

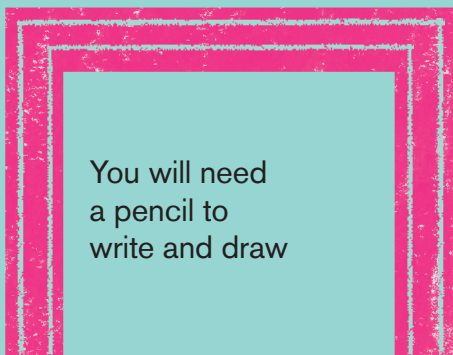
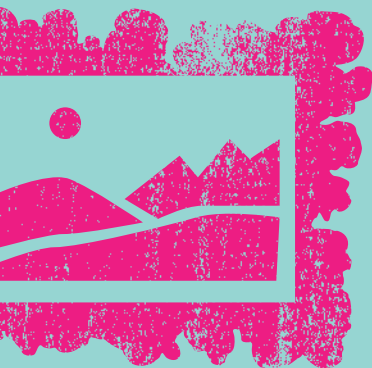
# RA

Royal Academy of Arts

## Art Detectives

A guide for  
young visitors

Art Detectives are supported  
by the Flow Foundation



You will need  
a pencil to  
write and draw

## Introduction

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Giovanni Battista Moroni was one of the greatest portraitists of 16th-century Italy. He is not very well known, but is now considered to be an underrated genius of his time. This is mostly due to his amazing ability to capture his subjects realistically, but also to get across something of their personality and emotions. The works in this exhibition range from the colourful and glittering portraits of fashionable aristocrats, to religious altarpieces and finally to more sober and insightful paintings created towards the end of his life.

**Let's explore...**

# Section 1. Moroni's teacher: Moretto



Find number 1:  
*Madonna and Child on a Throne, 1536–7*  
Oil on canvas

The son of a stonemason, Moroni was taught by a now little-known 16th-century painter, Alessandro Bonvicino, known as Moretto. Moretto greatly influenced Moroni's style and development as a painter.

In this altarpiece by Moretto, there are six figures: Jesus and Mary, and the saints Eusebia, Andrew, Domneone and Domno. Moretto has cleverly created relationships between the six figures using only their gaze – the way they are looking at each other. Who is gazing at who?

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Three of the figures are holding an object, which in religious art shows that they are a martyr (someone who chooses to suffer death rather than give up their beliefs). Can you see what that object is?

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## Section 2. Early works



Find number 13:

*Portrait of Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi, 1557*

Oil on canvas

This is a portrait by Moroni of a woman called Lucrezia Vertova Agliardi, an elderly widow. The inscription on the marble plaque on which she rests tells us that she founded the church of Sant'Anna at Albini, 1557.

Choose some words from the selection below that best describe how this woman looks to you:

