

In a New Light

FIVE CENTURIES OF BRITISH ART

In this display you will encounter a history — complex, surprising, by turns inspiring and troubling — that spans five continents and five centuries, from the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in the sixteenth century to the present. Over this time, Britain, an island on the margins of Europe, became a global imperial and industrial power — and finally an empire in decline.

Throughout its history, Britain has attracted artists from around the world. Almost half of the painters and sculptors included here were born outside Britain, while others migrated to make their careers in India, the Caribbean, and beyond. They depicted landscapes, seascapes, animals, and stories from history and mythology. Their art shows people at leisure and at work: aristocrats, servants, merchants, and laborers.

We invite you to see these works as efforts not only to record the world as it is (or was) but also to shape how we see it. The landscapes both celebrate the beauty of nature and assert British power and prosperity at home and overseas. The portraits capture unique individuals while also revealing the systems of class, race, and gender that sustained the privileges of the wealthy and influential.

Journey through the galleries in either direction: turn right to begin in the sixteenth century, or turn left to visit the twenty-first. All paths lead to a deepened understanding of Britain's multifaceted history and extraordinary, ever-changing culture.

Sir Godfrey Kneller

b. 1646, Lübeck, Germany; active in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and England; d. 1723, London

Mary Boyle (née O'Brien), Lady Boyle, Nursing her Son Charles

1690, oil on canvas

This is thought to be the earliest portrait of a nursing mother in British art. At a time when it was rare for upper-class women to breastfeed their children, and almost unheard of to represent it in portraiture, this painting of Boyle and her son Charles stands out for its intimate portrayal of the subject. The pair calls to mind the Virgin and Child, but Kneller renders them with remarkable humanity. In the seventeenth century, it was believed that character traits passed through breastmilk, leading some Protestant ministers to discourage employing wetnurses. Boyle, an Irish convert from Catholicism to Anglicanism, seems to have subscribed to this idea.

Paul Mellon Fund, B2024.2

Cecily Brown

b. 1969, London; lives and works in England and the United States

The Hound with the Horses' Hooves

2019, oil on linen

“Like seeing some kind of abomination at high speed” is how Brown describes this vivid hunting scene, which features her characteristic gestural brushwork and expressive use of color. The shapes of a hound and a horse racing through woodland are suggested by the blurring of figurative forms and the abstract marks in both the lower right and the center of the painting. Inspired by the historic British hunting pictures that traditionally hung in the estates of wealthy landowners, Brown’s fractured composition hints at the brutality not only of the sport but also of the British class system.

Purchased with an anonymous gift, B2021.12

Jakob Bogdány

b. 1658, Prešov, Slovakia; active in the Netherlands and England;
d. 1724, London

Peacock, Peahen, Parrots, Canary, and Other Birds in a Park

between 1708 and 1710, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.47

Paul van Somer

b. 1577, Antwerp, Belgium; active in the Netherlands, Belgium, and England;
d. 1622, London

Elizabeth Erskine (née Pierrepont), Countess of Kellie

ca. 1619, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.598

William Larkin

b. ca. 1580, London; active in England; d. 1619, London

William Pope, first Earl of Downe

Gray Brydges, fifth Baron Chandos,
of Sudeley Castle, Gloucestershire

ca. 1615, oil on panel

Larkin portrays these men in the mirrored poses typically reserved for a husband and wife, capturing the intensity of male friendship in seventeenth-century England. The oval frames recall those of the portrait miniatures commonly exchanged as gifts between intimates. The men are similarly dressed: both wear high-necked silk doublets and standing linen collars, the impressive spans of which were achieved through heavy starching and the use of the supports that can be seen beneath the lace. Pope, on the left, was both Brydges's neighbor and his nephew by marriage. Often participating in performances at court, Brydges was the archetypal Jacobean courtier, spending prodigious sums to maintain his household at Sudeley Castle, which was open for his neighbors to enjoy three days a week.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.403, .404

Robert Peake the Elder

b. ca. 1551, England; active in England; d. 1619, London

Anthony Maria Browne, second Viscount Montagu

ca. 1590, oil on canvas

While buildings burn, ships flounder, and snakes and toads circle him, this young English aristocrat leans casually against a tree. His downturned boot strikes a melancholic note, but a plaque inscribed with the words *Rien m'estone* (Nothing astounds me), which hangs near his head, underscores how unmoved he is by the unfolding calamities. Browne was a Catholic at a time when plots against Elizabeth I, a Protestant, had created a climate of suspicion toward those loyal to Rome. A visual essay in stoicism, this painting captures the defiance of a man who felt unjustly persecuted for his beliefs and wrongfully accused of treason.

Paul Mellon Fund, B2021.15

William Larkin

b. ca. 1580, London; active in England; d. 1619, London

Jane Thornaugh (née Jackson), Lady Thornaugh

1617, oil on panel

Only sixteen when this portrait was made, Jane Jackson was from a wealthy family from Yorkshire, and likely sat for Larkin to commemorate her imminent marriage into a family of similar status. Her jacket's plunging neckline allies her with not only the most fashionable women of her time but also the most powerful, as similar garments were worn by the queen and her courtiers. The artist captures her sumptuous attire in painstaking detail: her stiffly starched collar and cuffs of lace, the sparkle of the jacket's silver-gilt spangles and the pile of red velvet against the sheen of blue silk. Embroidered with fantastical pond life, flowers, and birds, her skirt would have shimmered as she moved, the figures dancing with her every step.

Paul Mellon Fund, B2017.19

Sir Peter Paul Rubens

b. 1577, Siegen, Germany; active in the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and England;
d. 1640, Antwerp, Belgium

Peace Embracing Plenty

between 1633 and 1634, oil on panel

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.70

Sir Anthony Van Dyck and studio

b. 1599, Antwerp, Belgium; active in Belgium, the Netherlands, England,
and Italy; d. 1641, London

Katherine Stanhope (née Wotton), later
Countess of Chesterfield, and Lucy Hastings
(née Davies), Countess of Huntingdon

1636 to 1640, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.252

Sir Peter Lely

b. 1618, Soest, Germany; active in the Netherlands and England;
d. 1680, London

Diana and her Nymphs at a Fountain

ca. 1648, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B2019.8

Francesco Fanelli

b. 1577, Florence, Italy; active in Italy and England; d. after 1641

St. George and the Dragon

ca. 1635, bronze, on a later wooden base
with tortoiseshell veneer and gilt bronze mounts

Fanelli was a Florentine sculptor who worked in England, receiving a salary from King Charles I at a time when British taste had shifted decisively toward Italian art. The patron saint of England, St. George has long held significance for the royal family, who associated themselves with the bravery of the man who slayed a dragon. A version of this bronze was displayed in the king's cabinet room at his palace at Whitehall in London, a potent symbol of the monarch as both the country's worthiest knight and its leading art patron.

