



M. A. Caravaggio - P. Sciarra



Titian - M. Pitti

COPIES OF CARRAVAGGIO'S "THE CARDSHARPS" AND TITIAN'S "LA BELLA" BY HARRIET CARR, ABOUT 1793

REFERENCE: | SUGGESTED AGE GROUPS: KS2, KS3, KS4,
LIFELONG LEARNERS | PORTRAITURE, MASTER PAINTINGS, THE
GRAND TOUR, ARTS & CULTURE

THE GRAND TOUR

During the 18th and 19th century, it was fashionable for wealthy British families to send their sons, and occasionally daughters, on a Grand Tour. This saw privileged young men and women setting off usually from London to travel across Europe. The tourists were affluent enough to spend multiple years on the Tour. They would often carry letters of introduction with them to integrate into society while abroad.

JOHN AND HARRIET CARR

John Carr (1764-1817) and Harriet Carr (1771-1848) were siblings who set out on their Grand Tour in 1791, returning to England in 1794. They were the children of successful northern businessman Ralph Carr and his wife Isabella.



Northumberland
County Council

NORTHUMBERLAND
archives



Ralph and Isabella were initially against Harriet going on the Grand Tour but eventually gave their approval because it was thought that the tour would benefit Harriet's health – she had a cough thought to be tuberculosis. Some of their objections were around fears of the political situation in Europe and potential dangers to travellers. John and Harriet's ultimate destination was Italy, travelling via France and Switzerland.

John and Harriet spent almost six months in Rome with short trips to Bologna, Florence, Naples, and Turin. They had planned to leave for England in early 1792 but the outbreak of the Franco-Austrian War prevented this. They returned to Florence in May 1792, staying there until November 1793. In December 1793 John and Harriet made a final visit to Rome before leaving for England and arriving home in the summer of 1794.

HARRIET CARR & ART

Almost all of Harriet's Grand Tour letters include reference to her interest in art and her efforts to improve her own artistic knowledge and skills.

Writing to her mother from Florence on 4th August 1792 (ZCE F/1/1/4/4) Harriet describes how she goes 'to the Gallery (which one does with as much ease as at one's own House) & copy some of the Statues for 2 Hours; the rest of the day is spent in reading, writing, drawing'. The Gallery was the Uffizi, one of the must-see sights for the Grand Tourist in Florence.

In the letter Harriet lists some of the paintings she had made, a combination of copies of paintings she has viewed, places she has visited and portraits of people she has met on the Tour. She makes specific reference to a Titian painting 'Venus blinding Cupid', probably Venus Blindfolding Cupid, now in the Borghese Gallery in Rome.

THE CARDSHARPS

The Cardsharps was painted in around 1594 by Italian Baroque artist Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.



Northumberland
County Council

NORTHUMBERLAND
archives



Caravaggio used everyday people as models, giving his art works a different look to religious paintings and portraits of wealthy influential figures of the time. The painting shows a petty crime scene with the card players engaged in a game of primero. The young man on the left is expensively dressed and likely new to gambling. The young man is engrossed in his cards and is unaware of the older cardsharp in the middle glancing down at his hand and signalling to his accomplice on the right. The fingertips of the older cardsharp's gloves are cut off, possibly to better feel marked cards. The younger cardsharp on the right has a dagger tucked into his belt and upon the signal is reaching for a hidden card behind his back.

LA BELLA

Titian is regarded as one of the greatest painters of 16th century Venice. Over his long career he experimented with many different painting styles. La Bella, sometimes known as 'Portrait of a Lady', was painted in around 1536.

The painting is a three-quarter length portrait shows a young woman wearing a fashionable, expensive-looking blue dress. Her garments and accessories are the same as those associated with mature Venetian noble ladies. She has a neutral facial expression and is shown to have the 'ideal' proportions of a Renaissance woman.

Although the model's identity is unknown, it has been suggested that she is the same model who Titian used for his Venus of Urbino (1534) painting.

OTHER ONLINE RESOURCES

CARAVAGGIO

Kimbell Art Museum page about The Cardsharps: <https://kimbellart.org/collection/ap-198706>

Caravaggio page about The Cardsharps: <https://www.caravaggio.org/the-cardsharps.jsp>

Caravaggio biography: <https://www.caravaggio.org/biography.jsp>



Northumberland
County Council

NORTHUMBERLAND
archives



Learning and Educational Archive Resources from Northumberland

National Gallery page about Caravaggio: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/michelangelo-merisi-da-caravaggio>

TITIAN

National Gallery page about Titian: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/titian>

Uffizi Gallery page about La Bella: <https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/portrait-of-a-lady-la-bella>

Kimbell Art Museum page about La Bella: <https://kimbellart.org/exhibition/titians-la-bella>



