninsula of Scotland. He moved to Edinburgh in 1851 and studied at the Trustees Academy where he won several prizes and went on to exhibit his work at the Royal Academy in 1870. Although McTaggart's early works were mainly figure paintings, often of children, he would return to landscapes and marine art, specifically seascape painting, inspired no doubt by his childhood.

McTaggart strove to capture the moods of nature, such as the transient effects of light and water, so he adopted the Impressionist practice of painting out of doors, *en plein air*.

In this painting, movement is expressed by the small fishing boat lurching in the swell, buffeted by the wind. Inside the boat are four red-cheeked, curly-haired children who are enjoying their adventure and are no doubt looking forward to eating the fish that one of them gamely clings on to. They are given more attention than the adult male, who is in charge of the boat, or the other adults in the boat behind.

Activity

Organise your class into two groups. Give a time limit of five minutes and ask them to discuss the questions for the two highlighted paintings.

When the time is up, swap the groups and repeat the process.



Discussion Points for *A Frugal Meal*

Ask your group what their favourite meal is. Explain to them that there are children in Scotland who will go hungry today. Then ask your pupils if they know of any areas in the world that experience food shortages and famine.

Discussion Points for *A Ground Swell, Carradale*

Everyone in your group should choose one word to describe how the children might be feeling and one word to describe the sea.



Now go to **Gallery 4: Human Presence**.

When moving between galleries ask learners to look out for other representations of children in sculptures, photographs, prints and drawings.

FEEDBACK LOOP

Kenny Hunter, 2003

Kenny Hunter was born in Edinburgh in 1962 and graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1987. After studying classical sculpture at the British School in Athens, he subsequently moved back to Scotland and works at Edinburgh College of Art.

Hunter has said that the aim of his work is to question certainties and stereotypes. In *Feedback Loop* you can see how he is exploring cultural change within a modern urban environment. He has drawn on lots of different influences, from the Statue of Liberty to the massive propaganda sculptures of communist states like North Korea. The artist is interested in showing how cultures evolve, change and influence each other and this is illustrated in the girl's clothes. Although she is clearly a teenager of Japanese origin, we could see a girl looking like this in any major city of the world. Her pose and the colour of the sculpture are very deliberate choices. Gray is the colour of conformity but the girl is rebelling against this with one arm raised defiantly, holding a bunch of bright-pink flowers.

The sculpture is made from fibre glass, a material the artist uses in many of his sculptures. It is quite a lightweight material, allowing him to make large scale sculptures with relative ease. It also gives a smooth, uniform finish, which suits his style of cartoon-like sculpture.

Activity for *Feedback Loop*

Organise your learners so they are sitting in a large circle around *Feedback Loop*. Everyone should draw what they can see of the sculpture. As everyone will have a slightly different view you will get a full 360 degree image of the girl.

 Now go to **Gallery 18: People and Portraits**.

Gallery 4
Human Presence



BRIGHT EYES

Sir John Everett Millais, 1887

Millais was a child prodigy who became the youngest ever student of the Royal Academy at the age of 11. An original founder of the *Pre Raphaelite* Brotherhood in 1848 along with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Holman Hunt, they aspired to recapture the beauty and simplicity of the medieval world. They wanted to combine the pious qualities of medieval art with their own study of nature and the world around them.

By the mid 1850s Millais moved away from the moral intensity of the Brotherhood. He strove to develop a new realism in his work with a broader style. These later works, especially those of children, were incredibly popular. His famous portrait of a child, known as *Bubbles*, was used for a Pears Soap advert which became one of the most reproduced advertising images ever and made him one of the wealthiest artists of the day. They also drew sharp criticism from some of his peers with accusations of the work being too commercial.

The simplicity of Millais' later works is clearly evidenced in this striking portrait of Florence Coleridge. She is depicted full face, with a straightforward gaze and honest expression. Her hands are tucked into the pockets of her bright red Inverness cape. This very casual pose hints at Millais' knowledge of contemporary French portraiture, particularly that of the Realist painter Edouard Manet.

Activity for *Bright Eyes*

Ask your group to look at *Bright Eyes* but do not provide them with any information about the painting. Then invite the pupils to give the artwork a suitable title. After hearing their responses and the reasons behind their choices, tell them the actual title and discuss why you think the artist called it this.

 Now go to **Gallery 15: Paradise Lost.**

Gallery 18
People and Portraits



FAMILY GROUP NO 3 (ANGLE)

Henry Moore, 1944

Gallery 15
Paradise Lost



Henry Moore was one of the most important British sculptors of the 20th century. Throughout his career he achieved critical and popular success, both nationally and internationally.

Born in Yorkshire in 1898 to a large, though poor family, Moore developed an interest in art at his local school. After a brief time in the army during the First World War, he continued his education and in 1921 won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art, where he would later teach part-time. It was after the Second World War that his major successes came, with his work receiving numerous awards.