Paul Mellon Fund, in honor of Brian Allen, Director of Studies,
Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (1993–2012), B2012.4

William Dobson

b. 1611, London; active in England; d. 1646, London

A Family, probably the Streatfeild Family

ca. 1645, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.241

Mary Beale

b. 1633, Barrow, England; active in England; d. 1699, London

Bartholomew Beale

1663–64, oil on paper laid to canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B2016.24

Mary Beale

b. 1633, Barrow, England; active in England; d. 1699, London

Charles Beale

ca. 1660, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B2024.9

Sir Anthony Van Dyck

b. 1599, Antwerp, Belgium; active in Belgium, the Netherlands, England, and Italy; d. 1641, London

Mountjoy Blount, Earl of Newport

1637 to 1638, oil on canvas

As King Charles I's painter, Van Dyck transformed British portraiture by introducing a new style from continental Europe. He imbued his sitters with grace and confidence, and his influence endured for centuries. Made prior to the English Civil War in 1642, this portrait presents the Earl of Newport prepared for battle, his helmet and baton of command by his side. He was a favorite courtier of the king, who bestowed honors and lucrative offices upon him, including the Master of the Ordnance. This high-ranking position gave the earl control of the contracts for supplies and defenses, and provided him with ample opportunities for personal gain. However, his self-serving nature led to widespread distrust and, ultimately, to his political demise.

Paul Mellon Collection, b1977.14.52

Sir Peter Lely and studio

b. 1618, Soest, Germany; active in the Netherlands and England;

d. 1680, London

Edward Montagu, first Earl of Sandwich

1660 to 1665, oil on canvas

This painting presents the Earl of Sandwich in the ceremonial robes of the Order of the Garter, which include the large jewel depicting St. George on his chest and the badge embroidered upon his shoulder. The order was Britain's highest honor, bestowed directly by the monarch, and large-scale portraits such as this projected the sitter's status among the most privileged elite. Made shortly after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Lely's painting serves as a statement of Sandwich's loyalty and willing participation in the new regime. Although he fought against Charles II during the Civil War, the Earl later accepted the king's return to power, even sailing to the Netherlands to bring him back from exile.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1980.25.1

Sir Peter Lely

b. 1618, Soest, Germany; active in the Netherlands and England;

d. 1680, London

Diana Kirke, later Countess of Oxford

ca. 1665, oil on canvas

The inscription at the bottom right of this painting identifies the sitter as Diana Kirke, the daughter of a Scottish courtier. Her family came to England when James VI of Scotland acceded to the throne in 1603, and thereafter they improved their social standing through advantageous marriages to members of the English ruling class. This striking portrait presents Kirke as self-possessed and in command of her sexuality, and points to the promise of her marriage to Aubrey de Vere, a member of one of the oldest aristocratic families in the country. The rose she holds alludes to Venus, the goddess of love, asserting Kirke's confidence and prowess in matters of the heart and the boudoir.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.756

Mary Beale

b. 1633, Barrow, England; active in England; d. 1699, London

An Unknown Woman

ca. 1675, oil on canvas

Beale ran a commercial studio in London, meeting the strong demand for portraits of an exclusive clientele. This depiction of a high-status woman is representative of the painter's output during the 1670s. The blue ultramarine pigment used in the mantle draped over the sitter's shoulders not only denotes her wealth and status but also would have occasioned a surcharge from the artist to pay for the costly hue. In addition to commissions such as these, Beale made portraits of her husband, Charles, and their two sons, all of whom assisted in the running of her business.

Paul Mellon Fund, B2024.8

Isaac Fuller

b. ca. 1620, England; active in France and England; d. 1672, London

Unknown Man, Traditionally Identified as Edward Pierce

mid-17th century, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1988.23

Willem van de Velde the Younger

b. 1633, Leiden, the Netherlands; active in the Netherlands and England;
d. 1707, London

A Battle of the Third Anglo Dutch War, probably the *London* at the Battle of the Texel, August 1673

ca. 1700, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1973.1.60

Hendrik Danckerts

b. ca. 1625, The Hague, the Netherlands; active in the Netherlands, Italy, and England; d. 1680, Amsterdam

Plymouth

1673, oil on canvas

With access to both the English Channel and the Atlantic Ocean, Plymouth was a launching point for naval campaigns, colonial settlement, and trade with North America and the Caribbean. At center is the Royal Citadel, then nearing the end of its ten-year construction, which made Plymouth one of the most heavily fortified ports in the nation. At a time of naval conflicts and threats, this image offered proof of Plymouth's protection. Danckerts was part of a group of Dutch painters working in Britain who were admired for their expansive landscapes. These artists were often commissioned by the government to paint views of its military installations both at home and in its colonies, reinforcing the image of Britain's power.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.105

Attributed to Isaac Sailmaker

b. ca. 1633, Scheveningen, the Netherlands; active in England; d. 1721, London

The Island of Barbados

ca. 1694, oil on canvas

This is the earliest known painting of Barbados, which was colonized by the British in 1627 to exploit its resources for financial gain. When this image was painted, sugar was the island's primary cash crop. The artist depicts the processes of the sugar industry, which fueled an explosion of wealth for white planters, traders, and colonial officials at the expense of African and Indigenous lives and freedom. Beyond the coastal settlements, the sugarcane grows in fields while the enslaved workers bundle it and carry it away for processing at the mill on the shore to the right of the fort. Nearby, white workers prepare to load the sugar onto the heavily armed merchant ships that will transport it to Britain and its New England colonies for further processing and trade.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.547

Tobias Stranover

b. 1684, Sibiu, Romania; active in England and the Netherlands;
d. 1756, London

Scarlet Macaw, Yellow-Naped Amazon, Eurasian Bullfinch, Blue Tit, Eurasian Jay, and Red Squirrel with Fruit

between 1710 and 1724, oil on canvas

Stranover's imagined scene places British flora and fauna alongside imported species. The South American parrots are joined by animals common to Britain, all perched among fruits from the English countryside as well as the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Stranover showcases his painterly skill to create an idyllic vision of an integrated, prosperous world. In reality, however, imported commodities such as parrots and pomegranates were the fruits of exploitative systems of colonialism and capitalist trade, and were available only to the wealthiest members of the British elite.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.614

Thomas Beach

b. 1738, Milton Abbas, England; active in England;

d. 1806, Dorchester, England

Four Servants of Ston Easton Estate

1776, oil on canvas

Although a large number of eighteenth-century Britons worked as domestic servants, they were rarely the subjects of portraits, which is why Beach's painting is so unusual. He depicts a huntsman, a housekeeper's assistant, a housekeeper, and a steward. The housekeeper is the dominant figure, positioned at the center and looking at the viewer. She receives a bill from the steward, who was responsible for the management of the wider estate, while her assistant looks as though she may soon depart with the huntsman to deliver a basket of game. By including staff from both the house and the grounds, Beach creates a picture of a stable, self-sufficient household, an image in line with the landowner's conservative politics.

