



Uncovering the nation's
art collection

PRESS RELEASE

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OVER HALF THE NATION'S COLLECTION OF PAINTINGS NOW ONLINE

THE PUBLIC HELPING TO CATALOGUE THE ART

Your Paintings is the first national online museum of all publicly owned oil paintings in the UK. It was launched in June of this year (2011) by the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF) and the BBC. Today it has been announced that a further 40,000 paintings have been uploaded to the site since the launch, taking the total to 104,000 paintings, over half the national collection.

Among the latest painting images uploaded to the site are works by Thomas Brooks (RNLi Grace Darling Museum, Northumberland), Edgar Degas (The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham), Joshua Reynolds (The University of Aberdeen), Bridget Riley (Morley College, London), Peter Paul Rubens (National Trust, Saltram, Devon) and Henry Whiting's *Man Wrestling an Alligator* from Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre, a world-class collection of British fairground art from the 1880s to the 1980s. In total the works of over 23,000 artists can now be seen on the site.

Your Paintings is the world's most ambitious initiative to bring an entire nation's painting collection to the public online. The UK's collection is an estimated 200,000 oil paintings, held in 3,000 galleries, museums, libraries and public institutions, making it one of the largest and most diverse collections in the world.



Your Paintings is interactive and fully searchable by artist, collection and location, and is enriched with links to the BBC's formidable archive of TV, radio and online resources. It provides links to the collections themselves and encourages users to visit the paintings in person.

To make the site searchable by subject matter over 5,000 members of the public have already signed up as taggers, alongside curators and experts, participating in the enormous task of cataloguing the collection online. These Taggers have already entered over 1.3m tags into the system. Tagging, using the latest crowd-sourcing techniques, is revealing a fascinating new layer of rich, and ultimately shareable, data, that will allow searches for a huge range of subject matter across the website.

Your Paintings has recently been recognised at the 2011 British Interactive Media Awards (BIMA), winning first prize in the Arts and Culture category.

Your Paintings reached on average 125,000 unique monthly browsers, in the first three months after launch. (91,000 unique monthly browsers in the UK).

Mark Thompson, Director General, BBC, said "I am delighted that Your Paintings has reached this impressive milestone. The website that we have created in partnership with the Public Catalogue Foundation is an important commitment to the cultural sector and a significant example of how the BBC can help in the creation of a digital public space."

Andrew Ellis, Director, the Public Catalogue Foundation, said "Your Paintings is a worldwide showcase of the United Kingdom's paintings. The public are invited to play an important role in building and enhancing this website. By tagging what can be seen in each work, everyone can contribute to making Your Paintings a unique and rich learning resource."

Your Paintings

bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings

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Notes to Editors

About Your Paintings

Your Paintings is a partnership project between the BBC and the Public Catalogue Foundation (PCF) to put the United Kingdom's entire collection of oil paintings online at www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings. This website is emerging as a unique learning resource, showing not only photographs and information about each painting but also selected BBC TV archive footage and links to further information. The website was launched at the National Gallery in the summer of 2011. Currently, the site shows around 104,000 paintings from 1,400 collections.

In total, the national oil painting collection amounts to some 200,000 works, held in 3,000 galleries, museums, universities, hospitals and other public institutions from across the UK, making it one of the largest and most diverse collections of paintings in the world. The plan is for all these paintings to be online by the end of 2012.

With the help of crowd-sourcing technology pioneered by the Astrophysics Department at the University of Oxford to classify galaxies, and art historical input from the University of Glasgow, the public are being invited to go online and help classify or 'tag' the paintings catalogued by the PCF so that in due course the paintings can be searchable by subject matter. Paintings can be tagged by visiting <http://tagger.thepcf.org.uk/>

About the Public Catalogue Foundation

The PCF is a registered charity. It was launched in 2003 to create a photographic record of all the oil paintings in public ownership in the United Kingdom. In addition to publishing its work online, the PCF is also publishing a series of printed catalogues.

The painstaking research to locate the paintings up and down the country and collate the data has been carried out by 50 researchers. Over 30 fine art photographers have been employed to take photographs of these paintings over the life of the project. London-based staff focus on fundraising, processing and editing the data that comes in from the field, and clearing copyright.

