



**Claude Monet**

*In the Norwegian* c 1887

**Use the reflections in the water to discover the colour of the sky.**

Monet's three daughters are depicted boating on the river near their home in Giverny. The name 'Norwegian' refers to the type of boat the girls are sitting in. Did you notice that we don't see any land or sky and the boat is seen to one side of the composition? These features reveal the influence of photography and Japanese woodblock prints.

**How has Monet used colour to create a mood or atmosphere in this painting?**



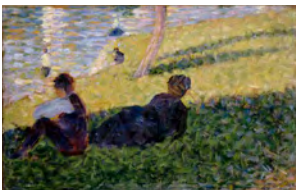
**Edgar Degas**

*Dancers climbing the stairs* 1886-90

**How has Edgar Degas arranged the ballet dancers in this painting?**

Almost half of Degas' paintings are based on the ballet. In *Dancers climbing the stairs* he has cropped the composition and cut off figures such as the young dancer in the foreground with her back to the viewer.

**Why do you think Degas depicted the dancers while they were climbing the stairs, and not when they were on the stage?**



**Georges Seurat**

*Studies for 'A Sunday afternoon on the island of La Grande Jatte'* 1884 and 1884-86

**Observe the technique Georges Seurat has used to apply paint to these two wooden panels.**

These small studies were part of 60 preparatory works Seurat made for one of his most famous paintings, *A Sunday afternoon on the island of La Grande Jatte*, which hangs in the Art Institute of Chicago. In these studies Seurat planned and refined his ideas on colour and composition before he began the final painting in 1886.

**What do you think Seurat was trying to investigate in these two studies?**



**Théo van Rysselberghe**

*The man at the tiller* 1892

**Look closely at the way Théo van Rysselberghe has applied paint in this maritime scene.**

Van Rysselberghe became a friend of French artist Paul Signac, and adopted a variation of the Pointillist technique of applying dots of colour. This method of painting is also known as Divisionism because the dabs of contrasting colour are mixed in the viewer's eye.

**Describe the way van Rysselberghe has used areas of light and dark to lead the viewer's eye from left to right and from foreground to background.**



**Paul Cézanne**

*Bathers* c 1890

**What effect does Paul Cézanne's limited range of colours have on this composition of a group of bathers?**

Cézanne produced hundreds of paintings of bathers during his lifetime. Nude bathers are a traditional way of depicting figures in the landscape, and have been popular subjects for artists since the Renaissance.

**Discuss the elements of this painting which could be interpreted as having religious significance.**



### Vincent van Gogh

*Imperial Crown fritillaries in a copper vase* 1887

**Examine how Vincent van Gogh has used paint to create a variety of textures in the flowers, vase and table in this study.**

Van Gogh was given flowers every week by friends to use as models for studies. These golden blooms stand tall in a copper vase with a few stray specimens balancing the vertical focus of the arrangement.

**Compare this flower study with van Gogh's self-portrait and his painting *Starry night in this room*. What similarities do you notice?**



### Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

*Woman with a black boa* 1892

**Notice how Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec uses the surface of this brown card as an important element of his composition.**

Toulouse-Lautrec thinned his oil paint with turpentine and applied it like a wash. This meant that the paint dried rapidly and the artist was able to work quickly. In this portrait he used paint sparingly to capture the character of the woman wearing a black boa.

**Can you find one area where the paint fully covers the brown card?**



### Gustave Moreau

*Orpheus* 1865

**Look carefully at this detailed painting of a girl carrying the head of a man on top of a lyre.**

Many of Moreau's landscapes were based on one of Leonardo da Vinci's most famous paintings, *Virgin of the rocks*. Here, a young girl carries the head of Orpheus, an important figure from Greek mythology. Orpheus's body was torn apart, and his head thrown in a river.

**Discuss the symbolic elements of this composition, such as the lyre, tortoises and the shepherds on top of the rocks.**



### Pierre Puvis de Chavannes

*The poor fisherman* 1881

**Discuss the mood of this large painting of a widowed fisherman and his two children.**

Puvis de Chavannes intended this painting as a social comment, as he was deeply concerned about the plight of the poor. The artist was a celebrated muralist and was accustomed to working on a large scale.

**In what ways does this image empathise with the artist's ideals about poverty?**



### Henri Rousseau

*War* c 1894

**Do you think Henri Rousseau creates a dramatic painting of war that still has relevance today?**

Rousseau's painting was influenced by the political conflicts that occurred during his lifetime, such as the Franco-Prussian War. The artist depicts a wild woman riding a galloping horse across a devastated landscape littered with dismembered bodies.

