

# The Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Collection of Pre-Raphaelite Art

## Teacher's Curriculum Guide



Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935

*The Council Chamber*, 1872-1892  
Edward Burne-Jones



DELAWARE ART MUSEUM



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## **NOTICE:**

Several works of art in the Delaware Art Museum’s collection contain partial or full nudity. While we maintain the artistic integrity of these pieces and do not encourage censorship we have marked these pieces in an effort to provide educators with pertinent information. You will see a green inverted triangle ( ▼ ) next to any works that contain partial or full nudity, or mature content. This packet is intended for educators; please preview all materials before distributing to your class.

# HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

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These materials are designed to provide teachers with an overview of the artists and their work in the Pre-Raphaelite collection. This information can be used before and/or after a visit to the Delaware Art Museum, or as a substitute for teachers and schools that are unable to visit. Teachers should adapt these materials according to the grade level and ability of their students.

## GOALS FOR LEARNING

History	Language	Art
Industrial Revolution in England	New vocabulary relating to art and the PRB	Subject, purpose, and composition of PRB paintings
Victorian England, as is reflected in art	Dual creation of art and writing.	Arts & Crafts Movement with William Morris
Wilmington society, as is reflected in art	Literary influences on art and society	Perceive and interpret visual elements and clues
Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (PRB)	Narrative in Art	

## LOOKING AT ART WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Museums are among the best places for teaching people how to look carefully and to learn from looking. These skills, obviously critical to understanding art, are also important for experiencing the everyday world. Frequently referred to as "visual literacy", these skills are seldom taught, despite their usefulness.

There are many ways to approach looking at art. All of them are appropriate at different times. With young people, it is important to discover what catches their attention and try to pursue that interest. At other times, it might be useful to point out things you have noticed. In so doing, you help young people expand on their experiences and their capacities to think, analyze, and understand.

Identifying and talking about recognizable subject matter is a frequent beginning point. Inherent or imagined stories are too. Abstract issues can also be observed and discussed; for example, even quite young children can suggest meanings for colors and see the implied energy in a line or brushstroke.

Background information and biographies of artists have less relevance to younger children, although they are almost always of interest to older people. Instead, one can accomplish more by helping young children concentrate on and appreciate the images at hand. An excellent use of time in the Museum, therefore, is for adults and children to point out things to each other, and share their thoughts and feelings about what they might mean. You can, of course, make mental notes of things you might like to ask the artist if he or she were there, but emphasize what you can see and think about, instead of fretting about what you do not know. The process of discovering information in paintings can be fun and serious, in part because there are few rights and wrongs.

*From the Museum of Modern Art's A Brief Guide for Looking at Art*

# THE PRE-RAPHAELITE BROTHERHOOD

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Seven young idealists formed the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in England as a reaction against what they saw as the stylistic pretenses and unworthy subject matter of the art of their day. They created an entirely new style of painting that looked back to the romance of medieval chivalry and also documented contemporary Victorian social themes.

In 1848, the British art world was dominated by the traditions of the Royal Academy, who looked to the Renaissance for inspiration. Unhappy with what they saw as the Academy's rigid and unchanging traditions, seven young artists and writers: John Everett Millais, William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Michael Rossetti, James Collison, Thomas Woolner, and Frederick George Stevens came together in London to create their own style. They highly admired and drew inspiration from the art of the Middle Ages, that of the time before Raphael, and therefore called themselves the *Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood favored a style focused on disciplined study, the precise depiction of nature, and the use of bright colors. Uninspired by the subject matter popular at the Royal Academy, the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood turned to contemporary society and literature for themes. Living during the Industrial Revolution, they were witness to not only the technical advances it brought, but also the harsh social conditions that developed. In addition, they drew inspiration from an array of literary sources including Arthurian legends, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, the Bible, Ancient Mythology, and the contemporary poetry of Byron, Keats, and Tennyson. They combined these sources of influence, creating subject matter that depicted Victorian social conditions in combination with the ideals of medieval chivalry. William Michael Rossetti defined the aims of the Brotherhood as follows:

- 1.) to have genuine ideas to express
- 2.) to study nature attentively, so as to know how to express them
- 3.) to sympathize with what is direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, to the exclusion of what is conventional and self-parading and learned by rote
- 4.) to produce thoroughly good pictures

Society's response to the artwork varied from contempt to admiration. The controversial nature of these pictures resulted in repeated and often vicious criticism from many, including Charles Dickens. However, the celebrated critic John Ruskin championed their cause and credited them with creating a *"school of art nobler than the world has seen for 300 years."*

By the time the brotherhood came to its dissolution around 1853, they had left a mark on the art world. While the Royal Academy continued, many of the artists that followed drew inspiration from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. One such example was William Morris, who led the Arts and Crafts movement. Embracing many of the Brotherhood's ideals, this movement focused on handcrafted objects.

