

Hurdle Gallery Labels

PLYMOUTH CITY MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

THE ACQUISITION OF GENIUS

Section 6 / Reynolds the Collector

Winged figure standing on a sphere, holding a tablet
(frontispiece)

1590

Cherubino Alberti (1553-1615)

after Baccio Bandinelli (1493-1560)

Etching

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Three goblets

Hieronymus Hopfer (c.1500-1563)

after Albrecht Altdorfer (1482/5-1538)

Etching

Hopfer made a number of prints based on etchings by the German print-maker Albrecht Altdorfer, dating from the 1520s. This particular example reverses and rearranges a smaller work by Altdorfer and is topped by a banderol (narrow flag) proclaiming Hopfer's pride in the print.

Private collection, London

Study of a dragon

c.1526–27

Giulio Romano (1499-1547)

Pen and ink with brown wash, with later framing lines

Private Collection, London

Studies of a Seated Female Figure, Crowned by Another ('Virtue Crowned by Honour') and Two Other Figure Studies

Carlo Maratta (1625-1713)

Red chalk with pen and brown ink

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Section 6 / Collecting Genius

Cain cursed by the Lord

c.1608-10

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)

after Adriaen Thomasz. Key (c.1544-c.1589)

Red chalk, with brush and red ink and wash, heightened with white

Key had made a copy of the Flemish painter Michiel Coxie's (1499–1592) painting of the Death of Abel (after 1539) and it is Key's copy that Rubens took as his model.

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Abel Slain by Cain

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)

after Michiel Coxcie (?1499-1592)

Red chalk

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Cleopatra

Guercino (1591-1666)

Pen and brown ink

Cleopatra is shown with the asp that she used to commit suicide coiled around her arm.

Reynolds seems to have based the pose of the principal female character in his painting *Cimon and Iphegenia* (Royal Collection), which he exhibited in 1789, on this drawing.

Royal Cornwall Museum, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro

Ulysses shooting through the rings

Primaticcio (1504-1570)

Red chalk and white heightening
on pink prepared paper

Ulysses' twenty-year delay in returning home after the Trojan War led many to assume he was dead. His faithful wife Penelope, courted by numerous suitors, had used many ruses to avoid remarriage. Finally, she declared she would accept whoever could string Ulysses' great bow and fire an arrow through the fixing ringlets in twelve axe heads. Ulysses, in disguise, entered the competition and naturally succeeded where the suitors had failed. He then revealed his true identity and slaughtered them all. (Homer's *Odyssey*, Book XXI).

This is a finished study or modello for a fresco in the series in the *Galerie d'Ulysse*, commissioned by King François I of France for his palace at Fontainebleau.

National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery

Purchased with the assistance of the National Art Collections Fund and the Friends of National Museums Liverpool, 1991

The Rest on the Flight into Egypt

Palma Vecchio (1480?-1528)

Pen and brown ink over black chalk

Reynolds was noted for his re-use of motifs from past art declaring that 'invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory.' (Discourse II).

His occasional forays into religious painting are strongly indebted to works by Palma Vecchio and other painters working in Venice.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Two Groups of Ecclesiastics, facing one another

Vittore Carpaccio (1455/6-1525/6)

Pen and brown ink over red chalk

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Head of a young girl - perhaps Elizabeth Seymour, Countess of Ailesbury (1655–1697)

Sir Peter Lely (1618-80)

Black and white chalk, touched with red,
on brown-grey paper

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Section 6 / Figure Studies and Compositions

A soldier walking down a step

Taddeo Zuccaro (1529-1566)

Red chalk

Reynolds may have adapted the stance of this figure for two of his full-length male portraits: Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle (1769; Castle Howard, Yorkshire) and Peregrine Bertie, 3rd Duke of Ancaster (1758–61; Grimsthorpe Castle).

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

The Holy Family

Ludovico Cigoli (1559-1613)

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash,
over black chalk

This double-sided sheet of studies of the Holy Family could have served as models for Reynolds' occasional forays into religious painting.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Head of St Crispin

c.1620-21

Guido Reni (1575-1642)

Black, red and white chalk, on brown paper

St Crispin is the patron saint of shoemakers. This drawing is a study for the head of St Crispin in Reni's painting of the Virgin and Child with Saints Crispian, Crispin and Jerome, painted in 1620–21 for the altar of the Arte de'Calzolari (Shoemakers' Guild) in the church of San Prospero, Reggio Emilia.