Paul Mellon Fund, B2023.10

Jan Siberechts

b. 1627, Antwerp, Belgium; active in the Netherlands and England;
d. ca. 1703, London

Wollaton Hall and Park, Nottinghamshire

1697, oil on canvas

Idyllic views of country estates such as this one were commissioned by the ruling classes to show off their possessions and their taste. Siberechts presents a bird's-eye view of Wollaton Hall and Park, capturing its vast acreage while nodding to the sources of the Willoughby family's wealth: landownership, agriculture, and mining. Built in the 1580s, the grand Elizabethan house is surrounded by opulent gardens, while the distant hills hold the coal on which the family built its fortune. In the foreground, richly dressed figures arrive by carriage, while others promenade and play lawn bowls. To the left, household staff work in vegetable gardens, a subtle indication of the hard labor involved in maintaining both the estate and the comfortable lives of its owners.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1973.1.52

Charles Philips

b. 1703, London; active in England; d. 1747, London

Tea Party at Lord Harrington's House, St. James's

1730, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.503

Canaletto

b. 1697, Venice, Italy; active in Italy and England;
d. 1768, Venice, Italy

Westminster Bridge, with the Lord Mayor's Procession on the Thames

1747, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.94

Peter Gaspar Scheemakers

b. 1691, Antwerp, Belgium; active in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and England;
d. 1781, Antwerp, Belgium

Alexander Pope

ca. 1740, marble

This is one of many portrait busts produced within the lifetime of poet and translator Alexander Pope, the leading literary celebrity of his day. From his position of privilege and detachment from contemporary politics, Pope used his talents to satirize the increasingly materialistic world he inhabited.

Scheemakers had studied antique sculpture in Rome and rendered Pope, who was also a translator of Homer's *Iliad*, in a classical form, equating the eighteenth-century writer with his Greek and Roman predecessors. Imitating classical forms in both literature and art was in keeping with the Augustan fashions of the day, which saw Britain's colonial empire mirror the omnipotence of ancient Rome.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.29

Marco Ricci

b. 1676, Belluno, Italy; active in Italy and England; d. 1730, Venice, Italy

Rehearsal of an Opera

ca. 1709, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.523

Marco Ricci

b. 1676, Belluno, Italy; active in Italy and England; d. 1730, Venice, Italy

Rehearsal of an Opera

ca. 1709, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.524

William Hogarth

b. 1697, London; active in England; d. 1764, London

The Beggar's Opera

1729, oil on canvas

This work is among the earliest paintings of an English stage performance. Hogarth, initially known for his satirical prints, gained acclaim as a painter with his representations of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728). The popular satirical play presents a world turned upside down, in which highwaymen and robbers behave like gentlemen. In this climactic scene, the notorious highwayman Macheath, in irons and facing execution, stands between Lucy Lockit and Polly Peachum — both of whom believe themselves to be married to him and plead for his life. Hogarth includes likenesses of the actors and other notable individuals, advertising his skills as a portrait painter. He alludes to the real-life drama of an affair between the actress Lavinia Fenton (1710–1760), who kneels on the rug, and Charles Powlett, third Duke of Bolton (1685–1754), who gazes at her from a prime seat at the far right. The banner above the stage reads *Veluti in speculum* (as in a mirror), suggesting that the stage action reflects real life.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.349

William Hogarth

b. 1697, London; active in England; d. 1764, London

Self-Portrait

ca. 1735, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.360

William Hogarth

b. 1697, London; active in England; d. 1764, London

William Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington, later fourth Duke of Devonshire

1741, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.358

Thomas Gainsborough

b. 1727, Sudbury, England; active in England; d. 1788, London

The Gravenor Family

ca. 1754, oil on canvas

Working in his native Suffolk, Gainsborough painted members of the professional classes, such as John Gravenor, an apothecary and local politician; his wife, Ann; and their two daughters. Gainsborough has arranged them in a harmonious group alongside a wheat field, as if they have stopped on a walk, the girls holding freshly picked flowers in their hands.

Gainsborough supported his own family through portraiture — or the “Face way” — but he took his greatest pleasure in landscape painting. He carefully details the crossing trees behind the couple and opens up the landscape behind them to include a distant church. The darkening sky serves as a contrast to the fashionable dresses worn by the Gravenor women. Fluid brushstrokes give the impression of light dancing across the brightly colored silks.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.56

Thomas Gainsborough

b. 1727, Sudbury, England; active in England; d. 1788, London

Wooded Landscape with a Cottage and Shepherd

1748 to 1750, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.2.1

Francis Hayman

b. ca. 1707, possibly in Exeter, England; active in England; d. 1776, London

George Rogers and His Wife, Margaret Rogers (née Tyers), and His Sister, Margaret Rogers

between 1748 and 1750, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.327

Samuel Scott

b. ca. 1702, London; active in England; d. 1772, Bath, England

Arches of Westminster Bridge

ca. 1750, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.146

Thomas Gainsborough

b. 1727, Sudbury, England; active in England; d. 1788, London

Landscape with Stream and Weir

between 1750 and 1753, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.57

Francis Harwood

b. ca. 1726; active in Italy; d. 1783, Florence, Italy

Bust of a Man

ca. 1758, black limestone on a yellow marble socle

At a time when most Africans living in Europe and its colonies were enslaved, and their depictions in Western art were largely demeaning, this remarkable bust presents its subject as dignified and autonomous. The figure's power offers an alternative vision of the Black experience in eighteenth-century Europe, though little is known about the circumstances of the bust's creation. For years, its artist was unknown, until the discovery of a second version that was signed and dated led to this work's proper attribution. From his studio in Florence, Harwood sculpted copies of antiquities for his British clientele, many of whom were tourists. Unlike most of his output, this bust was Harwood's own composition, though the identity of his model remains a mystery.

Paul Mellon Collection, B2006.14.11

Katherine Read

b. 1723, Dundee, Scotland; active in Scotland, France, Italy, and England;

d. 1778, at sea in the southern Indian Ocean

British Gentlemen in Rome

ca. 1750, oil on canvas

Read staged this group portrait in what is unmistakably Rome, with the Colosseum and Arch of Constantine in the background. The setting indicates that these young men are on the Grand Tour, a journey through Europe that exposed the sons of the British elite to the art of antiquity and the Renaissance. The Tour was considered a rite of passage, one that concluded their education and cultivated their artistic taste.

Although not necessarily from families of means, young artists such as Read also went to Rome to study classical art and establish their reputations. Among the Grand Tourists Read met there was the young politician-to-be Sir Charles Turner, who commissioned this work and is depicted, hand on hip, at the center of the painting. It was rare in this period for a woman artist to paint men, which is one reason that this work was not attributed to Read until 2006.

Richard Wilson

b. ca. 1712, Penegoes, Wales; active in England and Italy;

d. 1782, Llanferres, Wales

The Destruction of the Children of Niobe

1760, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.81

Joseph Wright of Derby

b. 1734, Derby, England; active in England and Italy;

d. 1797, Derby, England

Cavern, near Naples

1774, oil on canvas

Bequest of Pamela Askew, B1998.26.1

Sir Joshua Reynolds

b. 1723, Plympton, England; active in England and Italy; d. 1792, London

Sarah Campbell

1777 to 1778, oil on canvas

Campbell was part of a powerful family based both in the Scottish Highlands and West Wales. In 1777, her brother John inherited their grandfather's estates. That same year, he commissioned this painting of his sister from Reynolds, one of the most popular portraitists of the age. By sitting for the artist, nineteen-year-old Sarah displayed her wealth and position in society.

