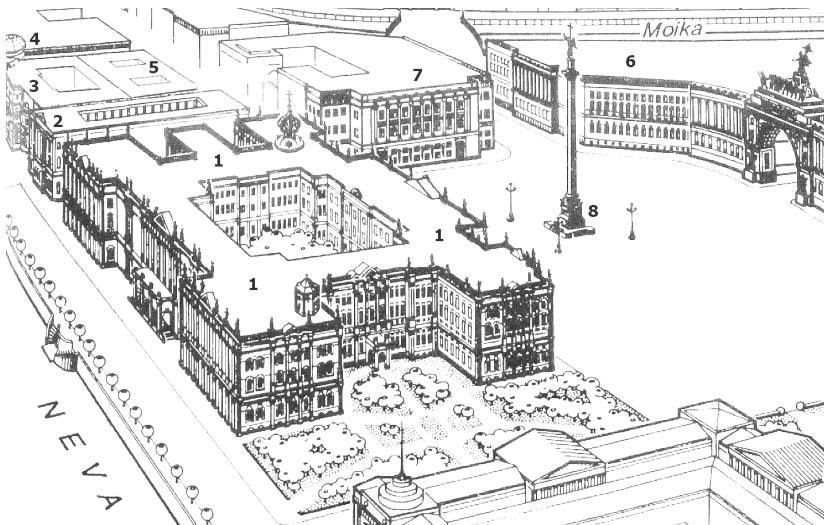


The Hermitage



1 – the Winter Palace  
2 – the Small Hermitage  
3 – the Old Hermitage  
4 – the Hermitage Theatre

5 – the New Hermitage  
6 – the General Staff Building  
7 – the Former Guards'  
Headquarters  
8 – the Alexander Column

## 1 THE HERMITAGE

The State Hermitage is one of the greatest museums in the world and the largest one in the country. It easily ranks with such famous museums as the British Museum in London, the Louvre in Paris, the Prado in Madrid and the Metropolitan Museum of Arts in New York.

The Hermitage is visited by 3.5 million people a year. The total length of the Hermitage routes is over 20 km. The Hermitage collections number over three million items, including paintings, sculptures, graphics, various objects of applied art, coins and medals, arms and armour, archeological artefacts and other treasures from all over the world. The Main Museum Complex consists of five buildings. They are the Winter Palace, the Small Hermitage, the Old Hermitage, the Hermitage Theatre and the New Hermitage.



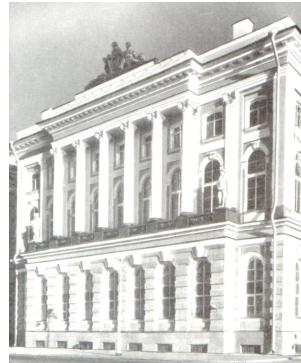
**The Winter Palace** is the former residence of Russian emperors. The palace was commissioned by Empress Elizabeth.

It was built in 1754–1762 by the architect Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli.

The palace was built in the magnificent and lavish style of Russian Baroque. The light green walls of the palace are decorated with rows of white columns. Along the roof there are numerous statues and vases. The building has more than a thousand rooms and a big inner yard. It was the biggest and most elegant palace in St. Petersburg in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The story of the Hermitage collection began when Catherine II was the Empress of Russia. In 1764 she bought 225 Dutch and Flemish paintings from a Berlin merchant. To house her collection Catherine II commissioned a special building, which she called "The Hermitage". The word means "a solitary place, a place where a hermit lives". Such cosy apartments, closed for everyone, appeared at the courts of most European monarchs, and the Empress followed the trend of the time. Only the most privileged courtiers were allowed to see her collection. As Catherine herself wrote, "All this is only for the mice and myself to admire!"

The first building of the Hermitage was erected in 1764-1775. It was designed by the architects Yury Felten and Jean Batist Vallin de la Mothe. They combined features of Baroque style and elements of the new fashion known as Neoclassicism. Later the building was called **The Small Hermitage**. It consisted of two pavilions, connected by galleries, where Catherine put her collections. Between the galleries was the Hanging Garden, Catherine's favourite place for walks. The pavilion facing the Neva was decorated with a six-column portico and several sculptures.





**The Old Hermitage** was built in 1775-1784 by Yuri Felten to accommodate the growing collection of the works of art. The modest façade is decorated in the early classical style. From 1787 to 1792, the architect Giacomo Quarenghi designed and built a wing of the Old Hermitage along the Winter Canal Embankment with the Raphael Loggias. It was a gallery decorated with copies of murals by Raphael and his pupils in the Vatican Palace in Rome.



**The Hermitage Theatre** (1783-1787) was also designed by Giacomo Quarenghi. It's a classical building decorated with a colonnade and niches with statues of ancient Greek playwrights and poets. The Hermitage Theatre was the private theatre of Catherine the Great and her descendants. In the 1970s part of the Winter Palace of Peter I was discovered beneath the theatre. It was restored and opened to the public in 1992.

In 1838, Nicholas I commissioned the German architect Leo von Klenze to design another building for the museum. **The New Hermitage** was erected in 1839-1852 by the architects Vasily Stasov and Nikolai Yefimov.

The main entrance of the New Hermitage is decorated with ten huge statues of atlantes. They were cut from granite according to a model made by the sculptor Alexander Terebenev. The New Hermitage was the first



public museum in Russia. It was opened in 1852. First only the members of the elite were admitted to the museum on special invitation cards. During the rule of Alexander II the museum was opened to the general public. The admission to the museum was free.



In 1837 there was a fire in the Winter Palace. The fire burnt for three days. It destroyed everything but the brick walls. The soldiers managed to take away all the pictures from the palace. The pictures were piled in the square near the Alexander Column.

The passages leading to the Small Hermitage were heaped with bricks and thus the fire was stopped. The restoration was done by the architects Vasily Stasov and Alexander Bryullov.

**The General Staff** building was designed by the architect Carlo Rossi and was erected during the years 1820-1827. It is an outstanding architectural monument in the style of Russian Classicism. The Eastern Wing of



the building was opened to the public in 1999. There are both permanent and temporary exhibitions of the Hermitage.

At present the Hermitage collections are divided into the following departments:

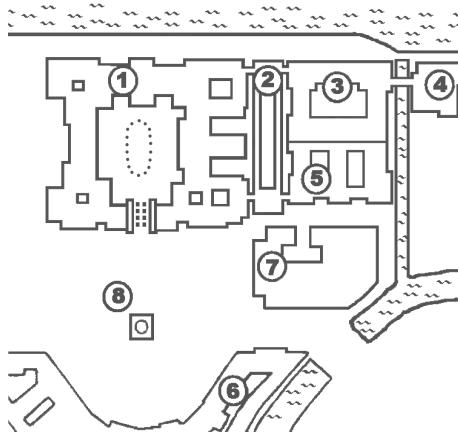
1. Western European Art;
2. Oriental Culture;
3. Antique Culture;
4. Russian Culture;
5. Prehistoric Culture;
6. Numismatics.

The Hermitage frequently displays its collections abroad and arranges foreign exhibitions in St. Petersburg.

**1A** Find events in the text according to the dates:

- 1754-1762
- 1764
- 1764-1775
- 1775-1784
- 1783-1787
- 1787-1792
- 1820-1827
- 1839-1852
- 1837
- 1852
- 1992
- 1999

**1B** Name the buildings on the plan:



**1C** Match the architects with their creations:

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Yuri Felten          | a) the Hermitage Theatre |
| 2. Giacomo Quarenghi    | b) the Winter Palace     |
| 3. Vallin de la Mothe   | c) the New Hermitage     |
| 4. Leo von Klenze       | d) the Old Hermitage     |
| 5. Bartolomeo Rastrelli | e) the Small Hermitage   |
| 6. Carlo Rossi          | f) the Raphael Loggias   |
|                         | g) the General Staff     |

**1D** Read the sentences and name the buildings:

- 1. Its light green walls are decorated with rows of white columns.
- 2. It's decorated with a colonnade and niches with statues of ancient Greek playwrights and poets.
- 3. It's decorated with a six-column portico and several sculptures.
- 4. Its modest façade is decorated in the early classical style.
- 5. Along its roof there are numerous statues and vases.
- 6. Its main entrance is decorated with ten huge statues of atlantes.
- 7. It's decorated with copies of murals by Raphael and his pupils in the Vatican Palace in Rome.
- 8. It consisted of two pavilions, connected by galleries with the Hanging Garden between them.

**1E** Look for the sentences in the text and complete them.

1. The State Hermitage easily ranks with such famous museums as ...
2. The Hermitage collections number over three million items, including ...  
3. The Winter Palace is the former ...
4. In 1764 Catherine II bought ...
5. To house her collection she commissioned ...
6. The Small Hermitage consisted of two ...
7. The Old Hermitage was built in 1775-1784 by Yuri Felten to ...
8. From 1787 to 1792, the architect Giacomo Quarenghi designed and built ...
9. The Hermitage Theatre was the private theatre of ...
10. The New Hermitage was the first ...
11. First only the members of the elite were admitted ...
12. In 1837 there was ...
13. The passages leading to the Small Hermitage were heaped with bricks and thus ...
14. The Hermitage frequently displays its collections abroad and ...

**1F** Agree or disagree, prove your choice, correct the false statements.

1. The Hermitage is the largest museum in the world.
2. The Hermitage is visited by three and a half million people a year.
3. The Main Museum Complex consists of six buildings.
4. All the buildings of the Hermitage were built in the Baroque style.
5. The Winter Palace has more than a thousand rooms.
6. The first paintings for the Hermitage were bought from a Berlin merchant.
7. Catherine's collections were open to the general public.
8. The Hanging Garden was Catherine's favourite place for walks.
9. Raphael Loggias are situated along the Neva embankment.
10. The pictures painted by Raphael are exhibited in Raphael Loggias.
11. The main entrance to the Old Hermitage is decorated with the statues of  
    atlantes.
12. Since 1852 anyone could visit the museum in the New Hermitage.
13. During the fire many pictures of the Hermitage collection were destroyed.
14. The Hermitage collections are divided into six departments.

## **1G** Answer the questions.

1. What famous museums does the Hermitage rank with?
2. How many items do the Hermitage collections number?
3. What buildings does the Main Museum Complex consist of?
4. What famous architect built the Winter Palace?
5. What is the architectural style of the Winter Palace?
6. How is the building decorated?
7. What were the first items of the Hermitage collection?
8. What does the word "Hermitage" mean?
9. Why did Catherine II order to build the Hermitage?
10. Who was allowed to see the collection?
11. What architects designed the Small Hermitage?
12. What does the Small Hermitage consist of?
13. How is the building of the Small Hermitage decorated?
14. Who is the architect of the Old Hermitage?
15. What is the architectural style of the Old Hermitage?
16. What wing was added to the Old Hermitage?
17. Who designed the Hermitage Theatre?
18. What was discovered beneath the Hermitage Theatre?
19. Who designed the New Hermitage?
20. Who were the first visitors of the New Hermitage?
21. When was there a fire in the Winter Palace?
22. What did the fire destroy?
23. What happened with the pictures?
24. How was the fire stopped?
25. In which part of the General Staff building are exhibitions held?
26. What departments are the Hermitage collections divided into?

## **2 THE HALLS OF THE HERMITAGE (part 1)**

The original interiors of the Winter Palace were designed by Rastrelli, but at present practically nothing remains of them because of the fire in 1837. What we see now is the work of Vasily Stasov and Alexander Bryullov, the architects who restored the Palace after the fire.



**The Grand Staircase** is the largest and most impressive of 117 staircases of the Palace. It is richly decorated with marble and gilded mouldings. There are many mirrors which produce an illusion of space. On the upper landing of the staircase there are ten granite columns which were added by Stasov. It was for the first time that granite was used in the inner decoration. The ceiling above the staircase is decorated with the painting "Gods on Olympus". The second name of this staircase is the Ambassadors' Staircase. It was used during the official receptions and it was to impress ambassadors with the grandeur and power of the country. The third name of this staircase is Jordan. During the Epiphany the Tsar's family went down this staircase to the river Neva for the ceremony of the "Blessing of the Waters", a celebration of Christ's baptism in the Jordan River.

**The Field Marshals' Hall** was built according to the design of Auguste Montferrand in 1833-34. It was planned as one of the interiors commemorating important events of Russian history. The hall was restored after the fire of 1837 close to the original design. Motifs of military glory are used in the decoration of the walls, the ceiling and the chandeliers. In the niches you can see portraits of the most famous Russian field marshals, among them are Alexander Suvorov, Mikhail Kutuzov, Grigory Potemkin, and Pyotr Rumiantsev. There is also a large painting "The Victory at Poltava". The hall is decorated with many vases.





**The Hall of Peter the Great (the Small Throne Room)** was created by Montferrand in 1833 and reconstructed in the original style by Vasily Stasov. Upon a dais in the recess you can see the throne of Russian tsars. The frame of the throne is made of gilded silver, and its back is embroidered with the state emblem

of Russia – a double-headed eagle. The throne was commissioned in England by Peter the Great, but when it was brought to Russia Peter was already dead. The throne was used by all Russian emperors except Peter I.

The walls of the room are covered with red velvet embroidered with silver. Above the throne there is a portrait of Peter the Great with Minerva - the goddess of wisdom. There are two pictures on the side walls, which show victories of Peter the Great in the Northern War in the battles of Poltava and Lesnaya. The room suffered twice: the fire of 1837 started in this room, and during the siege of Leningrad the room was destroyed by a shell.



**The Armorial Hall** got its name because the shields arranged on the gilded bronze chandeliers show coats-of-arms of all the provinces of Russia. The entrance to the hall is decorated with sculptural groups of Russian warriors with spears and banners. The combination of gold with the white colour of the walls produces the impression of magnificence. The hall was used for the receptions of governors of Russian provinces.

**2A** Match the words to the definitions.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| a) original     | 1) a period when armed forces surround and blockade a town in order to capture it             |
| b) interior     | 2) existing before being changed  |
| c) to restore   | 3) a person who directs and controls the public affairs in a part of the country              |
| d) moulding     | 4) part of a room where a wall is set back from the main part                                 |
| e) landing      | 5) the inner part or inside of something  |
| f) reception    | 6) a line of ornamental plaster, metal or woodwork, etc. round a wall, a cornice or a window. |
| g) ambassador   | 7) to repair an old building, painting etc., so that it is close to the original              |
| h) recess       | 8) A level area at the top of a staircase or between one set of stairs and another.           |
| i) siege        | 9) a large formal party to celebrate an event or to welcome somebody                          |
| j) coat of arms | 10) a pictorial design used as the special sign of a noble family, town, etc.                 |
| k) governor     | 11) a minister representing the government of his country in a foreign country                |

**2B** Agree or disagree, prove your choice, correct the false statements.

1. After the fire all the original interiors of the palace were restored.
2. Ten granite columns on the Grand Staircase were used by the architect to produce an illusion of space.
3. The Grand Staircase has two names.
4. The Field Marshals' Hall is decorated with the portraits of famous people.
5. All Russian tsars used the throne which we can see in the Small Throne Room.
6. Above the throne one can see a picture of Peter I with the goddess of wisdom.
7. The Armorial Hall got its name because it is decorated with the coat-of-arms of Russia – the double-headed eagle.

**2C** Read what the guide says during the excursion and answer the questions.

"Now we're leaving the Field Marshals' Hall. Please follow me. We're going to the next hall, over there... Now, could you move a little to the right and stand in a semicircle, please, so that everybody can see and hear everything?... Thank you. Well, we're in a room of the Winter Palace which has got two names. Do you know how it's called? Look, you can see a throne here, so one of its names is the Small Throne Room. The *Small* Throne Room, it means, there is another, a larger throne room somewhere in the palace. Have you been to the *Great* Throne Room? Well, we are going to see it soon.

Another name of this room is the Hall of Peter the Great. It doesn't mean, of course, that Peter the Great himself used this room, you remember that the Winter Palace was built long after Peter the Great died... Right, he died in 1725, and the palace was started... yes, I've already mentioned it earlier, when we looked at the plan of the Hermitage, it was started in 1754. And the interior of this room was created much later than the palace itself by the architect Auguste Montferrand. We've already seen another hall built according to his design, the Field Marshals' Hall, the one we've just left. By the way, what did Montferrand build in our city? A famous cathedral... yes, very good, St. Isaac's Cathedral, and the column in Palace Square... the Alexander Column.

