TURNER'S MODERN WORLD

28 October 2020 – 7 March 2021

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This exhibition explores JMW Turner (1775–1851) as an outstanding painter of contemporary life. Spanning his early architectural drawings from the 1790s to the paintings of steam power in the 1840s, it examines what it meant to be a modern artist during Turner's lifetime.

Turner lived through revolutions, the Napoleonic Wars, the violent expansion of empires and the abolition of slavery in British colonies. At the same time, industrial development saw the construction of canals and brought machines to the workplace, while steamships and railways transformed travel.

War, colonialism and industry created immense wealth for British entrepreneurs and industrialists. Turner sold paintings to mining magnates and canal builders. He knew scientists and worked with writers, poets and publishers, who broadened his perspectives. He embraced new processes of print reproduction, which allowed his work to reach wider audiences.

Turner was unusual in depicting such a wide range of modern subjects. As well as embracing conflict and technology as themes, his work explored many social and political causes. As the world around him changed, Turner transformed his painting to capture this new environment. He used luminous colour and innovative techniques. The radical approach to paint and composition in his mature paintings show Turner paying tribute to the transformed world of modern experience.

Entering the room, on the right

Dudley, Worcestershire

1835
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Robert Wallis 1794–1878

Tate. Purchased 1988
Reproduction. Photograph: Sam Day © Tate

Entering the room, clockwise

The Chain Pier, Brighton

c.1828
Oil paint on canvas

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N02064

CHICHESTER CANAL
THE CHAIN PIER, BRIGHTON

Turner's friends and clients encouraged his interest in innovation. The aristocratic collectors who bought his early work were often also canal builders, mining magnates and pioneering agriculturalists. Later, he was supported mainly by wealthy business owners and industrialists.

Turner made these oil sketches for pictures commissioned by the 3rd Earl of Egremont. They depict new infrastructure Egremont supported financially: Chichester Canal and a pier at Brighton.

The canal was intended to join an inland navigation system linking London and the south coast. It opened in 1822 but was little used, as railways transferred most goods. Egremont withdrew his money in 1826.

Brighton's Chain Pier (right) opened in 1823 to serve steamboat traffic. It was more successful than the canal because it was one of the first piers on the south coast. Turner often travelled on steamboats and included them in his work.

Chichester Canal

c.1828

Oil paint on canvas

Tate.

Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00560

THE HERO OF A HUNDRED FIGHTS

Britain's industrial revolution and wars with France set the scene for Turner's life and work. This picture, begun in the 1790s and reworked for exhibition in 1847, registers both industry and warfare.

On the right is an iron-forge, with the cogwheels of a tilt hammer. Turner saw foundries and ironworks on his travels around England and Wales. He reworked the left of the picture 50 years after originally painting it, adding the casting of a statue of the Duke of Wellington. This statue was destined for the Wellington Arch in London. As a veteran soldier and victor at Waterloo in 1815, Wellington was known as a 'hero of a hundred fights'.

Turner's title may be ironic. As a Tory minister and Prime Minister 1828–30, the Duke of Wellington had opposed political reforms favoured by Turner. The statue, by Matthew Cotes Wyatt, was ridiculed for its gigantic size and was soon removed from the arch.

The Hero of a Hundred Fights

c.1800–10; reworked and exhibited 1847

Oil paint on canvas

Tate.

Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856

N00551

ROOM 2
SIGNS OF THE TIMES:
EARLY WORK

Timeline

1789

French Revolution

1793

Great Britain enters French Revolutionary Wars

1794–5

Habeas Corpus suspended 'Gagging Acts' (Treason Act and Seditious Meeting Act)

1796–1806

British iron production doubles to 250,000 tons

1797

British Royal Navy mutinies at Spithead and the Nore

Entering the room, clockwise

2. SIGNS OF THE TIME: EARLY WORK

Turner began studying at the Royal Academy in 1789, the year of the French Revolution. His studies contributed little to his modern outlook. Students drew from antique sculpture and read Greek and Roman history. They were advised to avoid contemporary subjects. After France declared war on Britain in 1793 the British government cracked down on political activism, fearful of another revolution. Many artists were sympathetic to events in France, but rarely drew topical or political themes.

As well as observing the world he saw around him, Turner learned from established artists like his early mentor Philip James de Loutherbourg, who painted contemporary subjects. Glimpses of modern life appeared in Turner's early watercolours of picturesque landscapes and historic buildings. First tentatively, then more confidently, he introduced industrial features like mills and foundries, and made subtle comments on current affairs in paintings of historical events.

Sketches Turner made of urban, industrial and coastal scenes during summer tours around Britain brought contemporary society into sharper focus. These were more than documentary reporting. He recorded machinery, technology and working people, but the 'sublime' spectacle of these new industries also sparked his imagination.

Fishermen Hauling a Boat through Surf on a Windlass

1796–7
Watercolour and gouache on paper

This was possibly drawn on the south coast of England. Turner remained fascinated by this coastline for the rest of his life, especially during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793–1815), when it was a vital national frontier.

Here, fishermen use a windlass to haul their boat ashore. Fisherwomen collect their nets.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D00888

Small Boats beside a Man-o'-War

1796–7
Gouache and watercolour on paper

Turner must have witnessed this scene from a boat. Two small boats alongside a man-of-war bring crew or supplies. A rope ladder has been lowered near two open gun ports and several crewmen watch from the deck.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D00902

Shipwreck on a Rocky Coastline with a Ruined Castle

1792–3
Watercolour and pencil on paper

Much of Turner's early work was topographical, depicting real places and activities. This watercolour is most likely an imagined composition, blending historic and modern features Turner had observed on his sketching tours. On what looks like a stretch of the Welsh coast, a medieval castle is juxtaposed with more recent buildings that resemble the iron-smelting complex at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire.