Reynolds sometimes had his own mounts made up, and this drawing is one of the rare examples still in its 'Reynolds' mount, framed by simple pen lines in brown ink and bordered with grey wash.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Standing Figure of a Saint

Giovanni Bandini (1540-1599)

Pen and brown ink

Both the recto (front) and the verso (back) of this sheet were drawn in preparation for the standing male figures, which decorate the bas-reliefs of the choir in the Duomo in Florence. Bandini worked on this project from 1560–72.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Acquired with a contribution from the National Art Collections Fund

Study for the portrait of Henriette de Lorraine

c.1634

Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641)

Black and white chalk on blue paper

Henriette de Lorraine, with her sister Margu rite and her brother Charles, Duc de Lorraine, were members of the French royal family and resided in Brussels. The finished portrait is in Kenwood House, London.

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

A sheet of studies for a male figure

Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641)

Pen and brown ink

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Study of Pluto for the fresco 'Ceres searching for Proserpina'

c.1593–94

Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619)

Black chalk on faded blue-grey paper

In Roman mythology the story of Proserpina was used to explain the seasons. Ceres was the goddess of agriculture and her daughter Proserpina was abducted by Pluto, the god of the underworld, to live in Hades. In her anguish Ceres halted the growth of all crops. Jupiter insisted Pluto release Proserpina but Pluto made her eat six pomegranate seeds and because those who have eaten the food of the dead cannot return to the world of the living, Proserpina had to live six months of each year with him, and six with her mother.

This drawing has recently been identified as directly related to Ludovico's fresco depicting Ceres searching for Proserpina on the chimneypiece in the Palazzo Sampieri-Talon in Bologna (1593–94).

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Studies of two men running

Andrea Sacchi (?1599-1661)

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, over red chalk

This drawing appears to be related to a group of dancing musicians, nude except for fluttering loose drapery, in Sacchi's *Allegory on the birth of Pope Urban VIII*, which was engraved by Charles Audran (1594–1674).

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Recumbent nude female figure asleep

c.1530-40

Rosso Fiorentino (1494-1540)

Red chalk

The historic mount, with its red pen lines and wash border, dates from at least the eighteenth century.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Study of a male figure (?holding a censer)

Annibale Carracci (1560-1609)

Red chalk

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Section 6 / Pintmaking and the Artist

Saint Catherine and Saint Lucy

Marcantonio Raimondi (c.1480-c.1534)

after Francesco Francia (1450-1517)

Engraving

Saint Catherine is shown leaning against the spiked wheel to which she was strapped. Lucy had her eyes removed to avoid the unwanted attentions of a suitor; they can be seen in the dish in her left hand. She holds a closed book, never to read again; however, God later restored her sight. The withered tree, with broken branches, and the young though poorly formed example at the left, can both be understood as symbols of martyrdom.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

The Martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Paul

Jacopo Caraglio (c.1500-1565)

after Parmigianino (1503-1540)

Engraving

The Apostles St Peter and St Paul were executed on the orders of the Roman emperor Nero c.AD 64. Paul was beheaded and Peter crucified. Peter insisted on being crucified upside down because he was not worthy to be crucified like Christ. The keys lying on the ground are the traditional attributes of St Peter, who had been given the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven by Jesus.

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Vulcan and the Cyclopes forging arrows (Vulcan's forge)

Guido Ruggeri (fl.1540s)

after Primaticcio (1504-1570)

Engraving

The most ancient myths claimed that the fire-god Vulcan was related to the race of the Cyclopes, who helped him make fresh thunder-bolts for Jupiter as the old ones decayed. In Virgil's Aeneid, Venus commanded him to forge armour and arrows for her son Aeneas, but here he is simply making arrows for the cupids who occupy the foreground.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Madonna of the Rosary

Domenico Maria Canuti (1625-1540)

Etching

The Rosary (from the Latin rosarium meaning 'rose garland') is a traditional emblem of Catholic worship, comprising a string of prayer beads and the prayer and meditation that accompanies them.