As for this hall, it was designed in 1833. Can you tell me who ruled Russia at that time? No, I'm afraid you're wrong here, not Catherine II, it was her grandson, Nicholas I. Unfortunately, in 1837, soon after this hall was created, a disaster struck the Winter Palace. Do you remember what it was? We spoke about that, too... Yes, you're quite right, it was a fire, and it started in this very room!... Yes, that's where the fire began, and it destroyed *all* the interiors of the Winter Palace. Just imagine, only the brick walls were left!... During the restoration works, many interiors were changed, but this room was reconstructed by the architect Vasily Stasov in the original style, as Montferrand had designed it.

OK, now let's look around. It's a memorial room. What in this room reminds us of Peter I?... Yes, certainly, the portrait behind the throne, it depicts Peter I with Minerva - the goddess of wisdom. And if you look up, above the cornice, to the right and to the left, there are two more pictures, they show victories of Peter the Great in the Northern War, the war with Sweden. As a result of the war Russia got access to the Baltic Sea. Do you see the state emblem of Russia, the double-headed eagle, on the walls? Where else can you see it in the room? Yes, on the frame of the picture and on the back of throne as well. And there, above the painting, is the monogram of Peter the Great. ... I'm sorry, but we must move on, another group is waiting. If you have any questions about this hall, you can ask them later, when the excursion is over. Now we're going to see another room, which commemorates Russia's military deeds. Please go straight ahead and then turn left."

1. Is this excursion given to a group of foreign tourists, Russian schoolchildren or professional historians? Why do you think so?

2. What facts from your text about The Hall of Peter the Great does the guide mention?
3. What new information does the guide add?
4. What information from your text does the guide not mention?

**2D** Find in the guide's speech, underline and mark on the margin with the letters (a-g) the word combinations the guide uses:

- a) to arrange the group's movements;
- b) to arise the group's interest in what they are going to see;
- c) to remind of something the group has already seen or heard during the excursion;
- d) to invite the group to share their knowledge;
- e) to react to the answers given by the group;
- f) to attract attention to particular details of the interior.

**2E** Answer the questions.

1. Why do you think the guide asks so many questions? Would you ask the same questions to a different group (e.g. tourists from other countries)? Why?
2. What does the guide do to help people remember the information?
3. Would you prefer to listen to this guide or to hear your text learned by heart? Why?
4. What is your impression of the guide? What useful ideas have you found in the extract?

**2F** Make your excursion about the halls of the Hermitage more interactive, adding expressions from the guide's speech.

### **3 THE HALLS OF THE HERMITAGE (part 2)**



**The 1812 War Gallery** was designed in 1826 by Carlo Rossi and later restored by Vasily Stasov. There are 332 portraits of Russian generals who took part in the war with Napoleon. The portraits were painted by an English artist George Dawe and two Russian assistants. The empty frames in green silk with the names and ranks of the generals commemorate the dead heroes whose portraits it was not possible to reproduce. In the gallery there are also big portraits of Alexander the First, Kutuzov, Barclay de Tolly, and allies: the King of Prussia Friedrich Wilhelm III, the Emperor of Austria Franz Joseph I and the Duke of Wellington.

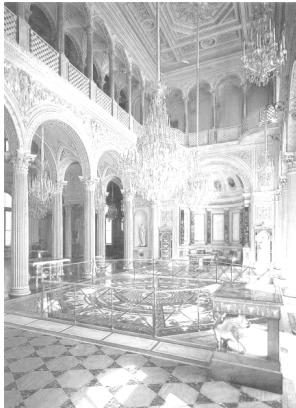
**The St. George Hall** is also known as **the Great Throne Room**. It was designed by Giacomo Quarenghi. The hall was used for balls and receptions. After the fire of 1837 Vasily Stasov replaced colour marbles with white marble and the ceiling painting was changed to gilded bronze ornaments. The pattern of the ceiling is reflected on the floor.

The magnificent parquet floor was made from 16 varieties of wood. The throne stands under the gilded canopy against the background of the Russian National Emblem – the double-headed eagle. Above the canopy there is a bas-relief showing St. George - the protector of Russian tsars.



The Northern and Southern Pavilions of the Small Hermitage are united by two galleries with **the Hanging Garden** between them. Two metres thick of soil were put in the garden to grow flowers, shrubs and trees. White marble statues were placed along the paths. In summer a small fountain splashed in the garden.

In winter snow hills were made for sledding. In the 1840s the garden and the galleries were reconstructed by Vasily Stasov.



In the 1850s Andrei Stakenschneider replaced six small rooms of the Northern Pavilion with the single large room that became known as **the Pavilion Hall**.

The architect combined elements of Classical, Moorish and Renaissance architecture. The Pavilion Hall is decorated with white marble columns, a beautiful gallery from which concerts were given, and magnificent crystal chandeliers. There are also four "fountains of tears". The original ones are in the Bakhchisarai Palace in the Crimea. When the fountains work the water drips very slowly from one shell into another.

The floor is decorated with a mosaic panel depicting scenes from classical mythology. It is a copy of an ancient Roman original now preserved in the Vatican Museum. It was completed between 1847 and 1851 by Russian artists who had studied in Rome. It is made of glass cubes. In the centre of the mosaic there is a head of Medusa the Gorgon. The hall also contains an excellent collection of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mosaic tables. They are made of semiprecious stones, glass and pearl. One of the table tops is a small copy of the mosaic on the floor.

Another notable feature of the Pavilion Hall is **the "Peacock" clock** made in England by James Cox. The clock was bought by Prince Grigory Potemkin in 1780 and brought to St. Petersburg in pieces. It was assembled only in 1792 by Ivan Kulibin. When the clock strikes, the peacock spreads its tail, the cock crows, the owl turns its head and blinks its eyes. The face of the clock is in the cap of a mushroom.



**3A** *What do the following numbers and dates refer to? Find in the text and explain:*

1812, 1826, 332, 1837, 16, 1840s, 1850s, 1847-1851, 1780, 1792.

**3B** *What did these people do?*

Carlo Rossi, Vasily Stasov, George Dawe, Giacomo Quarenghi, Andrei Stakenschneider, James Cox, Grigory Potemkin, Ivan Kulibin

**3C** Answer the questions.

1. Why are there empty frames in the 1812 War gallery?
2. Whose portraits in the gallery are larger than the others?
3. How was the design of the St. George Hall changed after the fire?
4. Who is the protector of Russian tsars? Where in the hall can you see his image?
5. What does the Small Hermitage consist of?
6. Why is it possible to grow flowers, shrubs and trees in the Hanging Garden?
7. What architectural elements did Andrei Stakenschneider combine in the decoration of the Pavilion Hall?
8. What copies of works of art can we see in the Pavilion Hall?
9. How did the "Peacock" clock appear in the Hermitage?

**3D** Match the words from the columns A and B according to the text.  
Make sentences with them.

A	B
empty	canopy
a ceiling	statues
gilded bronze	chandeliers
gilded	frames
marble	feature
snow	stones
marble	ornaments
crystal	columns
a mosaic	panel
classical	painting
glass	hills
semiprecious	mythology
a notable	cubes

**HOW TO DESCRIBE A PICTURE**

<b>introduction</b>		a) the artist's name b) the title of the picture c) the time when the picture was painted
<b>general information</b>		d) the country where the artist lived, historical events of that time e) the development of art in general and in the particular country/place at the time the picture was painted f) the history of the picture (who it belonged to, how it was acquired by the Hermitage, any other events connected with it)
<u>the artist</u>		g) the main events of the artist's life, his interests, his personality h) the events of the artist's life at the time the picture was painted i) the place of the picture in the artist's creative career
<u>artistic trends</u>		j) the style in which the picture was painted k) characteristics of the style, artistic techniques typical of the period in general l) the school of painting the artist belonged to, its typical features
<b>picture description</b>		m) the genre of the painting, whether it is typical of the period/artist n) the subject of the picture, whether it is typical of the period/artist o) information about the place/people/events the artist depicted
<u>artistic methods and techniques</u>		p) the composition of the picture q) details of the picture r) the symbols, their meaning s) the colours t) materials used by the artist (e.g. paints, canvas, etc.) u) individual artistic manner, style and techniques v) the way the artist achieved certain effects
<u>role of the picture</u>		w) comparison of the painting with pictures by other artists x) comparison of the painting with other pictures by the same artist
<b>interpretation</b>		y) the ideas the picture expresses z) the impression the picture makes, the feelings it arises

#### 4 ITALIAN ART (part 1)

#### **4A** Read the text and mark the features of medieval art and Renaissance.

The early Renaissance idea was formed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when there was a renewed admiration for ancient Greek and Roman heritage and an awakening of interest in the material world and nature. The term "Renaissance" means a "rebirth", or "revival" of classical influence. Italian artists overcame the norms of the religious art and turned to the portrayal of man and the world around him. At that time the painters employed a new technique to represent light and shadow, discovered the laws of perspective, and began to study the anatomy and proportions of the human body. However, the works of that period still have some features of a medieval icon.

The leading school of Florence which was the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance is represented in the Hermitage by such prominent figures as Fra Beato Angelico da Fiesole (c. 1400 - 1455) and Fra Filippo Lippi (1406 - 1469). One of the fine examples of early Renaissance is



*The Madonna and Child with Four Angels* by **Fra Beato Angelico da Fiesole**. The Madonna is depicted sitting with the child on her lap. She is surrounded by angels who are praying or playing musical instruments. The picture is notable for the festive colour scheme and rich ornamental motifs. The influence of medieval art can be seen in its flatness, the elongated figures of the angels and the golden background. Gold symbolizing divine light was the usual background of medieval icons.

The halos are depicted as flat disks around the heads. The figures have different sizes. The most important figure – the Madonna – is much larger than the angels. At the same time, the artist gives some volume to the figures and we feel the weight of the folds of their clothes. The proportions of the child's body are true to life, and the tender beauty of the Madonna's face is typical of Renaissance art.

*The Vision of St. Augustine* by **Fra Filippo Lippi** takes its subject from the life of St Augustine. He was trying to comprehend the dogma of the divine Trinity as he walked along the seashore when he saw a small boy removing water from the sea with a spoon and pouring it into a hole. When Augustine asked him the purpose of what he was doing, the child

answered that any attempt by the human mind to comprehend the mystery of the nature of God was as vain and hopeless as seeking to remove all the water from the sea with a spoon. Having said this, he disappeared.



Fra Filippo Lippi was possibly the first artist to take up this rare subject. He depicts the mystical event as a real scene taking place amongst the hills of his native Tuscany. Instead of the sea he showed a stream, and in the distance to the left we see the bend of a river and the towers of a small town. In the upper right corner is a three-faced sun, a symbol of the Trinity. The high horizon and the small hills and trees, as compared with the figures, testify to the artist's mastering of the principles of linear perspective.

The High Renaissance (late 15<sup>th</sup> - early 16<sup>th</sup> century) became the culmination of the epoch. Using the achievements of the early Renaissance many artists portrayed an ideal individual, worthy of being the centre of the universe. This period is represented in the Museum collection by the works of such great masters as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Giorgione and Titian.

The Hermitage is one of the few museums in the world with the original works by the great Renaissance artist and thinker **Leonardo da Vinci**. *The Madonna with a Flower* (or *The Benois Madonna*) is one of the artist's early works.



**4B** Read the three extracts from three different guidebooks and use the table "How to describe a picture" to mark each bit of information with the letters a-z.

**1** *The Benois Madonna* was among the earliest works painted by this great master in Florence. Following the 15<sup>th</sup>-century practice, the painter treats this traditional religious subject as a genre scene which is both lively and natural. Young Mary, in the dress and with the hairdo of a Florentine woman, personifies the joys of motherhood, its captivating charm.

The flower with four petals which the Virgin holds out to the Child has the shape of a cross and symbolizes Christ's future Crucifixion. The

flower has attracted the boy's attention, he persistently reaches out for it. The underlying humanistic idea here is that every man wants to understand and know the world in which he lives.

The picture combines the knowledge and experience of Leonardo the scientist with the discoveries and innovations of Leonardo the artist. His study of anatomy helped him to faithfully convey the forms and proportions, particularly of the Child's body, as well as the movements and poses of both Mary and Christ. The painting was executed in oils, a technical innovation in Italian art, which enabled Leonardo to carefully render the slightest light and shade effects.

Originally painted on board, the picture was transferred onto canvas in 1824.

**2** *The Benois Madonna (The Madonna with a Flower)* by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) is among the earliest works by this artistic genius. The painting came into the Hermitage at the beginning of the twentieth century from the collection of the Russian architect Leonty Benois. It was executed in 1478 in oils, a technique that originated in the Netherlands and was rarely used in Italy at the time. Leonardo treats the traditional subject almost as a genre scene: the image of the Virgin is far from the ideal, there is nothing divine about it; this is rather a young Florentine woman playing with her child. In this picture we can easily feel the strong connection between Leonardo's painting and his activities as a scientist. He perfectly conveyed the forms and proportions of the woman and the child. The figures are given special weight, balance and elevated significance by the two sources of light from the side and the back.

**3** *The Benois Madonna*, created by Leonardo da Vinci (1452—1519), the greatest master of the Renaissance, also bears the name of its former owner, the Russian architect Leonty Benois. This work, painted in the technique of oil painting then rare in Italy, demonstrated to the artist's contemporaries new, yet unknown possibilities in the depiction of man. The traditional subject is treated by Leonardo almost as a genre scene: the image of the Madonna is far from being idealized — the young, animated and well-dressed woman playing with her child is rather a young Florentine than the Mother of God. She holds out a four-petalled flower (a symbol of the Cross) to her child. Two sources of light, one from the window behind and the other from the side, endow the figures of the Mother and Child with a special material quality and density created by

light and shade, an effect so far unknown in Italian painting.

**4C** Which information:

- 1) is mentioned in all the three extracts?
- 2) is mentioned in two of the extracts?
- 3) is mentioned in only one extract?
- 4) would, in your opinion, interest the visitors of the Hermitage?

**4D** Write out the expressions you may need to describe other pictures.

**4E** You are going to make an excursion for the students of your age. Use the three extracts to write your own description of the *Benois Madonna*. Make your sentences clear and easy to understand.

**4F** Read about *the Madonna Litta* by Leonardo da Vinci and compare it to *the Benois Madonna*.



*The Madonna Litta* is called so because it belonged to the Italian dukes of Litta. In this picture Leonardo wanted to show an ideal of human beauty and to convey inner harmony. The Madonna's red dress draws attention to the centre of the picture. The features of the Madonna's face remind us of ancient Greek statues. Her head is turned almost in profile. The face is illuminated by a soft light. We can hardly see the Madonna's eyes but we feel her loving gaze directed at the child. The child's figure is arranged in the Madonna's arms so that we sense the weight of the young body. The small bird in baby Jesus' hand is the European goldfinch. This image alludes to the future sufferings of Christ. According to legend, a goldfinch tried to remove the crown of thorns from Christ's head. A thorn pierced its beak, resulting in the red spot on the bird's head. The picture is simple and laconic. It has a triangular composition with symmetrical windows through which you can see a distant mountain landscape. The whole painting conveys harmony and composure characteristic not only of Leonardo's works but of High Renaissance art as a whole.

**4G** Read about *Judith* and use the table "How to describe a picture" to mark each bit of information with the letters a-z.



The Hermitage possesses two pictures by Leonardo's contemporary – the Venetian painter **Giorgione**. One of the pictures is the well-known *Judith*. The artist took as his subject a Biblical legend. When the army of the Assyrian general Holofernes was besieging her native town, this brave woman performed a noble deed to save her countrymen. She fascinated Holofernes with her beauty and intelligence, and when left alone with him after a banquet, beheaded the sleepy general with his own sword. Having lost their leader, the enemy fled in panic from the city walls. The artist depicted Judith in a victorious pose, with a heavy sword in her hand. Her foot is resting on the severed head of the enemy. The lyrical, charming image of Judith herself and the coolness of the morning landscape create the mood of poetical thoughtfulness, which is not disturbed even by the severed head of Holofernes. The world is depicted by the artist as a harmonic whole, in which life and death are inseparable.