Rather than stick to established formulas, Reynolds often used new pigments and mixes, which resulted in some of his colors, especially his pinks and reds, fading over time. This portrait is unusually well-preserved, showcasing the fashionable contrast between the sitter's pale skin and her rosy cheeks, a detail that has been lost in many other Reynolds works.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1973.1.48

Sir Joshua Reynolds

b. 1723, Plympton, England; active in England and Italy;

d. 1792, London

Frances Abington (née Barton) as Miss Prue
in William Congreve's *Love for Love*

1771, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.67

Thomas Gainsborough

b. 1727, Sudbury, England; active in England; d. 1788, London

Mary Little, later Lady Carr

ca. 1765, oil on canvas

Mary Little was from a small village just outside Bath, a fashionable spa town in the southwest of England. With a confident gaze and small smile, she holds a nosegay of blooming myrtle and pink flowers, a popular symbol of betrothal, suggesting this portrait was made around the time of her marriage to Robert Carr, one London's most successful silk merchants. As a weaver's son, Gainsborough had an expert understanding of fabrics and rendered with great skill the luster of his sitter's silk taffeta dress, the delicacy of her lace, and the sparkle of her diamond jewelry. This portrait is in effect a dual celebration of both the painter's talent and the source of the Carrs' wealth.

Bequest of Mrs. Harry Payne Bingham, B1987.6.2

Allan Ramsay

b. 1713, Edinburgh, Scotland; active in Scotland, Italy, and England;
d. 1784, Dover, England

An Unknown Woman

ca. 1762, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.761

George Stubbs

b. 1724, Liverpool, England; active in England; d. 1806, London

Horse Attacked by a Lion (Episode C)

between 1768 and 1769, beeswax and oil on panel

Paul Mellon Collection, B2006.14.1

George Stubbs

b. 1724, Liverpool, England; active in England; d. 1806, London

Lion and Lioness

1770, enamel on copper

Paul Mellon Collection, B2006.14.2

Anton Raphael Mengs

b. 1728, Ústí nad Labem, Czech Republic; active in Italy and Spain;
d. 1779, Rome

George, third Earl Cowper

ca. 1769, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.62

Attributed to Thomas Hudson

b. 1707, Exeter, England; active in England; d. 1779, London

Alexander van Aken

ca. 1770, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1991.42

Attributed to Giles Hussey

b. 1710; d. 1788

A Landscape Painter, possibly George Lambert

between 1740 and 1750, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.370

Sir Joshua Reynolds

b. 1723, Plympton, England; active in England and Italy; d. 1792, London

Mary Robinson (née Darby)

ca. 1784, oil on canvas

When Reynolds painted this portrait of Robinson, the celebrated actress and writer was facing personal loss and chronic illness, which may explain her contemplative demeanor as she looks out over a cloud-darkened seascape. Due to her poor health, Robinson left fashionable London society to devote herself to writing poetry and novels as well as advocating for the rights of women and their place in the literary world.

This unfinished canvas reveals the artist's working process. Robinson's face is clearly defined but her body and the background are only sketched in. Through the paint, it is possible to see that Reynolds followed the common practice of reusing canvases: another sitter's loosely rendered face appears, upside down, in the place where Robinson's right hand should be.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.520

Angelica Kauffmann

b. 1741, Chur, Switzerland; active in Italy, Switzerland, and England;

d. 1807, Rome

Rinaldo and Armida

1771, oil on canvas

At a time when few women in England were professional artists, the Swiss-born Kauffmann forged a successful career by producing ambitious allegorical paintings. Her command of the genre gained her admission to the Royal Academy of Arts, London, as one of its founding members. For this work, Kauffman drew her subject from the Italian Renaissance poem *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*) by Torquato Tasso, which inspired many other eighteenth-century European artists. She depicts Rinaldo, a Crusader, falling under the spell of Armida, a sorceress. The painter places a mirror at Armida's feet to reflect how the lovers have eyes only for each other and thus fail to notice Rinaldo's compatriots arriving to rescue him.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.383

James Barry

b. 1741, Cork, Ireland; active in England, France, and Italy; d. 1806, London

The Education of Achilles

ca. 1772, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1978.6

Tilly Kettle

b. 1735, London; active in England and India; d. 1786, Aleppo, Syria

Shuja-ud-Daula, Nawab of Awadh

1772, oil on canvas

Shuja-ud-Daula (reigned 1754-75), the nawab or governor of Awadh, was an enthusiastic patron of the arts. Intrigued by the possibilities of the European style of portraiture, he invited Kettle to his court in northern India in 1772. Kettle painted at least four portraits of Shuja, who is depicted looking boldly outward, asserting his authority. The nawab had strategically allied himself with the increasingly powerful East India Company, which allowed him to govern Awadh with relative autonomy. Company officers eager to memorialize their political alliance also commissioned portraits of the Mughal ruler from Kettle.

Kettle meticulously captures Shuja's luxurious winter hunting attire, from the brocaded silk to the fur hat and pelt draped across his shoulders. Near the curve of the bow in his hand, an embroidered figure on horseback reinforces the theme of the hunt.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.48

Francis Wheatley

b. 1747, London; active in England and Ireland; d. 1801, London

The Oliver and Ward Families

ca. 1778, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.2.4

George Willison

b. 1741, Edinburgh, Scotland; active in Scotland, Italy, England, and India;
d. 1797, Edinburgh, Scotland

Anne Parsons, later Viscountess Maynard

ca. 1771, oil on copper

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.681

Francis Smith

b. Italy; active in Italy, Turkey, and England; d. in or after 1779

The Kizlar Agha (Chief Black Eunuch, Head Officer of the Palace)

ca. 1765, oil on canvas

This painting presents the Kizlar Agha, one of the highest-ranking officials in the eighteenth-century Ottoman court, wearing the turban and robes of his office and acting as keeper of the palace harem. Both he and the women were enslaved. The women were not allowed to leave, and the Kizlar Agha's power was dependent upon his castration and his total loyalty to the sultan. This painting is not a portrait but rather an imagined view that the artist copied from works belonging to a popular genre depicting the diverse members of the Ottoman court. Smith produced at least thirty such images for his patron, Lord Baltimore, who had traveled to Constantinople as a tourist in 1763.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1994.18.5

Tilly Kettle

b. 1735, London; active in England and India; d. 1786, Aleppo, Syria

Eleanora Frances Murray

in or before 1768, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.18

Andrew Geddes

b. 1783, Edinburgh, Scotland; active in Scotland, England, and Italy;
d. 1844, London

Charles Lennox Cumming-Bruce in Turkish Dress

1817, oil on panel

Paul Mellon Fund, B1979.4

Francis Smith

b. Italy; active in Italy, Turkey, and England; d. in or after 1779

A Turkish Woman and an Attendant Going to the Hamam (Public Baths)

ca. 1765, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B2006.14.8

Johan Joseph Zoffany

b. 1733, Frankfurt, Germany; active in Germany, England, Italy, and India;

d. 1810, London

The Drummond Family

ca. 1769, oil on canvas

Zoffany, a German painter, was popular in eighteenth-century Britain for his group portraits. In this work, he depicts three generations of a wealthy Scottish family. Andrew Drummond, patriarch and founder of a major bank, sits at center while his son John stands to the left with two of his four children. To the right of Andrew is John's wife, Charlotte, and their other two children. From the fine ponies, to the women's lace-trimmed gowns, to Andrew's gold-handled cane, Zoffany captures the luxurious details that convey the Drummonds' fortune. A decade after this painting was made, the family became even richer when the bank took on an important government contract: funding the British army during the American War of Independence.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.86

