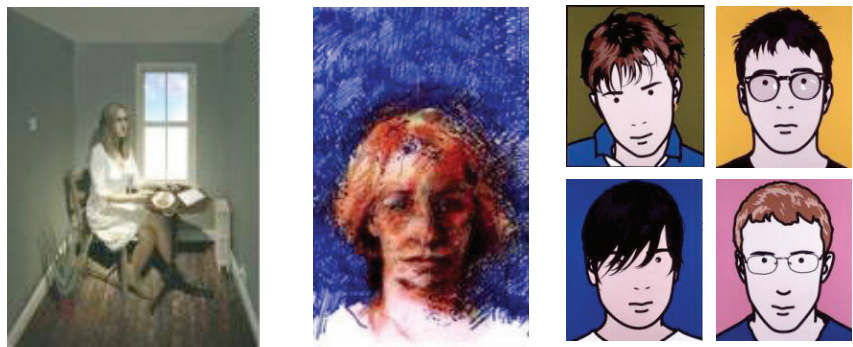


## Contemporary Portraits Mixed Media



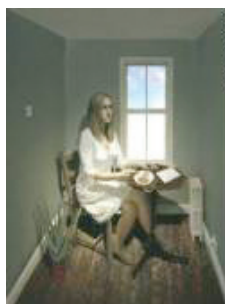
## Teachers' Notes

Information and activities for teachers

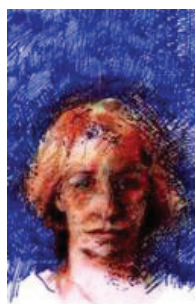
These teachers' notes are suitable for use with Key Stage 3 and 4 Art and Design students. They can be used to assist teaching in the gallery as well as in the classroom. Each image has suggested activities, questions and talking points that can be adapted to meet student's needs.

Portraits in the gallery can go off display at very short notice. Please check on the website ([www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk)) to see if these portraits are on display before you make a visit and look for alternative portraits to use as part of your lesson planning.

## Teachers' guide lines



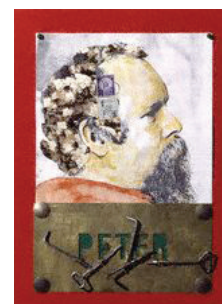
J K Rowling



Baroness Greenfield



Blur



Peter Blake

### Introduction

The portraits in this pack are part of the contemporary portraits in the collection; each one has been chosen for its use of different media, including mixed media. Portraits such as Joanne Kathleen ('J.K.') Rowling by Stuart Pearson Wright were commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery as part of the BP Portrait Award, an exhibition that showcases the very best in contemporary portrait painting. The Award encourages young artists to focus upon, and develop, the theme of portraiture within their work, offering a first-prize of £25,000. Teachers may wish to use this pack to discuss the commissioning of contemporary portraits, use it as an introduction to visiting the BP Portrait Award, or to discuss different approaches to portraiture in contemporary art.

### Classroom activities

- 3D
- Collage
- ICT
- Mixed media
- Painting
- Photography
- Printing
- Video

### Gallery activities

- 3D Silhouettes
- Collage with gummed paper
- Discussion
- Sketching
- Writing

### Groups at the Gallery

Dry drawing materials can be used in the gallery, including pencils, charcoal, chalk and oil pastels.

### Booking

Please phone 020 7312 2483 to book a visit. Advance booking is essential and we require a minimum of two weeks notice.

Please check our website [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk) for further information.

### QCA Schemes of work

#### Key Stage 3

- Unit 7A: Self Image
- Unit 8A: Objects and Viewpoints
- Unit 8B: Animating Art
- Unit 9A: Life Events
- Unit 10 Generic: Visiting a museum, gallery or site

## Joanne Kathleen ('J.K.') Rowling (b.1965)

**Artist:** Stuart Pearson Wright (b.1975) **Date:** 2005 **Medium:** oil on board construction with coloured pencil on paper



The author of the Harry Potter series, J. K. Rowling, studied French and Classics at Exeter University and began writing while working for Amnesty International in London.

