



UPPER PRIMARY
PORTRAITURE

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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.

PORTRAITURE

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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!

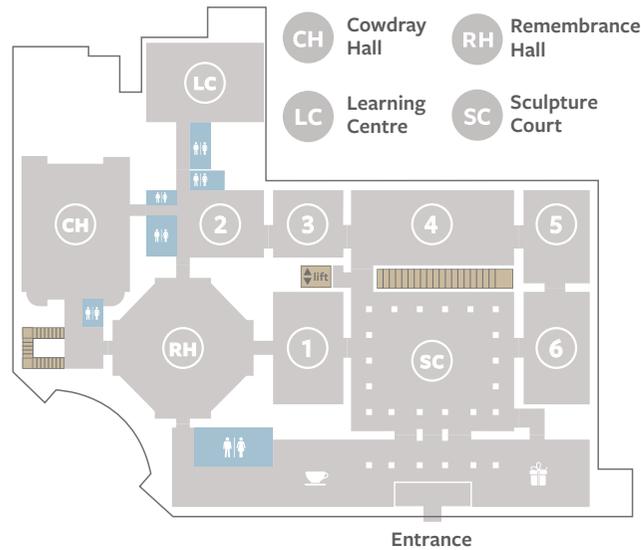
Please supervise your pupils appropriately at all times and ask them to be considerate of other visitors.

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

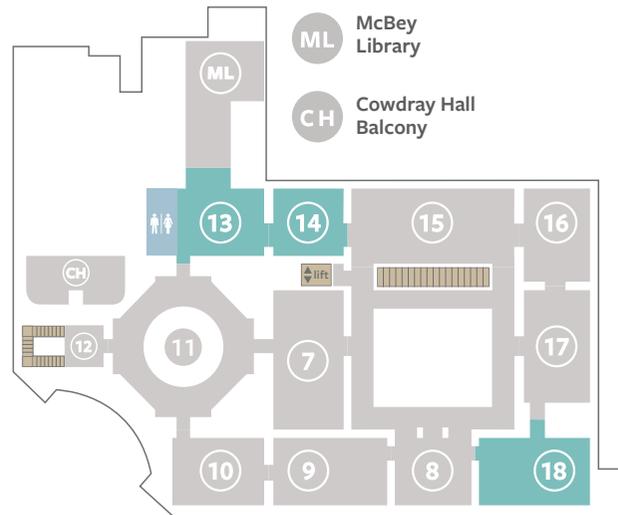
GETTING AROUND THE ART GALLERY



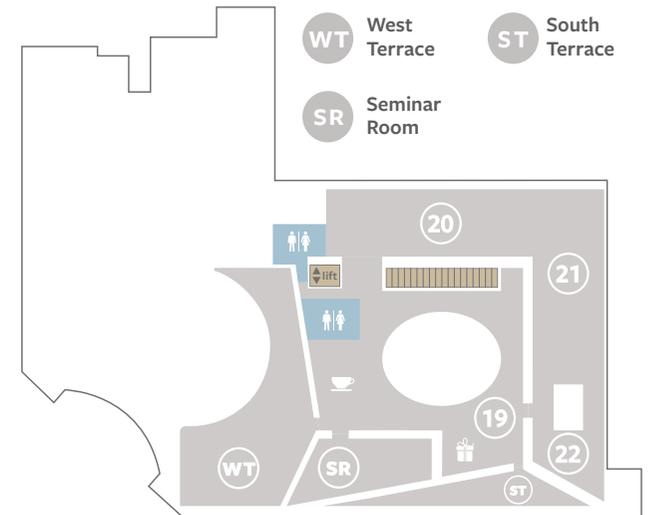
Ground Floor



First Floor



Second Floor



start here **18**
People and Portraits

- Settler Activity**
Say what you see
- Gallowgate Lard**
Ken Currie
- The Convalescent**
Sir John Everett Millais
- Brother and Sister**
Julien Dillens