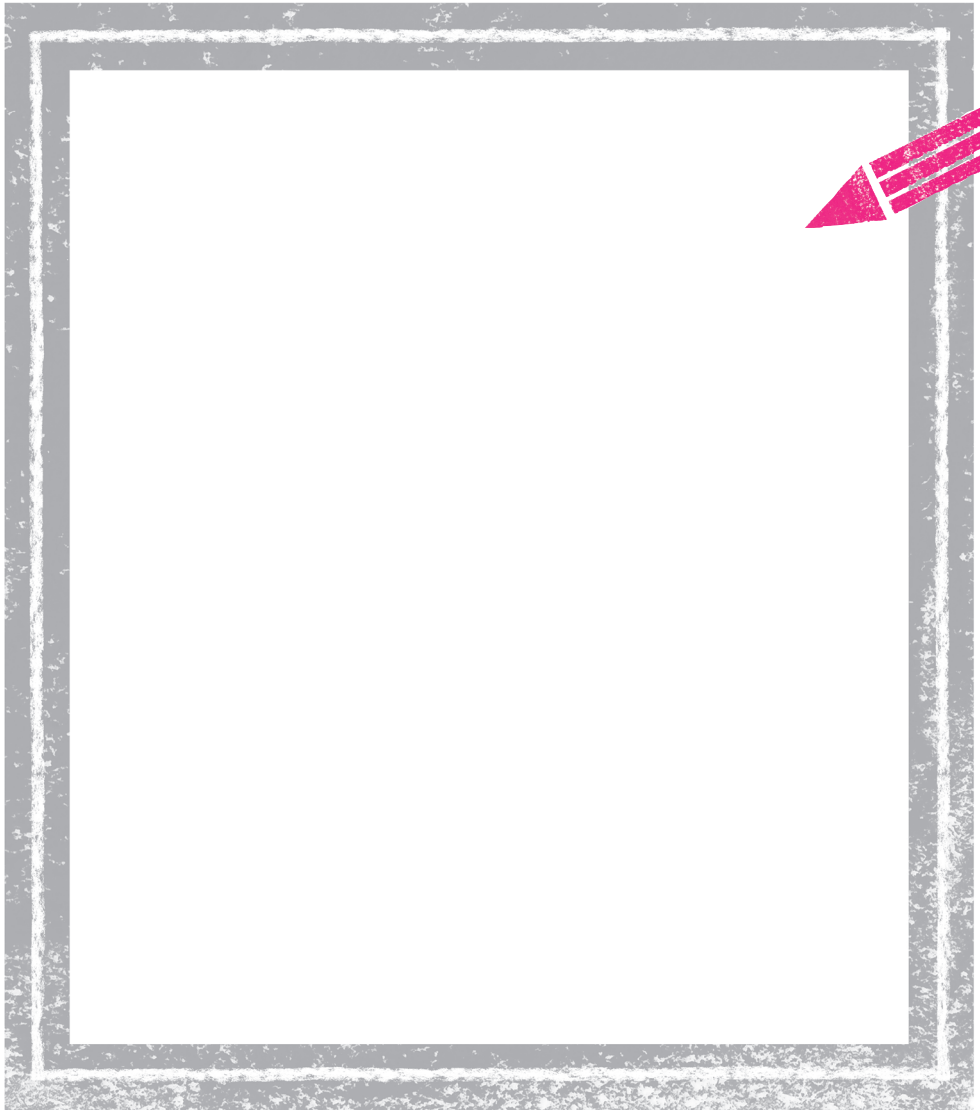
Noble Nice Old Sad

Religious Rich Thoughtful

Respectable Ugly Poor

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Draw your own portrait in the space below. Think about what you would wear, and how you would pose! Would you smile and look friendly, or would you want to seem cool and aloof? Don't forget the background and any objects or symbols you might want to include...



### Section 3. Aristocratic portraits



Find number 14:  
*Portrait of Faustino Avogadro (The Knight with the Wounded Foot),*  
c. 1555–60, Oil on canvas

Moroni was the favourite portrait painter in his home region of Bergamo, and painted portraits of many members of the local aristocracy. Most of the sitters were very wealthy and fashion-conscious.

Did you know: The man in this portrait died in 1564 after falling down a well when completely drunk!

This young man is typical of Moroni's aristocratic portraits. What do his clothes tell us about him? Does he seem wealthy? Why?

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Why do you think his armour is shown scattered around him?

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This painting is titled 'The Knight with a Wounded Foot'. Which foot is hurt? How can you tell it is wounded?

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Find number 16:  
*Portrait of Isotta Brembati*,  
c. 1553  
Oil on canvas

Describe the expression on the subject's face. What are her clothes like? Do they tell us anything about her? Describe the background (you might like to think about the use of colour and space).

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Is this a woman you would like to meet? Tell us why.

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The woman in this painting was actually married to 'The Man in Pink', Giovanni Gerolamo Grumelli (next to her, Cat. 17). Can you tell they are married by looking at their portraits? Why or why not?

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# Section 4. Portraits from nature



Find number 26:  
*Portrait of a Lateran Canon, c. 1558*  
Oil on canvas

Moroni's portraits have been described as 'so true, so simple, so realistic, they instantly make us feel that we know the sitters'. He made sure to show his sitters as they looked in real life – warts and all.

This man has a slightly strange expression on his face. How would you describe it?

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What can we discover about a person just by looking at his or her portrait? What do you think we can learn about this man?

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# Section 4. Altarpieces



Find number 32:  
*The Last Supper*,  
1566–69, Oil on canvas

Moroni produced many compelling altarpieces in the 1570s.

Moroni has used standard or 'stock' figures and replicated their profiles in this image. Can you find where he has used the same face more than once? What are they?

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Describe the colours and textures of the clothing worn by the Apostles.

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# Section 6. Late portraits



Find number 36:  
*Portrait of a Tailor, c. 1570*  
Oil on canvas

Moroni's late portraits tend to be simple and elegant, though not necessarily of aristocrats – he also painted the comfortably off artisan class. In fact, he was revolutionary in challenging established ideas of who should be depicted in art – and how.

In 16th century Italy, portraits were usually only made of the aristocracy, so the portrayal of a tradesman, and one at work, would have been shocking. What clues does Moroni give us about what this man's job was?

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Describe the expression of the man. How does he make you feel?

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Do you get the sense that you have interrupted the Tailor at work? How has the artist achieved this feeling?

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Find numbers 41 and 42:

*Portrait of Giovanni Gerolamo Albani, and  
Portrait of an Elderly Man*

We finish with two portraits  
of two elderly men, painted  
by Moroni towards the end of  
his life.

What are the similarities and differences between the two  
men? Think about their poses, their clothes and objects.

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In the thought bubble below, write a short explanation  
or 'caption' of what you imagine the thoughts of either of  
these men to be!



Written by  
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Designed by  
Kathrin Jacobsen

If you would like to see your drawings on the RA website, please hand in your completed Art Detective at the Reception Desk. Alternatively, if you would like to work on your picture at home and send it to us later, you can post it to:

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