Agostino Brunias

b. 1728, Rome; active in Italy, England, Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent; d. 1796, Roseau, Dominica

Linen Market, Dominica

ca. 1780, oil on canvas

Underneath a bright red parasol held by an attendant, an elegantly dressed woman in white examines textiles for sale. In this bustling linen and vegetable market, enslaved people, free people of color, and white people visit with one another and buy and sell their wares. In this scene, Brunias pays careful attention to textiles, both the linen for sale and the striped and checked cotton worn by women in the market. The ships in the background hint at the global trade networks involved in importing these textiles. Brunias drew on ethnographic images in his work, and here the gazes of the figures reinforce the acts of looking and comparing — heightened by the presence of a woman who surveils the scene from a window. By representing this polite commercial space, Brunias obscures the larger market that drove this economy: the sale of human beings.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.76

William Hodges

b. 1744, London; active in England, the South Pacific, and India;

d. 1797, Brixham, England

Storm on the Ganges, with Mrs. Hastings near the Colgon Rocks

1790, oil on canvas

The rocks of Kahalgaon (known as Colgong during the colonial period) lie along a treacherous stretch of the Ganges River in northeastern India. The boulders are so large that they form small islands, upon which ancient tombs and dwellings were built. During the rainy season, boat travel becomes treacherous. In this scene, a passenger boat hurtles toward the giant rocks, and oarsmen struggle to keep the boat level in the churning water. A rainbow appears in the sky to indicate that the storm will soon pass and the passengers will survive.

The painting was commissioned by Warren Hastings, the East India Company's first governor-general of Bengal, after his return to England. It commemorates an incident in which his wife Marian (née Chapuset) survived this harrowing journey to reach his sickbed.

Johan Joseph Zoffany

b. 1733, Frankfurt, Germany; active in Germany, England, Scotland, Italy,
and India; d. 1810, London

The Gore Family with George, third Earl Cowper

ca. 1775, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.87

Joseph Wright of Derby

b. 1734, Derby, England; active in England and Italy; d. 1797, Derby, England

The Blacksmith's Shop

1771, oil on canvas

In the early 1770s, Wright produced a series of dramatic paintings that explored the subject of a blacksmith's forge at night. This canvas's scene is populated by three groups: those who wait, those who watch, and those who work. At center, the smiths work on a horseshoe, casting sparks into the eyes of a child who turns away, shielding his face. To convey the sparks' glow, Wright laid silver leaf into the paint. Lavishing a quotidian subject with such detail and sophistication challenged the academy's privileging of heroic scenes from history and mythology. In this light, the figure in the foreground might be read as contemplating the power of artifice, whether that of the artist or the smiths.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.712

Alexander Nasmyth

b. 1758, Edinburgh, Scotland; active in Scotland, England, and Italy;

d. 1840, Edinburgh, Scotland

View of the City of Edinburgh

ca. 1822, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1974.3.21

John Sell Cotman

b. 1782, Norwich, England; active in England; d. 1842, London

Drainage Mills in the Fens, Croyland, Lincolnshire

ca. 1835, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1974.3.27

John Wilson Carmichael

b. 1799, Newcastle upon Tyne, England; active in England;

d. 1868, Scarborough, England

A View of Murton Colliery near Seaham, County Durham

1843, oil on canvas

In the nineteenth century, coal mining powered Britain's rapid industrialization, which in turn drove momentous social and environmental changes. Carmichael's painting celebrates the opening of Murton Colliery (or coal mine) in the northeast of England. At first glance, his subject appears rustic, almost a natural part of the landscape: a vision at odds with the dirty reality of the business. The bucolic stream would have in fact been formed by water pumped from the mine. The affable-looking men resting nearby with their pickaxes are "sinkers," who would have excavated the pits at great risk to their safety. In the distance, women, some carrying their children, comb the ground for discarded coal to fend off the deprivations of rural poverty.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.12

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Hadleigh Castle, The Mouth of the Thames— Morning after a Stormy Night

1829, oil on canvas

One of Constable's most ambitious compositions, this landscape depicts a fourteenth-century stronghold on the Essex coast where the Thames Estuary widens and meets the sea. The dilapidated structure dominates the otherwise flat marshland, long ago reclaimed by nature and returned to rural use. With characteristic verve, the artist summons a dynamic, windswept scene, with clouds rolling across the sky and shards of sunlight illuminating the dank water below. His evocations of the march of time and the transitory nature of life have been interpreted as expressions of Constable's grief at the loss of his wife, Maria, who died shortly before he painted this scene. Though he continued his work, he considered himself a ruin without her.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.42

Samuel Palmer

b. 1805, London; active in England and Italy; d. 1881, Redhill, England

The Harvest Moon

ca. 1833, oil on paper, laid on panel

Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.65

John Linnell

b. 1792, London; active in England; d. 1882, Redhill, England

The Rest on the Flight into Egypt

ca. 1827, oil on panel

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.496

Sir Thomas Lawrence

b. 1769, Bristol, England; active in England; d. 1830, London

Lord Granville Leveson-Gower,
later first Earl Granville

between 1804 and 1809, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.736

Richard Parkes Bonington

b. 1802, Arnold, England; active in England and France; d. 1828, London

A Fish-Market near Boulogne

1824, oil on canvas

This depiction of a lively fish market reveals not only Bonington's keen attention to the customs of coastal life in northern France but also his commitment to direct observation from nature, as seen in details such as the slimy white skate spilling out onto the beach and the wicker baskets laden with fish. However, the artist did not render this scene exactly from life. He composed his painting for theatrical effect, contrasting the brilliant dawn sky with the shadowy group of figures in the foreground and echoing the form of the solitary woman at the water's edge with that of the sailboat in the distance. The result is a masterpiece — a celebration of everyday life — by an artist who died tragically young.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.50

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Harnham Gate, Salisbury

between 1820 and 1821, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.126

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Stratford Mill

1819 to 1820, oil on canvas

Direct observation of nature lay at the heart of Constable's ethos and practice. He would take his equipment outdoors to capture the varied qualities of light through the swaying trees and the shapes of clouds forming and dissipating. This painting depicts his homeland in rural Suffolk. In the foreground, young boys fish in the river, echoing Constable's desire to see the world with the eyes of a child. Although sometimes described as a sketch, this canvas is in fact a full-scale preparatory prototype. Never intended for public display, the work allowed Constable to perfect the overall effect of his composition, and to achieve the balance of light and dark that was so important to him, before embarking on his final version.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1983.18

John Middleton

b. 1827, Norwich, England; active in England; d. 1856, Norwich, England

A Landscape with a Horseman

ca. 1850, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.446

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Hampstead Heath, with a Bonfire

ca. 1822, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B2001.2.241

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Cloud Study

1822, oil on paper laid on panel

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.116

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Hampstead Heath Looking Towards Harrow

1821, oil on paper laid on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.103