# SAMUEL BANCROFT JR.

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Wilmington industrialist Samuel Bancroft, Jr. was on business in Manchester, England, in 1880 when he was first smitten by Pre-Raphaelite art. It was at the home of an early Pre-Raphaelite patron he visited with his cousin that he saw a painting by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the painter and poet who was at the center of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Bancroft was moved and delighted by the art he saw that day. Bancroft bought his first Rossetti oil painting, *Water Willow*, in 1890, going on to pursue his passion assiduously and thoroughly, until he had a collection that was to become one of the largest in the United States. Bancroft exhibited his collection at the Art Club of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and the Century Club in New York City. At his death in 1915 the collection hung in his home, Rockford, in Wilmington where his family kept it intact.



Portrait of Samuel Bancroft Jr., c. 1909  
Winifred Sandys (1875-1944)  
Watercolor on ivory  
Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935



**Drawing Room, Rockwood**  
Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Pre-Raphaelite Manuscript Collection  
Helen Farr Sloan Library, Delaware Art Museum

The Delaware Art Museum's collection of Pre-Raphaelite art was donated by Samuel Bancroft's family in 1935 to what was then the Wilmington Society of Fine Arts (the predecessor to the Delaware Art Museum). Along with the art works the family donated land for the museum. Today the **Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Collection**, enhanced by notable additions over the years, consists of approximately 200 paintings, prints, drawings and decorative arts. The diverse works illustrate well the hauntingly beautiful women, rich colors and extraordinary attention to detail for which Pre-Raphaelite paintings are known, and they are a testament to Bancroft's connoisseurship, his passion for beauty and his true collector's vision.



# LIFE IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

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Victoria became queen of Great Britain in 1837. Her reign was the longest in English history, lasting until 1901. This period is called the Victorian Age. During the Victorian Age, great economic, social, and political changes occurred in Britain. It was under her reign that the British Empire reached its height, taking up about 25 percent of the earth's land. Industry and trade expanded with developments made on the steam engine and the increased amount of railroads and canals. This expansion of industry and trade is known as the Industrial Revolution.

During the Industrial Revolution, extensive mechanization shifted production from home craftsmanship to large-scale factories, causing masses of people to move out of the country into the cities where factory jobs were available. Previously, each item was produced by a skilled individual or in a small workshop; industrialization emphasized standardization and conformity to achieve mass production. Working class families, once accustomed to country life, now lived in crowded quarters in cities made dirty and unhealthy by the pollution created by the factories they now depended on for their livelihood.



▼ *Found*, designed 1865; begun 1869 (unfinished)  
Dante Gabriel Rossetti  
Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935



*The Waterfall*, 1853  
John Everett Millais  
Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935

The working and living conditions in the city provoked much comment. Charles Dickens wrote some of the best known criticisms of the terrible conditions he saw because of the progression of the Industrial Revolution in his novels, *Oliver Twist* and *Bleak House*. His images show very clearly how difficult and dangerous life in the city could be. Like Dickens, painters and sculptors were considering specific ways to recapture the simple life and excellence in craftsmanship of a bygone era. These sources converged to influence the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

In *Found* (above, right), Dante Gabriel Rossetti was interested in painting a subject which reflected the world in which he lived. This work represents a young woman who has come to the city to find work. Unable to make an honorable living, she has turned to prostitution, a social problem resulting from England's transition from a rural to metropolitan culture. During this time many young women were forced to turn to prostitution in order to survive.

# LITERARY INFLUENCES

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All of the Pre-Raphaelites shared an intense love of literature. When painters in the group departed from documenting contemporary life, they often turned to the literature of the day for inspiration. William Shakespeare, John Keats, Lord Byron, and Alfred Tennyson as well as legends and folk tales were among the sources the artists favored.

One of the first endeavors of the young PRB was *The Germ*, a periodical in which literature and imagery were combined. In 1848, the group drew up a “List of Immortals”—a document listing personages from history through the present day (whom they graded by a star system) for whom they held the greatest respect. The list was made up in large part of writers including those drawn from the past as well as the present. Their interests in literature were extensive, including the Bible, Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Dante. A great deal of their painted subjects were drawn from their favorite texts.