The PCF is funded principally by grants and donations. Under 20 per cent of its funding comes from the public sector. Whilst many hundreds of individuals and institutions have supported its work, the PCF's principal funders are Arts Council England, Christie's, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Garfield Weston Foundation, the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, The Monument Trust, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Wolfson Foundation.

The PCF was founded by Dr Fred Hohler. Its Trustees are Charles Gregson (Chairman of the PCF), Robert Hiscox (Chairman of Hiscox plc), Menna McGregor (Clerk of the Mercers' company), Alex Morrison (Founder and Managing Director of Cogapp), Richard Roundell (Vice-Chairman of Christie's UK), Marc Sands (Director of Audiences and Media at Tate), Dr Charles Saumarez Smith (Chief Executive of the Royal Academy), Graham Southern (Founding Director of Blain Southern) and the artist Alison Watt. The Director is Andrew Ellis.

For more information go to www.thepcf.org.uk

About BBC Online

BBC Online is BBC's portfolio of websites, available at bbc.co.uk. It comprises ten Products – News, Sport, Weather, CBBC, CBeebies, Knowledge & Learning, Homepage, Search, TV & iPlayer and Radio & Music. In April 2011 it had 31.7 million unique browsers and was the fourth most popular website in the UK. It is the only UK-owned website in the UK top ten. Your Paintings is part of Knowledge & Learning.

The BBC creates partnerships with the arts sector that go beyond broadcast, from sharing expertise to widening public engagement in UK arts.

A small selection of the paintings recently added to Your Paintings

Press images of the paintings below are available from Katie Carder at katie.carder@thepcf.org.uk or on

020 7395 0338



Rubens, Peter Paul 1577–1640
Marchesa Maria Serra Pallavicino 1606
 Oil on canvas 233 x 145cm
National Trust, Kingston Lacy, Dorset

This must be one of the most stunningly lavish portraits ever painted. The inscription (D[ono] D[edit]) implies that Rubens painted this as a gift during one of his visits to Genoa. It was acquired by William Bankes (1786–1855) for Kingston Lacy in 1840, thought to be of the marchesa Isabella Grimaldi. The original identity of the lady, dressed for a sumptuous banquet and ball, was lost until research into the heraldic motifs of the curtain drawn up above the sitter's head. This research identified her as Maria Serra, the wife of Niccolò Pallavicino, banker and host to Rubens's employer, Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga of Mantua.

Collection contact: Allan King
 (allan.king@nationaltrust.org.uk)



Reynolds, Joshua 1723–1792
Dr James Beattie (1735–1803) 1773
 Oil on canvas 122 x 155cm
The University of Aberdeen

In 1807, after a 20-year fight by British and African activists, Britain finally banned the slave trade. Slavery was still permitted in British territories, but planters could not import new slaves from Africa. Many North East Scots joined the fight to abolish the slave trade. In 1770 Dr James Beattie, a philosopher at Marischal College, became one of the first public figures to argue that slavery was morally wrong.

Collection contact: Shona Elliott
 (museums@abdn.ac.uk)



Guzzardi, Leonardo active 1798–1800
Horatio Nelson (1758–1805), 1st Viscount Nelson 1799
 Oil on canvas 216 x 129cm
Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth

Badly damaged when the College was bombed in 1942, this picture is one of several painted by Sicilian painter Guzzardi, about who little is known, to celebrate Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile. The portrait could not be started directly after battle as Nelson had sustained an unsightly wound above the eye during the fighting. There are several other copies by other artists but this painting was recently identified as a genuine.

Collection contact: Dr Richard Porter
 (01752 553740)



Brooks, Thomas 1818–1892
Grace Darling (1815–1842)
 Oil on canvas 60 x 78cm
RNLI Grace Darling Museum, Northumberland

Grace Darling was 22 years old when she risked her life in an open boat to help the survivors of the wrecked SS 'Forfarshire' on 7 September 1838. As inhabitants of the Longstone lighthouse on the Farne Islands, Grace and her father rowed for over a mile through raging seas to reach the 'Forfarshire'. Grace was the media celebrity of her day and was showered with honours. This painting shows Grace rowing heroically towards the stricken ship. It captures the solitude of the deed and the fragility of the heroic endeavour.