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Cloud Study

1822, oil on paper laid on panel

“Skying” was the term Constable used to describe his studying of the sky from Hampstead Heath. He worked rapidly in oils, capturing on paper the character and motion of clouds. His handwritten notes on the backs of the paintings record the circumstances of their making: the date and time, the direction the artist was facing and the direction of the wind, and the atmospheric conditions. Never intended as works in their own right, these studies provide the clearest expression of the naturalism that underpinned the Romantic movement in art, and are therefore as highly esteemed as any of his other paintings.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.148

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Cloud Study

1822, oil on paper laid on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.144

John Constable

b. 1776, East Bergholt, England; active in England; d. 1837, London

Cloud Study

ca. 1821, oil on paper laid on card

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.146

Sir Henry Raeburn

b. 1756, Edinburgh, Scotland; active in Scotland, Italy, and England;

d. 1823, Edinburgh, Scotland

Quintin McAdam

ca. 1815, oil on canvas

As Edinburgh's preeminent portraitist, Raeburn attracted a clientele ranging from leading intellectual figures to wealthy landowners and their children. This painting was likely commissioned to commemorate McAdam's inheritance, at ten years old, of the three thousand acres of heaths, pastures, and lochs that made up the extensive Craigengillan estate in southwest Scotland. McAdam is depicted as a miniature adult, his top hat and rider's whip indicating his prowess in horsemanship and his status as a gentleman. The boy appears at ease in his new role as the head of the family, though he barely had time to enjoy it. He died suddenly in 1827, and the estate was inherited by his sister.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.509

William Daniell

b. 1769, Kingston upon Thames, England; active in England, India, and Scotland;
d. 1837, London

A View in China: Cultivating the Tea Plant

1810, oil on canvas

Organized on a picturesque winding river, this composition focuses on the steps of tea production, from preparing the soil and caring for the young plants to harvesting, folding, crisping, packing, and weighing the leaves and shipping them to the port of Canton (Guangzhou). Although Daniell traveled to China twice, there is no evidence that he ever visited a tea plantation. Instead, he likely relied on artworks by Chinese artists to create this detailed scene. Tea, initially an elite beverage in seventeenth-century Britain, became widely consumed across social classes by the early nineteenth century. The demand was such that by 1810 approximately 20,000 tons of the product, valued at £3 million, were imported each year by the East India Company. The high demand for tea created a trade imbalance, which prompted the Company to start smuggling highly addictive opium into China.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1976.7.22

John Linnell

b. 1792, London; active in England; d. 1882, Redhill, England

Hanson Toot, View in Dovedale

1815, reworked 1846, 1854, and 1870, oil on canvas

Linnell once wrote that he “lived to paint poetical landscapes,” such as this view of Hanson Toot, a mountain in Derbyshire. The laborers who worked the land were as important to his paintings as the land itself. After moving from London to rural Surrey later in life, he began to depict the tenant farmers on his own property, using the land for agriculture while drawing artistic inspiration from it. Linnell returned to this canvas throughout his career, retouching it every time it changed hands, and made his final alterations at the age of seventy-eight. Taking pride in his productivity, he recorded the dates of his revisions on the bottom right of the picture.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.426

Edward Lear

b. 1812, London; active in England, Italy, and India; d. 1888, San Remo, Italy

Between Olavano and Civitella

1842, oil on canvas

Gift of Donald C. Gallup, Yale BA 1934, PhD 1939, B1997.7.5

Edward Lear

b. 1812, London; active in England, Italy, and India; d. 1888, San Remo, Italy

Landscape with Goatherd

ca. 1842, oil on canvas

Gift of Donald C. Gallup, Yale BA 1934, PhD 1939, B1997.7.4

John Singleton Copley

b. 1738, Boston, Massachusetts; active in the United States and England;
d. 1815, London

Richard Heber

1782, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.745

William Daniell

b. 1769, Kingston upon Thames, England; active in England, India, and Scotland;
d. 1837, London

Madras, or Fort St. George, in the Bay of Bengal —
A Squall Passing Off

1833, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.209

Henry Dawson

b. 1811, Hull, England; active in England; d. 1878, London

London from Greenwich Hill

1869 to 1870, oil on canvas

In the foreground, a group of women and children gather around a pensioner from London's Greenwich Hospital, a home for retired sailors, located at the bottom of the hill. The loss of his leg speaks to the human cost behind the prosperity enjoyed by those walking through the park. The view from Greenwich Hill across the Thames had long been popular with artists, but by the time Dawson painted this canvas, large swathes of the capital had been given over to factories that manufactured goods from materials from across the globe while belching smoke into the sky. The river was not only the city's central artery but also connected it to its port and, by extension, to the rest of the British Empire.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.216

Edward Lear

b. 1812, London; active in England and Italy; d. 1888, San Remo, Italy

Kangchenjunga from Darjeeling

1879, oil on canvas

When Lear traveled to the Himalayan mountains in 1873, he wondered whether he could capture the grandeur of Kangchenjunga, the third highest peak in the world, in a painting. To accurately render the details, he made numerous sketches and purchased tourist photographs for reference. His composition conveys a sense of scale by juxtaposing a steeply declining avenue of trees with the soaring mountains beyond. The tea pickers gathered in the foreground by the Buddhist shrine hint at the cultivation of tea in Darjeeling by the British East India Company in the early nineteenth century. Lear painted this third and final version of his scene for Thomas Baring, Lord Northbrook, viceroy of India between 1872 and 1876, who sponsored the artist's expedition.

Gift of Donald C. Gallup, Yale BA 1934, PhD 1939, B1997.7.3

James Ward

b. 1769, London; active in England; d. 1859, Cheshunt, England

Man Struggling with a Boa Constrictor, Study for *The Liboya Serpent Seizing His Prey*

ca. 1803, oil on canvas

This carefully rendered study depicts a man using all his strength to push a large snake from his body, his eyes trained on the flailing tail that might strike at any moment. Ward made this canvas in preparation for a larger painting, now lost but known through a full compositional study. In the final painting, the snake winds around the body of a white horse, snatching the rider from its back. Given the artist's opposition to Britain's involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, it seems likely he intended this composition as an allegory of slavery, which at the time had yet to be abolished.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.664

Elizabeth Emma Soyer (née Jones)

b. 1813, London; active in England; d. 1842, London

Young Mariner and Dog

1833, oil on canvas

The boy wears the raincoat and hat of a working sailor, suggesting a life of hard labor. The stick in his hand implies that he was playing with his trusty canine companion before his job interrupted their fun. The painting was exhibited the year that the Factory Act of 1833 was passed, which prohibited factories from employing children under the age of nine and limited the hours that older children could work. Soyer herself was only twelve when she began her professional training with the Belgian portrait painter François Simonau. Despite achieving success during her short life, she has since been largely overlooked and the location of most of her works remains unknown. This painting is the first by the artist to enter an American museum collection.

