

# NGV KIDS



## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Introducing *Australian Impressionism* to children

Over 100 years ago Tom Roberts returned to Melbourne from Europe. He travelled by ship.



While overseas he learnt how to paint outdoors. He wanted to show the different times of day in his paintings. He also became interested in painting ordinary people.

What time of day do you think it is in this painting?

How are these people passing time on the long sea voyage?

**Tom Roberts**  
*Coming South* 1886  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Colonel Aubrey Gibson in memory of John and Anne Gibson, settlers (1887), 1967

Frederick McCubbin lived and painted life in Melbourne. He painted in detail where people lived.



Find a clue in this painting that tells us something about how people lived in Melbourne over 100 years ago.

In other pictures, he painted ...

- people at work
- people at leisure
- the city

**Frederick McCubbin**  
*Kitchen at the old King Street bakery*  
1884 (detail)  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide  
M. J. M Carter, AO, Collection, 1992



Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin and Arthur Streeton camped and painted in the bush at Box Hill on the outskirts of Melbourne.



The men camped overnight so that they could paint outside in the open air from sunrise to sunset. They captured in paint the light and mood throughout the day.

They exchanged ideas about painting and art and they learnt from each other.

**They painted in the ...**

- morning
- noon
- afternoon
- evening

Tom Roberts  
*The artists' camp* (1886) (detail)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Felton Bequest, 1943

Jane Sutherland would sometimes visit the Box Hill camp and paint with them.



The children in the paintings look small surrounded by the gum trees, which reach from the bottom of the canvas to the top.

What could these children be talking about?

**Notice that when people are included, the paintings begin to tell a story.**

**Look closely (but don't touch!) at the brush marks in the paintings. What do you see?**

**Stand back from the paintings. What do you see?**

Jane Sutherland  
*Little gossips* (1888) (detail)  
Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth



Charles Conder joined the artists in Melbourne. Together they have become known as the Australian Impressionists and their art as Australian Impressionism.



Charles Conder was visiting Richmond NSW. He also painted outside, capturing the moment in paint. He used bright, bold colours.

Some of Charles Conder's pictures tell a funny story.

Make up a story to match this painting.

**Charles Conder**  
*An early taste for literature* 1888 (detail)  
Ballarat Fine Art Gallery, Victoria  
Mary Helen Keep Bequest, 1944

On sunny days the Australian Impressionists painted the beach at Mentone, Melbourne.



This beach scene is peaceful, with people relaxing by the sea.

In other paintings, you can see people at the beach ...

- boating
- walking
- reading
- sun bathing

How do people dress and relax on the beach today?

**Frederick McCubbin**  
*The shore* 1887  
(also known as *Moyes Bay, Beaumaris*) (detail)  
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth  
Purchased with funds from the Great Australian Paintings Appeal with funds presented by the Swan Brewery Co. Ltd, 1978



Tom Roberts and Charles Conder painted together at Coogee Bay near Sydney.



Find and compare Tom Roberts' and Charles Conder's paintings ...

- Name 2 things that are the same
- Name 2 things that are different

Arthur Streeton also painted at the same place.

Can you find his painting?

**Charles Conder**  
*Coogee Bay 1888* (detail)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased with the assistance of a special grant from the Government of Victoria, 1979

In Heidelberg near Melbourne the artists found a new place to paint landscapes overlooking orchards, paddocks and the Yarra River.



This painting is full of blue and gold, capturing the bright light and heat of a summer's day.

How many sheep are standing in the shade?

The Australian Impressionists painted the seasons.

Look closely and match a painting to each season ...

- Summer
- Autumn
- Winter
- Spring

**Arthur Streeton**  
*Golden summer, Eaglemont 1889* (detail)  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased, 1995



People paid Tom Roberts very well to paint their portraits in his city studio.



Ethel Chapman, dressed in her best blue dress, sat with her dog in front of one of the Japanese screens he kept in his studio. She had to be very still while he painted her picture.

Why do you think this painting is called *Blue eyes and brown*?

What would you wear if you were having your portrait painted?

Tom Roberts  
*Blue eyes and brown* (1887, dated 1888) (detail)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1960

The Australian Impressionists believed these small paintings were very important as they captured the moment — the light, time, season, mood and action in an instant.



The name of this painting is *How we lost poor Flossie*.

How do you think they lost Flossie the dog?

These small paintings are called '9 by 5s'. Find out why.

Charles Conder  
*How we lost poor Flossie* (1889) (detail)  
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide  
Elder Bequest Fund, 1941



Sydney was an exciting city to visit and paint.



Circular Quay was very busy with boats ferrying people all around Sydney Harbour.

How many different types of boats can you find in the paintings?

In some paintings the strong sunshine, colourful shadows and reflections in the clear blue water are captured using brightly coloured paint.

Notice all the different colours used to paint the rocky shores.

Arthur Streeton  
*Circular Quay* 1892 (detail)  
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased, 1958

Jane Sutherland painted quiet, calm landscapes. The horizon, the place where the sky meets the land, blurs in the distance.



She often placed a figure in her landscapes.

What could these children be looking for?

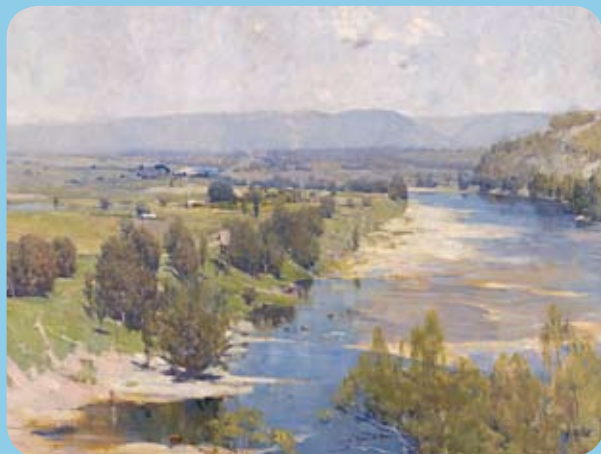
Imagine the sounds of the people at work or play.

Imagine the silence of the landscape.

Jane Sutherland  
*Field naturalists* (c.1896) (detail)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Mrs E. H. Shackell, 1962



Sitting on a hill shaded from the hot sun,  
Arthur Streeton painted this scene in a day.



#### Arthur Streeton's landscapes

- are painted with broad, flat brush marks
- often have a road, track or river leading to the horizon
- usually have a distant horizon
- usually have a large amount of sky
- are painted from a distance or up high

Arthur Streeton  
*'The purple noon's transparent might'* 1896 (detail)  
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased, 1896

The Australian Impressionists were proud to tell  
stories of colonial Australia.



They used all that they had learnt about painting  
to tell stories of ...

- hard working men, shearing sheep in the heat of the day
- swagmen wandering the countryside looking for work
- the day the stagecoach was robbed by bushrangers
- pioneer women and their families

Can you make up your own stories to match  
the paintings?

Tom Roberts  
*Bailed up* 1895, 1927 (detail)  
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney  
Purchased, 1933



## Gallery Hours

### NGV International

180 St Kilda Road, Melbourne

Open daily 10am–5pm

Closed Tuesdays

### The Ian Potter Centre:

#### NGV Australia

Federation Square, Melbourne

Open daily 10am–5pm

Closed Mondays

## COVER

### Frederick McCubbin

*The shore* 1887

(also known as *Moyes Bay*,  
*Beaumaris*) (detail)

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

Purchased with funds from the Great

Australian Paintings Appeal with funds

presented by the Swan Brewery Co.

Ltd, 1978

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