

John Minton: A Centenary

1 July - 1 October 2017



Exhibition Notes : Learning Through Art

Designed to support teachers and students as they explore the exhibition

- **Looking Together:** Ideas on how to engage with art during your visit to Pallant House Gallery
- **Exhibition Overview:** An introduction to the current exhibition
- **Pre-visit Activities:** Useful links and pre-visit ideas
- **Key Themes:** An introduction to each section
- **Works in Focus:** Discussion questions to facilitate open-ended exploration
- **References and Connections:** Artists and art historical terms mentioned in the text

**PALLANT
HOUSE
GALLERY**

Looking Together

These notes are aimed to help you and your students think in terms of shapes, colours and space, to develop the skills and techniques to focus on an object, identify its essential elements and to find meaning and build a visual vocabulary.

Try to keep group numbers to a minimum so everyone can see the work and have time to participate in the discussion.

Use this line of questioning when looking at the **Works in Focus**.

Observation - Description - Interpretation - Connection

Observation

Approach the work and take a closer look. Encourage your students to take a “visual inventory” of the art work, focusing on it and noticing details.

Take the time to look.

What lines and shapes do you see in this drawing?

Where is the figure in relation to the building?

Description

Describe the work as a group to establish an understanding of what is being seen.

It is useful to start by simply listing what everyone sees. Remember to explore the formal properties of the work, as well as naming recognisable objects, for example consider:

• **Line** and **Shape** as well as **Colour** and **Composition**

Material and **Technique**

Subject matter

By looking closely at this painting, can you describe the brushstrokes?

This process allows a wide range of participation and will benefit future interpretation.

Once you feel that the group has thoroughly described the work, summarise all the elements mentioned and point out any important details that have been missed.

What is implied by the way these two figures are interacting?

Interpretation

Interpretation is about assigning meaning to various elements of the work and thinking about its overall significance. Encourage breadth and variety, and use ideas generated to expand the conversation.

Ask questions that prompt your students to reflect on what is not clearly visible in the work but perhaps merely suggested.

Time and **Place**, **Narrative** and **Mood**

Artist's Intention and **Biographical Information**

Historical and **Social Context**

Balance your questions by sharing some of the interesting facts in these notes, make connections and encourage further discussion.

What overall mood is conveyed in this photograph?

How does this painting make you feel?

Connection

Encourage your students to connect the work to their life experiences as well as wider cultural and social events.

Personal Life Experience and **Emotional Effect**

Personal Opinion

Cultural Changes and **World Events**

Artwork by different artists

Why do you think the artist used these found objects together to create this sculpture?

Do you like this painting?

How does this drawing of a landscape compare to the painting next to it that depicts the same scene?

Summary

Toward the end of the discussion of each work, bring together the various threads of conversation, summarising and synthesising the points you have talked about.

Exhibition Overview

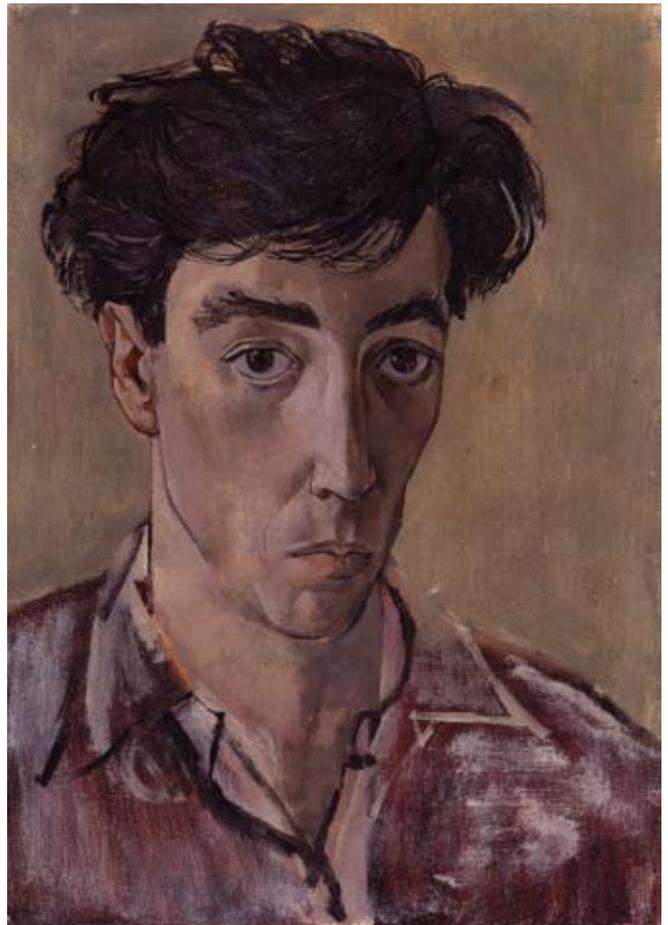
John Minton (1917 - 1957) was a leading figure in Modern British art. Known as a remarkable draughtsman and one of the most significant illustrators of his time, he was also a sensitive portraitist and ambitious figurative painter.