Stuart Pearson Wright studied at the Slade School of Fine Art. He has come to prominence as a sometimes irreverent, always meticulous figurative painter referring to traditions including the Flemish masters and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He was the winner of the BP Travel Award in 1998, the BP Portrait Award in 2001, and the Garrick/Milne Prize in 2005 for his portrait of the actor Sir Michael Gambon.

### Practical Activities in the Gallery

- Students could practice drawing a friend in one of the rooms in the gallery, focusing on perspective
- Students could cut a piece of paper into the shape of a figure based on a portrait that they like. They could then draw a room similar to Rowling's portrait (in their sketchbooks) and stick the figure silhouette onto this background. Other elements of the room could be added and raised up using pieces of paper

### Practical Activities in the Classroom

- Students could draw or photograph figures in rooms, then create a 3D picture, using mixed

media such as card, board, paint and coloured pencils

- Students could make a collage using magazines to create a background of a room, city or landscape, with a collage figure raised out from the surface using foam pads

### Questions

- Why has the artist placed in a room?
- What atmosphere is the artist trying to create?
- Does the composition work?
- Why did the artist use perspective in this way?
- Could this writer be portrayed in 2D as effectively as the 3D?
- Does the colour scheme work? Does it suit the sitter's character?
- Is the size of the picture important? Does it work?

### Talking Points

- Why did the artist use 3D, relief and perspective in this work?
- What was he trying to achieve?

### Key words

- Mixed media, composition, relief, 3-Dimensional, Perspective

# Blur

**Sitter:**

**Damon Albarn** (b.1968)  
**Artist:** Julien Opie (b.1958)  
**Date:** 2000  
**Medium:** C- type colour  
 print on paper laid on panel


**Sitter:**

**Graham Coxon** (b.1969)  
**Artist:** Julien Opie (b.1958)  
**Date:** 2000  
**Medium:** C- type colour  
 print on paper laid on panel



**Sitter:** Alex  
**James** (b.1968),  
**Artist:** Julien Opie (b.1958)  
**Date:** 2000  
**Medium:** C- type colour  
 print on paper laid on panel



**Sitter:** Dave  
**Rowntree** (b.1964)  
**Artist:** Julien Opie (b.1958)  
**Date:** 2000  
**Medium:** C- type colour  
 print on paper laid on panel



Julien Opie, graduate of Goldsmith's (1979-82), was the youngest of the New British Sculptors in the early 1980s. He subsequently diversified into a variety of media from video and vinyl to scaffolding wrap.

Opie's portraits were commissioned for the cover, associated advertising and merchandising of *Blur: the best of the Album*.

He created these 'digital drawings' by sketching onto his photographs of the band. The prints shown here were made in three sizes. This set is the 'medium', the 'small' set belongs to the band.

## Practical Activities in the Gallery

- Students could use thick crayons to copy one of the Blur portraits then use the same simple style to interpret a more traditional portrait elsewhere in the gallery
- Coloured pencils could be used to create four simple portraits in the gallery to make a group of similar portraits
- Students could slick pieces of gummed paper on a coloured background and use black pencils or charcoal to recreate one of the Blur pictures

## Practical Activities in the Classroom

- Students could take digital photographs of each other. Using Photoshop or a similar computer package, students could simplify their faces in the style of the Blur portraits and several versions could be created as in of different colours and filters

- Students could use screen or lino printing to create simplified faces. These could be manipulated using colour and layering. The prints could be displayed as a single portrait or as a group to make a larger piece of work
- Students could work in groups on a large scale (AO or A1 paper or board) to produce a portrait using mixed media, such as collage, paint and thick pens
- Students could produce flatly painted acrylic paintings of four members of their family or friends

## Questions

- What is the first thing that your eyes are drawn to with these pictures?
- Do you think the portraits are realistic? If not why are they not? Do they represent the bands likeness?
- What were these pictures used for? Are they appropriate for their function ?
- Does the style of the pictures work? Do you like the style?
- What effect do the colours have on you? How do they make you feel?