**4H** Read the second text. Did Giorgione depict Judith in a traditional way?

The story of Judith is told in the Book of Judith. Holofernes, the leader in war of the Assyrian emperor Nebuchadnezzar, sieged the town Bethulia. A young widow Judith went to the enemy camp to save her native town. When Judith faced Holofernes, he was stricken by her beauty and asked her to join in their feast. After the feast, when Judith and Holofernes stayed alone and the leader fell asleep, she cut his head, cheated the guards and left the camp with Holofernes's head. The death of their leader embarrassed the Assyrians and they were beaten (Book of Judith; 1-14). "Judith" is one of the most picturesque works by Giorgione, the Venetian artist of the Renaissance epoch. The artist depicted a beautiful woman who is ready to sacrifice herself saving her nation. The image of Judith created by the artist is complex. She is majestic and modest at the same time. We can feel both her pride of a victress and the sorrow for her deed. Giorgione represented Judith treading on Holofernes's head with her foot. All her pose is highly feminine, but at the same time she is firm holding a great sword in her hand. The situation becomes even more complicated by the fact that Giorgione, in spite of the fixed tradition of painting, did not depict Holofernes's head loathsome and monstrous as it was frequently

done. The face of the defeated leader distorted by death has regular features; it is even beautiful and by no means abominable as it ought to be. Such a complex mixture of feelings and characteristics is inherent in Giorgionne who moves away from the clear harmony in the images of the heroes which is usual for his contemporaries.

The background for Judith is a complex landscape with the far horizon. To the right of her figure two trees are represented – a strong oak and a thin tree trembling in the wind. Probably, it is the allegoric comparison of Judith's female weakness with the physical strength of her foe.

#### 4I Speak about Italian art (part 1).

### 5 ITALIAN ART (part 2)

5A Read the description of the picture. Find in the Internet the myth about Danae. What happened to her? Did her father die at the hands of his grandson or not?

The greatest painter and the head of the Venetian school was **Titian**. The Hermitage possesses a number of splendid paintings by Titian of his later period. One of them is *Danae*. According to the myth the oracle predicted that Danae's father Acrisius, the king of Argos, would die at the hands of his grandson. Acrisius locked up his daughter in a bronze tower. But he couldn't escape his fate. The god Zeus, charmed by Danae's beauty, entered her chamber in the form of golden rain.



Titian was attracted by the chance to show the great power of love and to praise the beauty of the human body. In the picture he affirms the humanist idea of the right to love and happiness.



Among the other works by Titian in the Hermitage are *the Repentant Mary Magdalene* and *Saint Sebastian*.

**5B** *Mark the words that refer to Mary Magdalene (M) or St. Sebastian (S) Use them to speak about one of the paintings.*



- lived in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD
- lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD
- became captain of the Emperor's guards
- led a sinful life
- secretly helped other Christians
- was arrested
- repented her sins
- was forgiven by Jesus
- was sentenced to death
- travelled with Jesus as one of his followers
- spent 30 years in the desert
- was shot with arrows
- is depicted praying to God
- eyes are full of tears
- the scene of the execution
- is depicted tied to a tree
- hand pressed to her breast
- a glass vessel with oil she used to anoint Christ's feet
- an open prayer book
- is pierced with arrows
- a skull symbolizes the brevity of human life
- shows great moral strength
- shows deep repentance
- is full of dignity
- a dramatic landscape
- carefully painted
- large thick brushstrokes
- applied paint with his fingers

The features of Renaissance art are expressed in the work of one of the greatest masters of Italian painting, **Raphael** (1483-1520). There are two pictures by Raphael in the Hermitage: *the Conestabile Madonna* and *the Holy Family*.

**5C** Read the three extracts from different guide books about *the Conestabile Madonna* and find answers to the questions.

1. What are the two names of this painting?
2. How did the picture get its present name?
3. How was the picture acquired by the Hermitage?
4. Where did Raphael live at the time the picture was painted?
5. Does the painting belong to his early or mature period?
6. Who was Raphael's teacher?
7. What features of the painting are typical of early Renaissance? Find the two ways in which the same idea is expressed.
8. Against what background are the figures portrayed?
9. What place does the landscape remind of?
10. What phrases describe the details of the landscape?
11. What adjectives are used to describe the Madonna and the Child?
12. What material was the picture initially painted on?
13. What was done to the picture in 1871? Why?
14. Is it known for sure who the frame of the picture was designed by? Who could have designed it? How is the same idea expressed in all the three texts?



**1** *The Conestabile Madonna* was considered the gem of the collection held by Count Conestabile in Perugia, where the artist was born. The decision to sell the work abroad raised such a storm of protest among the Italians that the Count, who was badly in need of money, was obliged to publish a special brochure explaining his reasons.

The relatively small work is a *tondo*, a round painting. A young Virgin of exquisite beauty holding the Christ-Child with a book in her lap, is placed against the background of a panoramic landscape, which is still executed with the characteristic fifteenth-century attention to details. The soft line

of the hills, the mirror surface of the lake, the slender trees covered with light spring foliage — this poetic, entirely harmonious landscape is reminiscent of Umbria, the artist's native region.

The picture is set in a gilded frame that once formed a single whole with the image as it was carved from the same wooden panel (according to legend following a sketch by the artist himself) on which the work was painted. After this precious purchase arrived in the Hermitage in 1871, specialists discovered that cracks in the wooden base of the painting had grown and it was decided to carry out a difficult restoration operation — transferring the painting to canvas.

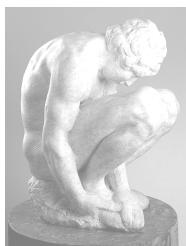
**2** This small-scale masterpiece created by Raphael in his native Perugia, still bears some traces of the poetic style of Perugino whose pupil the great master was. The artist carefully and lovingly portrayed the details — the face of the beautiful and young Madonna attentively looking into the book, the serious and concentrated Child Christ, the details of the light spring landscape against the background of which the figures are portrayed. The picture was painted on a wooden panel and once it made up a single whole with its frame said to have been produced from a drawing by Raphael.

**3** The *Madonna with a Book* has got its present name the *Conestabile Madonna* from the family name of its owners Counts Conestabile. In 1871 it was bought from Count Shipione Conestabile and presented by Emperor Alexander II to his wife Maria Alexandrovna who kept it in her rooms. The empress bequeathed the picture to the Hermitage and since 1880 it has been exhibited in the Museum. This is one of the best works executed by young Raphael in the tradition of early Renaissance which he adhered to at the period. In this rather small painting, typical of the artist's early career, all the details are rendered with precision, characteristic of 15<sup>th</sup>-century art. The lyrical portrayal of the Virgin is echoed by the poetic landscape, reminiscent of Umbria, the painter's native land. The picture is a *tondo*, a round painting, and is set in the original gilded frame with the sumptuous grotesque ornament, a sketch for which was evidently done by Raphael himself. After the picture arrived in St Petersburg, specialists discovered that cracks in its wooden base had grown during its trip from Italy to Russia and in 1871 the painting was transferred to canvas.

**5D** Use the three extracts to write your own description of *the Conestabile Madonna*. Add it to your story about Italian art.

**5E** Read the texts. Add them to your story about Titian, Raphael, and Michelangelo.

In 1504 Raphael, already one of the most famous Italian masters of painting despite his youth, moved from his native Umbria to Florence. There he became acquainted with Leonardo da Vinci and other Florentine artists, whose paintings influenced Raphael's work. The picture is marked by the simplicity of composition and delicate light and shade effects. While *the Conestabile Madonna* is calm and lyrical, *the Holy Family* is monumental and even ceremonious. The harmony of the figures, their spiritual beauty and greatness are revealed in the picture. Saint Joseph was traditionally depicted as a bearded old man, but Raphael portrayed him without a beard, because the Florentines did not grow beards at that time. That is why the picture is known as *the Madonna and Child with Beardless Joseph*.

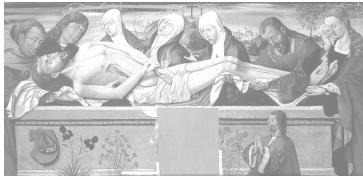


**Michelangelo Buonarroti** was the great sculptor, architect, painter and poet of the Renaissance. The Hermitage possesses his sculpture *the Crouching Boy*. It was made to decorate the tomb of the rulers of Florence – the Dukes of Medici. This is the only work by Michelangelo in Russian museums. The sculpture was purchased by Empress Catherine II in 1785.

The sculptor created an expressive figure. The head is bowed and you can hardly see the face, but the back and tense body muscles create an impression of physical strength and self-discipline, an effort to overcome the pain. During the crisis of the Renaissance, when Michelangelo realized that the humanist dreams of man's freedom were not to come true, he turned to dramatic figures. They no longer possess the calm and harmony that were in the works of Leonardo and Raphael. Michelangelo's heroes are engaged in a struggle and often are unable to overcome the hostile forces.

## 6 SPANISH ART (part 1)

The collection of Spanish painting in the Hermitage is one of the best in the world. It embraces the period of the 16th-18th centuries. It isn't as vast as the collection of Italian painting but it is of immense importance as it contains the works of the most eminent masters.



*The Entombment* was painted by an unknown artist. The painting shows a group of people grieving over the body of Christ. The man supporting Christ's head is Joseph of Arimathea, who was a rich man and a secret disciple of Christ. He was given permission to take away the body of Jesus down from the cross and bury it. The young man next to him is John the Evangelist. The female figure in the centre is Virgin Mary, Christ's mother. Christ's legs are supported by Saint Nicodemus, who traditionally removed the nails from Christ's feet on the cross, and Mary Magdalene.

The entire composition of the painting is defined by the horizontal line of Christ's body. It looks much larger than the other figures, which demonstrates the influence of medieval art. However, the background with a distant landscape shows the artist's interest in nature, which is typical of Renaissance. The small figure in the foreground is the portrait of the donator who gave money to the church to paint the picture. All the flowers in the foreground have symbolic meaning. Black and purple irises symbolize sorrow. Red carnations are the symbols of mother's undying love. White lilies symbolize the Madonna's purity and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Red roses are the symbols of Christ's spilt blood.

The Hermitage collection of Spanish art includes formal portraits of aristocrats. **Alonso Sanchez Coello** painted *the Portrait of the Infanta Catalina Michaela of Austria*. The youngest daughter of the Spanish King Philip II, Catalina Micaela has the proud bearing of one of noble blood. Her cold, arrogant face, the gesture of the hands with their fine fingers touching the necklace - a common gesture in portraits of noblewomen- and the luxurious dress speak of her high position. Since early childhood Spanish aristocrats were trained not to show any emotions. Catalina Michaela is wearing black, the colour which was fashionable in Spain. The artist paid great attention to the depiction of the gold embroidery of the dress and the white lace of the collar.



Catalina is not beautiful, but the artist saw no reason to make her attractive, for the aristocratic ideal lay beyond mere physical beauty.



Another fine example is *the Portrait of Diego de Villamayor* painted by **Juan Pantoja de la Cruz**. The seventeen-year-old youth depicted in the portrait is the descendant of an ancient noble family. His armour is richly decorated with gold. The artist painted its ornamentation in minute detail. The large collar and soft hands with slender fingers add to the image of a young aristocrat. The knight's armour not only points to the high social status of the sitter, but also conceals his weak body. Pantoja de la Cruz very accurately, and without any idealization, conveys the youth's peculiar face, his large aquiline nose and pale skin.

The pictures by **Louis de Morales** are full of suffering and Christian sacrifice. He depicted elongated figures in mourning static poses, with a sorrowful expression of pale thin faces illuminated by an inner light. The figures dressed in cool greenish colours are painted against dark backgrounds.



One of his paintings is *the Virgin and Child with a Cross-shaped Distaff*. The spindle in the Child's left hand is the symbol of death and the cross is a symbol of suffering and resurrection. The Madonna looks sad because she already knows the destiny of the Child. In the painting *Mater Dolorosa*



Morales depicted the Virgin after the death of Christ. The painting displaying mother's grief in solitude is highly emotional. The Virgin Mary's hands are clasped in an imploring attitude, her gaze is absent and her eyes are flooded with tears. Morales was criticized by the official church for mysticism and religious exaltation, but his paintings express spiritual purity and sincerity.

One of the greatest European artists who worked in Spain was Domenicos Thetocopoulos (1541-1614). A Greek by nationality, born on the island of Crete, he was nicknamed **El Greco**. His painting *The Apostles Peter and Paul* is a masterpiece. El Greco was one of the first painters in Spain to depict the two apostles together. This enabled the



artist to contrast their different personalities. The sad gaze and bowed head of Peter, the weak gesture of his hand and the yellowish-green colour of his dress - all speak of a tender and indecisive character. Unlike the Apostle Peter, Paul is shown as a man of character and spirit. The determined expression of his black eyes, the energetic movement of the hand placed on the open Holy Book reveal the passionate preacher in him. This inner fire seems to be reflected in the tense colour of his dark red cloak.

The Golden Age of Spanish painting is connected with the four glorious seventeenth-century painters – Jose de Ribera, Francisco de Zurbaran, Diego Velazquez, and Bartolome Esteban Murillo.

For many years **Jose de Ribera** (1591-1652) worked at the court of the Spanish governors in Naples, and his paintings show the influence of the Italian school. His works are remarkable for the intense emotional quality of the figures and the unusual light and shade effects.

One of Ribera's early paintings is *St. Jerome Listening to the Sound of the Trumpet*. St Jerome was a man of learning who translated the Bible into Latin. Ribera depicted him at the moment when he hears the trumpets sounding the Last Judgement. St Jerome is interrupted in the act of writing. The steep turn of the figure, the sharp contrast of light and shade, and the low horizon emphasize the dramatic event.



St Jerome is often depicted with a lion. According to the legend, he removed a thorn from a lion's foot, and the lion then became St Jerome's faithful servant.



Another picture by Ribera is *St. Sebastian and St. Irene*. St. Sebastian was an officer in the imperial bodyguard of Rome and had secretly helped other Christians, until he was arrested and sentenced to death. He was handed over to archers, who pierced him with arrows. St. Irene came by night to take his body away for burial, but found him still alive and helped him to recover from his wounds. The artist depicted St. Irene taking the last arrow from St. Sebastian's body. The diagonally built composition creates a feeling of tension. Deep shadows, which make St. Sebastian look pitifully thin, emphasize his sufferings.

The monumental canvas by **Francisco de Zurbaran** (1598-1652) entitled *St. Lawrence* portrays the first deacon of the Roman Christian Church. Martyrs were usually depicted with the instruments of their martyrdom. St. Laurence is depicted with a gridiron on which he was burnt alive. The saint's face is a portrait of a concrete monk. The figure of the saint, in a heavy velvet vestment looks monumental against the background of a serene landscape with a low horizon.



## 7 SPANISH ART (part 2)



Zurbaran's contemporary **Diego Velazquez** (1599-1660) had a considerable influence on the development of realism in art. *The Luncheon* belongs to his early period, during which he gave preference to genre scenes. The artist portrayed ordinary people who gathered round the table in a tavern. Each of them is behaving according to his age. Next to a calm old man stands a boy, laughing merrily and holding up a large bottle of wine. A young man is mocking him ironically. The three men were clearly painted from life, and the young man on the right is probably a self-portrait of Velazquez himself. An everyday scene is combined, typically for the art of that time, with Christian symbols. The still life in the foreground includes bread and wine – the sacraments, the fish – one of the symbols for Christ, and the red pomegranate seed – drops of Christ's blood. The depictions of a boy, a youth and an old man suggest the three stages of human life.

As a court painter to Philip IV Velazquez portrayed many members of the royal family. Count-Duke Olivares, a court minister, also posed for him several times. Olivares was a clever but cruel statesman who took advantage of Philip's weak will and practically became head of state. In this portrait the artist reveals his complex personality. The dark background, black dress and straight lines of the collar concentrate attention on the face. Behind the smile and apparent mildness one can sense his secretiveness, cunning and determination.



The Hermitage possesses thirteen works by the famous master **Bartolomeo Esteban Murillo** (1628-82) representing all the periods of his creative career.

### 7A Read the Biblical legend.

Esau and Jacob were twins. When they were born, Esau was born first, so he was older than Jacob, but only by a few minutes. Because Esau was born first, he had the “birthright.” That meant he would be the head of the family and inherit his father’s land. Although the brothers were twins, they were very different. Esau was a skilled hunter and loved the outdoors. His skin was rough and hairy. Jacob was a quiet man who liked to stay at home. His skin, unlike his brother’s, was smooth. Their father, Isaac, favoured the elder son, but their mother, Rebecca, liked the younger one.