Collection contact: RNLI Grace Darling Museum
 (askgracedarling@rnli.org.uk)



Gheeraerts the younger, Marcus 1561/1562–1635/1636
Sir Alexander Carew (1608–1644), 2nd Bt c.1630
 Oil on canvas 190 x 107cm
National Trust, Antony, Cornwall

The person represented in this portrait was cut out of the painting's frame by his Royalist relatives in the English Civil War when he took the side of Parliament. However, after switching his allegiance back to the crown, he was captured by the Roundheads and beheaded at Tower Hill. Having thus become a Royalist hero, his picture was sewn together again and restored to its frame; the crude stitches can be seen to this day. It was accepted in lieu in 2005 on the estate of Sir John Carew Pole (1902–1993), 12th Bt and remains at Antony, Cornwall.

Collection contact: Claire Bolitho
 (claire.bolitho@nationaltrust.org.uk)



Kilbourn, Oliver 1904–1993
Miner Setting Prop in Low Seam (from the series 'My Life as a Pitman') c.1950
 © Ashington Group Trustees
 Oil on paper on hardboard 57 x 77cm
Woodhorn Museum and Northumberland Archives

Kilbourn was a miner and part of the Ashington Group, often referred to as the 'Pitmen Painters'. This painting is typical of the work of the group. Kilbourn's collection of works, *My Life as a Pitman*, provides a documentary account of life as a miner. The painting shows a scene through Kilbourn's eyes in a way that a photograph could not.

Collection contact: Woodhorn Northumberland Collection
 (wow@woodhorn.org.uk)



Carse, Alexander c.1770–1843
The Village Ba' Game 1818
 Oil on canvas 89 x 133cm
**Dundee Art Galleries and Museums
 Collection (Dundee City Council)**

The Village Ba' Game is reputed to be the earliest painting of a football match in the world. This boisterous game between the 'Uppies' and the 'Doonies' was held in Jedburgh in the Scottish Borders in 1817. Carse excelled at genre painting and this work is of international importance. It has just gone out on loan to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

**Collection contact: Anna Robertson and
 Susan Keracher (01382 307200)**



North, Marianne 1830–1890
Victoria regia c.1879
 Oil on board 35 x 129cm
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Marianne North is the most prolific artist represented on Your Paintings, with over 980 paintings. This *Victoria regia*, the largest of all water lilies, is native to South America. Discovered in the early 19th century by Father La Cueva and German born naturalist Thaddeus Haenke (1761–1816), it was introduced to Britain in 1849, and took its name in honour of Queen Victoria. The sixth edition of the *North Gallery Guide*, published in 1914, tells us "the picture was not painted from nature, but from Fitch's splendid illustrations, and done in the fogs of a London winter ... The leaves are of enormous size, often over six feet across, and have upturned rims four or five inches high, so that the Indian mothers, who go down to the rivers to wash, place their babies on them in perfect safety."

**Collection contact: Lynn Parker
 (020 8332 5429)**



Brueghel the younger, Pieter 1564/1565–1637/1638
The Faithless Shepherd
 Oil on panel 74 x 105cm
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

This is one of three versions of this subject by Brueghel and was presented in 1977 by Mrs Alice Hay of Seaton whose ancestor, Lord Hay of Seaton, it is believed, was given the painting by the Duke of Wellington. The subject of this painting is taken from the New Testament, the Gospel of St John, Chapter 10, where Christ says: "I am the good shepherd, the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep."

Collection contact: Office (01224 523 700)



Riley, Bridget b.1931
The Morley College Mural c.1973
 © the artist
 Acrylic & pencil on canvas 211 x 317cm
Morley College, London

Morley College is an adult education college in London. Barry Till (Morley Principal 1965–1986) commissioned this painting out of a personal admiration for Bridget Riley's work. Riley commented: "I was initially commissioned for a mural. However, it was technically too difficult to draw huge diagonals directly on the wall so the only way to produce this was on canvas. This was then set back into wall so that it was same level as plane of wall. The commission was a great encouragement to me at the time, as my work at that moment was suffering from a lack of interest."

**Collection contact: Jane Hartwell
 (gallery@morleycollege.ac.uk)**



Steen, Jan 1626–1679
The Doctor's Visit c.1660
 Oil on canvas on panel 70 x 56cm
**The University of Edinburgh Fine Art
 Collection**

Jan Steen's *The Doctor's Visit* is one of the finest examples of genre painting in the city. This painting appears to show an ill, feverish patient turning in bed to look at her doctor, who is in turn looking directly at the maid and past the wine proffered by her. We soon realise that the patient isn't sick in the conventional sense but sick with love for the doctor. Her own lover can be seen distantly at the window looking in on the scene.