Celebrated as a key proponent of British 'Neo-Romanticism' in the 1940s, he not only produced evocative wartime landscapes, but also exotic images inspired by his travels in the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

A Bohemian figure in Soho in the 1940s and 50s, Minton counted Lucian Freud and Keith Vaughan amongst his friends. He could be the life and soul of a party, but also plagued by melancholy. His complex character was reflected in his poignant artworks, which convey the uncertainties of the times in which they were created. A much-admired tutor at several London art schools, he taught numerous artists including Peter Blake, Frank Auerbach, Bridget Riley and Joe Tilson.

Celebrating the centenary of Minton's birth, and marking the 60th anniversary of his early death, this is the first major exhibition of the artist's work in over 20 years. It features over 70 works lent by public and private collections including recently rediscovered and are on public exhibition for the first time in many years.

Words which are underlined refer to the References and Connection section at the end of these notes.



Self Portrait, c.1953, Oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, London, Purchased with help from the Contemporary Art Society and the Hon. Michael Astor Charitable Fund, 1968

Pre-visit Activities

What is a gallery?

Discuss their understanding and expectations of a gallery visit.

Ask about any other galleries or museums they have been to, what did they see?



Look

Look at a range of work by artists who were either an influence or contemporaries of John Minton.

- William Blake (1757-1827)
- Daniel Maclise (1806-1870)
- Samuel Palmer (1805-1881)
- Eugène Berman (1899-1972)
- Pavel Tchelitchew (1898-1957)
- Christian Bérard (1902-1949)
- Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978)
- Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)
- Henri Matisse (1869-1954)
- Robert Colquhoun (1914-1962)
- Robert MacBryde (1913-1966)
- Keith Vaughan (1912-1977)



Think about

'There is no more revealing human personality than the visual artist. For a man will paint only of himself and of the things he knows, loves, hates, desires.'

- What do you think of this quote by John Minton?
- Think about what you would include in a painting, and how does it relate to you?

Think like a Curator

The role of a curator is to decide on the theme of the exhibition, choose what artworks to display and where to put them.

As you explore the exhibition, think about the following:

- What is the theme/s of this exhibition?
- Why have certain artworks been put together?
- Is there anything you would put in a different place? and why?
- What was your favourite artwork? and why?
- Which artwork did you least like? and why?

Key Theme: War and Neo-Romanticism

John Minton (1917–57) was one of the prime exponents of British Neo-Romanticism in the 1940s. After attending the St John's Wood School of Art from 1935–8, he spent 8 months in Paris with the artist Michael Ayrton, where he encountered the work of the French and Russian Neo-Romantic artists Christian Bérard, Pavel Tchelitchew, and Eugène Berman. Together, Ayrton and Minton produced set and costume designs for *Dido and Aeneas* and *Macbeth*, which reveal these continental influences and their interest in staging and performance.

During the Second World War, Minton unsuccessfully applied to be a conscientious objector, and subsequently served in the Pioneer Corps. His evocative depictions of the devastation of the Blitz in London, see **Work in Focus:** *Bomb-damaged buildings, Poplar, 1941*, led him to be described as an 'urban romantic'. He also produced sepia pastoral views of figures in the British landscape that form an imaginative retreat from the horrors of war such as *Surrey Landscape* (1944), the last of four ambitious and richly textured drawings Minton produced during the period 1943–44.

Many of these images feature young men who seem to be a form of self-portrait and a reflection of Minton's conflicted sexuality. Stylistically these works reflect the artist's interest in the Romantic imagery of 19th-century artists Samuel Palmer and William Blake, and his own contemporaries including the Polish émigré Jankel Adler, and Keith Vaughan, Robert Colquhoun and Robert MacBryde, with whom he shared homes during the 1940s.

Minton's attitude to landscape began to change in the summer of 1944, whilst he spent six weeks at Germoe, in Cornwall. Sun and sea refreshed him, while the force and complexity of nature revived his desire to paint. He now drew less upon his imaginative resources and more on what he saw around him, such as the fishing boats in harbour.



Surrey Landscape, 1944, Pen and ink on paper, Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

Work in Focus: Bomb-damaged buildings, Poplar 1941

Pen and black ink, grey wash on card
Private Collection, courtesy Christie's



Look + Discuss

Observation - Description - Interpretation - Connection

During a massive Luftwaffe attack on London's docks on 19th March 1941, Poplar was severely hit, as was its hinterland of wharves, warehouses, sheds and stores. Such destruction caused Minton to produce many drawings, in pen, ink and wash, which, although not topographically accurate, nevertheless sing the desolation of war. He favoured high viewpoints. His agile pen catches the cracks in the buildings as well as the pooling of water in the swift-moving Thames. Pen and ink drawings largely dominated his work during the war. This partly reflects his teaching interests – 'make the pen flow', he would repeatedly tell his students.