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester
X76507

Imaginary Landscape with Windsor Castle on a Cliff and a Distant Plain

1794–5
Gouache, graphite and watercolour on paper

This imagined panorama stretches from a river valley to Windsor Castle and the Thames. The large central building might be a cotton-spinning mill like those built by Richard Arkwright at Cromford, Derbyshire. Arkwright's mills were important sites of the Industrial Revolution.

The watercolour presents a prosperous, industrious England. Made after the war with France began, it demonstrates the benefits of peace at a time of increasing hardship, shortages and social unrest. Despite its scale and finish, Turner did not exhibit it. He may have decided against risking an obvious political statement.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D00879

Edinburgh, from Caulton-hill

exhibited 1804
Graphite and watercolour on paper

Turner visited Edinburgh in 1801 and exhibited this watercolour at the Royal Academy in 1804. It shows a city in transition, with the historic Old Town linked by the North Bridge (built 1763–72) to the New Town under construction below Calton Hill.

JMW Turner 1775–1851
Sawrey Gilpin 1773–1807

Donkeys beside a Mine Shaft

c.1805–7
Gouache, graphite and watercolour on paper

This shows a 'gin', a traditional rotating winch pulled by donkeys or horses to lift material up a mine shaft to a pithead. By the time Turner painted this, gins were being superseded by steam-driven winding gear.

While the landscape is by Turner, the donkeys are the work of Sawrey Gilpin. Gilpin was an animal painter who often collaborated with other artists. He supported Turner's first attempt to be elected as Associate of the Royal Academy (ARA) in 1798. This watercolour must have been intended for exhibition, but it was left unfinished.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D04160

Philip James de Loutherbourg 1740–1812

The Battle of the Nile

1800
Oil paint on canvas

De Loutherbourg was an influential mentor to the young
Turner. He painted many modern subjects, including industry
and battles. In 1798, the Battle of the Nile saw the British
Royal Navy, led by Nelson, defeat the French off the coast of
Egypt. De Loutherbourg's painting shows the explosion of the
French warship **L'Orient** during the battle. Turner's version of
the same subject, exhibited in 1799 (now untraced),
was his first picture of modern warfare.

Tate. Purchased with assistance from
the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1971
T01452

A Lime Kiln by Moonlight

c.1799
Watercolour on paper

According to an old label on the back of this drawing, Turner drew this lime kiln in Surrey, to 'show the effect of moonlight on firelight… when the moon was visible'.

Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry.
Purchased with support from the Arts Council England /
V&A Purchase Grant Fund
X77249

**Llanstephan Castle by Moonlight,
with a Kiln in the Foreground**

c.1795
Graphite and watercolour on paper

Lime was produced by heating and calcinating limestone
in a kiln. It was used for construction, agriculture and, when
burned with charcoal, iron-smelting. Often small-scale
independent ventures, lime kilns sprang up wherever the
stone could be quarried.

Turner saw this lime kiln beside the river Tywi near
Llansteffan Castle during a tour of South Wales in 1795.
He contrasts modern industry with picturesque scenery.
Kilns and furnaces glow in the moonlit night.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D00689

COALBROOKDALE

In Turner's time, Coalbrookdale in the Severn Valley in Shropshire was an industrial powerhouse, described by one commentator as full of '[f]urnaces, forges, roaring blasts'. The area was rich in ironstone and coal. The Darby family ran the most well-known ironworks. They discovered a method of smelting iron with coke instead of the traditional charcoal. Iron and cast-iron products such as cannon from John Wilkinson's foundry at nearby Broseley were shipped south by barge to Bristol and then around Britain, to Europe and the wider world.

Turner knew the area from works by other artists, on display nearby.

Colebrooke Dale

1825
Mezzotint on paper
Engraver Frederick Christian Lewis 1779–1856

This print reproduces a small painting made by Turner around 1797. It records the location of the lime kiln. Remains of similar structures survive today at Coalbrookdale, Shropshire but there is no sign of the iron-smelting works in the picture.

Turner seems more interested in contrasting moon, fire and lamplight than recording industrial processes. His composition is a modern take on a Biblical scene painted by Rembrandt, which belonged to his patron Richard Colt Hoare.

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04821

Paul Sandby Munn 1773–1845

Bedlam Furnace, Madeley Dale, Shropshire

1803
Watercolour on paper

Turner would have seen this watercolour in the Royal Academy in 1803. In contrast to Dayes's view of the same subject (on display nearby), Munn pictures blast furnaces working at full power. The drama of the fire and smoke – creating a sense of monstrous power and danger – meant this would have been appreciated as a 'sublime' subject.

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04172

Edward Dayes 1763–1804

Bedlam Furnace, Coalbrookdale

Date unknown
Gouache, graphite and watercolour on paper

Bedlam Furnace was perhaps named after the noise and smoke it pumped out, or the 'hell-fire' sermons of a local Methodist preacher. The word 'Bedlam' had come to mean uproar and confusion, after the Bethlem psychiatric hospital in London.