As the years went by, Isaac grew older. Eventually, he became blind and knew he wouldn’t live much longer. One day he called Esau to him. He told Esau that he would bless him and make him the head of the family before he died.

First Esau had to go hunting and then make Isaac a delicious stew. When he brought the stew to Isaac, he would receive his blessing. Esau immediately left the house to go hunting.

Rebecca overheard their conversation. When Esau had left she called for Jacob. She told him to bring her two young goats. She would make a delicious stew and Jacob would take it to his father to receive his blessing.

Jacob was afraid that his father would know that he wasn’t Esau, if he touched his smooth hand, but Rebecca had a plan. She had Jacob put on some of Esau’s clothes. She put sheep skin on his arms and hands, so he would feel hairy. Rebecca gave Jacob the stew and sent him to Isaac.

Jacob offered the stew to his father and asked for his blessing. Isaac was confused. The voice sounded like Jacob, but it was the smell of the fields, the smell of Esau. Isaac reached for his hand. The hand was hairy. Isaac believed it was Esau and gave his blessing.

Jacob heard Esau coming and quickly left. “Father, I am here for my blessing,” said Esau. “Your brother has already been here and stolen your blessing. There is nothing I can do,” replied Isaac.

### 7B Look at the picture by Murillo *Isaac blessing Jacob*. Describe the picture using the legend and the questions below.



Where are the characters? How are they depicted? What are they doing? What/who can you see in the foreground, in the middle ground, in the background, in the distance? What parts is the picture divided into? Which part of the picture is dark? Why did the painter make it dark? What idea did he want to convey?

*The Boy with a Dog* is an example of the artist's early, 'cold' style named so because in this period cold tones prevailed in his pictures. In this small genre painting Murillo poetically conveys the lively temperament of a simple peasant boy. The boy is shown against a background of hills and a stone wall. He is painted in poor clothes with holes at the elbows, holding an old basket. But his face is lit with a smile. The artist shows the child's delight at the appearance of the dog.



Murillo and his contemporaries frequently portrayed the Madonna, who was particularly revered in Catholic Spain. *The Immaculate conception* is a perfect example of the artist's 'airy' manner. Murillo creates the illusion of a figure ascending. He shows the Madonna from the position of the viewer standing below. Her hand is raised and her eyes are turned to the heavens. The artist perfectly conveys a sense of space and movement. The picture is also notable for the beautiful range of colours.

The famous Spanish painter **Francisco Goya** (1746-1828) is represented in the Hermitage by the only picture - *a portrait of the actress Antonia Zarate* presented to the museum in 1972 by the collector Armond Hammer (USA). The face of the young woman is set off against the darkness of the background. The actress's large eyes attract the viewer's attention. Behind her calmness one senses a hidden anxiety. The actress had a tragic fate: she contracted tuberculosis and died soon after the portrait was completed.



## 8 FLEMISH ART (part 1)

The Hermitage possesses a very rich collection of the Flemish Art which is represented by the most prominent masters: Rubens, Van Dyck, Snyders, Jordaens and Paul de Vos. The 17th century was a Golden Age of Flemish art, though the country itself experienced difficulties, because unlike Holland Flanders was under the Spanish rule.

**Peter Paul Rubens** (1577-1640) is represented in the Hermitage by more than forty pictures. He was one of the greatest artists of the Baroque style. He stood at the head of a big studio in Antwerp. Commissions were showering on him and very often he painted only the main figures in the picture and left the details for his pupils.



*Roman Charity* is a work from the artist's early "Classicism" period. The subject is the noble deed of the young woman Pero who saved her father, condemned to death by starvation in prison, by feeding him with her breast. The artist employs the triangular composition with the main character in the centre. The figures, executed in bright colours, stand out clearly against the dark background of prison walls.

**8A** Read the text. Who were the Pharisees? How was Jesus' attitude to the sinner different from their attitude? What does the word "pharisee" mean nowadays?

The Pharisees (from the Hebrew *perushim*, meaning "to separate") were, depending on the time, a political party, a social movement, a religious sect and a school of thought. This sect sought to keep everything strictly Jewish in a land that was gradually coming under the Greek influence. They spoke in favour of the old Jewish traditions, wanted to keep them unmixed from foreign influence, though added to by themselves.

The New Testament presents the Pharisees as obsessed with rules (especially concerning purity) whereas Jesus is more concerned with God's love; the Pharisees scorn sinners whereas Jesus helps them. Because of the New Testament's frequent depictions of Pharisees as self-righteous rule-followers, the word "pharisee" has come into usage in English to describe a hypocritical and arrogant person who places the letter of the law above its spirit. Jesus himself was on good terms with some Pharisees, like Simon,

Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. But those who valued their positions hesitated to come out openly in Jesus' behalf. Jesus spoke out in general against their actual behavior rather than their teachings.

Here is an extract from the Bible (Luke 7: 36-50).

"One of the Pharisees asked him (Christ) to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table.

And a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought a flask of ointment, and standing at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus, knowing what was going on in Simon's mind, said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss of friendly greeting, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The canvas *The Feast in the House of Simon the Pharisee* depicts a biblical scene. During the feast a repentant woman entered the house and washed Christ's feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and then anointed them. Christ forgave the woman's sins but the Pharisees criticised him. The artist depicted a dramatic conflict between true faith and hypocrisy. The face of Christ expresses confidence, while the Pharisees look surprised, annoyed or



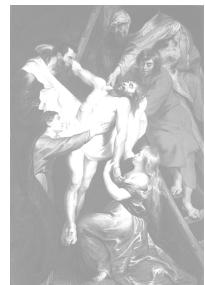
angry. The conflict is emphasised by the structure of the painting and the dynamic contrast of colour: the left side of the picture is full of movement and small detail; the right side, dominated by the figure of Christ, is composed of calm lines and large areas of colour.



*The Union of Earth and Water* is one of the finest of the artist's early works. In order to embody the union of the two elements, Rubens took figures from Classical mythology: resting on the trident is the god of the sea, Neptune, representing Water, whilst Cybele (Mother of the Gods), with the horn of plenty in her hand, is Earth. The prosperous union of Earth and Water, bringing mankind wealth and plenty, is blessed by the goddess of Victory, who descends from Mount Olympus, and is heralded on a conch by the Triton, who has raised himself up from the watery depths. The sculptural treatment of these painted figures is evidence of Rubens's great respect for Classical art. At the same time, the pyramidal composition, built on principles of symmetry and balanced forms, the sensuous treatment of the naked bodies and the warm golden-brown colouring, all indicate the influence of the Italian Renaissance, particularly of Venetian artists. But in turning to the traditional theme of the elements, Rubens filled it with contemporary meaning, linking it with burning questions of great importance to his native land: Rubens depicted the union of the city Antwerp and the River Scheldt, the mouth of which was then blocked by the Dutch, depriving Flanders of an outlet to the sea. Thus Rubens united myth and reality, nature and man, Antiquity and national history.

*The Descent from the Cross* is a variation on the central panel painted for the altar in Antwerp Cathedral. Rubens treated the traditional subject in accordance with the canons of the Church. The dead body of Christ is supported by his closest friends and disciples: Nicodemus, John and Joseph of Arimathea. The artist did not emphasize the people's grief and sufferings to show that they knew that Christ's self-sacrifice was inevitable.

Look at *the Descent from the Cross*. What is the composition of the painting? Where are the characters depicted? Who is depicted standing on the left? Who is kneeling in the bottom right-hand corner? Is the weight



of Christ's body conveyed realistically or does he seem very light? What contrasting colours did Rubens use?



One of Rubens's best works on mythological subjects is *Perseus and Andromeda*. It is based on Greek mythology. The vain queen Cassiopeia boasted that her daughter Andromeda was more beautiful than any nymph. Neptune got angry and sent a sea monster to destroy the country. Andromeda was offered as a sacrifice to the monster. The Greek hero Perseus, son of Danae and Zeus, was charmed by Andromeda's beauty. He promised to save her if her parents allowed him to marry her.

**8B** Read the myth in the Internet to answer the questions.  
Whose son was Perseus? How did Perseus defeat the monster?

**8C** Look at the picture *Perseus and Andromeda* and describe it. What moment did Rubens depict? Who is depicted in the middle, on the left and on the right, at the top and at the bottom? What is the compositional centre of the picture? Is the picture static or dynamic? How does Rubens convey movement? What contrasting colours does the artist use? Which part of the picture seems to emanate light? How was it achieved?

## 9 FLEMISH ART (part 2)

**Anthony Van Dyck** (1599-1641) is represented in the Hermitage by 24 works. He started to paint as a very young boy at the studio of Rubens. Since 1613 he already worked on his own. The Hermitage collection spans all the periods of his creative work.



One of the most marvellous works of his early Antwerp period is *The Family Group*. In the woman's flourishing, rosy face we can see intelligence, a sense of her own merit and certain independence. In the man the artist emphasised restraint, modesty and seriousness. The portrait conveys the spirit of a calm dialogue between the models and the viewer. We feel the attentive gaze of the woman while her husband seems to be waiting for an answer. This "immediate contact"

between the sitter and the viewer was something novel for the time. Introduced by Van Dyck, it was repeatedly used by other artists.

In 1622 Van Dyck went to Italy where he worked for five years. The refinement and elegance characteristic of Van Dyck's mature period are expressed in his *Self-portrait* painted in Antwerp after his return from Italy. Van Dyck certainly idealises his image representing himself as a handsome and romantic young man with a slightly mysterious glance. At the same time the painting includes a semi-ruined Classical column, a hint at the rapid passing of time and the short lifespan of beauty, youth and glory. The artist uses the finest gradations of black and grey to convey the surface of the silk which highlights the soft skin of the face and the golden hair. Our attention is also drawn by the elegant hands with long beautiful fingers. Van Dyck liked to show fingers very much and he specially invited sitters with such fingers.



One of the best religious compositions by Van Dyck is *The Madonna with Partridges*. It is based on the popular subject of the Rest on the Flight into Egypt. It represents Mary, the infant Christ and Joseph amused by dancing *putti*. The scene is painted with elegance typical of the artist. It is full of religious symbols of that time. The sunflower always turning to the light is the symbol of Christ, the poppy symbolizes death and the partridges flying away from the Holy Family are the symbol of debauchery.



Towards the end of his life Anthony Van Dyck worked in London at the court of Charles I, painting portraits of the king, his wife Henrietta Maria and many members of English aristocracy. He skilfully achieves great likeness, adding sufficient idealisation to flatter his high-ranking clients. The elegant poses, the rich costumes and the luxurious setting give the portraits a very official feel. Van Dyck was in great favour with the king. In *The Portrait of King Charles I* two gloves are one-handed, but the king accepted the picture in spite of this drawback.



**Jacob Jordaens** (1593-1678) is represented in the Hermitage by one of his finest paintings *The Bean King*. He depicted the festival of the Three Magi or Three Kings, which was celebrated in Flanders every year on the 6th of January. On this day a large pie was served at table with a bean hidden in it. He who found the bean in his slice of the pie was declared the Bean King.



According to the rules of the festival, the Bean King chose for himself a "queen" and appointed a "suite". The participants in the feast were obliged to submit to the royal pair in everything and even imitate them, and when the Bean King lifted a glass of wine to his lips they had to shout "The King drinks!" in chorus. In this picture Jordaens showed the most joyful and noisy moment of the feast. Rich colouring and dynamic gestures emphasize the air of festivity.



**Frans Snyders** (1579-1657) created a series of pictures called *Stalls*. There is so much food on his canvasses that the frames seem unable to hold it all. The compositions include the traditional symbols for the five senses and four elements.

The artist glorifies abundance of Nature's gifts, richness and prosperity. Frans Snyders liked to introduce into his paintings the figures of people and animals, which is in general a characteristic feature of Flemish still life painting. In the Fruit Stall, a beautifully dressed lady is selecting the peaches offered by the saleswoman. The dog is barking at the viewer and the monkey is overturning the basket. The artist produced the impression or reality, it seems that the fruits are going to fall to our feet.

**9A** Look at the other paintings of the series and describe them. What kinds of food can you see? What are the people and the animals doing?

**Paul de Vos** (1596-1678) is famous for huge pictures with hunting scenes. He depicted the moment of fierce combats between the dogs and wild beasts. This type of painting was particularly popular among the Flemish nobility, who used such pictures to decorate their hunting lodges or palace rooms.



## 10 DUTCH ART (part 1)

The collection of Dutch Painting is the oldest one in the Hermitage. It was started by Peter I. It consists of more than 1,000 items. The exhibition occupies six rooms in the New Hermitage. The largest of them, the Tent Hall, contains an excellent display of 17th-century works by the leading masters.

Holland of the 17th century was a quickly developing country. It was formed as a result of the bourgeois revolution when seven northern provinces were separated from the Netherlands. Earlier these provinces had been under the power of Spain.

The 17th century was the period of flowering of the arts in Holland. Painters were specialising in different subjects. Sometimes we call the works represented in the Hermitage "Small Dutchmen". Firstly, it is because of the small sizes of the pictures. They were small in size because they were meant for the decoration of the houses of bourgeoisie and not for the large palaces. Secondly, because of the subjects of the paintings: the Dutch artists didn't take up grand subjects for their pictures, such as mythological, historical or religious.



One of the most prominent portrait painters of 17th-century Europe, **Frans Hals**, is represented in the Hermitage by two marvellous works: *the Portrait of a Young Man with a Glove* and *the Portrait of a Man*. Frans Hals painted many pictures of ordinary people. In his works he revealed the Dutch national character - optimism, confidence in their powers and a sense of dignity. *The Portrait of a Young Man with a Glove* is a fine example of Dutch realistic art. It contains nothing artificial, no posing or attempt to put on airs. The young man seems to be alive, he is passing close by, his elbow seems to be jutting out of the picture. He has appeared in the square of the frame, turned round, glanced at us and is now about to move on. The slight smile, raised eyebrows, the playing shadows on his face create the impression of movement. Frans Hals experimented with new painting techniques, he used open, free brushstrokes. The combinations of black and white used by Hals result in unusual pictorial effects and a delicate harmony of tones.



One of the most popular genre painting artists is **Jan Steen**. He is famous for his anecdotal approach. His paintings reflect his wide range of interests, his humour and keen power of observation. In the well-known picture *The Idlers* the artist painted himself and his wife in a tavern. The woman is asleep at the table. The disorder in the room is not typical of Dutch houses. The plate on the table is about to fall. On the floor you can see a broken pipe and a slipper next to it. These details reveal the careless morals of the idlers. Steen's face is turned to the viewer; it expresses kind humour with which he often depicted such scenes. By moving the figures to the back of the room the artist creates the impression of light and space. He paints each object brilliantly. The artist attracts our attention to the figures by the skilful use of colour. This portrait shows us one side of Steen's life - painting could not provide for his big family so he had to keep a tavern.

*The Marriage Contract* is a scene of a forced marriage. Both the central and the secondary characters are natural and convincing. The artist relates the events in detail, which makes the narrative more lifelike, and yet at the same time many details have an allegorical meaning. The yoke is a symbol of the heavy burden of a loveless marriage, the dead duck means that the man is in trouble, the bird in a cage symbolizes the loss of freedom, and the broken eggs hint that the bride has already lost her virginity. The artist skilfully combines traditional morality and entertaining elements. The goodnatured humour with which the comic situation is played out is common to many of Steen's genre works, making it the defining characteristic of his painting, the expression of his individuality. The feel for an entertaining story, the ability to combine the humourous and the serious, and a keen observation of everyday life made Steen one of the most outstanding representatives of 17th-century Dutch genre painting.



**10A** Look at the picture *The Marriage Contract* and describe it. What is happening? Who is depicted in the foreground, middle ground, background, in the centre, on the right, on the left? What are they doing?



Another painting by Jan Steen is *Esther before Ahasuerus*. The artist took the subject of this painting from the Old Testament.

Esther was the second wife of Persian king Ahasuerus. Her cousin Mordecai, who had brought Esther up as his own daughter, refused to bow to the king's chief minister Haman. Haman was so insulted that he got the king's permission to destroy all the Jews in Persia. Esther decided to go before the king and beg him to change his decision. The artist depicted a dramatic moment. By appearing in the royal apartments, Esther broke the rules of the court, and could be punished by death. In the centre of the picture you can see king Ahasuerus. He is pointing his sceptre at Esther, allowing her to speak. On the right you can see Esther fainting from emotion. She is supported by two maid-servants.