LEARNING ACTIVITIES: COPIES OF TITIAN'S "LA BELLA" AND CARRAVAGGIO'S "THE CARDSHARPS" BY HARRIET CARR, ABOUT 1793



TOPIC: PORTRAITURE, MASTER PAINTINGS, THE GRANT TOUR, ARTS & CULTURE
SUBJECT AREAS: HISTORY, ART, LITERACY

Background	Activity	Resources
<p>The Cardsharps was painted in around 1594 by Italian Baroque artist Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.</p> <p>Titian is regarded as one of the greatest painters of 16th century Venice. Over his long career he experimented with many different painting styles. La Bella, sometimes known as 'Portrait of a Lady', was painted in around 1536.</p>	<p>See: Who painted The Cardsharps? See: When was The Cardsharps painted? See: What is taking place in the painting? See: Who painted La Bella? See: When was La Bella painted? See: What is shown in the painting?</p> <hr/> <p>Think: What is a cardsharp? Think: What is petty crime? Think: Who might each of the men shown in The Cardsharps be? Think: What can the viewer see in the scene that the subjects of the painting cannot? Think: What can the subjects of The Cardsharps see that the viewer cannot?</p>	<p>https://kimbellart.org/collection/ap-198706</p> <p>https://www.caravaggio.org/the-cardsharps.jsp</p> <p>https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/michelangelo-merisi-da-caravaggio</p> <p>https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/titian</p> <p>https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/portrait-of-a-lady-la-bella</p>



	<p>Think: Why did Caravaggio use everyday people as models?</p> <p>Think: Who did Titian use as models?</p> <p>Do: Write a script of the conversation which might have been taking place leading up to the scene shown in The Cardsharps.</p> <p>Do: Write a narrative for what might have happened next.</p> <p>Do: Create an artist's profile for Caravaggio. What were the defining characteristics, themes, and styles of his art?</p> <p>Do: Create an artist's profile for Titian. What were the defining characteristics, themes, and styles of his art?</p> <p>Do: Research La Bella. In groups, debate who the model might have been.</p> <p>Do: Research Renaissance idealised beauty standards. Discuss how La Bella fits these ideals.</p> <p>Do: Compare the two paintings. How do the two works differ?</p> <p>Do: Write a critical analysis of The Cardsharps. Think about the artistic and stylistic techniques used in the painting.</p> <p>Do: Write a critical analysis of La Bella. Think about the artistic and stylistic techniques used in the painting.</p>	
<p>Almost all of Harriet's Grand Tour letters include reference to her interest in art and her efforts to</p>	<p>See: How often did Harriet Carr write letters about art while on the Grand Tour?</p> <p>See: What types of artworks did Harriet Carr study and create copies of?</p>	<p>https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/r/replica</p>



<p>improve her own artistic knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Writing to her mother from Florence on 4th August 1792 (ZCE F/1/1/4/4) Harriet describes how she goes 'to the Gallery (which one does with as much ease as at one's own House) & copy some of the Statues for 2 Hours; the rest of the day is spent in reading, writing, drawing'. The Gallery was the Uffizi, one of the must-see sights for the Grand Tourist in Florence.</p>	<p>See: Where did Harriet go to study and copy artworks?</p>	<p>https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/are-replicas-changing-way-we-experience-art-180960224/</p> <p>https://www.suzinassif.com/original-art-vs-replicas</p>
	<p>Think: What is a replica?</p> <p>Think: Why did Harriet study and replicate artworks?</p> <p>Think: What can be learned from replicating artworks?</p> <p>Think: When replicating an artwork, should the artist create a complete copy of the original or create their own interpretation of the original?</p> <p>Think: Did Harriet create a complete replica of the original or a version with her own interpretation?</p>	
	<p>Do: Compare Harriet's paintings to the original versions. What are the similarities and differences?</p> <p>Do: In groups debate whether replicas can be considered as art.</p> <p>Do: Create your own copy of The Cardsharps. This could be a replica or your own interpretation, in any medium.</p> <p>Do: Analyse your copy of The Cardsharps.</p> <p>Do: Create a spider diagram thinking about the types of petty crime that takes place today while travelling, and how people might be targeted.</p> <p>Do: Create an artwork inspired by the points in your spider diagram.</p> <p>Do: Create your own copy of La Bella. This could be a replica or your own interpretation, in any medium.</p>	



Northumberland
County Council

NORTHUMBERLAND
archives



Learning and Educational Archive Resources from Northumberland

Do: Analyse your copy of La Bella.

Do: Create a spider diagram about contemporary ideas around celebrating or rejecting beauty standards in society today.

Do: Create an artwork in response to the points in your spider diagram.