

The Courtauld

Create your own Great Portrait Makeover



↑ Peter Paul Rubens, *The Family of Jan Brueghel the Elder*, Around 1613–15, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld



↑ Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882, oil on canvas, 96 x 130 cm, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust) © The Courtauld

In this mask making activity you will create your own fun mask to wear. First find some portraits for inspiration by doing The Great Portrait Makeover Trail, which you can pick up at the ticket desk when you arrive or [download](#) and use with our [virtual tour](#) at home.

Looking at a portrait is a good way to explore the identity of a person (the sitter), the artist who created the work and the era they both lived.

The Courtauld Gallery has many portraits - some are nearly 600 years old! On the trail, you will have found *The Family of Jan Brueghel the Elder* painted by Peter Paul Rubens over 400 years ago. You will also have found Édouard Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, painted in 1882. Which of The Courtauld's many portraits do you find most interesting and why?

Over the centuries, there are many reasons why people have had portraits made. Sometimes it was to demonstrate wealth, status or power and the costumes, poses, props and settings were a way of showing these off. Remember, portraits are not necessarily a truthful representation, perhaps like social media today?

In the later 19th century, there was a break with tradition as Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists began to paint people from more humble backgrounds. The expressions of the sitter and the emotions conveyed by the artist, through use of different techniques and colours, can give us a window into the personalities and feelings of both.

Look carefully at all the clues portraits give and form your own opinions.

A Closer Look:

Before making your mask, use the questions below to think more about the portraits in our collection. There are no right or wrong answers.

- Look carefully at the sitter's expression – what could they be thinking and feeling?
- Is there anything in the background that tells you more about their life?
- What do the clothes tell you about their character and status?
- What difference have the artist's choice of colour and technique made?
- What would you like to change and how will your makeover achieve this?

Choose your favourite portrait from the images on pages 4 to 8 and inject your personality and identity to give it a proper makeover. Experiment with different techniques and materials. How does this change the look?

Materials:



- Black and white image of your chosen portrait printed to A4 size (on pages 4 to 8).
- Sheet of stiff card – cut a flat sheet from a cardboard box.
- Glue, scissors and tape.
- A stick, garden cane or strip of thick cardboard box card.
- Colouring media for example paints, crayons, felt tips.
- Collage materials – use anything you can find in your cupboards and recycling bin (check with an adult first!!) – tinfoil, bubble wrap, wrapping paper, old magazines and newspapers.
- Ribbons, sequins, beads, buttons, wool, cotton wool, feathers.



Step 1:

Stick your chosen portrait onto thick card from a cardboard box.



Step 2:

Decorate using your chosen materials. Give it a proper makeover and be as wild as you like!



Step 3:

Cut around the edge of your portrait.



Step 4:

Attach your stick or some stiff card to the back using tape.

Well done! Your mask is ready to use!! You can make more with family or friends and use them to tell stories or perform a play.