13
James McBey: Artist Adventurer

- Portrait of a Hero -**
John Innes of Newburgh
James McBey

14 end here
Art of Empowerment

- Anne Finlay**
Dorothy Johnstone

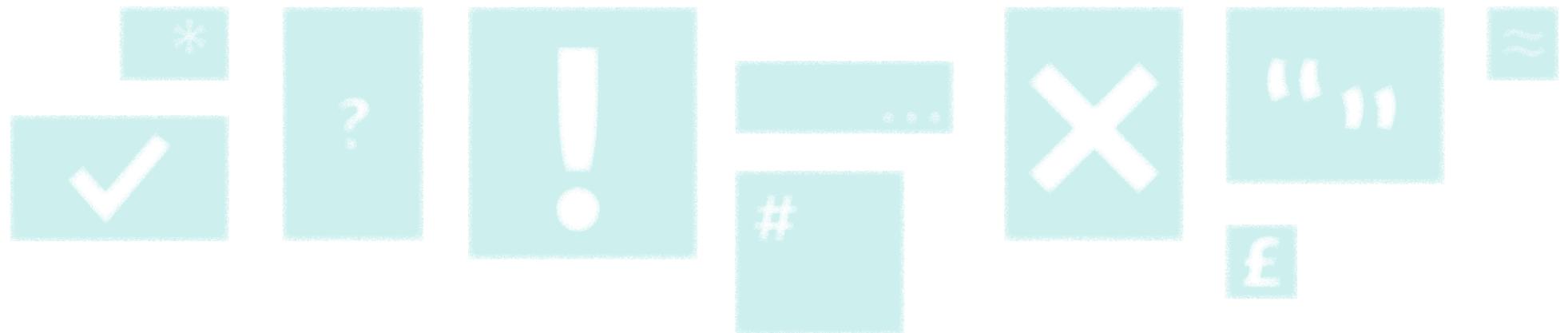
SETTLER ACTIVITY

GALLERY 18: PEOPLE AND PORTRAITS

When you bring your learners into this gallery space do not provide an introduction to what they are going to see. Lead them on a walk round the room looking at all the artworks, but not stopping. When you are back to your starting point ask:

- if they know what the theme of the gallery is
- if there is an artwork they want to go and have a second look at because it interested them

The purpose of this simple activity is to start the process of critical thinking and also let the pupils know that their opinion on an artwork, whether they like it or not, is just as important as anyone else's.



GALLOWGATE LARD

Ken Currie, 1995/6

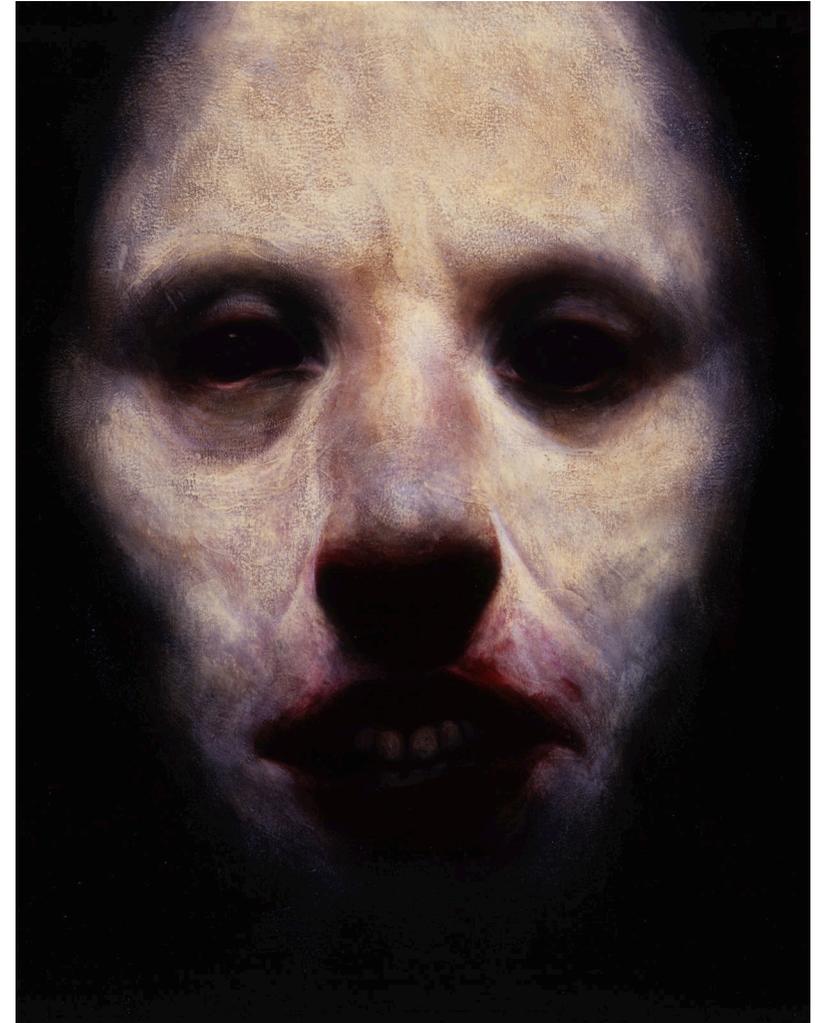
Through his work Scottish artist Ken Currie shines a light on social injustice and shows the impact of poverty on society, especially in the more deprived areas of Scotland.

