



SENIOR PHASE
PORTRAITURE

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SENIOR PHASE | 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: PORTRAITURE

A portrait is an artistic representation or likeness of a person which can take many forms including painting, sculpture, drawing, photograph or print.

Traditionally a portrait would resemble the subject's physical appearance and capture some elements of their personality or achievements in life. Contemporary artists question the nature of identity and may not even show the face of the sitter.

Clues to the social context of a portrait can be found in the sitter's pose, clothing and objects that are in the background.

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!

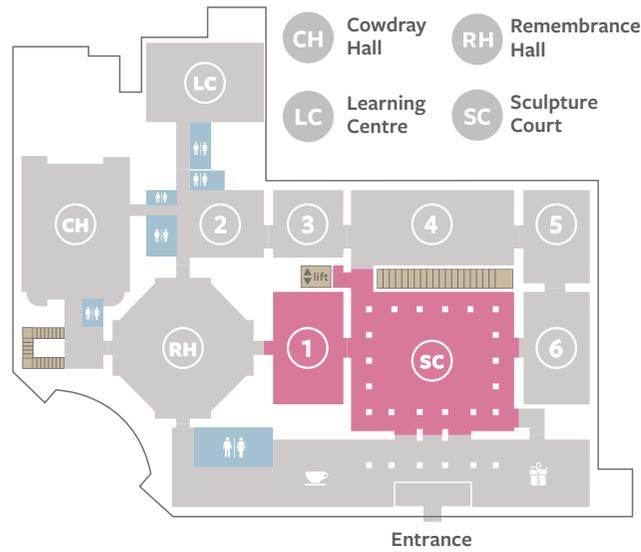
Please supervise your pupils appropriately at all times and ask them to be considerate of other visitors.

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

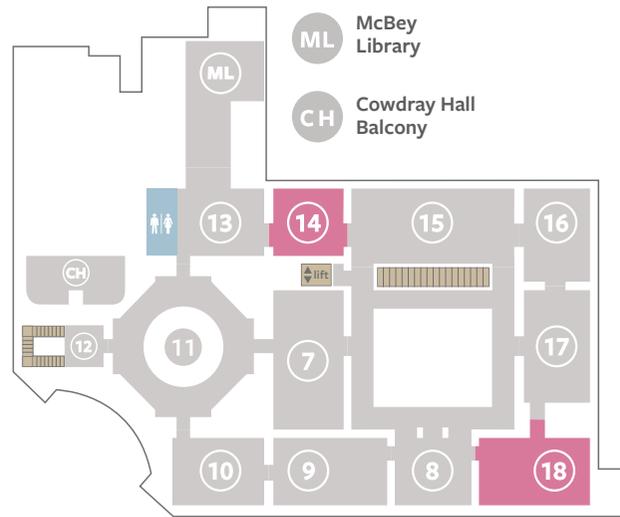
GETTING AROUND THE ART GALLERY



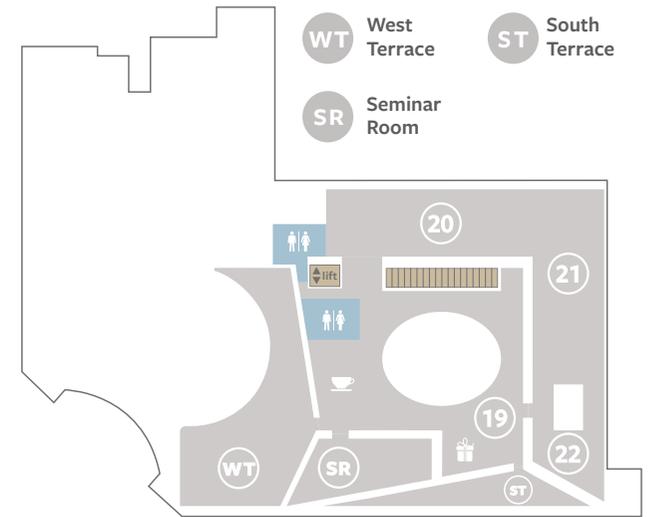
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