Turner bought this watercolour in 1833. It had been owned by Dr Thomas Monro, a physician known to Turner's family. Turner had studied and copied drawings from Monro's extensive art collection at his informal evening 'academy' for young artists in 1793–4.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D36352

The Interior of a Cannon Foundry

1797–8
Graphite and watercolour on paper

This watercolour shows workers forging cannon in a foundry. As in the picture of anchors being forged (on display nearby), Turner depicts industry which helped support Britain's role in the French Revolutionary Wars. The location of this foundry is not confirmed, but Turner visited sites in Wales, the Midlands and the north of England at this time.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D00873

View of Cyfarthfa Ironworks ?from the North-West

General View of Cyfarthfa Ironworks from the Brecon Road

1798
Graphite on paper

Turner's early commissions rarely reflected his clients' commercial interests. These sketches relate to his first commission for manufacturing subjects, from Anthony Bacon for views of the Cyfarthfa Ironworks at Merthyr Tydfil, south west Wales. Bacon inherited the ironworks from his father and leased them to Richard Crawshay who turned them into the largest in the world. Cyfarthfa's products included cannon for the Royal Navy. Nelson visited the works in 1802. No finished versions of these sketches are known.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D01630, D01631

High Green, Wolverhampton

1796
Watercolour on paper

In 1796, two years after he visited the town, Turner exhibited this watercolour depicting Wolverhampton's annual July fair. The scene is filled with incident, including theatre, waxworks, wild animals and food and drink vendors. The man in striped 'sailor' trousers resting on a crutch is a sobering reminder that the war with France came at a painful cost to many.

The 'King and Constitution' banner on the right is characteristic of the counter-revolutionary nationalism that emerged in Britain in response to the French Revolution. Its presence here is an early example of Turner alluding to contemporary politics, even if his own convictions are unclear.

Wolverhampton Arts and Culture
X76514

The Pantheon, the Morning after the Fire

1792
Graphite and watercolour on paper

In January 1792, the 16-year-old Turner witnessed the fire which destroyed the Pantheon Opera House on London's Oxford Street. This watercolour, exhibited at the Royal Academy that year, shows a crowd assembled outside. A fire truck is on the left, while huge icicles indicate the severe frost that morning. This is above all a street scene: the fire itself, and the efforts to extinguish it from the rear of the building, are concealed by the imposing front of the Pantheon.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D00121

Vitrine in centre of the room, left to right

Philip James de Louterbourg 1740–1812

Near View of the Resolution Steam-Engine, Coalbrookdale

1786 or 1800
Pen and ink and graphite on paper

Philip James de Louterbourg made these drawings at Coalbrookdale in 1786 or 1800. The 'Resolution' was a water-returning steam engine designed by the engineers Matthew Boulton and James Watt to power a blast-furnace. It was installed in 1781–2. The boiler house and casting house probably belong to Bedlam Furnace.

Turner bought these drawings in 1833 at the estate sale of physician and collector Dr Thomas Monro.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D36409

Philip James de Loutherbourg
1740–1812

**The Resolution Steam-Engine, Coalbrookdale,
Seen from the New Pool**

1786 or 1800
Pen and ink and graphite on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D36405

Philip James de Loutherbourg 1740–1812

The Boiler House and Casting House of a Furnace, Probably Bedlam Furnace, at Coalbrookdale

1786 or 1800
Pen and ink, graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D36407

Interior of a Forge: Making Anchors

1796–7
Gouache, graphite and watercolour on paper

The Interior of a Tilt Forge

?1798
Graphite on paper

Turner filled many sketchbooks with drawings and watercolours while travelling around Britain in the 1790s. He appears to have sought out industrial subjects like the two forges shown here. One is producing anchors that were used on ships fighting in the French Revolutionary Wars. The other drawing presents in detail the workings of a tilt forge: a waterwheel powers large tilt hammers which pound iron to make it malleable.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D01219, D01220, D01735, D01736

ROOM 3
WAR AND PEACE

Timeline

1796

France invades northern Italy

1798

France invades republican Switzerland and Ottoman Egypt

1799

Siege and capture of Srirangapatna (Seringapatam)

1801

Britain invades French-occupied Egypt

1802

Treaty of Amiens suspends hostilities between Britain and France

1804

Napoleon Bonaparte crowns himself Emperor of the French

1805

Battle of Trafalgar and the death of Nelson

1812

France invades Russia, retreats with terrible losses

1814

Napoleon forced to abdicate and exiled to Elba

1815

Napoleon returns from exile (the Hundred Days)
France defeated at Waterloo

Entering the room, clockwise

WAR AND PEACE

France's new revolutionary-republican government declared war on Britain in 1793, four years after the French Revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned as the first Emperor of France in 1804, and war with France became a clash of empires and ideologies that lasted until 1815.

Turner seized the opportunities the wars gave him as a painter of modern history. He depicted conflicts that took place as far afield as Egypt and India, and British victories in the Napoleonic Wars such as the Battle of Trafalgar, which took place in Spanish waters in 1805. By the time he painted a scene from the Battle of Waterloo in 1818, three years after the conflict, his political position seems to have changed. While earlier works glorified war, Turner's later paintings revealed a greater compassion for suffering and death among all sides and ranks.

Research for his battle pictures included site visits, conversations with survivors or drawings and records by military artists who had been present. Turner also depicted the trauma of war metaphorically through images of storms, shipwrecks and drownings at sea.

Turner was appalled by the human, social and economic costs of the long war with France and he celebrated the return of peace. Despite this, he regarded British Admiral Horatio Nelson (who died at the Battle of Trafalgar) as a national hero, and Napoleon as 'the scourge of Europe'.