According to legend the rosary was first revealed to St Dominic when the Virgin Mary appeared to him in a vision in 1214.

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Angels in Glory

1607

Guido Reni (1575-1642)

after Luca Cambiaso (1527-1585)

Etching

Reni was a painter, as opposed to a professional print-maker, and brought a 'painterly' sensibility to his engraved work which greatly appealed to Reynolds.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Battle of the Sea Gods

Andrea Mantegna (1430/31-1506)

Engraving in blue ink

Mantegna was the first painter to engage seriously with printmaking, and did so during engraving's infancy.

This is the left half of an allegory of envy – note the old hag on the left brandishing a tablet inscribed with the word 'Invid[ia]' (Latin for envy).

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Tityus (Prometheus)

1566

Cornelis Cort (c.1533-1578)

after Titian (c.1490-1576)

Engraving

Cort made six engravings from 1565 to 1566 under Titian's supervision in Venice, who supplied him with drawings of his paintings specifically for printmaking. Worried about inferior piracies, Titian obtained a 15-year privilege from the Venetian Senate to protect his compositions, hence the Latin inscription, with Titian's name: 'Titianus 1566' and 'Cum Privilegio' ('with privilege, or permission'). The original painting is in the Prado, Madrid.

In Greek mythology Tityus was a giant fathered by Zeus. Tityus attempted to rape Leto and was slain by Apollo and Artemis. As punishment, he was stretched out in Hades and tortured by two vultures who fed on his liver. His punishment is extremely similar to that of the Titan Prometheus, who suffered in this way for stealing fire from Zeus to give to mankind.

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Perseus killing Medusa

1637

Nicolas Mignard (1606-1668)

after Annibale Carracci (1560-1609)

Etching

In Greek legend Polydectes, ruler of Seriphos, asked the hero Perseus to bring him the head of Medusa, one of the three Gorgons. All who looked on the Gorgons were turned to stone. Perseus, therefore, with the goddess Athena helping him, as shown here, used the reflection in a bronze shield to accomplish the task of decapitating Medusa. The god Hermes stands behind him. Hermes had advised Perseus in this task and gave him the sword made of adamant (diamond) which was the only weapon strong enough to cut through Medusa's scales.

Reynolds owned only a few French prints. This is one of six prints published in 1637, the first to reproduce the frescoes by Annibale Carracci in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, painted from 1595–96. The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Pastoral scene with men and women merrymaking

Jan Thomas (1617-1678)

after Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640)

Etching

Thomas was a painter and print-maker who had trained under Rubens in Antwerp.

The Trustees of the British Museum, London

Saint Sebastian aided by Saint Irene and a companion, with angels

Rombout Eynhoudts (1613–80)

after Cornelis Schut (1597-1655)

Etching

According to tradition, the Roman emperor Diocletian, finding his Captain of the Praetorian Guard to be a Christian, ordered Sebastian to be killed by archers. Irene went to retrieve his body to bury it, but finding he was still alive she brought him back to her house and nursed him back to health. Having recovered, Sebastian harangued Diocletian who had him beaten to death and his body thrown into a privy.

Schut's work appealed to Reynolds because he had trained with Rubens, one of Reynolds' favourite artists.

Eynhoudts' etching reproduces Schut's painting in the church of Onze-Lieve-Vrouwkerk, Temse, which was commissioned in 1650.

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Jan Lutma

1656

Rembrandt (1606-1669)

Etching on Japan paper

Lutma was a renowned gold and silversmith of Amsterdam. His hammer and pot of punches are on the table beside him.

The Trustees of the British Museum, London

James Thomson

1761

James Basire I (1730-1802)

after William Aikman (1682-1731)

Engraving with etching

This print after Aikman's painting, now in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh, depicts the Scottish poet James Thomson (1700–48), author of *The Seasons*.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Section 6 /Varieties of Technique

Head and shoulders of a young woman

c.1480-90

Pietro Perugino (c.1450-1523)

Metalpoint, on grey prepared paper

Reynolds believed this drawing was by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–94), who had been the master of Michelangelo.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Study of a male head for 'Martyrdom of S.Vitale'

Federico Barocci (1528/35-1612)

Coloured chalks on blue paper

The church of San Vitale in Ravenna, for which this design was made, is dedicated to the Christian Saint Vitalis, who died for his faith in the reign of Nero. He was martyred by being tortured on the rack, then buried alive in a pit. This is a study for one of his executioners.