start here **SC** **1** **14** **18** end here

SC Sculpture Court
 Settler Activity
 Freeze Frame

1 Collecting Art
 Head of Francis Bacon
 Clive Barker

14 Art of Empowerment
 Anne Finlay
 Dorothy Johnstone

18 People and Portraits
 Mariana
 Dante Gabriel Rossetti
 Gallowgate Lard
 Ken Currie
 J.Y.M. Seated
 Frank Auerbach

SETTLER ACTIVITY

The size and needs of your class may determine how many learners are around an artwork at a time. You may want to split your class into smaller groups, with each group starting in a different part of the building.

When moving between galleries, ask learners to look out for other types of portraiture along the way, this could be in a variety of formats such as painting, sculpture, coins, photography, print, digital media etc.

SCULPTURE COURT

This is a good way to settle into critical thinking and allow learners to feel part of the gallery space.

Freeze Frame

Come together in a circle. Have a look at the space around you and think about a type of person that would visit a gallery. It could be an artist, an art student, a parent/carer with children, a school pupil, a business person, tourist or anyone you like.

Think about how you would move, what you are doing and what you are looking at.

Silently act out your character and then FREEZE! This helps learners to visualise how people interact with the space around them. It enables them to consider movement and expression as if they are artworks themselves.



Now make your way to
Gallery 1: Collecting Art.

Ask learners to look out for different examples of portraiture as they move through the galleries.

HEAD OF FRANCIS BACON STUDY NO 6 (HEAD & TEETH)

Cliver Barker, 1978

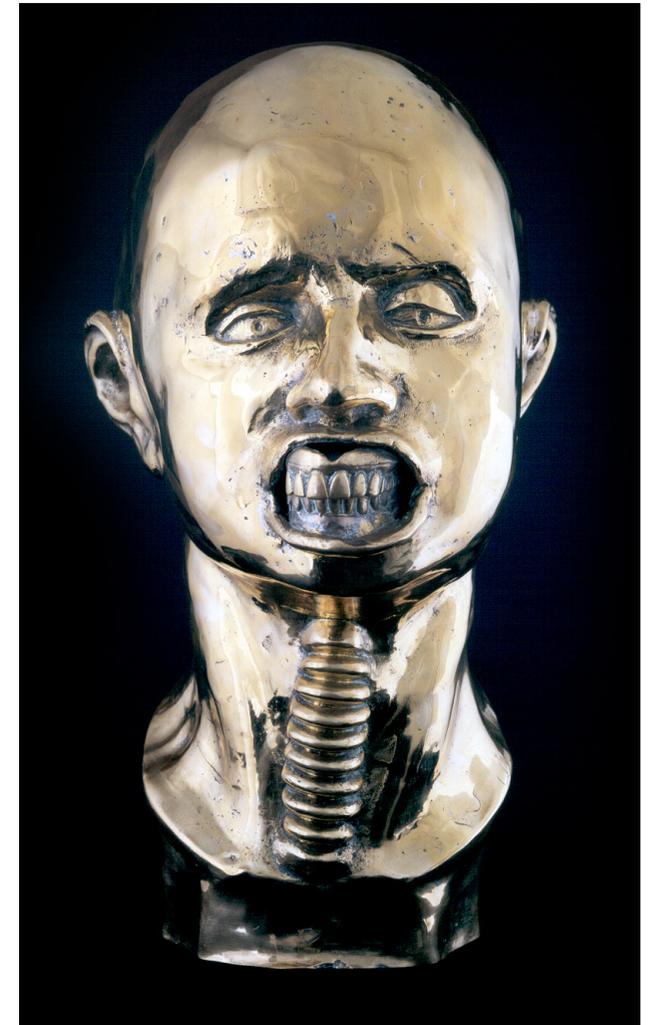
Clive Barker has been working primarily with sculpture since 1961 and is one of the few Pop artists to focus on sculpture as a medium. He was born in Luton and attended the Luton College of Technology and Art but left to work on the assembly line of the Vauxhall car factory. This experience of working with machine-made objects inspired his early sculptures, which were made from leather and chrome-plated metal. He continued to work with industrial materials such as polished cast metals throughout his career. In the Pop Art tradition, Barker often commissioned artisans to make or recast objects so that the resulting sculptures became non-functional artworks.