**Collection contact: Jill Forrest
 (jill.forrest@ed.ac.uk)**



Bellamy, John b.1942
The Obsession
 © the artist/Bridgeman Art Library
 Oil on panel 212 x 242cm
City of Edinburgh Council

John Bellamy was born in Port Seton, a fishing village in East Lothian. This early work depicts a group of fishermen at a gutting table. Their weather-beaten features reflect the harshness of their daily toil and battle against nature's forces. The composition makes strong allusions to the biblical Last Supper with the fishermen standing in for the disciples. One of the characters appears to be praying, and another clutching his bible, arms formed into a crucifix. The obsession in the title is Bellamy's own, his striving to discover the answer to life's questions.

**Collection contact: David Patterson
 (0131 529 3993)**



unknown artist
The Avalanche at Lewes, East Sussex
 1836
 Oil on canvas 66 x 81cm
Lewes Castle and Museum

Commissioned by Thomas Dicker of Lewes, this unknown artist commemorates the Lewes Avalanche of 1836, which killed eight and remains to this day the deadliest avalanche on record in the UK. Barbican House Museum, opposite Lewes castle, tells the story of Sussex throughout the ages and houses the Lewes Town model.

Collection contact: Emma O'Connor
(01273 486290)



Upton, John b.1933
Christ's Entry into Brighton 1976
 © the artist
 Oil on five hardboard panels 175 x 709cm
University of Sussex

A highly significant moment of student and youth culture is caught in the works of Upton. Among the crowd in *Christ's Entry into Brighton*, Christ is flanked by 1960s figures Jimi Hendrix, Cassius Clay, Christine Keeler and Harold Macmillian, alongside Sussex University staff and students. The painting currently hangs in a Seminar Room. Since its founding in the 1960s, the University of Sussex has continued to build its distinguished collection of contemporary art which is a mixture of interesting commissions, donations and specially commissioned pieces.

Collection contact: Kitty Inglis
(01273 678158)



Brown, Ford Madox 1821–1893
The Last of England 1855
 Oil on panel 82 x 75cm
Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery

Madox Brown's iconic painting, depicting a man and his wife leaving England for the last time with the white cliffs of Dover in the top right of the picture, is possibly the most well known of the collection. *The Last of England* is a good example of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery's large collection of Victorian artwork and famous Pre-Raphaelite collection.

Collection contact: Brendan Flynn
(0121 303 283)



Degas, Edgar 1834–1917
Jockeys before the Race 1878–1879
 Oil, essence, gouache & pastel on paper
 107 x 73cm
The Barber Institute of Fine Arts,
Birmingham

In this painting Degas disregards conventional composition rules by placing a pole in the foreground that runs from the top to the bottom of the painting, dividing it vertically and slicing through the head of the nearest horse. *Jockeys before the Race* is one of the most striking and important paintings in The Barber Institute of Fine Art's collection.

Collection contact: Andrew Davies
(andrewdavies@barber.org.uk)



Butler, Elizabeth 1846–1933
Scotland for Ever! 1881
 Oil on canvas 101 x 194cm
Leeds Museums and Galleries

Best known as a painter of battle scenes Lady Elizabeth Butler's iconic *Scotland for Ever!* is one of the most popular paintings on show at Leeds Art Gallery. This painting depicts the gallant charge, swords raised, of The Scots Greys at the Battle of Waterloo. According to an eyewitness the Greys were heard calling, "Now, my boys, Scotland forever!" as they rushed past the Highland Brigade.

Collection contact: Camilla Nichol
(museumsandgalleries@leeds.gov.uk)



Whiting, Henry c.1839–1931
Hatwell's 'Gallopers': Man Wrestling an Alligator
 Oil on panel 78 x 61cm
The Fairground Heritage Trust, Devon

Without doubt, the collection of fairground art at Dingles Fairground Heritage Centre in Devon is the most important of its kind in the country. It is a world-class collection of British fairground art from the 1880s to the 1980s. This is one of 4 panels on show at Dingle's Fairground Heritage Centre which were used to conceal the machinery of the ride, owned by the Hatwell family in the 1940s, and to decorate the bottom of the carousel of galloping horses.

Collection contact: Michael Smith
(01566 783425)