**Discuss the artist's decision to depict the personification of war as a woman.**



**Claude Monet**

*London, Parliament: sun through the fog* 1904

**Discuss the weather conditions in this painting of the Houses of Parliament in London.**

Early in 1871 Claude Monet and his friend Camille Pissarro travelled to London from Paris, where they saw the paintings of JMW Turner and John Constable for the first time. A few years later Monet painted *Impression, sunrise*, which was included in an exhibition of younger artists who became known as the Impressionists. In 1889 Monet returned to London, where he began a series of paintings based on the city.

**What time of day do you think is depicted in this painting and why?**



**Camille Pissarro**

*Pont Boieldieu, Rouen, sunset, misty weather* 1896

**What viewpoint has Camille Pissarro used to paint the city of Rouen?**

In 1896 Pissarro rented a hotel room in Rouen for a couple of months in order to paint the urban environment. Looking down from his hotel window the artist was able to capture the hustle and bustle of the city using linear and aerial perspective. This bridge joined the old Gothic city in the north with new industrial areas in the south.

**Look at the surface of the water and discuss Pissarro's use of brushstrokes.**



**Paul Signac**

*Women at the well* 1892

**What colours does Paul Signac use to convey the atmosphere of summer?**

The transparency found in this oil painting has similar features to the watercolour medium which Paul Signac had been experimenting with during a voyage from Brittany to St Tropez. The brilliant colour of this painting was intended to brighten up a dark corner in a room.

**Discuss the communal use of water in village life.**



**Maurice Denis**

*Homage to Cézanne* 1900

**What do you think this group is discussing as they gaze at Paul Cézanne's painting *Fruit dish, glass and apples* 1879–80?**

Seven painters, a critic, a dealer and the artist's wife gather around a painting by Paul Cézanne, who is not present. The painters were all members of a group known as the Nabis, a term meaning 'prophet' or 'magician'. As well as their artistic interests the Nabis were drawn together by idealist philosophies and Symbolist literature.

**What does this group portrait do that could not be portrayed more precisely by a photograph?**



**Paul Cézanne**

*Still-life with onions* 1896–98

**Discuss how photography may have influenced the composition of Paul Cézanne's still-life.**

Cézanne believed that the still-life genre was equal to portraiture. He was fascinated by the individual characteristics of different fruit and vegetables and commented that, 'they come to you with all their aromas and tell you about the fields that they left, about the rain that nourished them, about the dawns they watched'.

**How does Cézanne's still-life provide us with a social commentary?**





### Paul Gauguin

*Portrait of the artist with 'The yellow Christ'* 1890–91

**Identify the three very distinct sections of this triple self-portrait by Paul Gauguin.**

Gauguin's bulky shape dominates the foreground of the composition. The gaunt figure of Christ on the cross is a mirror image of Gauguin's earlier painting, *The yellow Christ*. To the right is another self-portrait in the form of a glazed stoneware pot which expresses the artist's definition of himself as a savage.

**Can you make connections between the life and suffering of Christ and the life of an artist?**



### Emile Bernard

*The harvest (Breton landscape)* 1888

**How does the viewpoint used by Emile Bernard show us much more than just a scene of the wheat harvest?**

Bernard uses bold, flattened shapes and strong outlines to depict a summer harvest in the French province of Brittany. When this painting was displayed in the boarding house where Bernard was staying, other guests who were conservative painters threw bread balls at it.

**What elements of the composition do you think these artists saw as so radical?**



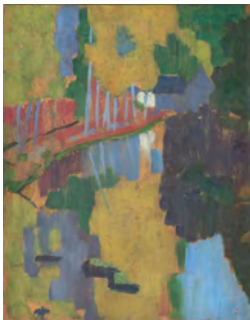
### Félix Vallotton

*The ball* 1899

**What features of this painting create an unsettling mood?**

Vallotton uses a limited range of colours in this painting of a child chasing a red ball. We notice two figures in the distance; one dressed in a white garment and another in blue. The artist was also well known in Paris as a printmaker, and his work exhibits a graphic quality.

**If this painting was a still from a psychological thriller what would happen next?**



### Paul Sérusier

*The talisman, the Aven at the Bois d'Amour* 1888

**What do you see in this painting by Paul Sérusier?**

In October 1888 Paul Gauguin gave Sérusier a brief painting lesson on the banks of the Aven River in Brittany. This painting is the result of that lesson and it has become known as *The talisman*. Sérusier returned to Paris and showed his artist friends this small painting, which was an inspiration to them all.

**What do you think was so revolutionary about this painting?**



### Pierre Bonnard

*View of Le Cannet* 1927

**Can you find the inhabitants of this village painted by Pierre Bonnard?**

The shape of this canvas suggests a window, while the viewpoint places us high above the village of Le Cannet. The geometric houses and brilliant yellow mimosa foliage create a pattern across the landscape.

**Discuss the decorative qualities of this landscape with your partner.**