Although Barker mainly re-worked still life objects, he occasionally created portraits. This sculpture is one of a series of portraits which Barker created of his friend Francis Bacon who, in turn, created three studies of Barker. Made from brass, Barker used casts from a real set of teeth and ribbed tubing for the windpipe which distorted the representation of Bacon. The static pose and relaxed eyes conflicts with the violent expression of the mouth, which prompts the viewer to consider the true nature of the sitter.

Activity for *Head of Francis Bacon, Study No 6 (Head & Teeth)*

Form, content, process, mood, context

- How do you think this sculpture was created? Do you think the artist used specific technology or materials?
- What textures do you notice first?
- What do you think this artwork is communicating?
- Have any parts been exaggerated or distorted? Why?
- What do you think the theme of the work is?
- What words come to mind when looking at this artwork?
- Do the things you've mentioned contribute to the mood of the artwork?
- Where do you think it was made and who for?
- Does the work relate to other disciplines, such as science or technology?



 Now head to **Gallery 14: Art of Empowerment** to see a portrait that reflects social change.

ANNE FINLAY

Dorothy Johnstone, 1920

Dorothy Johnstone was a Scottish artist who excelled in painting landscapes and portraits that showed her relaxed and informal style.

Born in Edinburgh in 1892, her father was a landscape painter and he encouraged her creativity. At the age of 16 she entered Edinburgh College of Art and showed so much potential that, upon graduating, she was given the use of a studio at the College. She had her first work exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy and became a member of staff at ECA.

Johnstone became a regular visitor to Kirkcudbright in Galloway in south-west Scotland. She painted there with other artists, mainly women, including Jessie M King. They became known as the Kirkcudbright School. A few years later in 1919, along with Mary Newbery, and Cecile Walton, she joined the Edinburgh Group which was a collection of gifted and progressive artists associated with ECA. Johnstone exhibited with both the Edinburgh Group and her friend Cecile in the early 1920s.

Anne Finlay, who is the subject of this painting, was also an artist and had become a good friend of Johnstone's when they both attended ECA. She was also a member of the Kirkcudbright School and there are many drawing and paintings of her among Johnstone's work. The vibrant colour of Anne's dress coupled with the intense red of the blanket that she is sitting on draws her reclining figure forward from the muted background. If you look closely you can see the pattern on Anne's dress is made up of small red or pink birds. Here is a perfect example of a post-war modern woman, with her short hair and bare shoulders. However, women were still bound by certain

legal restrictions, so when Johnstone married fellow artist David Sutherland in 1924 she had to give up her beloved teaching job at ECA. Johnstone continued to exhibit her portraits and landscapes at the RSA to which she was elected an Associate in 1962.

Activity for Anne Finlay

The *Art of Empowerment* gallery provides stimulus to introduce the study of the suffrage movement. Begin with questions relating to the artwork and life at the time.

- How does this woman seem to you on first impression?
- Describe her clothing, pose and hairstyle.
- What is she sitting on? How wealthy do you think she is?
- What do you think her life was like when she sat for this painting? Do you think she had a job?

We can then consider what this suggests about the era and the questions it poses:

- Why do you think Johnstone chose to paint Anne Finlay?
- What is it about this portrait that suggests a change for women?

Through discussion you can introduce key features of the suffrage movement and link them to the development of an inclusive society.

- What clues to the suffrage movement can we see in the painting? Colours, clothing, pose?



Now head to **Gallery 18: People and Portraits** to see more portraits in very different styles.