**10B** Look at the picture *Esther before Ahasuerus* attentively. Who is the man standing behind the king? What is the people's reaction to the scene? How does the artist paint the people, their clothes and the interior? Read the story in the Internet. What happened to Esther, Haman and Mordecai?



In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century taste began to favour effects of wealth, elegance, and refinement. Some of these scenes depicted by genre painters have a strong moralizing tone. Evident refinement characterizes the works of **Gerard Ter Borch**.



His most famous pictures in the Hermitage collection are *Reading a Letter* and *A Glass of Lemonade*. He perfectly conveys the beauty and texture of fabrics. Light plays a significant role in his pictures, emphasizing the foreground.

## 11 DUTCH ART (part 2)

The Dutch landscape and seascape are also well represented in the Hermitage. Dutch artists developed realistic attitude towards landscape. In their paintings the sky occupies two thirds of the canvas. This manner produces a sense of space, showing at the same time the flatness of the Dutch landscape.

**Jan Porcellis** was called "Raphael of Seascapes." In his canvas *Ships on Heavy Seas* he painted a familiar scene of the North Sea. Dutch painters usually depicted dark water in the foreground which gradually turns green and then silver-grey in the background. It gives the picture a feeling of depth and moves the foreground closer to the observer, making him almost a participant of the events.



One of the outstanding painters of the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is **Jan van Goyen**. In this painting he depicted a *Winter Scene near the Hague*, the town where he spent the last 20 years of his life. In this picture he created a lyrical and at the same type a typical image of his country. The sky takes up three fourths of the canvas. One can see numerous skaters, for whom skates are not entertainment but a means of transportation. There are no bright colours in the picture. The fine gradations of brown, grey, and yellow tones convey the feeling of moist sea air. The figures of people, as they recede, change colour and clarity of contour and fade away near the horizon with its distant churches and windmills. This method known as aerial perspective was an important achievement of 17<sup>th</sup>-century landscape painting.

Another very successful landscape painter was **Jacob van Ruysdael**. He adopted from the artists of the previous generation the tone, atmosphere, and the realistic observation of landscape; but he added to it a sense of grandeur, sometimes described as "heroic", and created a new kind of philosophical landscape.



He is especially noted as a painter of trees and his rendering of foliage, particularly of oak leaves, is characterized by the greatest spirit and precision. He often used back-lighting, placing the objects against the sun, to create strong light-dark contrasts. The light filters through the leaves, highlighting details and creating a feeling of space and depth never before seen in landscape painting. Ruysdael did not aim at a pictorial record of particular scenes, but he carefully thought out and arranged his compositions. His paintings often contain a message about the brevity of human life and the passing nature of earthly glory. One of his most famous pictures is *The Marsh*. Surrounding the marsh, covered with flowers and waterlily leaves, are some trees, from young to old, representing different ages of man.

Still life became extremely popular in Holland. Such early paintings as *Still life with Fruit, Shells and Insects* by **Balthasar van der Ast** convincingly reproduce the beauty of flowers, fruit and animals. All of these could be read as an allegory to symbolize three elements — earth, water and air. However, the hidden meaning seems to be much more manifold. Juicy fruits arouse taste, fragrant flowers mean smell, the sound of shells is hearing, sharp shell edges, uneven straw of the basket and its smooth bottom stand for the sense of touch. However, it is not by chance that fruits fall down, some of them are eaten by worms and one of them, in the very center, has a fly sitting on it. The shells are empty, and the leaves are rotting and fading away. All of these point to the frailty and sinfulness of life, whereas grapes side by side with apples allude to self-sacrifice of Christ.



*Still Life with Clay Pipes* by **Pieter Claesz** is a moralizing painting, which was generally very typical of the Dutch art of that period. At first sight, the still life painted in harmonious gray-green colors looks not only down to earth but also very quiet. Beer, tobacco and pipes remind us about drunkenness and smoking, and the brazier with charcoal very often was a symbol of love passion. But the glass is fragile and beer foam goes down very quickly, it seems, just before our eyes. The tobacco will be smoked; thin pipes can be broken any moment. The charcoals will turn into ashes. In other words, the earthly pleasures shorten and even destroy a human life.

Among the various types of Dutch still life we can find the so-called "breakfasts". In *Breakfast with a Crab* by **Willem Heda** the artist uses a number of devices to create an impression of space, of real surfaces and textures. He brings the table so close to us that its legs are pressed against the frame of the picture. The lemon peel dangling from the table and the plate half over the edge really project out of the picture. All this is emphasized by the large dish on the left.



## 12 REMBRANDT HARMENSZ VAN RIJN (part 1)

The Hermitage boasts one of the best collections of Rembrandt's works in the world. It includes 24 paintings, most of which are his masterpieces. The main theme in his art is the world of human feelings.



*The Descent from the Cross* was painted in the early 1630s when Rembrandt was already the best-known artist in Amsterdam. He depicted the moment when Christ's disciples are removing his body from the cross. Rembrandt attracts our attention to the scene's inner drama. The picture is executed mostly in dark shades. The light brings figures sharply from out of the darkness. The dead body of Christ and the elderly Madonna falling into the arms of her friends catch the viewer's eye. The people surrounding the Madonna hasten to her assistance, their faces are full of compassion.

Another picture belonging to the same period is the portrait of the artist's wife Saskia. Rembrandt portrayed her as *Flora*, the goddess of spring and flowers. She is dressed in a splendid costume of silk and heavy satin. Her head is crowned with flowers. The beautiful gold and olive-green colours were characteristic of Rembrandt's work in the 1630s. Saskia's features were not very regular, but the artist created the image full of inner beauty and youthful charm.



The picture *David and Jonathan* was painted on a biblical subject. Rembrandt depicts David's farewell to Jonathan, the son of King Saul. David was a young shepherd who gained fame by killing Goliath. He became the leader of King Saul's army and a close friend of Saul's son Jonathan. Suspecting David of pretensions to the royal throne, Saul plotted his death. Jonathan learnt about Saul's plan to get rid of David, and warned his friend. David has to run away. He weeps on the breast of his friend, full of sorrow. Rembrandt gave Jonathan his own features, while David's golden locks are associated with Saskia. The picture was painted in the year Rembrandt's wife died, and his personal tragedy is reflected in this painting.



Rembrandt fully revealed his talent in portraits. He created a special type of portrait - the biographical one. He was especially interested in faces of old people as they gave an opportunity to sum up the person's life. In those paintings the artist conveyed man's inner world. One of the examples of such portraits is *The Portrait of an Old Man in Red*. The simple pose and lack of detail give the figure monumentality and grandeur. There are two bright spots in the picture - the face with deep wrinkles and quietly clasped hands. In this portrait Rembrandt revealed the old man's wisdom, dignity, his spiritual beauty.

Rembrandt's picture *David and Uriah* conveys both the master's artistic skill and the deep psychological understanding of the subject. Uriah is shown in the foreground. He has been sent to death by David who loves his wife Bathsheba. The king standing behind him appears to begin regretting his sin. Uriah looks rather reserved but his suffering is betrayed by a dark shadow covering his face, and the intense red colour of the dress.



### 12A Find in the text the words corresponding to the definitions.

1.	to do something very quickly without waiting	
2.	help given to someone	
3.	a feeling of sympathy and caring for someone who is in a bad situation	
4.	arranged to form an even shape	
5.	young	
6.	relating to or based on the Bible	
7.	a goodbye to someone	
8.	to make someone go away because they are annoying, unpleasant, or not wanted	
9.	feeling sorry or sad that something has happened	
10.	an action, thought, or way of behaving that is wrong according to religious laws	

**12B** Change the underlined words to the words from the text with the similar meaning.

The Hermitage (1) possesses one of the best collections of Rembrandt's works in the world. It (2) contains 24 pictures, most of which are his (3) best works. The Descent from the Cross painted in the early 1630s (4) is painted mostly in dark colours. David and Jonathan was created in the year Rembrandt's wife died and his personal tragedy (5) is depicted in this painting. Rembrandt fully (6) developed his talent in portraits. He was especially interested in faces of old people as they (7) allowed him to sum' up the person's life. In those paintings the artist (8) showed the man's inner world.

**12C** Write key words from the text to describe each picture.

**13 REMBRANDT HARMENSZ VAN RIJN (part 2)**

**13A** Read the three extracts from different books and say which of the authors



1. Speaks about his feelings
2. Gives factual information
3. Addresses the audience
4. Tries to formulate the main idea of the picture

**1** One of Rembrandt's last and most famous masterpieces is *the Return of the Prodigal Son*. The subject of the picture is the biblical story of the young man who received his part of the father's inheritance but squandered it all away. Rembrandt shows the end of the story when the repentant son returns home and meets his father.

The figures of the father and the Prodigal Son stand out in light against the dark background. Rembrandt portrays the emotions experienced by father and son with moving sincerity. The prodigal son, shown from the back, falls on his knees before his father in deep repentance. The old man, bending over his son whom he has been waiting for so long, tenderly touches his shoulders. In this masterpiece Rembrandt proclaimed his philosophical ideas of main human values: the ability to love and forgive.

**2** Rembrandt painted The Return of the Prodigal Son shortly before his death in 1669. The subject comes from the Gospel According to Luke. Look at this painting. The contrast between the light and the dark, the mysterious figures in the background, the appearance of the man who stands on the right all contribute to this sense of tragedy.

Look at the father. His eyes are closed, but a sense of kindness is easy to feel. Look at his hands. How different they are! The left hand is strong and muscular. The fingers are spread out and cover a large part of the son's shoulder. That hand seems not only to touch but also to hold. The right hand is refined, soft and very tender. It lies gently upon the son's back, representing mother's caress. Here is a man who shows love and compassion to a son who left home and wasted his inheritance!

The prodigal son returns home. His head is shaved like that of a slave, and he looks to the side. His gaze is not up into the father's eyes. I wonder why... Do not make the mistake of interpreting the painting literally. Some writers suggest that the son is not returning in a spirit of repentance, but is looking for a place where he will not starve. Other writers suggest that the son has indeed repented. The son turns his eyes away in sorrow, shame, and perhaps anxiety over his father's response.

I wonder how Rembrandt's life impacted the way in which he dealt with the subject. He paid more attention to true human values and his interpretation of the Bible exhibited great sincerity.

**3** ... I was standing in front of Rembrandt's picture The Return of the Prodigal son and that was the moment I would like to be stretched out longer. I love his work, I like the way he depicts people and his sensitivity and the darkness of his colours. When I was looking at the Return of the Prodigal son I could really have stayed there for hours probably because there is so much to see in the picture, so many emotions, such intensity in the moment when the father welcomes the son back from his wanderings. It's such an evocative picture – one, which I could just look at for ages. Rembrandt's use of colour and light and shade is something that's always impressed me, particularly the blend of light and shade. In that picture, which, I think is one of his later works, he seems to accomplish it in a masterful way. So much to see... I would really have loved to have stayed with it for a longer time, but that's a picture gallery for you, you can't escape the need to go on to the next thing!

### **13B** Match the words to the definitions.

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| 1. inheritance (1) | a. ashamed and sorry because you recognize that you have done something wrong |
| 2. repentant (1)   | b. in the most basic, obvious meanings  |
| 3. impact (2)      | c. property or money that you receive from someone when they die              |
| 4. literally (2)   | d. ability to understand something  |
| 5. anxiety (2)     | e. to succeed in doing something  |
| 6. sensitivity (3) | f. making people remember something   |
| 7. evocative (3)   | g. to have an effect or influence on someone or something                     |
| 8. accomplish (3)  | h. a worried, nervous feeling   |

**13C Answer the questions.**

1. At what period of Rembrandt's creative work was the picture painted?
2. What is the subject of the picture based on?
3. What part of the biblical story is shown in the picture?
4. What details of the composition do the authors of the texts draw our attention to?
5. How does the artist show:
  - the father's feelings
  - the son's feelings
6. What may seem strange about the father's hands?
7. What phrases describe the light and shade effects? How do the authors comment  
on these effects?
8. Find words the authors use to describe feelings and emotions the picture evokes.
9. What is the main idea of the picture according to the texts?
10. How do the authors of the texts start/finish their stories?

**13D Change the underlined words to the words from the text with the similar meanings.**

1. The picture is based on the biblical story. (2 expressions)
2. Rembrandt shows the emotions of the main characters with moving sincerity.
3. In this picture the artist expresses his ideas of main human values.
4. The light and shade contrasts help us to feel the tragedy.
5. He concentrated on human values.

6. I love how he shows people.
7. The artist's use of colours has always made me admire his skill.

**13E** Describe *the Return of the Prodigal Son*. Use the following plan:

1. introduction: title, artist, time
2. the subject of the picture
3. the composition and details
4. artistic techniques
5. the ideas the picture expresses

**13F** Read the texts taken from guidebooks and make your own descriptions of the pictures using the picture description plan. Add your own information.

#### The Holy Family with Angels

**1** The Holy Family occurred frequently in Rembrandt's art during the 1640s. The Gospel subject is of such a genre interpretation as to make one want to call it The Carpenter's Family. Domestic happiness and intimacy are its dominating mood. This picture glows with human warmth; small details contribute to this effect. A burst of divine light accompanies the angels who invade the chamber to witness the scene from the everyday life of the Holy Family. The tenderness of the young mother's movement accords with the deep, warm colours, among which the cherry-red of her skirt is the strongest accent.



**2** In the 1640s Rembrandt produced several works on the subject of the Holy Family. The world of peace and love, lost after the death of his wife Saskia, seemed possible once more after the appearance in Rembrandt's house in 1645 of Hendrickje Stoffels. It has been suggested that the features of Hendrickje are to be seen in the face of the Virgin Mary and that the little child asleep in the cradle is Titus, son of Rembrandt and Saskia, while Joseph is probably a self-portrait of Rembrandt himself.

Joseph is hard at work at his bench, but the yoke in his hand may also be linked with the legend that Christ would free the people of Israel from the yoke. Mary slightly opens the curtain to look at the face of her son, her face radiating the light of love and tenderness. The warmth of the home is

felt in the brownish gloom of the peaceful household, into which a clear golden light pierces, accompanying the hovering little angels. The red cloth which covers the cradle of the Messiah rings out like a declaration.

### *Abraham's Sacrifice (The Sacrifice of Isaac)*

**1** The creation of this painting relates to the time when Rembrandt had won fame as the best painter of historical subjects in Amsterdam.

The history of the patriarch Abraham as recounted in the Old Testament was widely used in Dutch painting of the 17th century. According to the biblical tale, God subjected Abraham to many trials to test his spiritual will. The earliest mention of the painting entitled Abraham's Sacrifice, which now belongs to the Hermitage, goes back to 1736. This work by Rembrandt painted in 1635 was one of the last acquisitions in the collection of Robert Walpole (1676-1745). In 1779 Empress Catherine the Great purchased the Walpole Collection to fill out the art collection of the Imperial Hermitage in St Petersburg.

Rembrandt chooses the most dramatic moment of the Biblical episode – when Abraham obeying God's will is about to plunge his knife into Isaac's neck. At that moment an angel appears to stop him. The entire composition resembles a beautiful and decorative theatrical performance.

**2** God ordered Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a test of his faith. Abraham set out to carry out the command, proving his belief, but God sent an angel to stay his hand just as he was about to sink the knife into his son's body.

Rembrandt captures the dramatic nature of the culminating moment in this terrible intended sacrifice. Abraham's amazement as the angel stops him with hand raised is revealed in his expressive gesture and the strong expression of his face, which almost borders on madness. We see a moment of great emotional tension, expressed in dynamic forms and lines. The dynamism, colour and spatial resolution of this painting reflect Baroque style and are typical of Rembrandt's works of the 1630s.



**13G** Look in the Internet for information and make your own story about Rembrandt's *Danae*.

What legend is the picture based on?  
Compare the painting with others (see Titian).  
What do you know about the history of the picture?  
Why was it difficult to restore the painting?