From early on in his career Rossetti often worked simultaneously on paintings and poems of the same subject. This process would develop over time until he began including passages of the poem on the carefully designed frame depicting the same subject – an approach which has been termed “the double work of art”.

Sometimes Rossetti would start the poem first, while other times he would begin with painting. The paired image and text work together to offer a stronger understanding of Rossetti’s vision for both works and engage the viewers senses of sight and sound.

In the painting *Mnemosyne* (above), Rossetti depicts the female Titan from Greek mythology. She is the goddess of memory and the mother of the muses, nine daughters who represent different aspects of the arts and humanities. As always the case in Rossetti’s double works, the inscription on the frame reinforces the theme conveyed in the image:

*Thou fillst’ from the winged chalice of the soul  
Thy lamp, O Memory, fire-winged to its goal*



*Mnemosyne*, 1881  
Dante Gabriel Rossetti  
Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935

# THE ARTS & CRAFTS MOVEMENT

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John Ruskin, an artist and very influential art critic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, praised the work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and encouraged their detailed descriptions of the natural world, encouraging them to “go to Nature...rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, scorning nothing.” Ruskin also strongly advocated turning back the clock to medieval times, when the worker was a craftsman and contributed to the quality of life in his community. Inspired by the writings of Ruskin and the art of the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris, an artist and writer, similarly urged a return to medieval traditions of artistic design and craftsmanship.

Knowledgeable and enthusiastic about medieval art, Morris had great interest in designing useful objects in a medieval. Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, young students at Oxford University at the time, were so excited upon viewing Rossetti’s art that they switched their studies from divinity to art—Morris to architecture and Burne-Jones to painting. Morris and Burne-Jones rented a flat at Red Lion Square, London, which was formerly occupied by Rossetti. Morris ordered a suite of furniture from a local cabinetmaker, which were based on his own designs. Included in the order was a pair of chairs, which he and Rossetti decorated together. Such collaboration was an aspect of the medieval guild system that both artists admired and

wished to imitate. *The Arming of a Knight* chair (right) was based on Morris’ poem “Sir Galahad: A Christmas Mystery” (1858). The scene depicts a medieval woman bestowing her glove upon a knight.



*The Arming of a Knight*, 1857-1858  
William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti  
Acquired through the Bequest of Doris  
Wright Anderson and through the F. V. du  
Pont Acquisition Fund, 1997.

In 1861 he started a firm, Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co. in partnership with many of the Pre-Raphaelite like Rossetti and Ford Madox. He trained fabricators to a high level of craftsmanship, revolutionizing the design of interior furnishings and reintroducing the concept of the artist-craftsman and the dignity that could be found in everyday work.

Morris & Company (as the company was later renamed under the sole proprietorship of Morris) employed the designs of artists in the production of a variety of household objects including stained glass, jewelry, wall paper, and ceramics. Morris’ utilization of of designers and artist/craftsmen was modeled on the Meieval guild system. The long range influence of Morris & Company can be seen in the Arts and Crafts Movement that flourished in England as well as in Europe and the United States at the turn of the century. Reacting to the negative aspects of the Industrial Revolution—poor working conditions, pollution, and poverty. The Arts and Crafts Movement celebrated individual design and craftsmanship.



# SYMBOLISM & THE AESTHETIC MOVEMENT

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Many Pre-Raphaelite paintings contain more information than first meets the eye. Often certain objects stand for, or represent, a quality beyond what it actually is. Just as we understand a four-leaf clover as a symbol of good luck, the Pre-Raphaelite artists used objects in their paintings to represent particular ideas related to the narrative.

We can see many of these symbols at play in Ford Madox Brown's *Romeo and Juliet*:

- Red = Love, passion
- Crosses (balcony) = Sacrifice, death
- Black = Death
- Apple blossoms = Spring, young love, hope
- Sword = Protection, courage



*Romeo and Juliet*, 1868-1870

Ford Madox Brown

Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Memorial, 1935

## The Aesthetic Movement



*The Green Butterfly*,  
c. 1879-1881

Albert Moore

Samuel and Mary R.