Paul Mellon Fund, B2024.14

John Scarlett Davis

b. 1804, Leominster, England; active in England; d. 1845, London

The Interior of the British Institution Gallery

1829, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.212

Sir Thomas Lawrence

b. 1769, Bristol, England; active in England; d. 1830, London

George James Welbore Agar-Ellis,
later first Baron Dover

1823 to 1824, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B1981.25.411

Frederick Sandys

b. 1829, Norwich, England; active in England; d. 1904, London

Grace Charlotte Rose (née Snow),
Lady Rose

1866, oil on panel

Paul Mellon Fund, B1993.20

Joanna Mary Wells (née Boyce)

b. 1831, London; active in England, France, and Italy; d. 1861, London

Fanny Eaton (née Antwistle or Entwistle)

1861, oil on paper laid to linen

A painter as well as an art critic, Wells was highly regarded among her peers, even receiving praise from writer John Ruskin, but died young, soon after the birth of her third child. She made this preparatory study of Eaton as the ancient Syrian Queen Zenobia in anticipation of painting a large historical scene. Dressed in a luxurious silk shawl and wearing a glinting pearl earring, Eaton is the picture of regal poise and opulent wealth, though in life she sat for many Pre-Raphaelite artists to supplement her income as a domestic worker. Having migrated from Jamaica to London, she married James Eaton, a horse-cab driver with whom she had ten children.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1991.29

Sir John Everett Millais

b. 1829, Southampton, England; active in England and Scotland; d. 1896, London

L'Enfant du Régiment

1854 to 1855, oil on paper, laid on canvas, mounted on board

With her wounded arm bandaged and the jacket of a French soldier draped over her, a young girl, Marie, sleeps on an ancient monument to a medieval knight, undisturbed by the commotion of the soldiers on the left outside the tomb. The eponymous “daughter of the regiment” was the lead character of Gaetano Donizetti’s popular opera *La Fille du Régiment* (1840). In this story, she is born to an aristocratic Englishwoman and a French officer fighting in the Napoleonic Wars. After his death, Marie is adopted by the officers of his regiment. This tender scene of the artist’s imagining speaks to the human cost of war and the hope of a resolution to come.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1981.4

Ford Madox Brown

b. 1821, Calais, France; active in England, France, Belgium, and Italy;

d. 1893, London

The Irish Girl

1860, oil on canvas laid on board

The cornflowers this young street vendor holds to her chest are for sale, and the paisley red shawl around her body is a type often made by child laborers, many of whom were Irish immigrants to Britain. Brown encountered this sitter while looking for subjects for *Work*, a larger painting about labor and class in Victorian England that he completed in 1865. Originally, *The Irish Girl* formed a pair with *The English Boy*, which depicts the artist's five-year-old son wearing a hat and a smock and holding his toys. The two give contrasting views of childhood: his hair is brushed, hers is wild and unkempt; his gaze is innocent, hers is wily and self-possessed. His is a life of privilege, while she lives in poverty.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1989.11

John Gibson

b. 1790, Conwy, Wales; active in England and Italy; d. 1866, Rome

Cupid Disguised as a Shepherd Boy

commissioned in 1834, Carrara marble

Gift of Karen S. W. and Edward A. Friedman, Yale BA 1971, Kristin W. and Gary D. Friedman, Yale BA 1973, Ruth and Theodore N. Mirvis, and Darcy Bradbury and Eric Seiler, B2013.27

Frederic Leighton

b. 1830, Scarborough, England; active in Germany, Italy, France, and England;
d. 1896, London

The Sluggard

ca. 1895, bronze

Paul Mellon Fund, B1982.17

Sir Alfred Gilbert

b. 1854, London; active in France, Italy, and England; d. 1934, London

St. George

1891–96, bronze

Paul Mellon Fund, B1977.14.12

Sir John Lavery

b. 1856, Belfast, Northern Ireland; active in Scotland, England, Morocco, Ireland, and the United States; d. 1941, Kilkenny, Ireland

On the Clyde — Study of Elise Agnes Coats
(née Walker), later Lady Glen Coats

1890, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B2012.1.1

Sir George Clausen

b. 1852, London; active in England, Belgium, and France;

d. 1944, Newbury, England

Schoolgirls

1880, oil on canvas

Clausen's street scene is a commentary on class in the late nineteenth century, the artist drawing our attention in particular to women's social roles. With the eldest pupils at the head of the line, the schoolgirls pass a woman carrying heavy pails of milk on her shoulders and a flower seller who offers her wares from a basket. The hands of these working women are bare and their clothing is simple and practical, while the middle-class girls wear gloves and modish apparel. All but two of the students appear to ignore the outreached hand of the flower seller, a detail that underscores the distinctions between them.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1985.10.1

Walter Greaves

b. 1846, London; active in England; d. 1930, London

An Artist Painting

ca. 1870, oil on millboard

Bequest of Joseph F. McCrindle, Yale LLB 1948, B2009.9.47

James McNeill Whistler

b. 1834, Lowell, Massachusetts; active in England, France, and Italy;

d. 1903, London

Nocturne in Blue and Silver

1872 to 1878, butterfly added ca. 1885, oil on canvas

Depicted at nighttime and cloaked in fog and smoke, Whistler's haunting Thames landscape can be difficult to read. The buildings of Morgan's Crucible Company at the top left as well as the river barge and its solitary bargeman all fade into the murky gloom. The moodiness of the scene is the result not of the natural atmospheric caused by the river, but rather of the increase of smoke and pollution in the London sky due to unchecked industrialization. The artist adopted the word "nocturne" in the painting's title from Frédéric Chopin's musical compositions, implying that viewers are meant to appreciate the work for its formal "harmonies" of color and tone.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1994.19

Frederic Leighton

b. 1830, Scarborough, England; active in Germany, Italy, France, and England;
d. 1896, London

Ellinor Guthrie (née Stirling)

1865, oil on canvas

From the flowing silk of Ellinor Guthrie's dress to the delicate petals of the flowers she arranges, Leighton renders the material world so sensuously as to make his scene feel almost real. The opulence of Guthrie's clothing and surroundings not only creates a world of visual pleasure but also reflects her social status. The daughter of James Stirling, who drove Britain's colonization of Western Australia and became the colony's first governor, Ellinor became even wealthier when she married a banker, James Alexander Guthrie.ittings for this portrait were delayed by a long recovery following the birth of her fifth child. The wilting flowers may allude to the fragility of her health.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1978.43.10

Robert Polhill Bevan

b. 1865, Hove, England; active in England, France, and Poland; d. 1925, London

"Quiet with all Road Nuisances"

ca. 1912, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B2001.2.233

Spencer Frederick Gore

b. 1878, Epsom, England; active in England; d. 1914, London

Ballet Scene from *On the Sands*

1910, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1983.11.2

Walter Richard Sickert

b. 1860, Munich, Germany; active in England, France, and Italy;
d. 1942, Bathampton, England

La Giuseppina

1903 to 1904, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1979.37.2

Gwen John

b. 1876, Haverfordwest, Wales; active in England and France;
d. 1939, Dieppe, France

La Chambre sur la Cour

between 1907 and 1908, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B2014.5.3

Gwen John

b. 1876, Haverfordwest, Wales; active in England and France;

d. 1939, Dieppe, France

The Pilgrim

ca. 1920, oil on canvas

Although John painted this sitter, a professional artist's model, more than fifty times, her identity remains unknown. The artist consistently depicted her seated alone in a sparse interior but styled her with different props and clothes. Here, the model holds a rosary, which Catholics use in prayer. John, who moved from London to Paris in 1904, converted to the faith in 1913 and thereafter regarded her art practice as a calling from God. Her loose brushwork, thinly applied oil paint, and muted colors are characteristic of her works from the late 1910s and early 1920s, and reflect the influence of the French modernists.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1993.30.16

