

Blandford Art Society: December 2020 home quiz

Paintings with Hidden meanings

Quiz written by Neil Houghton

A small image of each painting is included in the quiz. I suggest you look at a larger image by putting the name of the artist into Yahoo or Google or whatever search engine you use followed by the word "Images". Then click on the image to examine closely.

1. John Millais – 'Christ in the Workshop of his Parents' at Tate Britain, London



The painting is full of iconography i.e. objects which have a significant meaning. There also some actions which have a meaning too. How many can you spot and what are their significance? Some are more obvious than others.

2. Michelino – 'Dante holding a copy of the Divine Comedy' on the wall of Florence Cathedral



What is the significance of the "layers" in the sky and the circular mountain in the centre?

3. Picasso – ‘Verre et bouteille de Suze’ at the Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art, USA



What is the significance of each element of this collage? Almost everything in it has a meaning or contributes to the overall scene.

4. William Holman Hunt – ‘The Shadow of Death’ at Leeds Art Gallery, UK



This painting prefigures a significant event but what iconography is included?

5. Angelo Bronzino – ‘Venus and Cupid’ at the National Gallery, London



This was painted as a visual puzzle for erudite viewers of the Medici family and their visitors. What is the overall meaning of the iconography in the painting?

6. Titian – ‘Bacchus and Ariadne’ at the National Gallery, London



Which mythological story is illustrated here?

7. Hans Holbein – ‘The Ambassadors’ at the National Gallery, London



What is the significance of the objects between the Ambassadors? What is the possible explanation of why Holbein painted the anamorphous skull at a strange angle? What event of British history was taking place during the painting?

8. How do you recognise the following saints and Biblical characters in paintings, sculpture, and stained-glass windows? They are usually are carrying or wearing some identifying object or costume, or involved in a particular action.

- St Catherine
- Saint Jerome
- Saint Francis
- John the Baptist
- St Peter
- Saint Cecilia
- Saint Sebastian
- Saint Paul
- Doubting Thomas
- Judas