MARIANA

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1870

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was a British poet, illustrator and painter whose work is characterised by its romantic themes and realist style. He co-founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with William Holman Hunt and John Everett Millais who, in turn, influenced William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. Their brotherhood was opposed to the Royal Academy's promotion of modern styles. Instead, they preferred the art of the late medieval and early Renaissance period, up to the time of Raphael, which was characterised by luminous colours and attention to detail. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood believed in art of a more natural realism inspired by literature and poetry, particularly dealing with love and death.

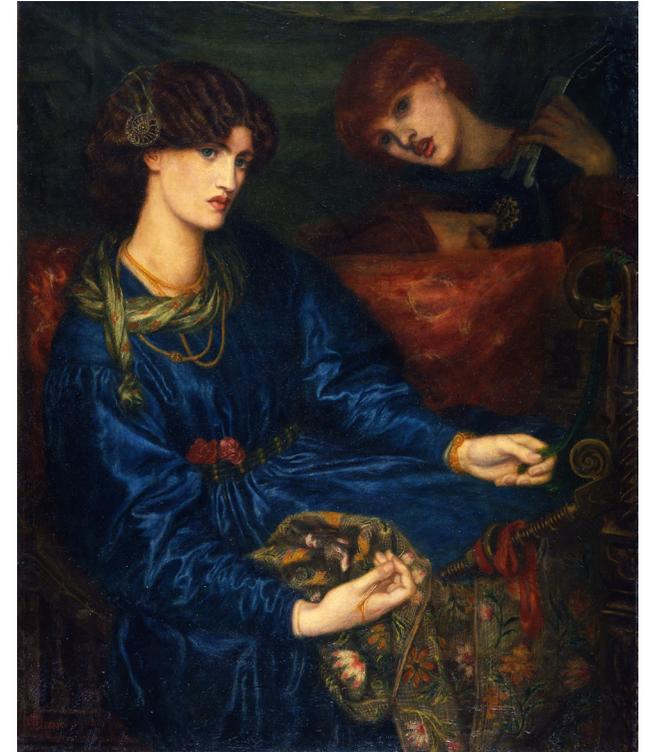
Poetry and imagery are closely linked in Rossetti's work and he often wrote sonnets to accompany his artwork. These were inspired by his muses, especially Jane Morris who was his lover and the model for *Mariana*. The subject of the painting is a character from Shakespeare's play, *Measure for Measure*. Rossetti's heroine is seen in subdued reflection after being deserted by her betrothed, Angelo. The rich colour palette adds a sense of theatre while Jane's real life problems with her husband, William Morris, provided a realistic sense of melancholy.

Rossetti is a prime example of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and this artwork encapsulates the emotive themes they are known for. Although the Pre-Raphaelites were, at the time, trivialised and lambasted for their obsessive themes, their work and lives continue to intrigue viewers.

Activity for *Mariana*

Before revealing any facts about the painting ask a few speculative questions to guide learners into looking closely at the artwork. This encourages critical analysis through imaginative thinking.

- When do you think this art work was created? 5 / 50 / 100 years ago? What clues are there to the time period – could the content be deceptive in placing it in history?
- What do you think the woman is thinking about? If she could talk to us, what do you think she would say?
- What mood do you get from the artwork? What is creating that mood, is it colour / composition / style / expression / tone?



GALLOWGATE LARD

Ken Currie, 1995/96

Ken Currie was born in 1960, to Scottish parents, in North Shields in England. The family moved to Glasgow shortly after his birth, where Currie still lives today. Currie studied at Glasgow School of Art from 1978 to 1983. He was a leading member of the New Glasgow Boys art group and in 1987 he completed six large murals for the People's Palace in Glasgow. Works by Currie are in several national collections and recent commissions include a portrait of the theoretical physicist Peter Higgs.