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

Study of the 'The Medici Prince defends the Temple of Peace' (for the Sala di Marte, Palazzo Pitti, Florence)

c.1646-7

Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669)

Black chalk

From the left of the drawing, a ship nears a rocky shore on which stands the Temple of Peace. A warrior, personifying the young Medici prince, attacks the ship with his spear. In front of the temple, a seated priestess, accompanied by two attendants, holds a book or tablet on a round altar with her left hand and with her right hand commands the winged figure of Fame to crown the warrior with a laurel wreath, ancient symbol of victory; Fame's trumpet may be seen in a pentimento (reworking) drawn to the right of this figure.

This drawing is mounted in one of Reynolds' own mounts.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Diana with a kneeling companion

Palma Giovane (c.1544-1628)

Pen and brown ink

Diana was the goddess of hunting and is recognised by her symbol of the crescent moon on her head.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Head of a bearded man wearing a wide-brimmed hat

Pier Francesco Mola (1612-1666)

Black and red chalk

It has been suggested that this drawing is not from life, but is based on the figure of Nicodemus in Federico Barocci's altarpiece *The Entombment* (1579–82) in the church of Santa Croce, Senigallia.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

Boreas raping Orizia

1588

Paolo Farinati (1524-1606)

Pen and brown ink, brown wash, heightened with white on faded blue paper

The subject comes from Greek mythology, telling how Boreas, the north wind, carried off the nymph Orizia and took her to Thrace where she became his wife. Orizia was transformed into the gentle breeze that follows the violent north wind and tempers the heat of the sun.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

A Man Holding a Barrel, study for 'The Pope inspired by the Holy Ghost receives homage from the ecclesiastical orders' (San Domenico, Siena)

Mattia Pretti (1603-1699)

Red chalk

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

God the Father

Battista Franco (c.1498-1561)

Black, red and white chalk on paper

National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh

The Annunciation

c.1568

Luca Cambiaso (1527-1585)

Pen and brown ink, with brown wash

The archangel Gabriel here fulfils Isaiah's prophecy 'Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel' (Isaiah 7.14).

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

The death of Saint Catherine of Siena

Andrea Boscoli (c.1560–1608)

Pen and brown ink with brown wash

Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) was a Dominican mystic who became a central figure in church politics, and persuaded Gregory XI to return to Rome from Avignon. In 1375 she is supposed to have received the five wounds of the stigmata, visible only to herself until after her death. She died of a stroke in Rome, in the spring of 1380, at the age of thirty-three. She was canonized in 1461.

The Samuel Courtauld Trust, The Courtauld Gallery, London

Section 7 / Legacy

Bust of Sir Joshua Reynolds PRA (1723-1792)

William Behnes after Giuseppe Ceracchi

Marble

William Cotton III (1794–1863) suggested in 1860 that a marble bust of Reynolds be commissioned for Plymouth Public Library. A public subscription fund for 60 guineas was quickly raised, major donors included the famous art critic, John Ruskin.

At the unveiling ceremony for this bust, local families such as the Molesworth-St Aubyns who had patronised Reynolds, were joined by Ruskin and The Times' art critic Tom Taylor.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery: Cottonian Collection

Charles Rogers FRS FSA (1711–1784)

1777

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Oil on canvas

Charles Rogers was one of the most important collectors of prints and drawings in England. Aspects of his collection are on show in the next gallery.

Rogers complained to Horace Walpole that Reynolds had made him look too young. Walpole replied that 'posterity will not know at what age the Likeness was taken'. The portrait was engraved by William Wynne Ryland (1733–83) in 1778 and appeared as the frontispiece in both volumes of Rogers' A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings published in that year and comprising 112 prints after Old Master drawings.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery: Cottonian Collection

Age of Innocence

(A Study of Offy, Reynold's niece, born 1782)

c.1788

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Oil on canvas

No painting entitled The Age of Innocence was exhibited by Reynolds; the present title derives from an engraving of it published in 1794, two years after his death. The Age of Innocence exists in several versions and the one in Tate Britain is widely presumed to be the original, although it is not in such a good condition.