Currie was born in North Shields in 1960 to Scottish parents. The family moved to Glasgow later the same year and settled in Barrhead. He attended Glasgow School of Art from 1978 to 1983 and it was here he met fellow students Peter Howson, Adrian Wiszniewski and Steven Campbell who collectively were labelled the 'New Glasgow Boys'. His best known early works were large-scale crowd scenes which were vibrant, violent and politically charged. As he got older his paintings became quieter, focused on smaller groups and single figures.

This work is a self portrait. Painted in thick oil paint, the surface is given even greater texture and a sense of real skin with the addition of beeswax. Combined with the raw red lips and the dark sunken eyes, this creates a frightening and distressing portrait. In order to provoke a reaction in the viewer Currie is deliberately shocking. This depiction of a decaying and damaged body is a response to what he felt was the sickness of contemporary society.

Gallery 18

People and Portraits



THE CONVALESCENT

Sir John Everett Millais, 1875

Millais was a child prodigy who, at the age of 11, became the youngest ever student at the Royal Academy. In 1848 he founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood with Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt. They aspired to create art like those who came before the renaissance artist Raphael, combining the pious qualities of medieval art with their own studies of the natural world around them.

By the mid-1850s Millais had moved away from the moral intensity of the Brotherhood and strove to develop a new realism in his work. These later works, especially those of children (the most famous being *Bubbles*, which was used to advertise Pears soap) were incredibly popular. This made him one of the wealthiest artists of the day but it led to criticism from some of his peers, with accusations of being too commercial.

This painting of the artist's daughter was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1876. When we look at it we see a sick child, but this scene would have held a greater poignancy for its original audience. With no access to antibiotics to stave off complications, flu might prove fatal for a child in the Victorian era. Convalescence was achieved by many hours of loving care and overnight vigils. In this instance it would appear that the sitter's health is improving, as symbolised by the flowers in her hand, but they could also suggest the fragility of life.

Gallery 18
People and Portraits



BROTHER AND SISTER

Julien Dillens, 1898

Gallery 18
People and Portraits



Julien Dillens is recognised as one of Belgium's most important sculptors and his work received many accolades. Born in Antwerp in 1849, son of the painter Hendrick Joseph Dillens, his formal artistic education was spent studying at the *Academie Royale des Beaux-Arts* in Brussels.

Along with fellow artists Alfred Gilbert and Henry Armstead, Dillens became part of a new artistic movement called The New Sculpture. It began towards the end of the 19th century and its goal was to create a new freedom of modelling and a freshness of vision which is often referred to as 'imaginative realism'.

This sculpture of a brother and sister has been created in accordance with The New Sculpture aspirations. From the detail in the siblings' faces, to the naturalistic manner of their familial hug, a warmth and everydayness radiates from this bronze sculpture.

Not only were sculptures becoming more vibrant, but the process of making them was also undergoing a change at this time. Rather than producing just one sculpture from a cast, a limited edition would be produced which enabled more people to buy artworks. Sculpture ceased to be the property of only the very rich and began to be acquired by the middle classes.



GALLERY 18 ACTIVITIES



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

After five minutes change the groups around and repeat the process until each group has discussed all three paintings.



Discussion points for *Gallowgate Lard*

- Some people find this painting unpleasant and a bit scary to look at. On first viewing what is your reaction to it?
- Look closer at the painting. What is different about this face compared to your own? What features are missing?
- Would you like to look at a photo of the artist and compare it to the self-portrait?



Discussion points for *The Convalescent*

- What age do you think this girl is?
- Whenever you are ill what do you do to feel better?
- Do think this girl survived her illness?