Gwen John

b. 1876, Haverfordwest, Wales; active in England and France;
d. 1939, Dieppe, France

Still Life with a Prayer Book, Shawl, Vase of Flowers, and Inkwell

late 1920s, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Collection, B2014.5.2

Harold Gilman

b. 1876, Rode, England; active in England; d. 1919, London

Stanislawa de Karlovska

ca. 1913, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1986.1.1

Winifred Turner

b. 1903, London; active in England; d. 1983, Burwash, England

Eve

1932, bronze

Turner primarily sculpted nude female figures, often serving as her own model. It is unclear whether or not she did so when creating this figure of Eve, whose form is simplified and possessed of an architectonic quality. Like many artists in the early twentieth century, Turner was interested in the art of ancient cultures. Her particular admiration of Assyrian sculpture may have inspired the defined profile of Eve's face, her almond-shaped eyes, and the work's frontal composition. This influence is significant, as biblical descriptions of the Garden of Eden suggest that Adam and Eve may have been from Mesopotamia, the region that included Assyria.

Gift of Miss Jessica Turner through the National Art-Collections Fund, B1989.2.3

Alfred Turner

b. 1874, London; active in England; d. 1940, London

Charlotte Turner (née Gavin)

ca. 1910 or ca. 1930, exhibited 1930, terracotta

Gift of Miss Jessica Turner through the National Art-Collections Fund, B1989.2.2

Charles Ginner

b. 1878, Cannes, France; active in France and England; d. 1952, London

The Fruit Stall, King's Cross

1914, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1980.18

Walter Richard Sickert

b. 1860, Munich, Germany; active in England, France, and Italy;

d. 1942, Bathampton, England

The Camden Town Murder, or What Shall We Do for the Rent?

ca. 1908, oil on canvas

The dueling titles of this ambiguous scene suggest two possible scenarios: a murder, or an exchange of sexual favors for money. The painting belongs to a series Sickert made after the 1907 homicide of Emily Dimmock, a sex worker, in Camden Town, London. The case quickly became tabloid fodder, appealing to the British public's appetite for stories of sex and violence. Sickert uses the conventions of mid-Victorian genre painting — scenes of everyday life that deliver lessons — not to offer viewers moral reassurance but to render them mere voyeurs. The second title, which the artist added later, suggests that this painting can also be read as a commentary on the living conditions of the working class.

Paul Mellon Fund, B1979.37.1

Ben Nicholson

b. 1894, Denham, England; active in England, Switzerland, and France;

d. 1982, Hampstead, England

May 1955 (Gwithian)

1955, oil on canvas

Between 1939 and 1958, Nicholson lived near Gwithian, a village in Cornwall on the south coast of England that had been a haven for artists in the interwar years. In this painting, the hazy blue wash recalls the open skies above the town, and the bold accents of color evoke the boats in its harbor. Gwithian was also the site of a Stone Age settlement, whose traces appeared in the landscape as abstract formations embedded with rocks. The work's beige interlocking planes may refer to these remains and to the sand dunes for which the village was also known. Nicholson highlights the enduring quality of this provincial English landscape, which was then under threat by postwar urban expansion.

Paul Mellon Collection, B1985.19.2

Leon Kossoff

b. 1926, London; active in England, d. 2019, London

Fidelma III

1979, oil on board

Lent from a private collection, L2000-165.2

Frank Auerbach

b. 1931, Berlin, Germany; active in England; d. 2024, London

Head of E. O. W.

1957, oil on canvas

Lent from a private collection, L2022-16

Sir Stanley Spencer

b. 1891, Cookham-on-Thames, England; active in England and Scotland;
d. 1959, Taplow, England

Winifred Augusta Frank (née Doherty)

1951, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1998.22

Albert Huie

b. 1920, Falmouth, Jamaica; active in Jamaica, Canada, England, and the United States; d. 2010, Baltimore, Maryland

Benjamin Dorrell

1942, oil on canvas

Dorrell, an orphan, sits in the Jamaican home of his adoptive guardian, a white Anglican minister who commissioned the portrait. The boy's hand rests on a tobacco jar made of *Lignum vitae*, a wood commonly found on the island; on the table are locally grown citrus fruits. Posing his sitter alongside the country's products as well as his guardian's property, Huie alludes both to Jamaica's identity apart from its colonizers and to the complex dynamics of colonialism. Huie traveled to London in 1947 to study art, returning home in the 1950s to become Jamaica's leading artist after Independence. In 1958, Dorrell immigrated to Britain, one of half a million Caribbean people known as the "Windrush generation," recruited by the government to help rebuild the nation's economy after World War II.

Friends of British Art Fund, B2023.6

Ellen Lanyon

b. 1926, Chicago, Illinois; active in the United States and England;

d. 2013, New York City

Bermondsey Market

1951, oil on linoleum

Gift of the Libra Foundation, B2017.3

John Minton

b. 1917, Great Shelford, England; active in England; d. 1957, London

A Street Corner in Jamaica

1951, oil on canvas

Paul Mellon Fund, B1985.9

Henry Moore

b. 1898, Castleford, England; active in England; d. 1986, Much Hadham, England,

Helmet Head, No. 3

1960, bronze

Paul Mellon Collection, B1984.6.1

Lucian Freud

b. 1922, Berlin, Germany; active in England; d. 2011, London

Girl in a Dark Dress

1951, oil on canvas

Anonymous loan, L2006-34

Francis Bacon

b. 1909, Dublin, Ireland; active in England, France, and Germany;

d. 1992, Madrid, Spain

Study of a Head

1952, oil on canvas

Bacon preferred to work from photographs or memory rather than live models, often merging parts of multiple figures into one image. To compose this screaming androgynous figure, he borrowed from an array of sources, including sixteenth-century portraits, popular cinema, and medical textbooks. Bacon once noted that he was “moved by” the movement and shape of mouths and teeth, and here the dark void of the subject’s own serves as the painting’s focal point. The figure’s white clothing and the yellow railing behind him suggest that he may be in a psychiatric institution. Produced in the decade after World War II, Bacon’s head expresses the despair and anguish brought on by its atrocities.

Gift of Beekman C. and Margaret H. Cannon, B1998.27

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

b. 1977, London; lives and works in England

Any Number of Preoccupations

2010, oil on canvas

Although Yiadom-Boakye renders the features of her subject with the precision of a portraitist, the subject is, in fact, wholly of her invention. Found images, historical paintings, memories, and literature serve as inspiration for her fictional characters whom she depicts in their own private worlds, at a remove from any specific time or place. Here, the figure's luxurious red dressing gown and white slippers suggest an intimate setting, but the dark background disallows such projections. The artist has said that this deliberate ambiguity creates a "world of infinite possibilities . . . unconstrained by the nightmare fantasies of others," inviting viewers to reflect on the history of representation in art.

Lent by Dr. Kenneth Montague | The Wedge Collection, Toronto, L2024.60