The high aerial perspective draws the eye along the road that leads to a bridge that spans the River Thames. In the foreground, the ruins of a once row of buildings, rise upwards in the centre of the drawing. While other bombed and desolate buildings run along the length of the road and are echoed on the other side of the river, suggestive of the widespread nature of the destruction. The relentless movement of the river, on which abandoned boats are moored, is captured by the linear pattern of the water.

Think about why the artist decided to draw the scene from a high vantage point?

Consider how Minton's use of line add to the structure and composition of the drawing?

Research the history of the Blitz and how different parts of London were affected.

Key Themes: Images of Escapism

In the years of austerity immediately following the Second World War, Minton began to use a vibrant colour palette, inspired in part by the work of [Pablo Picasso](#) and [Henri Matisse](#). He would have seen their work in the Picasso and Matisse exhibition at London's Victoria and Albert Museum in the winter of 1945-46. His views of the banks of the River Thames, such as *Rotherhithe from Wapping* (1946) and Northern towns found beauty and visual delight in industrial subjects that others would not have deemed to be conventionally attractive, and he described such subjects as having 'some reality and authenticity.' The label 'urban romantic' was first given to him after an exhibition, which he shared with [Julian Trevelyan](#) at the Lefevre Gallery in February 1946: the nine oils and ten gouaches, which he exhibited, were based on quays and wharves in the region of Southwark and Bankside.

Minton's skills as a draughtsman led to numerous commissions to illustrate books and magazines, and these designs often informed his oil paintings. Over sixty book jackets featured his cover designs and his illustrations appeared in publications including *Lilliput*, *Radio Times*, *Our Time*, *The Leader* and many others. Minton was part of a wider development of mid-century book illustration, with many of this artistic contemporaries also producing illustrations and designs for book jackets, including Michael Ayrton, Lucian Freud and [Graham Sutherland](#). However, Minton was perhaps the most prolific. His success was due, in part, to the support of the novelist, poet, literary critic and publisher John Lehmann. He was general manager and director of the Hogarth Press from 1938 to 1946 and editor of *New Writing* from 1936, which became *Penguin New Writing* in 1940.

In the summer of 1947, Minton travelled to Corsica with the poet Alan Ross to research a travel book entitled *Time was Away: A Notebook in Corsica* which records Minton's trip to the Mediterranean island for three weeks in the summer of 1947. Besides a large number of ink drawings, the Mediterranean island inspired a significant group of paintings, see **Work in Focus:** *Fishermen*, 1949. These featured bold



Rotherhithe from Wapping, 1946, Oil on board
Southampton City Art Gallery

colours and sunlit scenes that represented a form of escapism from post-war Britain, where rationing continued until the early 1950s. A desire to escape from the grim reality of post-war Britain fueled the remarkable success of Minton's illustration of Elizabeth David's much revered *A Book of Mediterranean Food* and *French Country Cooking* with images of plentiful foodstuffs that were unobtainable in this country.

Work in Focus: Fishermen, 1949

Oil on canvas

Private Collection, Osborne Samuel Gallery, London



Look + Discuss

Observation - Description - Interpretation - Connection

In the late 1940s, Minton produced a series of paintings of fishermen at work, reflecting scenes witnessed in Cornwall and the Mediterranean. He was evidently drawn to the subject matter of bronzed and virile men, but the imagery of healthy labour connected to land and sea would have carried a wider resonance, representing an aspirational aesthetic of health and plenty in the post-war years. The scene focuses on the activity of a busy harbour, with groups of fishermen hauling baskets of fish.

Minton was drawn to places where there was a strong individual flavour of climate and living.

He noted that *'anywhere which derives its existence from the sea is likely to be good to draw – marine architecture, quaysides, boats, fishing – all the complicated mass of detail and shape, which surround the activity of going to sea.'*

This sense of authentic activity is captured in this painting, offset against the use of angular forms, stylised figures and bold use of colour that creates a work which oscillates between realism and decorative abstraction, with raking perspectives and herringbone patterns in the baskets and men's jumpers.

Think about other images of the Mediterranean. What are these images meant to communicate?

Consider the use of colour within the painting. How has it been used to give structure to the painting? How does it add to the atmosphere created within the painting?

Research other work or images of workers, such as fishermen, miners, factory workers and farmers. How are they represented by other artists from different periods and styles?

Key Themes: Exotic Fruits

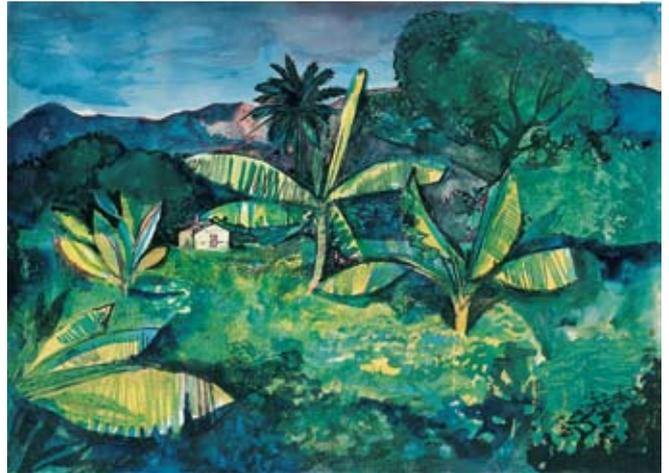
After 1948, Minton's restlessness led him to undertake numerous trips to destinations including France, Spain, Israel, Italy, Morocco, Norway and Sweden. He described travelling as 'a sort of drug' and claimed that it was 'rather like copying the squirrel who collects nuts all through the summer when he can and then has a good store for the lean winter months.'