The 'Victory' in the Channel with the Body of Nelson

c.1807–19
Graphite and watercolour on paper

This watercolour was based on a painting probably exhibited in 1806 and bought by Turner's friend and patron Walter Fawkes. It shows the **Victory** from three angles, supposedly returning from the Battle of Trafalgar, in which Nelson had been fatally wounded.

In fact, Nelson's flagship is shown without battle damage, sailing in the wrong direction and not flying her ensign at half-mast as she did when bringing Nelson's body back to Britain.

Tate. Bequeathed by Henry Vaughan 1900
D08183

Vitrine

Ship models including small craft for cross-channel invasion, with the sea and background painted by Turner

c.1804
Wood and mixed-media

In 1803, Napoleon began planning an invasion of Britain, across the Channel from Boulogne. Fast, shallow-bottomed boats were specially built for the purpose. The small craft in this case are models of these. Perhaps carved by French prisoners of war, they were owned by Turner who installed them in this case with a painted sea and background.

Tate Archive
Z75305

Wall

The Battle of Trafalgar, as Seen from the Mizen Starboard Shrouds of the Victory

1806–8
Oil paint on canvas

Nelson's defeat of the French and Spanish navies at Trafalgar on 21 October 1805, and his death during the battle, led to outpourings of jubilation and grief in Britain. Turner painted this picture for his own gallery in 1806 and reworked it by 1808 as a tribute to Nelson and the Royal Navy.

Turner depicts Nelson collapsing on the **Victory's** deck, struck by a French sniper's bullet just as the French concede defeat by laying down a tricolour. The picture was praised as the 'first British epic' combining the death of a 'hero' with 'the whole of a great naval victory'.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00480

The 'Victory': From Quarterdeck to Poop

1805

Pen and ink, graphite and watercolour on paper

Turner drew this careful study after going aboard Nelson's flagship **Victory** while she was at Sheerness for repairs after the Battle of Trafalgar. It details extensive damage to the ship. This, and the sketchbook on display nearby, prepared him for his painting of the battle (shown alongside). Turner gave or sold this drawing to the poet Samuel Rogers.

Tate. Bequeathed by Henry Vaughan 1900
D08275

Second Sketch for 'The Battle of Trafalgar'

c.1823
Oil paint on canvas

In 1823, George IV commissioned Turner to paint the Battle of Trafalgar to hang in St. James's Palace with de Loutherbourg's naval battle **The Glorious First of June**. The two pictures were to flank a portrait of George III. This is one of two sketches Turner made for this monumental picture.

While intensely dramatic, it is a more conventional, distanced view than his earlier picture of Trafalgar (displayed alongside). It was criticised in naval circles and the king gave Turner's and de Loutherbourg's paintings to Greenwich Hospital in 1829. This was Turner's only royal commission.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00556

The Loss of an East Indiaman

c.1818
Watercolour on paper

Turner did not only paint victories. He also portrayed the human cost of war, using storms and shipwrecks as metaphors for unpredictable historical forces. In this watercolour made for Walter Fawkes, a ship founders in a sea storm, its crew overwhelmed by rolling waves. The ship is thought to be an East Indiaman that worked the route to India. It is not certain if the picture depicts a particular event or ship. The cannon and uniformed soldiers indicate a military presence. Turner may have remembered a terrible storm that struck British troops returning from the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, sinking several prize ships.

Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (The Higgins Bedford)
X27753

The Wreck of a Transport Ship

c.1810
Oil paint on canvas

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we were unable to bring this picture to London as originally planned.

Calouste Gulbenkian Museum – Founder's Collection
© Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
photo: Catarina Gomes Ferreira

A First Rate Taking in Stores

1818
Watercolour and graphite on paper

A 'first rate' (such as Nelson's flagship **Victory**) was the largest naval warship, with a crew of around 875 men and more than 100 guns. Turner is said to have made this watercolour from memory, between breakfast and lunch, to show the son of his friend Walter Fawkes the 'size of a man-of-war'.

The ship is being provisioned with some of the vast quantities of ammunition, food and drink she requires while at sea. Seen with the two ships in the background, it gives a vivid impression of British naval strength during the Napoleonic Wars.

Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery (The Higgins Bedford)
X77245

Spithead: Two Captured Danish Ships Entering Portsmouth Harbour

1807–9
Oil paint on canvas

In 1807, British forces seized the Danish fleet to prevent Napoleon forcing Denmark to block the Baltic sea and hamper trade routes for British merchant shipping. Turner painted this picture after watching some of the captured ships arrive off Spithead. He first exhibited it in 1808 with the title **Two Captured Danish Ships Entering Portsmouth Harbour.** If it was intended as a patriotic celebration it was soon overtaken by political backlash. Denmark was neutral, and the British action was dangerously provocative. When Turner exhibited the picture again in 1809, he changed the title to **Boat's Crew Recovering an Anchor**.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00481

Saltash, Cornwall

1827
Line engraving on paper
Engraver William Raymond Smith 1818–1848

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04520

Devonport and Dockyard, Devonshire

1830
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Thomas Jeavons 1795–1867

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04552

Plymouth, with Mount Batten

1816
Watercolour on paper

Victoria and Albert Museum. William Smith Bequest
X12694

Turner's views of England's south coast often referred to the Napoleonic Wars and the peace that followed. Naval signifiers of sailors and ships are to the fore in these views of Devon and Cornwall. The sailors in Saltash and Plymouth are at ease, and the ships in Devonport are being 'paid off', indicating the end of their wartime service.