Discussion points for *Brother and Sister*

- How many people in your group have a brother or sister?
- Look at the way the siblings are holding each other. Do you think it's a loving hug?
- If they could talk to us what would they say?



Now go to **Gallery 13: James McBey: Artist Adventurer**. When moving between galleries, ask your learners to look for others examples of portraiture, such as sculptures, photographs, prints and drawings.

PORTRAIT OF A HERO - JOHN INNES OF NEWBURGH

James McBey, 1936

Gallery 13
James McBey:
Artist Adventurer 

Born in 1883 at Foveran, near Newburgh, James McBey is one of the North East of Scotland's most prolific artists. He was an official war artist during the First World War and later undertook private commissions for wealthy clients.

Mainly self taught, although he did attend evening classes at Gray's School of Art, in 1910 he left behind his job working at a local bank to pursue an artistic career far away from his unhappy home life. Travelling through Europe, North Africa and America he studied artists such as Rembrandt and developed his own artistry in etching and watercolour.

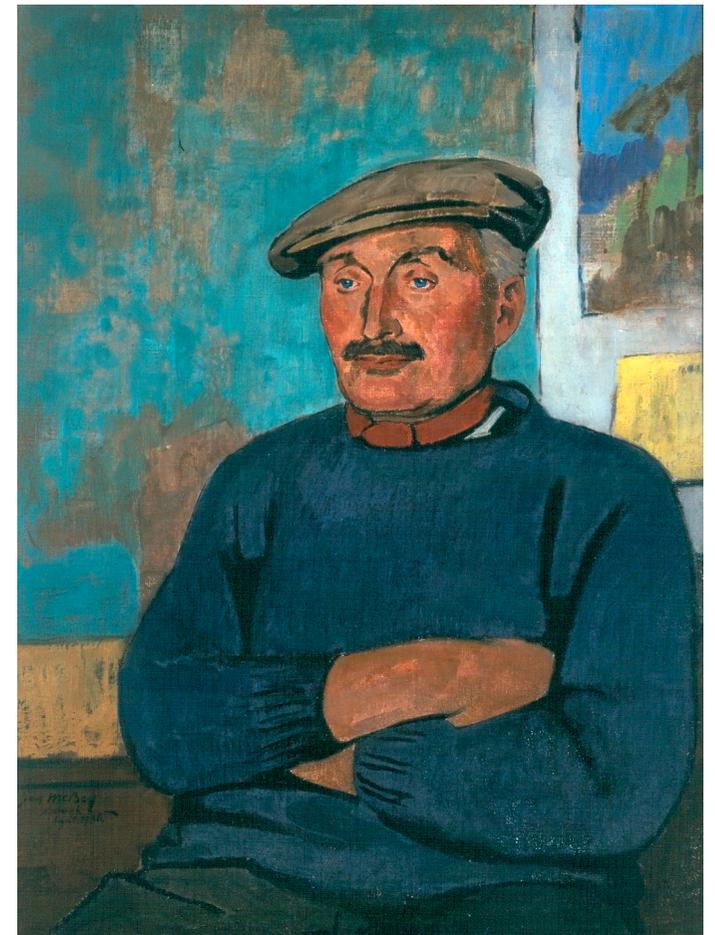
You will see many fine examples of McBey's output from the Great War and his later life in Morocco displayed here, but this portrait is altogether different. It is of a quiet man from Newburgh who achieved a great feat. John Innes was the coxswain of the Newburgh lifeboat from 1908 to 1931. In 1923 he and his son were instrumental in saving the lives of seven out of the nine crew from a stricken ship, *Imperial Prince*. For his heroic efforts the Royal National Lifeboat Institute awarded him a silver medal and his son received a bronze which is still in the family today.

McBey must have painted this portrait of the village local hero during one of his visits to Newburgh. Innes is sitting, arms folded, avoiding eye contact with the viewer, wearing his everyday clothes and hat. His ordinariness defies what we think a hero should look like.

Activity

Ask your pupils if they know of any heroes - they can be real people or characters from books or films.

Get everyone to pose like their hero of choice.