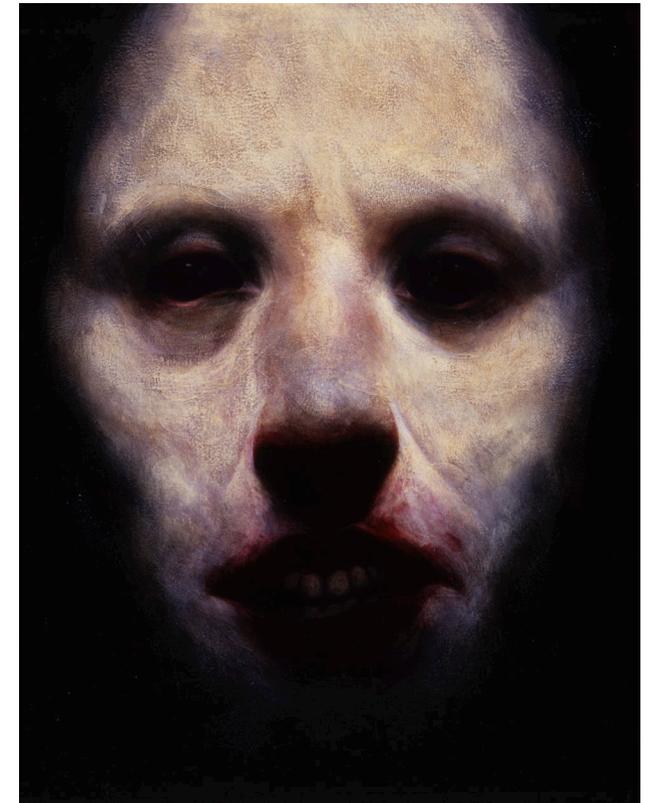
Currie has specialised in grim, socio-realist subjects inspired by his own working-class background. In his recent work he examined the brutality and poverty of urban life in Scotland through deeply disturbing images. He creates artwork which is deliberately shocking to provoke a reaction in the viewer. He views life as being a struggle for survival and tries to reflect this brutality in his work. This haunting painting is a self-portrait with red-raw lips and dark sunken eyes. To enhance the work's creepy atmosphere, he has added a layer of beeswax over the thickly applied oil paint. This creates an interesting texture, almost as though the skin is melting away from the face. Currie has created a portrait that looms out of the frame, as if about to speak, which makes a lasting impression on the viewer.

Activity for *Gallowgate Lard*

Split the learners into smaller groups with a few questions to start their discussion:

- What do you notice first about the artwork?
- How would you describe the colours, brushwork and tone to someone?
- What sort of mood does this painting evoke? In what way?

The learners can either feedback to their teacher in their small groups or the whole class can come together to discuss their thoughts.



PORTRAIT OF J.Y.M. SEATED

Frank Auerbach, 1976

Auerbach was born in Berlin, in 1931, of Jewish parentage and was sent to England to escape Nazism when he was eight years old. His parents died in concentration camps. He spent his childhood at a boarding school for Jewish refugee children in Kent. He then attended St Martin's School of Art in London from 1948 to 1952 and the Royal College of Art from 1952 to 1955. He has used three principal models throughout his career: his wife Julia, a professional model Juliet Yardley Mills ('J.Y.M.') and his close friend Estella West ('E.O.W.'), the model for most of his nudes and female heads prior to 1973.

He painted JYM, first as a life model and then as his friend, every week over a period from 1963. Writing about this work he said:

'I can't foresee the end of my pictures or my drawings. I keep on working and trying to do them in the hope of finding this result which to me is surprising, more surprising than finding an Easter egg as a child. I take one picture at a time...doing drawing after drawing and then trying to get this bit of a raw, wild, untamed, un-predicted fact... down onto canvas.'

Auerbach has been criticised for his thick application of paint, but admirers of his work describe his technique as exciting. Rarely leaving Britain, he lives and works in London and has had the same studio since the 1950s.

Activity for Portrait of *J.Y.M. Seated*

Pick up a sample of impasto painting at the Welcome Desk when you arrive.

Pass the impasto – pass round an example of impasto so that learners can get an impression of how thickly the paint is applied.