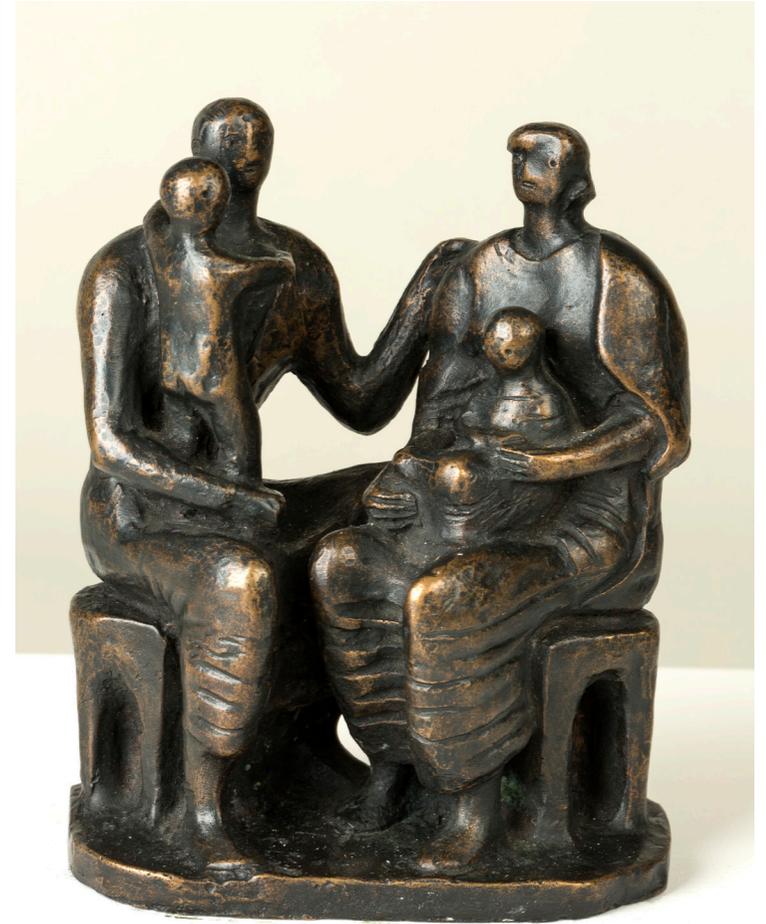
Moore returned again and again to the motifs of mother and child, the family group and the reclining figure. Just as the human body inspired Moore's forms, so the natural world also played a major role in his creative process. He often derived ideas from objects such as pebbles, shells and bones and the resulting sculpture would encourage the viewer to see the world as one endlessly changing work of art.

This sculpture emerged from a number of family group drawings Moore made in 1944. Later his figures were to become more stylised and the spatial relationships between each figure less defined. Two adults are looking after two children, the younger child is being held by the adult female and the older child is standing up on the adult male. Aside from the obvious beauty of this artwork it also generates discussion on what a family is. Just because there are adults looking after the children does that mean that they are the parents?

Activity

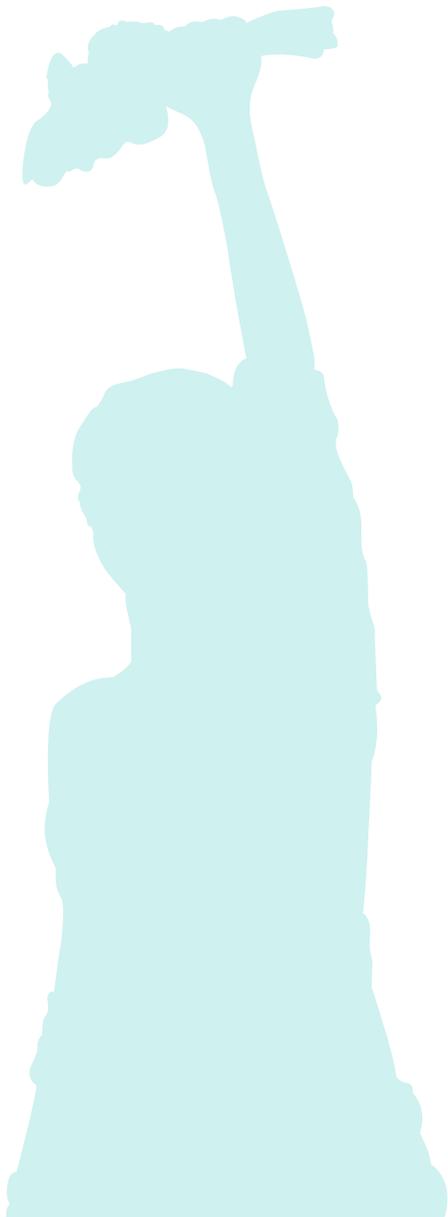
Organise your learners into groups of four and ask them to act out being a family, with two adults and two children, posing for a group photograph or painting. Get them to think about how the adults are looking after the children, and what the children may be up to.