 Now go to **Gallery 14: Art of Empowerment.**

ANNE FINLAY

Dorothy Johnstone, 1920

Dorothy Johnstone was a Scottish artist who excelled in painting landscapes and portraits, especially of children, that showed off 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 (ECA) and showed so much potential that when she graduated four years later, she was given the use of a studio at the college and had her first work exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy (RSA). Two years later she became a member of staff at ECA.

Johnstone became a regular visitor to the town of Kirkcudbright in Galloway where she would paint with other artists, mainly women, such as Jessie M King, as part of the Kirkcudbright School. A few years later in 1919, along with Mary Newbery, and Cecile Walton, she joined the reconstituted Edinburgh Group, 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.

The sitter, Anne Finlay, became good friends with Johnstone when they both attended ECA. She also was a member of the Kirkcudbright School and there are many drawings 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, pulls 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. 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. Despite this she continued to exhibit her portraits and landscapes at the RSA to which she was elected an Associate in 1962.

Activity

Lead your pupils round this room and explain the struggle for female suffrage. Also highlight to them how important it is that we learn more about female artists, as they have been traditionally under-represented in gallery and museum collections.



EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Complete back at school



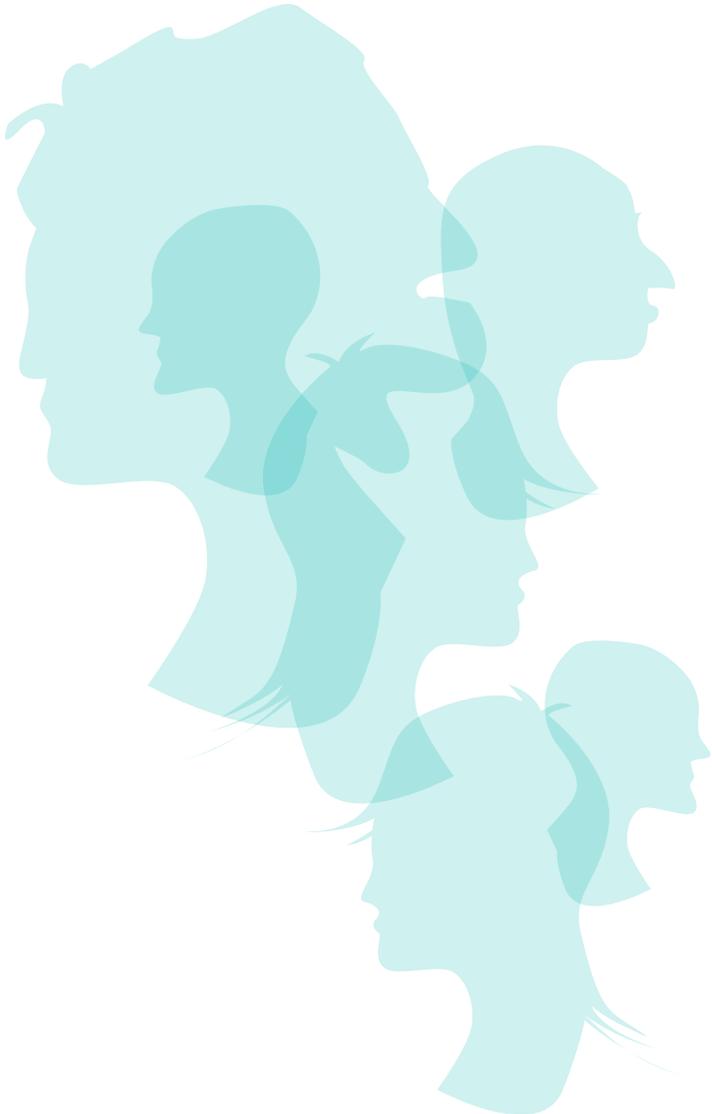
“I can respond to the work of artists and designers by discussing my thoughts and feelings. I can give and accept constructive comment on my own and others work.”

EXA 2-07a

Get your pupils to work with a partner and draw each other’s portrait.

They should think of an emotion and pull a face or adopt a pose that conveys this - it can be funny, sad, scared, angry etc.

When they have finished the portrait, they should draw a frame and write in it a few words that best describe their sitter.





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

The Convalescent, Sir John Everett Millais, 1875

Brother and Sister, Julien Dillens, 1898

Portrait of a Hero – John Innes of Newburgh, James McBey, 1936 Artist © Aberdeen City Council (McBey Collection)

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



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CITY COUNCIL



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



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