Split the learners into smaller groups with a few questions to start their discussion:

- What do you notice first about the artwork?
- How can you recognise this as a portrait?
- What are your thoughts on Auerbach's painting technique?

The learners can either feedback to their teacher in their small groups or the whole class can come together to discuss their thoughts.



FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Complete back at school

- Learners will produce analytical drawings and related investigative studies in response to stimuli
- Learners will develop skills in using a range of art and design materials, techniques and/or technology creatively and expressively

National 5 / Higher Course Specification

This is to encourage learners to focus less on perfection and more on exploring media by using a range of quick techniques. This could help to create a starting point or study for an expressive portfolio.

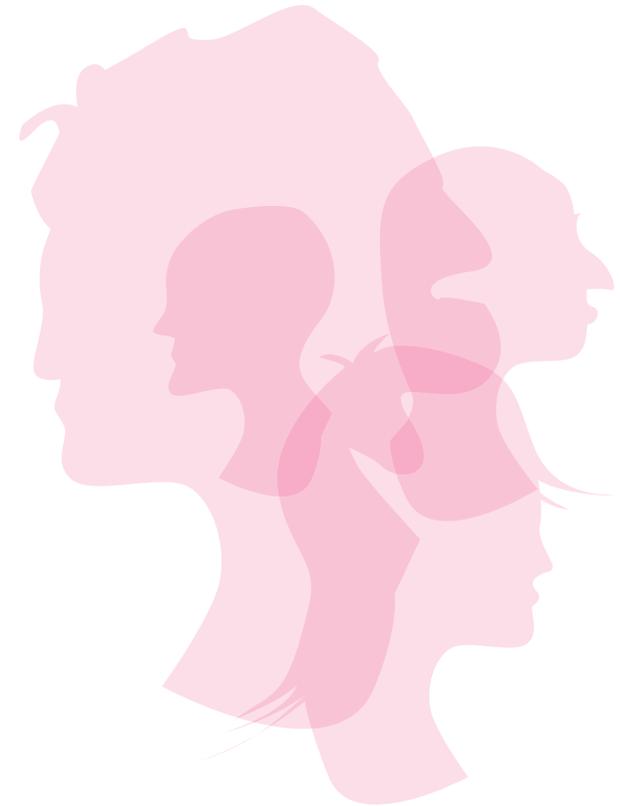
Follow-up activity

This will take two periods, with the option to develop further. Materials needed: A2 sheet of paper folded into quarters. A range of materials that could include, fine line or biro pens, tonal pencil or graphite, watercolour or block paints, pastels and coloured pencils. They could use a mirror or good quality photograph.

Give each learner a sheet of A2 paper folded into quarters. They will create a study in each quarter, but their drawings can overlap.



1. In the first quarter, create a head and shoulders study in fine line or biro pen using continuous line. This should fill the quarter and they can use as many lines as they like - it could end up looking quite abstract like an Auerbach study.
2. In the second quarter, create a close-up study of a facial feature (eye, nose, lips, teeth etc) using tonal pencil or graphite. This should be on a large scale, at least filling the whole quarter, so that they can really explore detail.
3. In the third quarter, create a study of another feature using coloured pencil lines using mark-making (cross hatching, contour lines, continuous lines) in a range of harmonious or contrasting colours.
4. In the final quarter, create a colour head and shoulders portrait in mixed media of their choice.



This will encourage learners to practise portrait techniques, which will highlight how artists need to explore different media and styles before creating a finished portrait – this could be inspired by an artwork they looked at on the Gallery visit.



Head of Francis Bacon Study No 6 (Head and Teeth), Clive Barker, 1978 Artist © Whitford Fine Art, London (2007)

Anne Finlay, Dorothy Johnstone, 1920 Artist © Permission by Courtesy of: Dr D. A. Sutherland and Lady J. E. Sutherland

Mariana, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1870

Gallowgate Lard, Ken Currie, 1995/6 Artist © Ken Currie (2002)

JYM Seated, Frank Auerbach, 1976 Artist © Frank Auerbach (2005)



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