The identity of the sitter, who seems to be five or six years old, is not known. The child has often been assumed to be Reynolds' great-niece Theophila 'Offy' Gwatkin (1782–1844).

Something of the Victorians' enthusiasm for Reynolds' pictures of children is revealed by the fact that Tate Britain's version sold for £1,596 in 1844, at a time when Reynolds' adult portraits rarely fetched more than £100.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

Hope Nursing Love c.1769

Sir Joshua Reynolds

oil on canvas

This is one of three versions of a painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1769. The sitter was known to be an aspiring young actress, Miss Morris, who died shortly after the painting went on show.

Reynolds' inspiration for Hope's pose may derive from Renaissance depictions of Leda and the Swan, although there is surely a deliberate echo here, too, of the iconography associated with the Madonna and Child.

The picture was engraved in 1771 by Edward Fisher. Its implicit sentimentality proved very appealing after Reynolds' death and in 1808 it was copied in enamel by Henry Bone for the future George IV.

This version entered the Port Eliot collection in the nineteenth century.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery: Port Eliot Collection

Self Portrait

1840

George Richmond

Oil on canvas

Richmond was one of the leading portraitist painters of the Victorian period. This self-portrait owes an obvious debt to Reynolds' youthful self-portrait (on show in the previous gallery) and is homage to Reynolds as the most famous portrait painter in British art.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Accepted in lieu of Inheritance Tax by H.M. Government from the estate of Kerrison Preston and allocated to The Fitzwilliam Museum, 1975

Sir Joshua Reynolds painting a fancy picture

undated

John James Chalon (1778-1854)

Brush in grey, brown, black and blue wash over graphite

Chalon's recreation of Reynolds at work was probably painted for the Sketching Society, a group of artists who met in the evenings to draw specially selected historical or literary subjects. In the nineteenth century Reynolds' portraits of children were very popular and Chalon imagines Reynolds in this role, basing his appearance on the late self-portrait in the Royal Collection (exhibited nearby).

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

The Strawberry Girl (cased)

After Sir Joshua Reynolds
(mid-nineteenth century)

Earthenware tile

Reynolds' pictures of children were extraordinarily popular in the nineteenth century. In 1856 the Marquis of Hertford paid £2,205 (42 times its original price) for Reynolds' painting of 1773 The Strawberry Girl, which was also a star exhibit at the Manchester Art Treasures exhibition in 1857. Its reproduction as a decorative item allowed the image to become part of many Victorian homes.

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

Self Portrait

c.1788

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Oil on panel

Those who knew Reynolds said that this portrait was the closest to Reynolds' true appearance and character. Painted when he was about 65 years old, he has shown himself in his silver-rimmed spectacles, pairs of which are on display in this gallery. Reynolds was short-sighted, and by this point in his life, would have worn his glasses when painting.

Lent by Her Majesty the Queen

Sir Joshua Reynolds after a self-portrait by Reynolds Chalk

According to an old label, this drawing was given by Reynolds to the wife of Edmund Burke M.P. (1729-1797). Burke was a member of the 'Literary Club' which Reynolds co-founded with Johnson and included Goldsmith, Boswell and Garrick amongst others. The drawing was exhibited as a Reynolds in 1881 and 1906. Doubts to its authorship remain, however; it may be a studio copy or even an early 19th century production.

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery

William Holman Hunt exclaiming

'Of course!'

c.1851-1853

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Pen and brown ink with brown wash

As young artists the Pre-Raphaelites dismissed Reynolds as 'Sir Sloshua' on account of his loose brushwork and the dark, discoloured state into which some of his works had fallen by the mid-nineteenth century. During his early career, Rossetti particularly followed Blake as a supporter of anti-academicism, acquiring one of Blake's notebooks in 1847 which abounds with humorous doodles and jibes at conventional artistic values. Rossetti's sketches are in the same satirical vein.

In these two examples William Holman Hunt is agreeing wholeheartedly with Millais' rejection of some unworthy example as 'Slosh'.