The Battle of Fort Rock, Val d'Aouste, Piedmont, 1796

exhibited 1815
Gouache and watercolour on paper

Turner exhibited this watercolour, with Lake of Lucerne (on display nearby), at the Royal Academy in 1815 to represent war and peace. Turner thought the war was over, but Napoleon returned from exile and was finally defeated at the Battle of Waterloo in June, during the exhibition.

The watercolour is set in the Alps. It imagines a battle during the French invasion of northern Italy in 1796. As well as the fighting, Turner shows a man and a woman tending a dead or dying soldier who has fallen off the road. In the other watercolour shown in 1815, a similar-looking young woman is weeping.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D04900

Lake of Lucerne, from the Landing Place at Fleulen, Looking towards Bauen and Tell's Chapel, Switzerland

1815
Watercolour, gouache and gum Arabic on paper

This watercolour is a scene of peace after war. It was displayed at the Royal Academy in 1815 with **The Battle of Fort Rock** (on display nearby).

Travellers gather at Fleulen at the eastern end of Lake Lucerne. A woman stands slightly apart, weeping. She is perhaps the same one who tends a fallen soldier in the associated watercolour. This watercolour was bought by Walter Fawkes, who might be the burly figure in brown coat and hat, reliving his alpine travels before the war.

Clode Collection
X78749

Calais Sands at Low Water: Poissards Collecting Bait

1830
Oil paint on canvas

This view of the French coast near Calais at low tide, exhibited in 1830, looks peaceful but the crimson sunset and boiling clouds may recall cross-Channel wars.

In the distance on the left is Fort Rouge. It is used to signal when the tide allows safe passage. It was built by the French king, Louis XIV for coastal defence. During the Napoleonic Wars the British tried to blow it up.

Bury Art Museum, Greater Manchester, UK
X18071

The Field of Waterloo

1817
Watercolour and graphite on paper

This watercolour belonged to Walter Fawkes. Fawkes's radical, humanitarian sympathies meant he was never an enthusiast for the war but accepted it was necessary.

More brightly lit than the painting alongside, and without the women mourners, the dead are even more starkly depicted. British, French and Scots regiments are mingled, identifiable only by their uniforms and the ciphers of George III (GR) and Napoleon (N).

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,
University of Cambridge
X76492

Virtine behind

Printed handkerchief entitled 'The Battle of Waterloo'

c.1815
White cotton printed in red, spiral twist border

Turner's depictions of battles from the Napoleonic Wars, including the Battle of Waterloo, were part of a broader realm of representations of the conflict. This also included satirical prints, ceramics, and textiles. This handkerchief shows a battle plan surrounded by vignettes and extensive text. It aimed to convey information about the battle in an accessible and multifaceted way.

National Army Museum
X79107

The Field of Waterloo

exhibited 1818
Oil paint on canvas

The Battle of Waterloo on 16 June 1815
saw Britain and Prussia defeat France, ending the Napoleonic
Wars. Turner visited the site in 1817. He filled a sketchbook
with drawings, took notes from guides, and read Byron's
verses on Waterloo, adapting them for his picture.

Pictures of battles were expected to be patriotic. Turner
neither celebrates victory nor takes the British side. Instead
he shows war's tragic consequences for all its victims.
Alongside the painting, Turner displayed a line from Byron's
poem **Childe Harold's Pilgrimage** describing 'friend, foe, in
one red burial blent'.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00500

Lake of Thun

c.1806–7
Graphite and watercolour on paper

When Turner visited Switzerland in 1802, the country
was very unsettled, with soldiers everywhere. The tense
atmosphere was matched by its unstable mountain geology
and climate. A soldier watches as lightning plays over Lake
Thun. Turner included this 'mountainous' image in his
landscape compositions in the **Liber Studiorum** ('book
of studies') series of engravings.

Snow Storm: Hannibal and his Army Crossing the Alps

exhibited 1812
Oil paint on canvas

Many of Turner's peers saw the Napoleonic Wars as existential clashes between empires, comparing them to the ancient Trojan and Punic wars. France and Britain debated which was the modern Carthage or Rome. French artists portrayed Napoleon as a modern Hannibal, the Carthaginian general who led his army across the Alps into Italy in 218 BCE. Turner shows him as a tiny figure riding an elephant. He is overwhelmed by a whirling blizzard as mountain-dwellers attack his troops. Turner's picture became prophetic later in 1812, when Napoleon was forced to retreat from Moscow by the Russian winter.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00490

The Devil's Bridge, St Gotthard

1803
Oil paint on canvas

Turner visited the St Gotthard pass in Switzerland on a tour of the Alps in the summer of 1802 during a ceasefire in wars against France. He saw the Devil's Bridge, that had seen fighting between French and Austro-Russian armies in 1801. Recalling recent campaigns, Turner shows troops, probably Austrian, marching through the pass and pack-mules crossing the bridge.

Schorr Collection
X78586

The Fifth Plague of Egypt

1808
Etching and mezzotint on paper
Engraver Charles Turner 1774–1857

In 1799 Napoleon invaded Egypt, then part of the Ottoman Empire, as a bridgehead to India where he was negotiating with Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore. Defeats, uprisings and plague forced the French to abandon Egypt by 1802. Here, Turner draws a parallel between the contemporary situation in Egypt and Biblical plagues, sent by God to punish Egypt for enslaving the Israelites. This print reproduces a painting that is sometimes interpreted as a coded attack on the slave trade. This is unlikely, as its owner William Beckford inherited several Jamaican sugar plantations, laboured by enslaved people.

