

<http://www.openartsarchive.org/open-arts-objects>

Student handout

Presenter: Dr Emma Barker

Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *A Lady Taking Tea*, oil on canvas, 80 x 100 cm, Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow

<http://www.openartsarchive.org/resource/open-arts-objects-chardin-woman-taking-tea-1735-hunterian-art-gallery-glasgow>

A Lady Taking Tea by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin (1699-17) is considered to be one of the greatest works of this French eighteenth-century artist. Most of Chardin's output consists of still-life paintings, though he did also paint a small number of figure paintings. His work has been greatly admired by many modern painters from Édouard Manet to Lucian Freud. In 2005, *A Lady Taking Tea* was voted Scotland's second favourite painting by readers of *The Herald* newspaper.

Before watching the film

1. What do you know about French art, either of the eighteenth century or the nineteenth? Does this picture remind you of any others you have seen?

2. What do you think this picture depicts or represents? Can you identify any recognisable elements (figures, objects, etc.)? Describe what you see on the screen (you might also consider the scale of the work and how a viewer might interact with it).

3. What kind of picture is this? Do you have any sense of the media or materials out of which it was made?

4. What do you think the point or purpose of this picture might have been at the time it was painted?

After watching the film

1. Is there anything unusual or striking about the scene depicted here? What kind of effect was the artist trying to achieve in this painting?
2. How did Chardin use technical and formal means (such as medium, scale, format, line, tone, colour) to achieve this effect?
3. Does it have a recognisable purpose or function? Does this relate to the historical period in which it was made?
4. What sense do you now have of French art of this period? Do you feel you understand why Chardin's work has been admired by so many modern painters?
5. What is its relevance for today?

Online Activity

Read a short article about tea drinking in the eighteenth century (<https://qmhistoryoftea.wordpress.com/2015/04/28/on-looking-at-tea/>) and think about how the information it provides adds to your understanding of Chardin's painting.

Bibliography

Juliet Carey, ed., *Taking Time: Chardin's Boy Building a House of Cards and Other Paintings*, Waddesdon Manor, The National Trust in association with Paul Holberton Publishing, London, 2012 (*A Lady Taking Tea* is Cat. No. 5)

Anne Dulau, ed., *Boucher & Chardin : Masters of Modern Manners*, Hunterian Gallery, University of Glasgow in association with Paul Holberton, London, 2008 (exhibition centred on *A Lady Taking Tea* and François Boucher's, *Lady on a Daybed*)

Chardin, London, Royal Academy of Arts and New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000.

Resources online

Short talk by Peter Black, curator at The Hunterian, on Chardin's *Lady Taking Tea*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIBWJFJwNJQ>

Information about *A Lady Taking Tea* on University of Glasgow Museums website

<http://collections.gla.ac.uk/#details=ecatalogue.36445>. Same information available at

<https://vads.ac.uk/large.php?uid=201272>

Information on three paintings by Chardin in the National Gallery, London:

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/jean-simeon-chardin-the-house-of-cards>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/jean-simeon-chardin-the-young-schoolmistress>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/jean-simeon-chardin-la-fontaine-the-water-cistern>

Comparative analysis

Fill out the table below, considering the following elements: date, subject matter, material, location, function, formal qualities. Use the empty boxes to comment on any other formal qualities or aspects of the works you would like to note.

Use the middle column to write down the information related to *A Lady Taking Tea*, and the right column for the information related to Édouard Manet's *A Bar at the Folies Bergère*, 1881, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm, Courtauld Institute of Art, London (you can find more information about the painting here:

<http://courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/collection/impressionism-post-impressionism/edouard-manet-a-bar-at-the-folies-bergere>)

Works of art	Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, <i>A Lady Taking Tea</i>, oil on canvas, 80 x 100 cm	Édouard Manet's <i>A Bar at the Folies Bergère</i>, 1881, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm
Date		
Material		
Size/scale		
Subject matter		
Composition		
Picture space		
Viewpoint		
Pose, gesture and expression		
Colour, light and shade		
Handling of paint		
Overall effect		
Function/history		