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

John Everett Millais exclaiming 'Slosh!'

c.1851-1853

D G Rossetti

Pen and brown ink with brown wash

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery

Titianus Redivivus, or the seven wise men consulting the new Venetian oracle

1797

James Gillray (1756-1815)

Etching with hand colouring

Gillray's title means 'Titian born again' and refers to an elaborate hoax which brought the Royal Academy into disrepute. In 1795, Thomas Provis and his artist daughter Ann claimed they had found an old manuscript that revealed how Venetian artists achieved their effects. Benjamin West fell for it and seven other members of the Academy paid 10 guineas for the privilege of learning the 'Venetian Secret.'

Ann Provis is at her easel, her peacock train supported by naked graces. The gullible Academicians sit together below; West sneaks off, bottom right, with the print-makers Boydell and Macklin who had hoped to profit from the secret. A monkey, wearing the cap of the French revolution, urinates on the portfolios of those (including Turner) who were not taken in by the hoax. In the background, the façade of the Royal Academy is cracking.

Amidst all this, Reynolds emerges from his grave, ear trumpet in hand. Reynolds' biographer, Edward Malone, asserted that Reynolds would have been an enthusiastic supporter of Miss Provis had he been alive to meet her.

The Trustees of The British Museum, London

cased items:

On the steady acquisition of genius through study of nature, citing Correggio as an example.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Reynolds had much to say (and write) about the notion of genius. Here he agrees “with all those who say that labour is in vain without... [innate] genius” but nonetheless believed that genius can be “acquired”. He then holds up the work of the Italian painter Correggio (c.1494-1534), whose soft and sensual style, was a favourite of Reynolds. Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

Reflections on his first response to the Vatican works by Raphael and Michelangelo.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Reynolds had two great favourites, the High Renaissance artists Michelangelo and Raphael (“Raffiele”). Here he cites both. Reynolds also describes the occasion when he visited the Sistine Chapel in Rome, famously decorated with frescoes by Michelangelo. He stayed there from “morning and remained there the whole day”. Later in life he came to own actual drawings by Michelangelo for this scheme. Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

Description of the effects seen in moonlit sky/biographical sketch of Masaccio.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Few letters by Reynolds are illustrated with sketches. Here he is interested in the effect of cloud cover on the brilliance of moonlight. His abbreviated style is the same as that when he describes works of art. Reynolds’ notes on a print after Rubens that he owned are similar in tone, with short, broken descriptions.

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

On the best way of starting to work, contrasting Rembrandt and Correggio.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Reynolds in his role as head of the first state-sanctioned art school in Britain had much to say about art teaching, and drawing in particular. Here he cites the work of Rembrandt and Correggio, two artists noted for their draughtsmanship. Reynolds came to own many examples by both. Correggio's drawings, Reynolds thinks, have "the advantage of chance" which gives them a sweet perfection and grace.

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

The Importance of studying the old masters before striking out in your own manner.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Reynolds made frequent reference in his writings to his heroes from past art. Here he cites two of his favourites: Guido Reni and Michelangelo. In this passage Reynolds contrasts the "elegance and...order" of Guido Reni, who was immensely fashionable in eighteenth-century Britain, with the 'masculine' style of Michelangelo. Reynolds owned drawings by both these artists.

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

Tea Caddy Set once belonging to Sir Joshua Reynolds

A gift by Marie Beattie to Joshua Reynolds in 1768, the year the Royal Academy was founded. The tea caddy was acquired by a group of prominent members of the art world in the 1890s who presented it to the Royal Academy.

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

Mulberry Tea Caddy

c.1769

Made from a tree that grew in Shakespeare's garden at Stratford, this caddy was bought by Garrick, at an unknown date. Garrick later gave it to Reynolds who bequeathed it to his niece, Offy.

Private Collection

Leaf-shaped Dish

Chinese, Qianlong (1736-1795)

Part of a blue and white and famille-rose dinner service. The dish is painted with a monogram combining all the letters in Reynolds' name. It is part of a 124 piece service that Reynolds used when entertaining.

Private Collection

Gold Rimmed Spectacles and leather case owned by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

Silver Rimmed Spectacles and leather case owned by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London

Palette owned by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Royal Cornwall Museum, Royal Institution of Cornwall, Truro

Palette owned by Sir Joshua Reynolds

Lent by the Royal Academy of Arts, London