In autumn 1951, Minton travelled to the Caribbean island of Jamaica for three months. In an article for *Vogue* magazine, published in November 1951, Minton remarked how,

'The colour of the Jamaican landscape is that of coloured inks, of overripe fruit, acid-yellows, magentas, viridians, sharp – like a discord. The vegetation, intricate, speckled and enormous, seems to grow before the eyes, bursting with sap, throttling itself in coils towards the sun.'

The trip inspired a new colour palette of sharp, acid colours and presented the artist with a backdrop of political and racial tension that mirrored his own search for equilibrium. In his paintings, he sought to capture the sultry atmosphere of nighttime scenes, as in the recently rediscovered **Work in Focus: Jamaican Village**, 1951, exhibited here in a public institution for the first time since it was shown in the Royal Academy in 1951. Minton did not shy away from acknowledging the post-colonial tensions in Jamaica's society, 'Daily the planes take off, the ships call, the tourists arrive, spend their money and depart. And meanwhile beneath this surface life, the life of the island, the inner conflict of politics, race, poverty and unemployment made acute by the crumbling of colonial life which is forever past, goes on.'

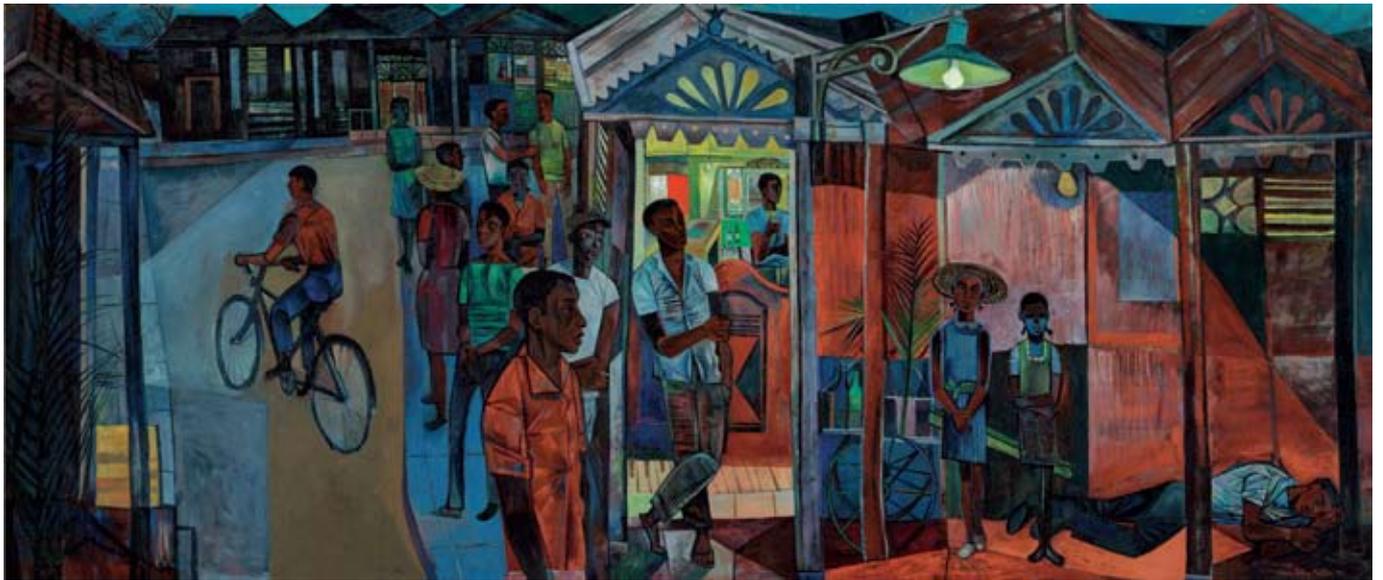
Travel offered Minton immense stimulation for his work: the opportunity to find new visual forms that he could add to his repertoire, inspiring not only major oil paintings, but also book illustrations, posters and prints, and even a mural on the theme of 'Exploration' for the Dome of Discovery at the Festival of Britain in 1951. In the post-war years, his images of the Mediterranean and Caribbean delighted an English audience that did not have the opportunity to experience such exotic locales themselves.