Tate. Presented by A. Acland Allen through the Art Fund 1925
A00942

The Fortress of Seringapatam, from the Cullaly Deedy Gate

1800

Watercolour and graphite on paper

This watercolour shows Srirangapatna (then known as Seringapatam) after the siege by the East India Company and the spot by the walls where Tipu Sultan was killed. There is no other sign of the fighting or looting that took place by British soldiers. Plunder from Tipu's palace became highly sought after in Britain, entering the collections of George III, and Turner's patrons and friends like William Beckford and John Soane.

Nirmalya Kumar Collection
X78587

The Siege of Seringapatam

c.1800
Watercolour, gouache and graphite on paper

In 1799 Britain's East India Company attacked Srirangapatna (then Seringapatam) in southern Karnataka (then Mysore), India and killed its ruler, Tipu Sultan (Fateh Ali Sahab Tipu). A longstanding conflict between Tipu and the Company became a proxy war with France when Tipu allied with Napoleon to expel the British from his kingdom. In India, Tipu was celebrated as a hero of anti-colonial resistance, but British propaganda demonised him as a tyrant. In around 1800 Turner painted the siege, based on drawings by British soldiers and probably intended for engraving. Here, the Company's army advances across the River Kaveri toward's Tipu's island fortress.

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04160

Vitrine in centre of the room, left to right

Key and Description of 'The Battle of Trafalgar, as Seen from the Mizen Starboard Shrouds of the Victory'

1806
Pen and ink and watercolour on paper

Turner probably drafted this to offer an explanation to visitors when it was exhibited.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D08266, D08267

Study for 'The Battle of Trafalgar, as Seen from the Mizen Starboard Shrouds of the Victory'

1805
Graphite on paper

(1) Diagram of the Disposition of British Forces at Waterloo; (2) La Haye Sainte from the South

1817
Graphite on paper

A Mounted Soldier
c.1817–18
Graphite on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D05482, D12741, D13279

Turner's pictures of the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo (on display in this room) were based on notes and drawings he made in his sketchbooks. He went aboard the **Victory** when she was at Sheerness for repairs, taking notes from men still on board.

Turner visited the battlefield of Waterloo in 1817. During a guided tour he sketched the terrain, troop positions, numbers of dead, and the 'great carnage of the cuirassiers by the guards'. He also sketched uniforms.

ROOM 4
'MODERN THOUGHT': TURNER AND HIS LITERARY CONTEMPORARIES

Timeline

1794

Polish uprising against Russian occupation led by Tadeusz Kościuszko

1797

Fall of the Republic of Venice

1799

Prussian fortress of Ehrenbreitstein surrendered to French army

1821–30

Greek War of Independence

1824

Lord Byron dies at Missolonghi, Greece

1827

Sir Walter Scott publishes 'Life of Napoleon'

'MODERN THOUGHT':
TURNER AND HIS LITERARY CONTEMPORARIES

Turner lived through an intensely literary age. His poems, book illustrations and collaborations with poets, writers and publishers reflected his modern interests. He saw painting and poetry as complementary. He exhibited pictures with fragments of his own poems or quotations from other authors.

Contemporary authors provided Turner with an insight into the politics and events of the time. They valued his interpretations of their work. He was in high demand, as his illustrations helped turn books into best-sellers.

Turner was selective in his response to modern writers. He knew Samuel Rogers, Walter Scott and Thomas Campbell, and illustrated their works. His favourite poet was Lord Byron, but it is unlikely they ever met. Turner made most of his Byronic images after the poet's death.

Turner's illustrations were reflections or meditations rather than literal or exact visualisations of particular passages of text. They drew on his own memory, travels or imagination.

after John Doyle 1797–1868

Samuel Rogers at his Breakfast Table

c.1823
Mezzotint engraving
Engraver Charles Mottram 1807–1876

The poet, banker and collector Samuel Rogers hosted legendary breakfasts at his London home for writers, artists and other friends. As was custom at the time, they were all-male gatherings. Here, the elderly Rogers is seated in the middle. Byron is on his right. Turner, second from right, examines a picture. Other guests include Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell and Thomas Moore. This scene is an imaginary one. Turner attended Rogers's breakfasts, but he probably never met Byron. The writer John Ruskin believed Rogers introduced Turner to 'modern thought' expressed in writing.

Tate. Presented by Dr David Blayney Brown 1987
T04907

Ship-building (An Old Oak Dead), for Rogers's 'Poems'

c.1830–2
Graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D27692

St Anne's Hill (I)

1834
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Edward Goodall 1795–1870

Tate. Transferred from the British Museum 1988
T06167

Vitrine

Samuel Rogers 1763–1855

Italy, A Poem
1830

Poems
1834

published by T Cadell and W Davies
Tate. Z75958, Z75959

The 1830 edition of Samuel Rogers's verse travelogue **Italy** with illustrations by Turner became a best-seller. Turner also illustrated Rogers's **Poems** (1834).

Some of Turner's work for Rogers recalled the Napoleonic Wars. He illustrated the poem **To an Old Oak** with a warship being built from its timber. For **Italy** he depicted Napoleon at Marengo, the victory in 1801 that put north Italy under French control and helped cement Napoleon's military rule.

Rogers's poems and Turner's illustrations share radical undercurrents. In **Human Life** Rogers paid tribute to his friend Charles James Fox, a former Foreign Secretary. Fox was an advocate for peace who opposed the slave trade. Turner pictures Fox's country home, and martyrs and campaigners 'for the general good' being escorted to the Tower of London via Traitor's Gate.