## 14 ENGLISH ART

**14A** Read the information from different guidebooks and make your own excursion about English art.

In the eighteenth century Russia was perhaps the only country in Europe to take a serious interest in English art. The work of English painters was then little known on the continent. The large collection of Robert Walpole that Catherine II acquired included works by his countrymen and these formed the basis for the future section of the Hermitage collection. By the end of the century that section had already been expanded with a number of famous works commissioned by the Empress from celebrated contemporary English artists, most notably Joshua Reynolds and Joseph Wright of Derby. In the nineteenth century interest in English art grew considerably and the works of artists representing that nation's culture appeared in private St Petersburg collections. In 1912 the Hermitage picture gallery received a generous bequest in the form of the collection of English painting assembled by the noted St Petersburg collector Alexei Khitrovo. It is to this that the Hermitage owes some remarkable works by outstanding portraitists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, above all, masterpieces by Thomas Gainsborough.



**Unknown artist** *Portrait of Edward VI*

Edward VI (1537-1553), son of Henry VIII and his third wife Jane Seymour, became King of England in 1547. Mounting the throne at just 10 years old, he reigned a mere 6 years, but the young king nonetheless left his mark in history as a "good" monarch, who revealed all the instincts of a talented politician and ruler. In this full-length portrait,

Edward stands richly attired against a background of Renaissance architecture and luxurious brocaded drapery. Beneath the knee of the left leg is the symbol of the Order of the Garter, of which select body the king was elected a member only nine days after mounting the throne on 6 February 1547. In this work by an unknown artist we feel the influence of the great German artist Hans Holbein, who spent many years working in England and in many ways determined the nature of English 16th-century portraiture. But while Holbein depicted his sitters to bring out their unique physical and spiritual characteristics, his followers went on to create more generalised portrait types. From Holbein the artist borrowed the composition and several elements of the style, in particular the flat, decorative approach and careful depiction of details. The king's facial features are somewhat generalised, the artist accentuating the external attributes of royalty. Such small portraits, which were usually based on official portraits hanging in royal residences, could be used as a gift or to adorn a portrait gallery in noble castles. In the later case, if they were perceived as a manifestation of loyalty to the ruling dynasty. This is a rare example of a full-length portrait of Edward VI.

### **Unknown artist** *Portrait of a Man*

Portraiture occupied a central place in 16th-century British painting. Most artists were foreigners who came in search of commissions in a country with few native painters. They portrayed their clients in the manner set out by the terms of the commission, but preserved their own native painting styles. Although the artist of this work is not known, he can be identified with the circle of the leading late-16th-century painter Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, a native of Flanders who worked in England. Gheeraerts and his followers mastered the tastes of their British clients in Elizabethan England. The main requirement was a good likeness, but restricted to the physical features of the sitter, character not being considered worthy of notice. The face of this 32-year-old man is totally without emotion. The artist saw his task as to create a portrait of a social type - be it grandee, officer, politician or royalty - and here we see an officer, his hand resting on the hilt of his sword, the other on his armour. The hands with their long, fine fingers are intended not to reveal anything about the sitter but to serve as an instrument to indicate those objects which determine his social status.





### **William Dobson** *Portrait of Abraham van der Doort*

This portrait is perhaps one of the most interesting works in the Hermitage collection of English painting. Dobson was the first truly independent native artist amongst a dominant mass of foreigners working in Britain. Of course he could not totally avoid the influence of Van Dyck but his portraits

were more realistic, revealing a desire to capture the individual's appearance rather than simply express his status. Abraham van der Doort (c. 1575/80-1640) was a medallist, Keeper of pictures and rarities to King Charles I of England, and author of the first catalogue of the royal pictures. This portrait would seem to have been painted not long before his tragic death: van der Doort committed suicide after mislaying a miniature entrusted to him by the king. The artist concentrates our attention on the troubled gaze, creating a contrast between the dark ground and the face appearing from the gloom. Small, vivid brushstrokes fill the image with the fluttering of life.

### **Godfrey Kneller** *Portrait of Sculptor Grinling Gibbons*

Grinling Gibbons was a sculptor who earned a brilliant reputation with his carvings in lime wood, chiefly garlands and other decorative elements containing fruit, vases and flowers. The image of the famous sculptor and woodcarver created by Godfrey Kneller, a portrait painter of European monarchs, can be compared to a



magnificent monument, not hardened in time but pulsating with inner energy. A tall, strong and well-built man, Gibbons himself presents a unique creation of nature. Picturesque draperies, a wig, artistic elegance of gestures and high lights accentuate Baroque expressiveness of the portrait. His hand rests on a cast by Italian sculptor Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini. According to Kneller, Gibbons was a worthy contemporary of the well-known Italian master, while Horace Walpole, one of the richest European art collectors, described the portrait as a masterpiece not inferior to any work of Van Dyck. In Walpole's collection Kneller's canvas was exhibited in the frame carved by Gibbons himself.

### **Godfrey Kneller** *Portrait of John Locke*

Portraits of Britain's scientific and artistic elite made up the best of the work of Sir Godfrey Kneller, active in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The artist was very successful in conveying the importance of the individual, particularly those who contributed so much to the development of mankind and knowledge of the world. John Locke (1632-1704) was an outstanding philosopher. He is seen here in the last years of his life, at a time when he had removed himself from society and settled on the country estate of some friends, associating only with a very close circle. According to Locke himself, he devoted all his time to the study of those questions which concerned him most. There is nothing official in this portrait, with its neutral ground and dark colours, the sitter wearing only modest attire, his face, hair and white collar picked out by light. Yet despite this intimacy and informality, we have a full sense of the importance and weight of the sitter's character.



### **George Romney** *Portrait of Mrs Harriet Greer*

British portraiture flourished in the late 18th century, when not only aristocrats, but also lesser nobles, merchants and officers commissioned portraits of themselves, their wives and children. We see in these portraits not only people who left their mark on the history of Britain but also those known only to the narrow circle of their friends and loved ones. Such was Harriet Greer, third daughter of Sir Hadley D'Oyly who married Captain William Greer. The portrait is the work of George Romney, an artist who enjoyed great popularity in social circles, particular amongst the women: he used his skilful brush not to penetrate character, but to capture a likeness and give the sitter charm. Conceived as a formal portrait, it nevertheless evokes a sensation of freshness and naturalness enhanced by the asymmetry of the composition and by the light and broad painterly manner. Mrs Greer is dressed with simple elegance. The dark clothing effectively sets off the fine fabric of the ruffled dress and the woman's handsome face. The black hat with its white ostrich feather is set a little rakishly, giving the face a coquettish note, while the powdered curls reinforce the freshness of the face.

## Thomas Gainsborough *Portrait of a Lady in Blue*



1 Gainsborough's portrait of this unknown woman is rightly regarded as one of the most charming and excellent works in the Hermitage collection of British painting. Although the artist did not in fact like painting portraits, preferring to work on landscapes, it is for his portraits that he was best loved and is best known today. Here he created an image of great elegance and beauty, a painting dominated by a mood of romantic dreaminess. The calm pose, elegant gesture, spirited face emphasize the nobility and refinement of this young and charming woman. The combination of the pink tones of the face with the silvery grey, white, and blue tones of the hair, dress and shawl is exquisite. The artist applied very fluid paints in a semi-transparent layer, making rapid strokes with a fine brush. The light, mobile, melting brushstrokes convey the soft skin, the greyish-blue silk of the shawl, and the luxuriant feathers of the headdress which surmounts the powdered wig. Free, sketchy painting is combined with fine transitions of colour to create an effect something akin to pastel. Gainsborough's style was noted and much admired by contemporaries, and even his great rival, the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds, admitted his skill.

2 A brilliant painter in the style of Rococo, Thomas Gainsborough adored nature and music. Landscapes were his passion while portraits became a necessity. But it was Gainsborough who went on record as the author of one of the most fascinating female images in the history of portrait painting. In the 19th century a young lady born of the refined brush of Gainsborough in his canvas was absolutely unfoundedly referred to as the Duchess Beaufort. One of numerous «blue» pictures created by the master, the portrait of a young lady is striking with the delicacy of fluid transparent strokes and subtle gradations of silvery-blue tints. The painter has attained the harmony of all elements as if with a touch of a magic stick (as Reynolds put it). An unidentified beautiful woman presents the viewers with a languorous glance of her velvety large and beautiful eyes, carelessly and gracefully holding her shawl. Towering powdered locks decorated with a little cap and ostrich feathers frame her lovely head. The portrait keeps its secret about the model seeming enveloped by vibrating magic sounds of viola da gamba so loved by Gainsborough himself.

### **George Morland** *Approaching Storm*

Although among the English landscapes in the Hermitage collection there are none by Thomas Gainsborough, who was also a major landscape painter, there are on display landscapes by other well-known English artists, including George Morland (1763-1804). The



motif rendered in his *Approaching Storm* in all probability was of great interest to the artist for he turned to it several times, imbuing his pictures with an element of romantic emotiveness and disquiet. The small figures of the traveller and his horses and dog discomfited by the approaching storm are depicted in sharp contrast to the natural elements — the enormous darkened sky with swiftly moving storm-laden clouds and the branches of the bushes bent by gusts of wind. The diagonal division of the composition, the contrasts of light and darkness enhance the drama of the scene.



### **Joseph Wright of Derby**

#### *Iron Forge Viewed from Without (The Blacksmith Shop)*

**1** This was the first English painting to enter the Hermitage when it was acquired by Catherine the Great in 1774. We do not know how it was that

Catherine had heard of the talent of this artist who was still so little known in his own country, but this purchase characterizes her as a perspicacious collector. Between 1771 and 1773 Wright painted five pictures of an iron forge, of which this was the last. With northern practicality he paints the inside of the forge, but it is light which dominates the canvas, the warm light in the forge itself and the complex shadows it throws on the walls and onto the ground outside, and the cold light of the moon.

**2** Wright, who lived in Derby, one of England's major industrial centres, was interested in scenes from everyday life in which he strove to convey the special significance and importance of the physical life of human beings and their surroundings. One such painting — *An Iron Forge Viewed from Without* — is a real-life scene that the artist turned into a poetic, slightly mysterious, romantic elegy in which the main protagonists are not the people, but the fascinating play of light and shade in nature.

**3** Joseph Wright of Derby gained fame for his skilful rendering of the complex effects of light. His two pictures in the Hermitage, *The*

*Blacksmith Shop* and *The Annual Girandola, Castel Sant'Angela* are typical examples. Particularly striking is the *Blacksmith Shop* which attracts the onlooker with its romantic mysteriousness, bold contrasts, and the juxtaposition of different sources of light (the moon in the night sky shedding its cold light, the warm flashes from the fire of the forge concealed behind the dark silhouette of the busy smith, the burning candle and the light outside the windows).

When painting such pictures, the artist, partitioning off differently illuminated parts of his studio by a system of black screens, watched from the darkness the illuminated objects and rendered them on canvas.

Paintings by Wright enjoyed tremendous success and were frequently repeated by him. Several times he painted variations of *The Blacksmith Shop*, and repeated *The Annual Girandola* about twenty times.

### **Joseph Wright of Derby**

#### *Firework Display at the Castel Sant' Angelo in Rome (La Girandola)*

Joseph Wright was enthralled by the use of lighting effects in painting, creating special mood and atmosphere in his canvases. He visited **Rome** in

1774-75 and was most impressed by the several firework displays (girandolas) held there each year, for instance during Holy Week and on the eve of the festival of SS Peter and Paul. These fireworks were set off from the roof of the Castel Sant'Angelo. In the autumn of 1774 he also set off to watch the volcano Vesuvius erupting. As a result he painted paired canvases of the fireworks and Vesuvius - as he put it, "the one is the greatest effect of Nature, the other of Art" - to contrast the theatrical and natural effects of fire. The purchase of these companion paintings by Catherine II in 1779 made her one of the first Europeans to recognize the importance of this then relatively unknown artist.



### **Joshua Reynolds**

#### *Infant Hercules Strangling Serpents*

1 In 1785 Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, was commissioned by Catherine II of Russia to paint a picture for her on any historical subject. The precise choice of theme was left to him. Reynolds decided not to show any

concrete event, preferring the universal language of Classical mythology. He selected one of Pindar's Nemean Odes. The infant Hercules, son of

Alcmene and Zeus, became the object of the bitter jealousy of Zeus's wife Hera, who sent two huge serpents to kill him. But to the surprise of those around, hurrying to save the child, the infant himself dealt easily with the monsters. In this subject the artist saw an analogy with the might of the young but powerful Russian empire. Exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1788, the painting met with a mixed response, from the most critical to the most eulogistic. This was the height of the expression of Reynolds's classicizing tendencies, founded on the universality and significance of ideas captured in concrete form. The artist preferred the study of Old Masters, particularly the work of the Flemish artists and of Rembrandt, to the study of monuments from Classical Antiquity. Unfortunately, Reynolds experimented with paints and techniques and the surface of the painting began to show signs of physical distortion and changing colouring even in the 18th century. The painting is interesting in that Reynolds spent more time working on it than on any other work he created, and particularly in that it includes quite a few portraits. The soothsayer Tiresias has a close likeness to the writer and philosopher Samuel Johnson, for instance, while in the features of Hera we see a portrait of the great tragic actress Sarah Siddons.

**2** In December 1785 Joshua Reynolds, the most influential English artist of the eighteenth century, received a flattering request from the Russian court to paint two works on a historical subject. One was intended for Empress Catherine, the other for her favourite Prince Potemkin. In choosing a subject from Classical mythology Reynolds invested it with a deeper meaning - the scene is an allegory glorifying the power and might of the young Russian state. According to the myth, Hera, the jealous wife of the chief Greek deity Zeus, decided to dispose of the son born to Zeus by the mortal Alcmene and sent two huge serpents to kill him in the cradle. Awoken by their cold touch Hercules (or Heracles) performed his first exploit and strangled them.

### **Joshua Reynolds** *Continence of Scipio*

In 1785 the British diplomat Lord Carysfort was entrusted with a commission to Reynolds for two paintings, one for Catherine the Great of Russia, and the other for her favourite friend and adviser, Prince Grigory Potyomkin. The artist himself was to choose the subject. For



Potyomkin's painting, Reynolds settled on a subject from Livy's History of Rome. Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (c. 235 - c. 183 BC), military commander and hero of the Second Punic War, showing virtue and great restraint (or "continence"), returns a beautiful captive Carthaginian woman to her fiance. This was a very obvious hint at the virtue of Potyomkin himself - a renowned general, he led the Russian army in campaigns against Turkey. The composition is based on a contrast between the powerful figure of the hero, calm and unshaking, and the tender captive, almost fainting from the endured misfortunes. The painting was exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts in 1789 and met with a mixed reaction. Some criticized the overloaded composition as a major defect, others noticed the beautiful colouring, "equal to the finest works of the Flemish School".

**Thomas Lawrence** *Portrait of Count Mikhail Vorontsov*

1 Outstanding among the masters of the first third of the nineteenth century is Thomas Lawrence. *The Portrait of Count Mikhail Vorontsov* is one of the four paintings by Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830) possessed by the Hermitage. Though comparatively small (canvases of a much larger format were frequently used in British formal portraiture), the picture gives the impression of grandeur and magnificence. This is further set off by the vertical composition and the depiction of the model from a low viewpoint, so that the figure, clearly delineated against the background of the sky, appears to be almost sculptural and monumental. The proud turn of the head, the hand firmly clasping the glove, the cloak thrown over a shoulder, the military uniform studded with decorations, and lastly, the massive handle of the sword — all sum up the character of a successful statesman, general and aristocrat.



2 Count Mikhail Vorontsov, accorded the title of illustrious prince in 1853, was a major military and public figure, the governor general of New Russia (the Ukraine) and from 1856 Field Marshal General. He spent his childhood and youth in England where his father, Count Semion Vorontsov, was Russian ambassador for more than forty years. In 1819 Vorontsov travelled to London with his young wife to visit his father. While there he commissioned a formal portrait from Lawrence. The Count is depicted in a general's uniform with the badges of three Russian orders: St Alexander Nevsky, St Vladimir and St George.



### **Josiah Wedgwood** *Items from the Green Frog Service*

This service was commissioned by Catherine II for the wayside palace (later called the Chesme Palace) that stood on the southern outskirts of St Petersburg. The local Finnish population called the area Kekerekesinen, meaning "the frog marsh". Hence the emblem on the service — a green frog in a heraldic shield. The service was designed for fifty people and included dinner (650 pieces decorated with garlands of oak leaves) and dessert (264 items farmed with ivy garlands) sets. The painted scene worked in purple on a creamy white background on each item is a specific, topographically precise view of some place in England.