Landscape near Kingston, Jamaica, 1950, Ink and watercolour on paper, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (Hussey Bequest, Chichester District Council, 1985)

Work in Focus: Jamaican Village, 1951

Oil on canvas
Private Collection



Look + Discuss

Observation - Description - Interpretation - Connection

Jamaican Village was possibly intended as a mural for a club such as The Colony Room or The Gargoyle and was exhibited at the 1951 Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Painted in his studio at 37 Hamilton Terrace on his return to England it depicts a night scene with figures gathered around the wooden veranda of a bar, illuminated by electric lights. The scene is framed by two solitary figures: the bicyclist riding away on the left-hand side and the young man asleep on the ground in the far right-hand corner. In between, a casual gathering of young men loiter outside a bar on a street corner, or lean against its brightly-lit entrance; while to the right of the bar, under bare electric lights bulbs, two female figures stand, waiting. The imagery reflects the languid atmosphere

Minton described in an article in 'Vogue':

'the air hangs heavy, there is a sense of watchfulness, of waiting, which belongs to the tropics, the jungle perhaps, with a disquiet that is potent and nameless. [...] Small villages punctuate the countryside, huts and houses perch dizzily above the roads and ravines, wooden fretwork-like houses with fretted and scalloped decorations, gaily painted. The children, dark, silent and wide-eyed, in pale pinks, gaudy reds and deep blues, shoeless, clutching hands, lurk in doorways or behind the enormous banana leaves, or peer from windows speechless at the visitors; whilst the villagers, young and old, stand aimlessly besides the tin Coca-cola advertisements and bar-room doors, watching, waiting.'

Think about the use of colour in dividing up the pictorial space and the use of light to draw the eye to different areas within the picture.

Consider the relationships between the figures depicted in the scene. What might they be thinking and feeling. Where would you position yourself in the painting? How would you feel?

Research how other artists have been inspired by their travels to other countries or places. Often seen as an escape or offering an alternative lifestyle, what elements of that society is it, that they are inspired by? How do they represent this in their work?

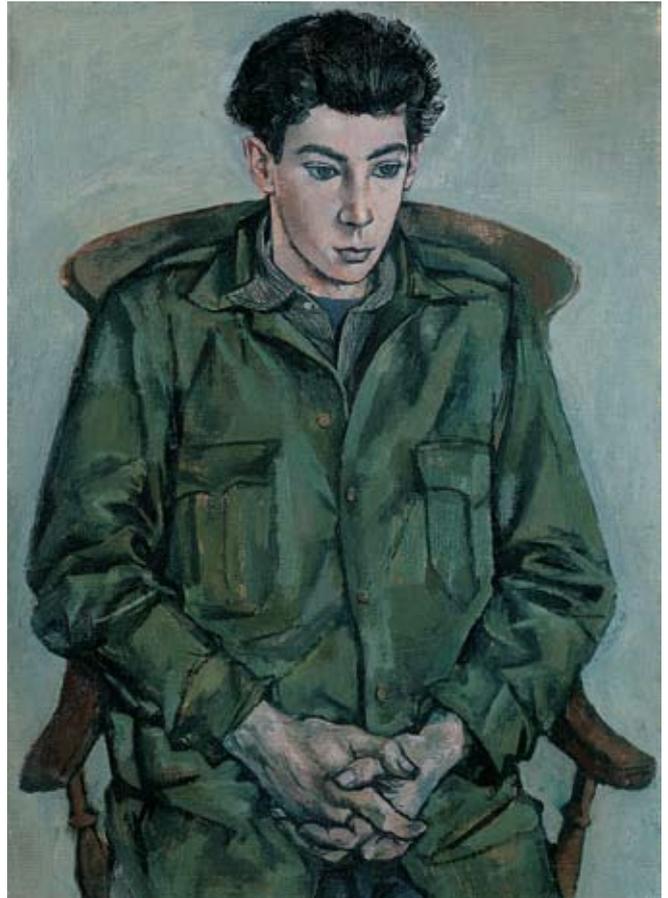
Key Themes: Portraits and Figure Studies

Alongside his landscape paintings and book illustrations, Minton produced a significant group of portraits and figure drawings. He was an influential tutor at several London art schools, where a dedicated cohort of students known as 'Johnny's Circus' formed around him. He taught illustration at Camberwell School of Art from 1943-46, the Central School of Art and Design from 1946-48 and, after 1948, in the Painting School of the Royal College of Art.

The motif of the reclining male youth reappears in his work in a variety of contexts, from Surrey landscapes or bomb-damaged streets in the East End of London, to Mediterranean ports and palm-lined Caribbean beaches. Referring to his paintings of youthful figures Minton reflected that *'The physical aspect of things have always been of great importance to me, and with it the touching and melancholy impermanence of all physical beauty – a sort of hopeless aching nostalgia – and the despairing transitory nature of all physical unions.'*

In some pieces, Minton evokes an atmosphere of poetic melancholy, but in others, he conveys an exuberant joie-de-vivre. In this respect, his work forms a mirror to his own complex personality. Minton was the life and soul of any party, but he could also be introspective and prone to self-doubt.