Bancroft Memorial, 1935

As the original artists of the P.R.B. matured, subtle stylistic changes began to appear in their work. Although they still held many of the views which had originally brought them together, each became more confident in expressing their individuality. In addition, the circle expanded. By the late 1860s, new artists, including Edward Burne-Jones, Simeon Solomon, and Albert Moore were introduced into the Pre-Raphaelite coterie, bringing fresh influences and issues to the table. One aspect of this influx of new ideas was what is now referred to as the "Aesthetic Movement," prevalent in the 1870s through the 1890s. Like Pre-Raphaelitism, it was derived from the values of both artists and writers, the most prominent proponents being James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). In the visual arts this style was grounded in a desire to move away from the sentimental narratives of the early Victorian period. Instead, these artists chose to focus on images of "beauty" with little or no "storyline," a response, to some extent to the French critic Theophile Gautier's appeal for an "art for art's sake." In the work of these painters, many of them Pre-Raphaelite, color harmony, the beauty of form and compositional balance took precedence over narrative.

# CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

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This information can be taught before and/or after a visit to a museum. Please adapt the information and activities to the grade level, ability, and learning styles of your students. Teachers may find some of them more suitable than others for meeting specific classroom goals. These materials may be reproduced for educational purposes.

## ALL LEVELS

**Visual Thinking Strategies**—Sometimes artwork is off-putting, sometimes it looks complicated, and sometimes it looks like a child could have made it. In order to break down students’ pre-conceptions or misconceptions use the screencast tutorial on VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies) to help you and your students feel confident about discussing new art, or discussing art at all! This is especially helpful for use in non-art classrooms.

**Visual Analysis**—Using works of art from E-Museum, have students discuss the basic elements of art. Examining the artist’s use of line, color, shape, space, light, and texture encourages students to look beyond the image itself to the ways in which it was painted.

## ELEMENTARY

**Understanding Symbols**—Just as we understand a four-leaf clover as a symbol of good luck, the Pre-Raphaelite artists used objects in their paintings to represent particular ideas related to the narrative. They had a whole language of flowers, colors, and objects that they incorporated into their paintings. This use of symbolic language was meant to intensify the meaning of the work to those who viewed it. Discuss symbolism associated with flowers, colors, and everyday objects around the home or classroom. Have students make a coat of arms using symbols which tell about their family. Look at several Pre-Raphaelite paintings and have students locate items of symbolism. Is there any relevance to the placement or size of the symbols?

**Narrative writing**—Art is a wonderful way to inspire student’s writing. Show students a work of art from the Pre-Raphaelite collection via E-Museum that tells a story (*Romeo and Juliet*, *The Council Chamber*). Have them examine the image closely and write down interesting features and details they notice. Using their list of details as a guide, students will write an original story related to what they see in the picture. Primary grade levels can focus on details and sequencing, while higher grade levels can use this activity to develop plot, character, and setting in their narrative writing.

**Stained-Glass Creations**—Morris & Company produced a variety of decorative and useful objects, and they were regularly commissioned to create works of stained glass. Have students celebrate the individual design and craftsmanship of the Arts and Crafts movement by creating their own unique “stained glass” designs using colored cellophane and black construction paper.

**Observing Nature**—Artist and art critic John Ruskin encouraged the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood to “go to Nature...rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, scorning nothing.” Give students a blank piece of paper and have them draw a line down the middle. On the first half, they will draw a leaf from memory. Next,

give them a leaf from outside and have them draw what they see on the other half of the paper. Have them observe the leaf closely (Is it smooth? Are there points? What patterns do the veins make?) Have students write a compare and contrast of their two leaf drawings. How was drawing from imagination different from drawing from nature, and what new things have they learned by the latter?

## SECONDARY

**Craft versus mass produced**—Have students bring in two objects, one hand crafted and one mass produced. Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting how it was made and the positive and negatives involved in the production of their objects.

**List of Immortals**—The seven members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood signed a document in 1848 which they called the “List of Immortals.” This document listed a variety of artistic and literary figures that inspired them. Have the students select one name from the List of Immortals to research. In which ways might this figure encompass the aims of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood?

**Double work of art**—In 1848, Dante Gabriel Rossetti began creating what is now called a double work of art. In his double works, the paired image and text work together to offer a stronger understanding of Rossetti’s vision for both works. Have students select one of Rossetti’s paintings (see E-Museum) and have them create a poem inspired by the painting.

**Industrial Revolution**—The Pre-Raphaelites were very concerned with the changes in society brought about by the increasing mechanization of the Industrial Revolution. They questioned the effects that city life, factory work, and an increased distancing from nature were having on people around them. Have students do additional research on the Industrial Revolution, selecting one aspect that they would like to report on to the rest of their classmates. Each student will write an article on their topic, with all articles compiled to form a class newsletter on the Industrial Revolution.