Point out that in this sculpture there are no faces on the figures but ask each pupil to display the emotions they may be feeling.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Complete back at school



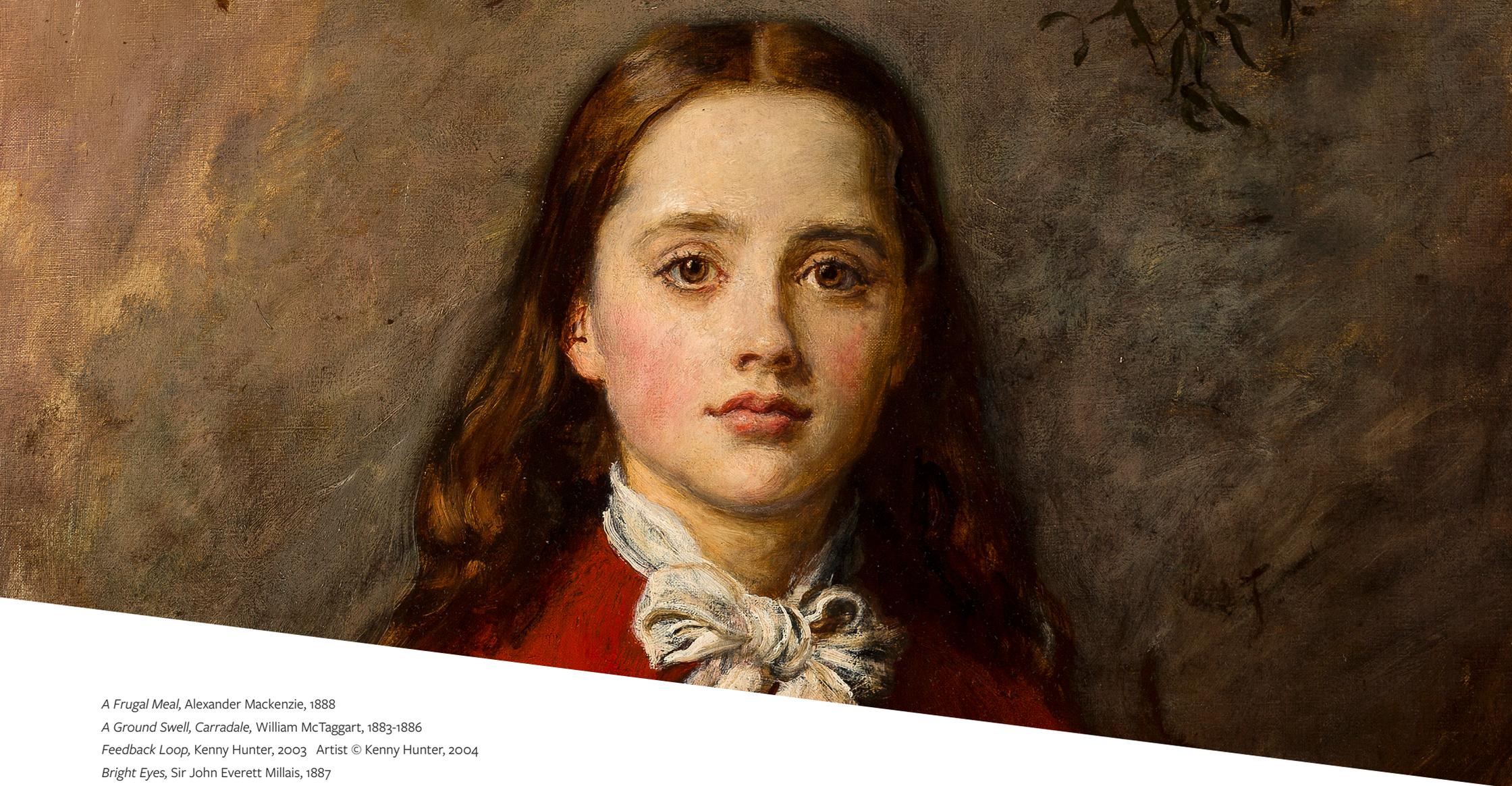
“I can develop and communicate my ideas demonstrating imagination and presenting at least one possible solution to a design problem.”

EXA 2-06a

Referring back to *Feedback Loop* ask your class to imagine that an artist wants to create a sculpture as big as this one but with them as the subject matter.

Ask them what clothes they would be wearing, what pose they would make and would they be holding anything in their hands?

Also ask where they would like this sculpture to be placed: in a public park, in a gallery or at school?



A Frugal Meal, Alexander Mackenzie, 1888

A Ground Swell, Carradale, William McTaggart, 1883-1886

Feedback Loop, Kenny Hunter, 2003 Artist © Kenny Hunter, 2004

Bright Eyes, Sir John Everett Millais, 1887

Family Group No 3 (Angle), Henry Moore, 1944 Artist © DACS



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Aberdeen Art Gallery | Schoolhill | Aberdeen AB10 1FQ | tel. 03000 200 293 | www.aagm.co.uk



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