In the early 1950s, Minton's portraits become less linear and increasingly naturalistic. Several of his students such as Eric Verrico and David Tindle, see *Portrait of David Tindle as a Boy* (c.1952), sat for portraits; as did friends including Norman Bowler and Nevile Wallis, see **Work in Focus: Nevile Wallis, 1952**, and lovers, such as Raymond Ray. These sensitive and often psychologically intense portraits of young men do not convey a heroic masculinity, but instead convey an introspective mood. Arguably, these works are also reflective of Minton's homosexuality. He did not keep his sexuality secret, but battled with the stigma and risk attached to being gay at a time before the Wolfenden Report in 1957 and the partial legalisation of male homosexuality in 1967.



Portrait of David Tindle as a Boy, c.1952, Oil on canvas, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester (Hussey Bequest, Chichester District Council, 1985)

Work in Focus: Neville Wallis, 1952

Oil on canvas

Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove



Look + Discuss

Observation - Description - Interpretation - Connection

The first picture that Minton painted on moving into 5 Shaftesbury Villas was this portrait of Nevile Wallis, art critic for the Observer, referenced by the inclusion of the newspaper on the floor of the studio. Minton appreciated his insightful criticisms, and they planned this portrait together. The sitter's blue pin-striped suit and white collar, umbrella and hat strike a more formal note than Minton's other portraits, but it is animated by Wallis' pose as he examines an oil sketch on the easel of 'Judith and Holofernes' by William Etty. The arrangement sets up a circular movement that keeps the eye moving around the picture and reinforces the tension of the gaze, between the sitter and the picture on the easel.

On the walls behind him are reproductions of work by Marc Chagall, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Samuel Palmer and Hans Holbein, whose relevance is further underlined by the monograph of his work on the floor. On an adjacent wall hangs a painting by Robert Colquhoun, which Minton bequeathed to the Royal College. This approach to painting images of works by other artists into a painting as a collection of visual reference material, undoubtedly had an impact on the work of Minton's students at the Royal College, such as Peter Blake's paintings of pin-boards of the pop ephemera he collected. Wallis also remembered how, whilst painting this portrait, Minton had skipped to and fro across the floorboards 'like some lean fencer with his long brush stabbing at the canvas'.

Think about how you would stage a portrait sitting. Think about the pose of the sitter and what additional items you would include in the painting, and why?

Consider John Minton's statement 'A man who paints his heart on the wall, and in the painting is the man's life: he makes the subject his own, a love of certain things, people, moods, atmosphere, shapes, forms, landscapes. So in the end one says, looking at nature, how like art it is'

Research the role of an art critic. If you worked for a newspaper, how would you review John Minton's paintings in this exhibition?

Key Themes: History Paintings and Last Acts

Minton's romanticism had identified him as a rebel and as an outsider, but during the 1950s he felt increasingly out of step with the rising interest in abstract art. Much had been made of Victor Pasmore's conversion to abstract art in 1948. Meanwhile, the work of the French tachistes were infiltrating Britain. In 1953, pieces by Jackson Pollock and Sam Francis were shown at the ICA in an exhibition entitled *Opposing Forces*. However, none of these works appealed to Minton's notion of the epic. Minton felt a need for painting to have once again 'the epic quality of Piero della Francesca, Delacroix, Cézanne, Picasso, for it to have any direction as this time.' Minton now favoured a size of canvas for his major works which were either four foot by six, as in **Work in Focus:** *Neville Wallis* or six foot by eight, as in **Work in Focus:** *The Death of Nelson: after Daniel Maclise*, 1952. This was an attempt to create a modern form of 'history painting', a genre from the 18th and 19th-centuries that had become deeply unfashionable.

While many leading artists derided the Royal Academy, regarding it as a retrograde institution that held back advances in modern art, Minton chose to exhibit his large-scale pictures there. Whereas the modernist approach scorned story-telling in art, the Academy had continued to support historical, mythological or religious narratives. When Minton turned to these subjects, the annual Summer Exhibition, which attracted large audiences and a great deal of publicity, became the logical destination for these ambitious works.

The largest of these narrative paintings is *The Dice Throwers* which depicts a game of dice being played at the base of Christ's crucifixion. The choice of subject matter might be a bitter reflection on the arbitrary nature of fate. Minton's final work was a painting entitled *Composition: The Death of James Dean* (1957) which was in his studio at the time of his death. Inspired by a car crash Minton had witnessed in Barcelona, it was posthumously given its title after Ruskin Spear told the Daily Mail that Minton had intended it as a tribute to the actor James Dean, who died in a car crash in September 1955. An avid film-goer, Minton had idolized Dean and was



The Dice Throwers, 1954, Oil on canvas, Royal College of Art Collection

drawn to his portrayal of sensitive young men in films such as *Rebel without a Cause*.

Although these paintings can now be recognised for their contribution to mid-century British realist art, it was perhaps the feeling of being left behind that contributed to the artist's tragic suicide in 1957, aged just 40. However, Minton was to have an enduring artistic legacy through his influence on his students and the significant body of artworks created in a very short career.