**Literary inspirations**—All of the Pre-Raphaelites shared an intense love of literature, and often turned to their favorite authors for inspiration, including writers such as William Shakespeare and John Keats. Have students select one of the following paintings to study in closer detail by reading the literary passages that inspired it. How has each artist captured the author’s words in their painting?

Painting: *Romeo and Juliet*, Ford Madox Brown (1869-1870)  
Literature: *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare

Painting: *The Council Chamber*, Edward Burne-Jones (1872-1892)  
Literature: “The Day Dream,” Lord Alfred Tennyson

Painting: *The Prioress’s Tale*, Edward Burne-Jones (1872-1892)  
Literature: *Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer

**The P.R.B. and “The Eight”**—The Delaware Art Museum is renowned for its collection of Pre-Raphaelite art as well as its collection of works by John Sloan, an American artist of the early 20th century who was a member of “The Eight.” Also known as the “Ashcan School,” this group of artists was interested in depicting everyday city life in their art. Have students research the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and The Eight. How are these two groups of artists similar? How are they different?

# GLOSSARY

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## **Academic**

A general term for artworks that seem to be based upon rules set up by some person or group other than the artist. Artists created academic artworks by following established, traditional rules emphasized by leaders of European art schools or academies in the 1700s and 1800s.

## **Aesthetic Movement**

A late 19th-century English movement which advocated a philosophy of “art for art’s sake.”

## **Arts and Crafts Movement (1880-1914)**

The Arts and Crafts Movement began in England from an awareness of the need to preserve qualities of design and craftsmanship, in the face of increasing industrialization and mass production. Led by William Morris, it rejected the shoddy standards of mass production and the fussy and over-elaborate designs that had become popular.

## **Chivalry**

The system, spirit, or customs held by medieval knighthood including the qualities of the ideal knight, such as bravery, honor, protection of the weak and generous treatment of the enemy.

## **Crafts**

Works of art, decorative or useful, that are skillfully made by hand.

## **Industrial Revolution (c. 1760-1840)**

Refers to the time period during which many processes were transitioned from hand-powered to mechanized processes. This contributed to greater production, factories, and new jobs—the negatives of the revolution included increased pollution, mass migration to cities, and poor working conditions.

## **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**

A name adopted by group of English artists in 1848 to show their admiration for the early Italian Renaissance painters that existed prior to the artist Raphael. They created a style of art which advocated the disciplined study and precise rendering of the natural world, the use of bright colors, and the use of literary sources. Their artwork looked back to the romance of medieval chivalry, while documenting contemporary Victorian social issues.

## **Renaissance (1400-1600)**

French for “Rebirth.” A period that began in Italy after the Middle Ages. The period was marked by a renewed interest in ancient Greek and Roman culture, the study of human beings and their environment, as well as science and philosophy.

## **Romance**

A prose or poetical tale of imagination, adventure, chivalry, etc., such as the tales of King Arthur: so called because written originally in the Romantic dialects. Also the class or style of fictional works about idealized love.

## **Royal Academy**

A society founded in London in 1768, under the patronage of King George III, to encourage painting, sculpture, and design in England.

# LIST OF IMMORTALS

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At the inaugural meeting of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (September 1848), Rossetti and Holman Hunt had created a document which would be signed by all seven members. Known as the List of Immortals, this document listed figures that inspired them, and which they graded by a star system (none to four). The list had the following one-sentence preamble:

*We, the undersigned, declare that the following list of Immortals constitutes the whole of our Creed, and that there exists no other Immortality than what is centered in their names and in the names of their contemporaries, in whom this list is reflected—*

Jesus Christ****	
The Author of Job***	
Shakespeare***	
Homer** Dante** Chaucer** Leonardo da Vinci** Goethe** Keats**	Shelley** Landor** Thackeray** Washington** Browning** Alfred**
Boccaccio* Fra Angelico* Mrs. Browning* Patmore*	Raphael* Longfellow* The Author of <i>Stories after Nature</i> * Tennyson*
Pheidias Early Gothic Architects Cavalier Pugliesi Rienzi Ghiberti Spenser Hogarth Flaxman Hilton Kosciusko Byron Wordsworth Haydon Cervantes Isaiah Joan of Arc Michael Angelo	Early English Balladists Giovanni Bellini Giorgioni Titian Tintoretto Poussin Milton Cromwell Hampden Bacon Newton Poe Hood Emerson <u>Leigh Hunt</u> Wilkie Columbus



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