### **Charles (Karl) Kandler** *Wine-Cooler*

This wine-cooler was produced in London. The decoration draws on ancient motifs deriving from myths about Dionysus, the Ancient Greek god of wine and wine-making. The handles of the huge silver vessel take the form of satyrs and bacchantes, the companions of the god. The bowl rests on the backs of four panthers who are attached together with chains. The side walls are adorned with relief images featuring dancing Cupids, while the rim of the vessel is entwined with a superbly chased silver grapevine. This virtuoso example of the silversmith's art weighs over 200 kilogrammes (some 450 pounds).



## **15 FRENCH ART (part 1)**



### **Simon Vouet** *The Allegorical Portrait of Anne of Austria*

Vouet was a royal artist who founded a new trend which was to dominate French art for nearly half a century. He sought to create majestic ceremonial works, as in this image of Minerva, Roman goddess of wisdom, protector of peace and patroness of the arts and sciences - in fact a portrait of the French queen, Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII and Regent to the young Louis XIV. Attributes of the goddess Minerva serve to emphasise the allegorical message of the painting - the metallic waistband with the mask of the Medusa, the shield and helmet - while the owl is a symbol of wisdom and the Latin inscription - "Nullum numen abest" - reads "In her is all divine power" (the commencement of a phrase from Juvenal's Satires, X, 363). The painting is a reminder of

events which took place in 1643: according to the will and testament of Louis XIII the powers of Anne, regent during the infancy of Louis XIV, were limited by a Council, but with the aid of Cardinal Mazarin she broke these bonds to gain full power. The composition is monumental and effective, the large forms and bright colours emphasising the decorative nature of the painting, intended to adorn a palace interior.

The modest paintings by the Le Nain brothers were an important contribution to the realistic trend in French painting. They depicted scenes from peasant life. Very popular themes in 17th-century art were the different ages of man and the unity of different generations.

*The Milkmaid's Family* by **Louis Le Nain** (1593-1648) is one of his best works. The foreground is raised up high so that we look at the figures from below. The people painted against the huge greyish-blue sky look immobile. They form a compact group which seems solid and monumental. The peasant family evokes a feeling of dignity and confidence. They stand out clearly against the landscape background, enveloped in a soft silvery light. The landscape is rendered by light, precise brushstrokes. The artist depicts a wide valley with fields, a village church and a low range of hills.



The 17th century was the age of Classicism in France. The creator of Classicism in French art was **Nicholas Poussin** (1594-1663). He treated mythological, religious, historical subjects and also painted landscapes.



Heroic plots are typical of Poussin. One of his best works is *Tancred and Erminia*. Poussin took as his subject an episode from a poem by the 16th-century Italian poet Torquato Tasso "The Liberation of Jerusalem". It tells about the love of a pagan woman, Erminia, to a noble knight, the crusader Tancred. Finding the dying knight on the battlefield, she cut off her hair which possessed magic power to bandage his wounds. But on doing this for the sake of love Erminia lost her magic gift for ever.

Poussin studied and made use of the classical traditions, and this is reflected in the construction of the painting and in the proportions of the figures. The artist attracts attention to the characters in accordance to their importance with the principal colours – red (Tancred), blue (Erminia), and

yellow (the knight's armour-bearer). Erminia is cutting her hair off with a sword. Her impulsive gesture and the gentle bend of her head reveal the idea of self-sacrifice for the sake of love. The uneasy red of the sky increases the picture's emotional impact.

### *The Landscape with Polyphemus*

Set into a Classical landscape are figures taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The one-eyed Cyclope Polyphemus fell in love with the sea nymph Galatea, but she rejected him and Polyphemus withdrew to a high mountain to play out his sadness



on his flute. Poussin presents love and music as the source of harmony in nature and human relations. Love has tamed the ferocious Cyclope, who has ceased to turn rocks to dust, to tear down trees and trample the corn, to sink ships. Charmed by Polyphemus's music, the nymphs who have come to collect water from a spring in their amphorae have stopped in their tracks; satyrs have emerged from their hiding places; a ploughman has stopped work to listen. Order, calm and harmony reign over nature. The steep cliffs, the solid trunks and leafy crowns of the trees all create an impression of power and the majestic beauty of nature.

Another leading representative of Classicism is a landscape painter **Claude Lorrain**. He mostly lived in Italy. In his paintings he combined an ideal conception of classical landscapes with a keen observation of nature. He constructed his landscapes

according to the laws of harmony and order. He was famous for his ability to convey fine light effects and aerial perspective.

His most celebrated pictures form a series of *the Four Times of the Day*. The figures in these pictures were painted by another master. The plots were taken from the Bible. Such collaboration between artists working in different genres was characteristic of 17th-century art.



"Landscape with Jacob, Rachel and Leah by the Well" ("Morning") has traditionally been placed within the series of the "Four Times of the Day". The subject of the painting is the story relating how Jacob set off to see Laban, a relative of his mother's, in order to save himself from the anger of his brother Esau over the blessing of their father which he received by deception. When he stopped

by a well, he met there Laban's daughter Rachel, who was driving sheep to a watering-place, and he fell in love with her. Departing from the text, Lorrain has depicted in the painting the figure of Leah, Rachel's sister, who is not mentioned in this part of the biblical text. The rays of the rising sun break through the clouds, illuminating the tops of the trees and the ruins of an ancient temple. The light gradually floods the plain, but the entire foreground of the painting is lit with only feeble reflected rays, diffuse and mild. Thus by using illumination, the artist emphasizes the harmony between human feelings and what is occurring in nature.

At the end of the 1630s and all during the 1640s, Lorrain returned more and more frequently to subjects from Ovid's Metamorphoses. In "Coast View with Apollo and Cumæan Sibyl", the artist refers to the 15th chapter of Metamorphoses, in which Sibyl tells her story. The oracle recalls how in her youth she met the god Apollo and how in exchange for love he offered to carry out her any wish. Gathering up a handful of dust, the maiden asked for as many years of life as there were specks of dust there, but she forgot to ask for eternal youth. The subject from Classical Antiquity provided Lorrain with a theme for reflection on the swiftness of life's passage and the vanity of being and the frailty of earthly existence. He framed it in a landscape with the remains of ancient ruins. Apollo's gesture, pointing to the handful of dust which is spilling onto the ground from Sibyl's hand, gives a sufficiently clear and traditional reminder of how human life ebbs like sand. The customary symbol of this are the ruins near which the main characters are situated and the fragments of columns which once decorated splendid buildings. As a rule, the figures one sees in Lorrain's paintings were painted by other artists. He did this only rarely. In the Coast View with Apollo and Cumæan Sibyl the figures were painted by Filippo Lauri.



### Nicolas de Largilliere

*Provost and Magistrates of Paris Discussing the Celebration of Louis XIV's Dinner at the Hotel de Ville after his Recovery in 1687*

Largilliere was renowned for his portraits in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and was commissioned to produce works for representatives of the very highest French circles. One such

commission was a vast composition, now lost, devoted to a sitting of the city fathers in the Hotel de Ville in Paris. Three preparatory sketches now survive, the most finished of which is the Hermitage version. On 30 January 1687, Louis XVI made a rare visit to the Hotel de Ville. Although he was not present at the sitting which took place later, the artist showed him many times in the canvas, as was demanded by the spirit of the age of absolutism. In the centre is a bust of Louis XVI with his symbol - the sun - on a pedestal, while to the left is a model of a monument of the king. In the background there is a large painting depicting a celebration with the king at the head of the table. What is more, within this picture, we can sense the king's portrait on the wall. Even the features of the magistrates' faces are similar and remind us of the king's appearance.

## 16 FRENCH ART (part 2)

**16A** Read the extracts and match them with the pictures.

**16B** Choose one picture of each artist and include them into your excursion.



1 An outstanding artist working in the Rococo style which emerged in France in the mid-eighteenth century was **Francois Boucher**. A characteristic genre painting by this artist is *The Pastoral Scene*, which is hardly intended to be a record of the real life of French peasants. He places the scene in an elegant, fairy-tale setting, depicting aristocrats as a

shepherd and shepherdess. Boucher never sought to convey deep feelings and subtle sensations. However, his gift of keen observation leads his brush to depict very convincingly the seduction of a naïve and simple-minded girl by the cunning tempter. Boucher's paintings perfectly matched the interiors of eighteenth-century palaces making up a beautiful single whole with furniture, decorative sculpture and tapestries. His pinkish-blue colours are pleasant for perception, his drawing is whimsical and elegant.

**2** **Boucher** often turned to the elegant and rather superficial subjects typical of the Rococo style, of which he was an outstanding master. Venus appears repeatedly in his works, and there are a number of canvases showing the goddess of beauty at her toilet. Such subjects allowed the artist to create light and frivolous works for which he was so famous, their optimism and festiveness enhanced by the colour scheme. *The Toilet of Venus* forms a pair with another canvas in the Hermitage, showing the triumph of Venus. Both works - as was common in the Rococo style - were intended to decorate an interior and to form an integral part of an ensemble. For many years Boucher produced designs for elegant tapestries and this could not but affect his painting style. This influence can be seen in the precise drawing, the relative flatness and exaggerated ornamental details.

**3** **Jean Honoré Fragonard**'s late period was marked by his careful study of the Dutch 17th-century masters, whose influence is felt in this masterpiece from the 1790s, *The Stolen Kiss*. The smooth, enamel-like surface of the painting, the blended brushstrokes used to convey the details so precisely, unavoidably recall the work of the Dutch artists Metsu and Terborch. Fragonard lovingly depicts surface texture and the material of which each object is made. Yet the subject itself is a pretty, amusing scene taken from life, with that grace and lightness in the movements of the two heroes which is so typical of French art of the time. How expressive, for instance, is the striped scarf flowing after the girl's arm, emphasizing the movement and marking that diagonal which leads the spectator's gaze to the lovers' agitated faces. The painting lies firmly within the traditions of the Rococo style - already being affected by realistic tendencies in the second half of the 18th century.

**4** Merry and playful, the subject of *The Captured Kiss* was probably dictated by the Bailli de Breteuil, well-known patron and art lover, who commissioned the work for which this is a sketch. With its soft warm

tones and its light, free manner of execution so characteristic of **Fragonard**, the sketch is in many ways more expressive than the final version (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). In submitting himself to the tastes of his rich clients and creating works in the light, elegant style they so loved, the artist nonetheless responded to new demands on art as expressed by the leading figures in the French Enlightenment, and this can be felt in the natural and vivacious gestures, poses and movements of the figures.

**5** When **Antoine Watteau** was elected a member of the French Academy of Arts, a term was specially invented to describe the kind of painting for which he is now so well known and of which this is an excellent example - the fete galante. An example of this type of painting is *The Embarrassing Proposal*. Some members of fashionable society are amusing themselves chatting in the shade of the gossamer foliage. They are depicted in a conventional, idealized landscape, rendered in tiny vibrating brushstrokes. The surface of his paintings seems to sparkle due to subtle gradations of colour. The figures, arranged in a certain rhythmical unity, are light and graceful. The poses of the young ladies and their admirers are elegant and mobile, the movements and glances are swift and fleeting, they convey subtle shades of emotion.

**6** In *The Capricious Woman* **Watteau** depicts the game of courtship with all its conventionalities. Flirting coquettishly yet innocently, the artist's imaginary heroes - the deliberately indifferent lady and her insistently attentive cavalier - are shown with gentle irony, and the result is a warm and charming painting. The heroine is the embodiment of that piquancy and grace which were so characteristic of the delightful participants of such fetes galantes. Their fragile, elegant world is dominated by a lyrical mood with just a touch of melancholy. The canvas dates from Watteau's late period and is painted with virtuosic skill. The vibrant painting glows with complex nuances of colour and reflections of light.

**16C** Draw and fill in the table according to the texts.

artist	titles of the pictures	the setting and the plot of the pictures	artistic style, methods and techniques	achieved effects

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The Rococo style influenced the great French sculptor **Etienne-Maurice Falconet** (1716-1791). All his works in the Hermitage were made in France and brought to Russia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Later the sculptor was invited by Catherine II to come to St. Petersburg and work on a monument to Peter I.

His *Cupid* is very well known. Falconet portrays the lively and charming figure of a child with great skill. Cupid was a son of Venus, the goddess of love. With a cunning smile he is taking an arrow and putting his finger up to his mouth - to make us be quiet. The person whom it strikes will immediately fall in love with the first person he will meet. Fine observation is combined with virtuoso treatment of the marble. Masterfully rendering the softness of the child's body and the fluttering feathers in the wings, the sculptor turns cold marble into a living being.



The realistic traditions found further development in the works of the 18<sup>th</sup> century artist **Jean-Baptiste Simeon Chardin** (1699-1779). He took much pleasure in depicting scenes from the life of the ordinary people who inhabited the poor craftsmen's areas of Paris. *The Laundress* is his masterpiece. In the room where the young woman works everything is filled with a sense of quiet and calm. The artist creates the impression thanks to the simple, strict composition, the symmetrically arranged objects, the alternation of areas of light and colour. One of the most marvellous things in the painting is the female figure seen through the door, the space around her filled with steam. The painting has a very restrained colour scheme. The artist used each colour with great care to give a fuller sense of the objects' reality and solidity.

Chardin was the first to introduce the themes of the family, motherhood and housework to French 18th-century art. The characters of *Saying Grace* belong to the Third Estate, that class of craftsmen and small traders with whose way of life Chardin was most familiar. The action centres on the table where a young mother is dishing out soup and seeking to make her two daughters



repeat the words of a lunchtime prayer. Composed with great care, the painting seeks to portray the artist's ideal of the closely-knit family, of their caring attitude towards each other. He produced a warm and touching image in the younger daughter, capturing the feelings of the child who does not as yet fully comprehend the meaning of the words, making it one of the best images of children Chardin ever created.

## 17 FRENCH ART (part 3)

**Neo-Classicism** became the official artistic direction in the period of the French Revolution and the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte. Again as in Poussin's days the art of classical antiquity was declared to be a model.



In Plutarch's *Lives*, we read of Marcus Porcius Cato of Utica (95-46 BC), Roman tribune and opponent of the monarchy who, after the defeat of the republicans and unwilling to submit to the autocracy of Julius Caesar, committed suicide by falling on his sword. **Guillaume Lethiere**'s painting *Death of Cato of Utica* is a typical example of the painting of revolutionary Neoclassicism, which was popular in the decade after the French Revolution of 1789. The subject was deliberately selected with a didactic purpose, to be an example of bravery and stoicism. The scene is treated with idealisation typical of the Neoclassical style. The composition recalls a bas-relief, with the subject stretched along the foreground of the painting, while the modelling of forms and the hero's pose are borrowed from the Ancient Roman sculpture of The Dying Gaul, evidence of the deliberate imitation of Antique art.

*Napoleon on the Bridge at Arcole* (1801) by **Antoine Jean Gros** is both a portrait and a historical painting. It was based on the artist's personal impressions. He accompanied Napoleon on the Italian campaign and was an eyewitness of all that happened. During the battle at Arcole Bridge Napoleon rushed forward with a banner in his hands, inspiring his soldiers, and won the battle. Gros embodied in the image of Napoleon the classical ideal of a strong, wilful individual. Napoleon's face is cold and calm, the features are idealized. At the same time his painting foreshadows the Romantic era, reflected



in the dynamic colour, light and shade contrasts, the diagonal lines and sharp movements, and the temperamental painting manner.

**François Gerard** managed to remain one of the most popular painters during the fast-changing era in which France moved from Consulate to Empire to the restoration of the monarchy. The artist depicted Josephine (1763-1814), wife of Napoleon, First Consul of France. The First Lady is seen in a relaxed pose, with a thoughtful gaze, on the open terrace of the palace at Malmaison as she perhaps takes a rest after a walk. The park landscape and the bunch of flowers on the divan create an atmosphere of sentimental poetry, emphasizing the inner state of the sitter, which was typical of the Romantic period. Yet the idealisation of the sitter, the static composition built upon a balance of horizontal and vertical lines, the style of the dress and hairstyle are very much within the traditions of Neoclassicism.



**Jacques-Louis David** is considered to be the founder and leading artist of French Neoclassicism. *Sappho and Phaon* is an example of his late work, in the Empire style, when scenes from private life became popular. In the painting we see the Ancient Greek poetess Sappho and her beloved, Phaon.