## Talking Points

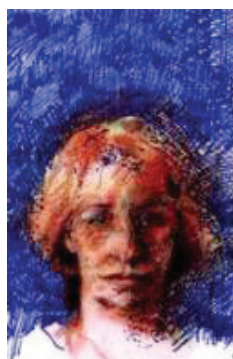
- Should modern portraits like this be in the National Portrait Gallery?

## Key words

Colour, contemporary, stylised, screen printing, photoshop

## Sitter Susan Adele Greenfield, Baroness Greenfield (b.1950)

Artist: Tom Phillips (b.1937) Medium: computer-generated drawings and video Date 1999-2000



This constantly changing portrait was made from 169 drawings on paper, drawings generated on a computer screen and short sections of video. The resulting 22,500 frames are running on an Apple Mac G4 from its DVD drive.

Baroness Greenfield is the Professor in Synaptic Pharmacology, Oxford University (since 1996), the first-ever woman director of the Royal Institution. Her specialism is the brain and she is also active in popularising scientific ideas.

### Practical Activities in the Gallery

- As the image is moving students could write about it rather than draw it, commenting on elements within it, allusions to the sitters' profession, health and life. Students could also comment on the moods presented and the age of sitter
- Students could make a series of quick sketches, trying to capture a moment in the portrait, including elements such as mark making and colour

### Practical Activities in the Classroom

- Students could draw a self-portrait on acetate in a variety of media and overlay the resulting images

- Students could work in Photoshop creating images that could be put together as a slide show or movie
- Students could make a short digital movie of themselves sitting down (about a minute long) and focus on the face. This movie could then be put into Apple QuickTime pro or a similar package, turned into single images and then printed out and worked on digitally. All the images could be then turned back into a movie using QuickTime pro or similar running as fast or as slow as required

### Questions

- What benefit is there in having moving image portraits?
- Could this be done in any other way than by using a computer?
- What is the artist trying to reveal?

### Talking Points

- Use of digital media, and non-traditional 'paintings' or portraits

### Key words

Digital, moving, changing / 'changie', media, computer, mood, relevance

## Sir Peter Thomas Blake (b.1932)

Artist: Clive Barker (b.1940) Medium: collage Date: 1983



The 'Peter Blake Box' is an appropriately witty portrait of this leading figure in the Pop Art Movement of the 1950s and 60s.

In 1969, co-found Peter Blake, the Brotherhood of Ruralists and was elected a Royal Academician in 1980.

Clive Barker was associated with Pop Art in the early 1960s, and is noted for his bold and brightly coloured portraits of fashionable personalities, and for elegantly stylized chrome and brass sculptures.

This portrait was from a series of portraits of artists including images of things about them. The daisies in Blake's hair and the two American 'Liberty' stamps allude to the sitter's daughters Daisy and Liberty.

### Practical Activities in the Gallery

- Students could sketch the portrait trying to emulate mixed media
- Students could discuss and decide on the materials or accessories they would use in their own portraits

### Practical Activities in the Classroom

- Students could use appropriate materials to make their own collage self-portrait, combining a 2D image with collage elements
- In the Gallery the portrait is presented in a box-like structure; Students could produce

a personal portrait box, which includes an image of themselves, and other elements, inspired by their personality or things associated with them

### Questions

- What do you think about the use of different materials, does it work?
- What do you think about the size of the piece?
- What do you think about the way it is displayed?

### Talking Points

- Use of mixed media

### Key words

Collage, mixed media, Portrait, fame, name, constrained

### Further Information

Search the National Portrait Gallery website for links to sitter and artist on [www.npg.org.uk/search/](http://www.npg.org.uk/search/)  
Products on [www.npg.org.uk/shopw](http://www.npg.org.uk/shopw)

Footnote: Written in partnership with teachers from Lillian Bayliss Technology School as part of the engage 'Watch This Space 2: Teacher Placement Programme' 2005

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