Wall

Marengo, for Rogers's 'Italy'

c.1826–7
Gouache, graphite and watercolour on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D27663

Venice, the Bridge of Sighs

exhibited 1840
Oil paint on canvas

Byron was Turner's favourite modern poet. He illustrated Byron's **Life and Works** for the publisher John Murray, and painted six pictures citing Byron's long poem **Childe Harold's Pilgrimage** (published from 1812).

Byron was a champion of liberty and independence across Europe. He wrote movingly about Venice, where he lived on and off between 1817 and 1820. To Byron's disgust, the once-splendid republic had been handed to the Austrian empire after the Napoleonic Wars. Turner exhibited this picture of the Bridge of Sighs, Doge's Palace and prison with a couplet adapted from Byron: 'I stood upon a bridge, a palace and / A prison on each hand'.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00527

The Field of Waterloo. From Hougoumont

1833
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Edward Finden 1791–1857

Tate. Transferred from the British Museum 1988
T06185

The Acropolis, Athens

1832
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Cousen 1804–1880

Tate. Transferred from the British Museum 1988
T06177

Scio (Fontana di Melek Mehmet, Pasha)

1833
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Edward Finden 1791–1857

Tate. Transferred from the British Museum 1988
T06186

Turner made drawings for vignettes of places associated with Byron for Byron's **Life and Works** (1832–4) and Byronic **Landscape Illustrations** for the engraver-publisher Edward Finden, both published by John Murray.

Byron despaired that the coalition victory at the Battle of Waterloo would return Europe to an authoritarian dark age. Turner accompanied Byron's satirical post-war poem **The Age of Bronze** with a scene from 'bloody and most bootless Waterloo'.

Turner's view of the Athenian Acropolis and vignette of Chios (then Scio) signify Byron's championing of Greek independence from the Ottoman empire. Athens was an ancient seat of democracy while Chios had recently experienced a Turkish massacre. Byron hymned Greek liberty in his poem **Don Juan**. He died in Greece in 1824 after volunteering for the cause.

Ehrenbreitstein, during the Demolition of the Fortress

1819–20
Watercolour on paper

The fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, in Koblenz and overlooking the Rhine and Mosel, was one of Turner's favourite places in Germany. He first saw it in 1817 and returned several times. In 1799 it was surrendered to the French, who occupied the city. French troops blew it up in 1801. The Rhineland became part of Prussia after the Napoleonic Wars. Turner shows the fortress before it was rebuilt and enlarged by the Prussians. Ehrenbreitstein became a symbol of conquest and resistance. Many writers including Byron and Thomas Campbell wrote about it. This watercolour was engraved for the popular **Literary Souvenir** in 1828.

Bury Art Museum, Greater Manchester, UK
X77247

The Opening of the Wallhalla, 1842

exhibited 1843
Oil paint on mahogany

Turner could claim to be a published poet. He wrote a poem, **Fallacies of Hope** to accompany his pictures and verses were printed in Royal Academy catalogues. To represent Turner as poet as well as painter, his verse for this picture, exhibited in 1843 is shown here. It moves from the Napoleonic Wars to peace and liberation. The Walhalla near Regensburg was built by the king of Bavaria to celebrate German history and culture. It was started during the war in 1807 and completed after it ended.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00533

'L'honneur au Roi de Baviere':

'Who rode on thy relentless car, fallacious Hope?

He, though scathed at Ratisbon, poured on
The tide of war o'er all thy plain, Bavare,

Like the swollen Danube at the gates of Wien.

But peace returns – the morning ray

Beams on the Wallhalla, reared to science, and the arts,

For men renowned, of German fatherland'

– **Fallacies of Hope** MS

Ehrenbreitstein

c.1832
Watercolour on paper

Illustrated annuals of short stories, based on German publications, became fashionable in the 1820s and 1830s. This watercolour was engraved in 1833 for the **Keepsake**. It appeared with a 'Tale of Ehrenbreitstein' by Ralph Bernal, a British Member of Parliament, lawyer and collector.

The **Keepsake** editor sometimes acquired images and text separately. The fortress is shown before it was rebuilt, which had actually happened by 1832. By 1833 Turner appears to have opposed slavery. He may therefore have felt uncomfortable being associated with Bernal, who in 1826 had made a speech, which he published in a pamphlet, urging delay in abolishing slavery.

Bury Art Museum, Greater Manchester, UK
X77246

Hohenlinden

1837
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Robert Wallis 1794–1878

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04773

Thomas Campbell commissioned Turner to illustrate the 1837 edition of his poems.

Campbell loathed revolutionary anarchy but also despotic tyranny. He thought it was Britain's moral duty to free Europe from oppressive regimes. Turner illustrated Campbell's poems with images from recent conflicts.

Recalling the Napoleonic Wars, Turner illustrated the Battle of Hohenlinden (1800) when the French defeated the Austrians, and the Battle of the Baltic (Copenhagen, 1801) when Nelson decimated the Danish and Swedish navies to make sure they didn't fall into French hands.

In 1794, conservative Polish aristocrats invited a Russian army to suppress political reforms in Poland. It burned Warsaw and massacred rebel patriots. Like many liberal Britons, Campbell was shocked by these events. His 'bloodiest picture in the book of Time' inspired one of Turner's finest vignettes.