Work in Focus: The Death of Nelson - after Daniel Maclise, 1952

Oil on canvas

Royal College of Art Collection



Look + Discuss

Observation - Description - Interpretation - Connection

This painting hung in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition in 1952. In the preceding years Minton had shown two large paintings at the Academy, but this was his first attempt at a large-scale narrative painting, of the kind that is more usually associated with the nineteenth-century's annual French Salon. The subject is one of the best known moments in popular history. Minton took as his starting point for the central motif Daniel Maclise's mural on this subject in the House of Lords. Minton's composition never fails to impress. But the fact that he had reworked another artist's evocation of a grand historical event seemed, to his students, puzzling and eccentric. One of them later recalled: *'You could see the panic, he was striking out in all directions, trying to be a painter.'*

In the painting, Nelson, on board HMS Victory, had been shot by a French sniper from the Redoubtable, and lies dying in the arms of Captain Hardy. Minton included prosthetic figures of other sailors who had already died from sniper fire before Nelson was hit. They begin and end the surge of movement which tilts and weaves its way through the variously clustered groups, reaching its climax in the prone figure of Nelson. The disorienting effect of the upward tilted deck encourages the eye to rove around the scene.

Think about the use of light and dark to highlight certain aspects within the complex composition.

Consider how Minton has structured the painting; such as the tilted deck and flat, angular forms of the mast and sails set against the overlapping, semi-circular arrangement of figures.

Research the wall painting *The Death of Nelson* (1859-64) by Daniel Maclise, in the Royal Gallery in the Palace of Westminster. Think about the difference / similarities in how these works depict a single historical moment.

References and Connections

Exhibition Overview

British Neo-Romanticism Neo-Romanticism is a term first used in the early 1940s to define loosely the work of a group of artists who had a personal and often poetical 'identification with nature.' Although never an organised movement there was a shared interest in the work of Romantic British visionaries such as William Blake (1757 – 1827) and Samuel Palmer (1805 – 1881).

Lucian Freud (1922–2011) One of the major figurative painters of the 20th century. His nude paintings are rendered with great texture, and weight, achieved through his generous application of pigment and expressive mark making. He would often paint family, friends, and acquaintances, imbuing his portraiture with a distinct intimacy and unique psychological space.

Keith Vaughan (1912–1977) During the war Vaughan formed friendships with the painters Graham Sutherland and John Minton. Through these contacts he formed part of the neo-romantic circle of the immediate post-war period. However, Vaughan rapidly developed an idiosyncratic style, concentrating on studies of male figures, and his works became increasingly abstract.

Peter Blake (b.1932) is considered a prominent figure in the pop art movement. Central to his work is his interest in images from popular culture, which have infused his collages and paintings.

Frank Auerbach (b.1931) A German-British painter, Auerbach is celebrated for his Expressionistic portraits and cityscapes characterized by a rough impasto technique.

Bridget Riley (b.1931) studied at Goldsmiths' College from 1949 to 1952, and at the Royal College of Art from 1952 to 1955. In 1960 she evolved a style in which she explored the dynamic potentialities of optical phenomena. These so-called *Op-art* pieces produce a disorienting physical effect on the eye.

Joe Tilson (b.1928) is an English pop art painter, sculptor and printmaker. During the 1960s Tilson became one of the leading figures associated with the British Pop Art movement. Making use of his previous experience as a carpenter and joiner, Tilson produced wooden reliefs and constructions as well as prints and paintings.

War and Neo-Romanticism

Michael Ayrton (1921–1975) was a writer, painter, printmaker, sculptor and designer, and also a critic, broadcaster and novelist. His varied work reveals an obsession with flight, myths, mirrors and mazes. He was also a stage and costume designer, working with John Minton on the 1942 John Gielgud production of *Macbeth* at the age of nineteen.

Christian Bérard (1902–1949), also known as Bébé, was a French artist, fashion illustrator and designer. He had an interest in theatrical scenery and costume designs, and played an important role in the development of theatrical design in the 1930s and 1940s.

Pavel Tchelitchew (1898–1957) A Russian-born surrealist painter, set designer and costume designer. In Paris in the 1920s, he began to incorporate Cubist and Surrealist elements into his work. He went on to form a small group of artists known Parisian Néo-Romanticism, which included Eugène Berman and Christian Bérard. By the 1930s, his work had begun employing multiple perspectives, a brighter colour palette, and extremely foreshortened figures.

Eugène Berman (1899–1972) Born in Russia, Berman moved to Paris and became associated with the *Neo-Romantics* for its melancholy and introspective qualities, having taken inspiration from the Blue Period paintings of Pablo Picasso. Eugène's work was characterized by lonely landscapes featuring sculptural and architectural elements, often ruins, rendered in a neo-classical manner.

References and Connections

Samuel Palmer (1805–1881) A British landscape painter, etcher and printmaker. Palmer was a key figure in Romanticism in Britain and produced visionary pastoral paintings. Between 1826 to 1835, Palmer produced a number of works based on the landscape around Shoreham, near Sevenoaks, Kent. These works had a great influence on many English artists, especially during a resurgence in twentieth-century landscape printmaking, which began amongst students at Goldsmiths' College in the 1920s.