Cupid, who holds out to Sappho a lyre (the emblem of music and poetry), symbolizes the idea of love as a source of creative inspiration. On Sappho's knees is a scroll with one of her verses in praise of Phaon. The artist concentrates on composition and drawing, ideal beauty and clarity of form. The historically convincing depiction of Classical details of furniture and clothing is combined with a sentimental, lyrical interpretation of loving harmony, including such traditional metaphors for love as the pair of kissing doves and the two trees in the landscape.



In the *Portrait of Count Guryev* **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres** depicted the Russian ambassador to Italy. The painting observes the conventions of the official portrait, and Guryev stands static and imposing against a distant mountain landscape. Without idealising Guryev's somewhat unattractive appearance, the artist emphasizes his elegance and sense of his own merit. The features of Neoclassicism – a well-balanced triangular composition, graphic precision of form, and the smooth surface of the painting – combine in this portrait with Romantic

tendencies: the individual characterisation of the model, the emotional tension of the colour contrasts, and the gloomy sky, which creates an unsettled feel.

**Eugene Delacroix** was an outstanding master of French Romantic art. The artist's work *Lion Hunt in Morocco* was created 20 years after his trip to the East. He depicted the tense mood of the hunters as they lie in wait beneath the branches of a tree, just at the last moment before they take their prey. The inner tension so typical of Romanticism is created through a dynamic rhythm of wavy lines (the folds of drapery, the pattern on the bag, the contours of the figures and rocks, the curving tree trunks), through contrasts between complementary colours (red and green, blue and orange) and also thanks to the vibrant paint surface of the canvas.



**The Barbizon painters** were part of a movement towards realism in art. In 1824 the Salon de Paris exhibited works of John Constable. His rural scenes influenced some of the younger artists of the time, moving them to abandon formalism and to draw inspiration directly from nature. Natural scenes became the subjects of their paintings rather than mere backgrounds to dramatic events. The Barbizon school of painters is named after the village of Barbizon near Fontainebleau Forest, where the artists gathered. The leaders of the Barbizon school were **Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, Jules Dupré, Diaz de la Pena, Charles-François Daubigny and Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot**.

**17A** Find information in the Internet and make your story about some pictures by the Barbizon painters. Add it to your story about French art.

## 18 FRENCH ART (part 4) IMPRESSIONISM

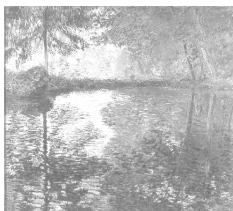
A new trend in French art which appeared in the 1870s was Impressionism. The Impressionists specialized in landscape, informal portraits in a domestic setting, and still life. They often painted out of doors, rather than in a studio, so that they could observe nature, especially the changing light of the sun. They captured the image of an object as someone would see it if they just caught a glimpse of it. Nature is very dynamic in their pictures.

Impressionists applied paint in thick, textural dabs of contrasting colours, sometimes without mixing them on the palette. The colours in Impressionist paintings are very bright and vibrant because the painters avoided black and earth colours. The Impressionists also simplified their compositions, omitting detail to achieve a striking overall effect. They often painted one colour on top of another that was still wet to blur contours and soften forms.



**Claude Monet** is represented in the Hermitage by works of different periods. *Lady in the Garden*, the earliest painting in the exhibition, is still constructed according to the rules: a balanced composition and a strictly emphasised centre. But the bright light makes all the colours exceptionally rich and they seem to come alive. The lady's dress and parasol are painted in strokes of yellow and pale blue, although they are both made of white material.

*The Corner of the Garden at Montgeron* was created when the Impressionist style was at its height. It is one of four large canvases painted to decorate the house of Ernest Hoschede, patron and friend of the Impressionists. This work is a typical example of how the Impressionist artists sought to convey a passing glimpse or impression of nature as seen by the human eye. For this purpose Monet took as his motif a blooming garden, and very successfully created an image of vivid, changing nature.



*The Pond at Montgeron* is another decorative panel commissioned by Ernest Hoschede. Rejecting the rules of classical landscapes, the artist concentrates on reflecting changes in light and colour, producing an astonishingly fresh momentary impression. We can feel the movement of the moist air above the vibrant surface of the water. The figures on the opposite side of the pond seem to melt in the shadows of the trees.

Most of the second half of Monet's life was spent in and around Giverny. He repeatedly turned to the landscape motifs of this area, painting them under different weather conditions, with different lighting effects. In this painting entitled *Meadows at Giverny* the artist skilfully conveys a fleeting moment in nature, when the sun is just starting to pierce through the rain. In the clouds we see touches of pink appearing and the soaked meadows reflect warm patches of sunny light.



*Waterloo Bridge* is just one of a series of famous views of London created by Monet during the later Impressionist period. In his cycle of London works, the central motif was the fog, the marvellous way in which it changed light and air and the very atmosphere, literally swallowing up buildings. The capturing of the moment's passing impression which gave Impressionism its name was replaced by an analysis of complex colour nuances in flickering, changing light.

Like Claude Monet, **Camille Pissarro** often painted whole series of works showing the same motif. He had his own special theme: the modern city. He painted a large number of views of *the Boulevard Montmartre* seen from the window of a hotel. With free, clearly differentiated strokes the master skilfully conveyed the rich atmospheric effects, the complex colours and the feeling of a gloomy day. The artist created the image of a contemporary city - fast-moving, dynamic urban life with an endless row of traffic and pedestrians.



**Alfred Sisley** painted the French countryside and river scenes. He was less daring than Monet in his use of the "rainbow palette" and closer to the Barbizon School tradition. Yet he had a fine lyrical sense and had the rare gift of being able to capture the modest charm and gentle beauty of nature. His canvas *the Village on the Seine* comes from the early period of Impressionism and still retains elements of traditional compositions. The centre of the landscape is framed by trees, creating a stage-like effect. The vivid sunlight illuminating the buildings

is seen from the shade beneath the trees. Sisley successfully captured the feeling of cool air, contrasting with the still heat of the opposite bank.

**Pierre-Auguste Renoir** embodied the principles and methods of Impressionism in portrait painting. *The Portrait of Jeanne Samary* is perhaps one of the most famous of Renoir's canvases. The artist showed the actress in her usual setting, against the background of a theatre foyer. The picture is noted for the harmony of its lines and the brilliance of colours. We can't help admiring the artist's ability to depict the light movement, the vivid glance and the enchanting smile of the young woman.



*The Girl with a Fan* is another fine portrait by Renoir. One result of the Impressionist's approach to painting was that in placing an emphasis on capturing "impressions" they had no need for subjects that reflected status or importance. They might choose a simple landscape, or, as here, take an ordinary Parisian girl as the subject for a portrait. The beauty of his model lies not in classically arranged features

but in the charm of youth, the vivid colours of her face, the shine of her eyes, just those qualities which Renoir always sought in his subjects. Thus the face is painted more smoothly, and here we can pick out details, while the hands, dress, even the fan, are only roughly depicted. Renoir never tried to give a psychological characterisation of his models. He glorified the beauty he saw in them. His glowing, relaxed paintings depicted the world as a place of happiness and harmony.

## 19 FRENCH ART (part 5) POST-IMPRESSIONISM

The end of the XIX century is the period of the **Post-Impressionism** in the French art. Each of the Post-Impressionists developed their own individual manner.



The works of **Paul Cezanne** belong to a variety of genres: still lifes, landscapes, and portraits. One of his famous paintings is *the Still Life with Drapery*. Unlike the Impressionists, Cezanne did not try to capture the passing moment. His purpose was to reveal the volume,

structure and weight of objects. He did not use light and shade effects, but rendered the volumes by the alternation of warm and cold colours.

Cezanne was indifferent to texture – we can't sense the freshness of the fruit or the softness of the cloth. The objects in his still life resemble a ball, a cylinder or a cone. He tried to reduce things to geometrical forms hidden in them (later this idea was developed by Picasso).

Cezanne's formalized approach to art found its place in portrait painting. Portraying people he did not seek to convey the psychological states of his sitters. The face of *The Smoker* is untouched by expression. He looks like a block of stone, solid and immovable. The artist is not interested in the sitter's character but in colouring and the forms of the figure.



Avoiding domestic details, the painter embodies the idea of staying away from other people and everyday cares.



Landscape was perhaps the most favoured genre in the work of the Impressionists, and in landscapes a shivering reflection in water was the symbol of the changeability of the world. In Cezanne's painting *Banks of the Marne*, however, the reflection is still, the water seems to be frozen, like a mirror. Despite his friendship with the Impressionists, Cezanne rejected their approach to painting and sought to capture not the transitory but the permanent. The centralised composition of the painting, framed by trees, is enclosed and stable. The brushstrokes follow the form of the objects which are really more like simple geometrical bodies. Cezanne brings out the clear structure of the material world and endows nature with a certain majesty.

**Vincent Van Gogh** (1853-1890) moved to France in 1886 and from February 1888 he was settled at Arles, in Provence, where in just 15 months he produced over 200 canvases. The subject of this painting is a bullfight at the ancient amphitheatre, and yet the arena is barely noticeable, for the main motif is the public, the colourful crowd gathered to watch the popular spectacle. Van Gogh was working in Arles alongside with Paul Gauguin, and was much influenced by his fellow artist's painting style. Note the flattened space and the replacement of individual strokes with general patches of colour, outlined with a broad dark contour.





*The Lilac Bush* was painted by Van Gogh when he was in the hospital. In this picture the artist seems to demonstrate the life of the plants in movement.

The picture's bluish-green colouring is astonishingly fresh. Every grass blade, every flower, every branch is full of life. You can feel dramatic tension in the extreme intensity of colours and in the restless rhythm of energetic brushstrokes.

The picture *Cottages* was painted not long before Van Gogh's death. He repeated the motif of peasant huts on many occasions. The hilly relief of the distance allowed the artist to accentuate the dynamics of space, which he reinforced through the use of colour contrasts. The tense, wavy brushstrokes and lines convey the the artist's dramatic perception of life and the world.



**Paul Gauguin's** paintings in the Hermitage belong to his so-called Tahitian period. The artist depicted the world untouched by civilization where people live in harmony with nature. In his paintings he combined this romantic dream with his vivid impressions of the exotic landscape and wildlife, the unusual appearance of the islanders, their mysterious beliefs and rituals.

Rejecting the rules of traditional painting, and then of Impressionism, Gauguin went on to create his own individual style. The flat space, the rhythmic repetition of lines, forms and areas of colour, and the pure colours applied in broad masses combine to create a highly decorative effect.



In the *Woman Holding a Fruit* a simple motif acquires almost ritual solemnity: the melon for carrying water becomes a symbolic attribute of Eve in a Tahitian paradise. The rhythmical arrangements of lines and exquisite colouring create an impression of sunlight, seen on the roofs of the huts, on the face of the Tahitian woman and her flame-coloured skirt.

*The Tahitian Pastorals* captures the idyll of the natural primitive life which Gauguin sought when he set off for Polynesia. One of the Tahitian girls is playing the flute: the Tahitians devoted flute music to the goddess of the Moon. It is evening, when the sun



sets and the times of ritual dances and music in honour of the goddess begin. The painting is made up of a combination of broad areas of pure colour, which is in harmony with the musical theme.



Gauguin's paintings are often filled with a mixture of Christian, Oriental, and pagan symbols. In *The Miraculous Spring* we can see a halo around the head of one of the women, the apple – the fruit of Paradise – held by another woman, and a lily – the symbol of purity, while in the background the natives are dancing around huge idols. The canvas reveals the artist's individual style with its bright contrasting colours applied in generalised flat areas with dark contours. As a result the artist achieved a marvellous decorative effect.

## 20 FRENCH ART (part 6)

**Henri Matisse** created a new tendency in art. Colour plays the leading role in his works. He completely excluded light-and-shade effects and half-tones from his paintings. There is no depth of space, the forms are simplified. He also paid attention to the contour lines which create movement and produce decorative effect.



Collioure was a small southern French town. This view of the town is usually dated to 1905. The world in this painting is flooded with sunlight, the colouring is unbelievably intense. Matisse created a sense of the bright southern landscape without the use of shadows. Areas of white canvas, untouched by paint, set off the colours and fill the picture with additional light. In 1905 Matisse and his friends exhibited their works in Paris. The artists amazed visitors with their daring colours, which provoked the critic Louis Vauxcelles to describe them as wild beasts – "fauves". Thus the short-lived movement (1905-1907) to which Matisse belonged at that time is now known as Fauvism.

Matisse painted *The Woman on a Terrace* in Collioure in 1907. The woman is the artist's wife. Unlike *The View of Collioure*, this work shows no sign of small, fragmentary brushstrokes of pure colour. Everything is simplified, the artist builds up the composition of large areas of colour outlined



with a coloured contour. Giving an energetic outline to the horizontal balustrade, the yachts on the water, the soft hills and comfortable figure of his wife, Matisse creates a world in which we feel both the beat of the pulse of life, and majestic calm. The painting, with its tendency towards clarity and monumentality, seems to hint at Matisse's departure from the Fauvist movement, of which he had been leader for several years.



The pair of panels *The Dance* and *Music* are amongst Matisse's most important and most famous works in the Hermitage.



They were commissioned in 1910 by one of the leading Russian collectors of French art, Sergey Shchukin. Until the Revolution of 1917, they hung on the staircase of his Moscow mansion. The artist used only three main colours: blue for the sky, red for the naked human bodies and green for nature. The five simplified figures of musicians and singers accord with the five dancers. But the mood of each picture is different. The dancers are united by the powerful rhythm. The swift, joint movement fills the bodies with untamed life force.

*Music* amazes us with its concentrated calm, the absolute immobility of the isolated figures, the total concentration on the playing of musical instruments and singing. The figures of musicians and singers look almost like musical notes on a page. Matisse worked on the huge canvas for *Music* without preparatory sketches and rethought the composition several times. The canvas thus bears the traces of numerous alterations, and we can almost trace all the steps in the artist's difficult search for the desired effect.



*The Family Portrait* was painted in 1911. In this work Matisse depicted his sons playing a game of draughts, his daughter and his wife. When Matisse was creating this painting he was inspired by Persian miniatures. The carpet, the sofas, the walls,

even the fireplace are decorated with various patterns. The figures wearing clothes of pure red or black colour play the central role in the canvas. The characters' faces lack distinguishing features. The artist is interested not in the realistic representation of his family but in the harmony of colours.

Created in 1913, *The Arab Coffeehouse* has been described as the most important painting in Matisse's Moroccan cycle. The painting is full of inner peace. The still figures are cut off from the world around. They are grouped around two central elements: the glass aquarium with the goldfish in the foreground and the musical instrument being played in the background. This state of enchantment is perfectly matched by the magic of the turquoise colour and the calm light grey of the figures, set off by patches of warm ochre. Matisse used his expressive simplification to capture the Spirit of the East.



**Pablo Picasso** is represented in the Hermitage by 31 canvasses, mostly of his early period. In the *Absinthe Drinker* he depicted a lonely woman who sits at a table in a café. The background is a dirty-red wall which creates the sense of discomfort. The marble table seems to press the space inwards, around the woman, enclosing her in her hopeless loneliness. The hand which clasps the shoulder reinforces the inner tension and cuts the figure off from the world around. In this picture Picasso created a generalised symbol of the tragedy of life.



Picasso painted the portrait of his friend *Benet Soler*, a fashionable Barcelona tailor, in 1903. Paying great attention to his appearance even during times of desperate poverty, Picasso would order his clothes from Soler and pay for them with his pictures. Picasso conveys both the artistic nature and natural elegance of Soler's appearance. But the artist did not seek to create a true representation of the sitter or his character. He sunk Soler into a world of dark blue and green, untouched by any hint of sunlight. The portrait, executed in dark tones, expresses the melancholy which Picasso was prey to during his "blue period".

In 1906 Picasso moved on to Cubism. The artist expressed his ideas by simplifying all forms to geometric figures. The massive figure of the female nude in his picture *The Seated Woman* is extremely schematic. The body seems to consist of basic geometrical figures – cylinders and cones. Dark ochre is the determining note in the colour scheme.



*Three Women* is one of the most important of Picasso's Cubist works. The artist took the traditional subject of the Three Graces and reworked it in his own style. Straight lines sharply differentiate the main elements of the figures, volume is built up through strong schematic contrasts of light and shade.

In the *Musical Instruments* Picasso destroyed the volume of the objects. Details of the guitar, mandolin and violin, along with musical notes and wallpaper, are brought together to create an abstract composition that has no connection with reality.