William Blake (1757–1827) An English poet, painter, and printmaker. Blake is considered a leading figure in the history of the poetry and visual arts of the Romantic Age and held in high regard for his expressiveness and creativity, and for the philosophical and mystical undercurrents within his work.

Jankel Adler (1895–1949) A Jewish–Polish painter and printmaker. In 1931, at the Düsseldorf Academy, he formed an important friendship with Paul Klee, who had a profound influence on his style. In 1933 Adler fled Nazi Germany for Paris and on the outbreak of the Second World War he travelled to Scotland in 1940. Through his friendship with Josef Herman in Glasgow he became a member of the Glasgow New Art club founded by J D Fergusson. He moved to London in 1943, sharing a house with 'the two Roberts', the painters Colquhoun and MacBryde.

Robert Colquhoun (1914–1962) A Scottish painter, printmaker and theatre set designer. Colquhoun studied at the Glasgow School of Art, where he met Robert MacBryde. His work developed into an austere, Expressionist style, heavily influenced by Picasso, and concentrated on the theme of the isolated figure.

Robert MacBryde (1913–1966) A Scottish still-life and figure painter and a theatre set designer. Influenced by Graham Sutherland and John Piper, MacBryde became known as a painter of brightly coloured Cubist studies. His later work evolved into a darker, Expressionist range of still lifes and landscapes. In collaboration with Colquhoun, he created several set designs during and after the Second World War.

Images of Escapism

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) A Spanish painter, sculptor, printmaker, ceramicist and stage designer, who spent most of his adult life in France. He is regarded as one of the most influential artists of the 20th century.

Henri Matisse (1869–1954) A French artist, known for his use of colour and fluid line. Matisse is commonly regarded, along with Pablo Picasso, as one of the artists who best helped to define the revolutionary developments in the visual arts throughout the opening decades of the twentieth century.

Julian Trevelyan (1910–1988) A British artist and poet. In 1935, Trevelyan bought Durham Wharf, beside the River Thames in Hammersmith, London. This became his home and studio for the rest of his life and was a source of artistic inspiration to him.

Graham Sutherland (1903–1980) Printmaker and painter, his work of the 1920s were mostly prints of romantic landscapes. He developed his art by working in watercolours before switching to using oil paints in the 1940s. It is these oil paintings, often of surreal, organic landscapes of the Pembrokeshire coast, that secured his reputation as a leading British modern artist.

Exotic Fruits

The Colony Room A private members' drinking club for artists and other creative people at 41 Dean Street, Soho, London. The club was founded and presided over by Muriel Belcher from its inception in 1948 until her death in 1979.

The Gargoyle A private members' club on the upper floors of 69 Dean Street, Soho, London founded in 1925.

Portraits and Figure Studies

William Etty (1787–1849) English artist best known for his history paintings. He was the first significant British painter of nudes and still lifes.

References and Connections

Marc Chagall (1887–1985) Russian-born painter, lithographer, etcher and designer.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901) A French painter, printmaker, and illustrator whose immersion in the colourful and theatrical life of Paris in the late 19th century led him to produce elegant and provocative images of modern society.

Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543) A German artist and printmaker he worked in a Northern Renaissance style and was one of the most accomplished portraitists of the 16th century.

History Paintings and Last Acts

Victor Pasmore (1908–1998) A British artist and architect. He pioneered the development of abstract art in Britain in the 1940s and 1950s.

Tachisme An art term used to describe the non-geometric abstract art that developed in Europe in the 1940s and 50s.

Jackson Pollock (1912–1956) An American painter and a major figure in the abstract expressionist movement. He was well known for his unique style of drip painting.

Sam Francis (1923–1994) An American artist known for his exuberantly colorful, large-scale abstract paintings. His practice incorporated elements from Abstract Expressionism, Color Field painting, Impressionism, and Eastern art to create a unique style of painterly abstraction.

ICA Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Founded by Roland Penrose, Peter Watson, Herbert Read, Peter Gregory, Geoffrey Grigson and E. L. T. Mesens in 1947.

Piero della Francesca (1415–1492) An Italian painter of the Early Renaissance. His painting is characterized by its serene humanism, its use of geometric forms and perspective. His most famous work is the cycle of frescoes in the church of San Francesco in the Tuscan town of Arezzo.

Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863) A French Romantic artist, who was regarded as the leader of the French Romantic school. His use of colour was influential in the development of both Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting and his inspiration came chiefly from historical or contemporary events or literature.

Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) A French artist and Post-Impressionist painter, whose works and ideas were influential in the aesthetic development of many 20th-century artists and art movements, especially Cubism.

Ruskin Spear (1911–1990) An English painter, initially influenced by Walter Sickert and the Camden Town Group, and the portraiture of the Euston Road School. His work often has a narrative quality, with elements of humour and gentle satire.

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