Prague – Kosciusko

1837
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Edward Goodall 1795–1870

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04767

**Vignette Study for 'Kosciusko',
for Campbell's 'Poetical Works'**

c.1835–6
Watercolour on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D27566

Battle of the Baltic

1837
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Edward Goodall 1795–1870

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04772

Napoleon's Logement, Quai Conti

1834–6
Line engraving on paper
Engraver John Horsburgh 1791–1869

Tate. Purchased 1987
T04968

Napoleon was the dominant and most destructive historical force for Turner's generation. Poets, writers and artists meditated on his rise and fall, character and conduct. In a verse written in 1811, Turner called Napoleon the 'scourge of Europe'. The conservative-minded author Walter Scott admired Napoleon for rescuing France from revolution, but thought his 'mingled character' destroyed him. Turner illustrated Scott's **Life of Napoleon Bonaparte** (1834–6) for the publisher Robert Cadell.

In the examples displayed here, Napoleon arrives at his Paris lodgings as a young soldier. Louis Antoine de Bourbon, Duke of Enghien is executed on his orders. After his first fall in 1814, Napoleon bids farewell to his Imperial Guard. Finally, he is shown captive, aboard the British ship Bellerophon and surrounded by sightseers as he prepares for exile on St Helena.

Vincennes

1835
Line engraving on paper
Engraver William Miller 1796–1882

Tate. Purchased 1987
T04973

Fontainebleau

1834–6
Line engraving on paper
Engraver William Miller 1796–1882

Tate. Purchased 1987
T04980

The Bellerophon, Plymouth Sound

1836

Line engraving on paper

Engraver Edward Goodall 1795–1870

Tate. Purchased 1987

T04982

The Wreck

1836

Line engraving on paper

Engraver Henry Griffiths died 1849

Tate. Purchased 1986

T04630

Fire at Sea

1835
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Tibbitts Willmore 1800–1863

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04629

The Sea! The Sea!

1837
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Tibbitts Willmore 1800–1863

Tate. Purchased 1988
T05109

The **Keepsake** literary annual featured women writers like Letitia Landon (known as the 'female Byron'), Mary Shelley and Caroline Norton, who was its editor in 1836. This was the year these three marine vignettes featured.

The Sea! The Sea! accompanied a naval story by Lord Nugent. **The Wreck** appeared with a poem by F Howard about a mother and her child saved by a lifeboat. **Fire at Sea** was placed with an account by Captain Frederic Chamier of women passengers travelling to India to find husbands, who were rescued from a ship in distress.

ROOM 5
HOME FRONT

Timeline

1801

General Enclosure Act facilitates privatisation of common land

1804

Defences built on English south coast in preparation for anticipated French invasion

1806

Shipping and trade between Britain and France cut off by government blockades and embargoes

1814

Grand Union Canal opens, connecting London and Birmingham

1820

Accession of George IV

Entering the room, anticlockwise

HOME FRONT

Britain was at war for most of the first half of Turner's life. His paintings and watercolours of this time show an awareness of how Britain and its population were affected by overseas conflict. They include pictures of coastal defences against a feared French invasion, depictions of soldiers (a common sight up and down the country), and the impact of tax increases to pay for the war effort.

Turner put human experience at the centre of his depictions of different subjects. The setting of rural labourers against the background of Windsor Castle in Ploughing Up Turnips, near Slough hints at the vast inequalities in British society. At the same time, he openly courted royal patronage. In 1819, he painted the birthday of the Prince Regent (later George IV), in the hope of selling the prince the painting, and he travelled to Edinburgh in 1822 to document the king's state visit.

A keen sailor, Turner's passion for the waterways connecting Britain is evident in many of his watercolours and prints. His depictions of canals show his interest in them as symbols of commercial and engineering progress as well as their placement in the rural landscape. Turner's pictures of Britain show him as a perceptive chronicler of contemporary history, fascinated by the changing face of the nation.

The New Council Room, Salisbury

1805
Watercolour on paper

This watercolour is one of a set of Salisbury views
commissioned from Turner by Sir Richard Colt Hoare.
It contrasts with another watercolour in the series showing
the ruins of the Old Council House, thereby celebrating the
town's architectural development. Equally noteworthy are
the soldiers unloading packages and laying out rifles.
A battalion was recruited in the Salisbury area in 1804
as part of a general increase in military presence in Britain
following the return to war with France in 1803.

Cooper Gallery, Barnsley
X78714

Hythe, Kent

1824
Watercolour on paper

During the Napoleonic Wars, the Kent harbour town of Hythe was transformed, not only by an influx of soldiers stationed at a new barracks there, but also by a new military canal. This was built to defend nearby Romney Marsh from French invasion.

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London
X77248

Martello Towers, near Bexhill, Sussex

1811
Etching on paper

Turner focuses here on the small, round defensive forts built to defend the south and east coasts of England. Over one hundred of these forts were erected, in a chain stretching from Seaford in Sussex to Aldeburgh in Suffolk. Although they were never put to the test, they became one of the most identifiable symbols of Britain's defence against Napoleon.

Tate. Presented by A. Acland Allen through the Art Fund 1925
A00978

Rye, Sussex

c.1823
Watercolour on paper

In this and two other views of the south coast on display nearby (of Hythe and Bexhill-on-Sea) Turner observed the defensive infrastructure that was put in place during the Napoleonic Wars in anticipation of a French invasion. Here he shows the Royal Military Road that was built across marshland to connect Rye and Winchelsea.

Lent by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales. Bequest: Gwendoline Davies, 1952.
X76494

More Park, near Watford, on the River Colne

c.1823
Gouache and watercolour on paper

This watercolour foregrounds Lot Mead Lock on the Grand Union Canal, which connected London and Birmingham. More Park was landscaped by 'Capability' Brown in the 18th century. Turner's composition suggests a seamless blend between these human-made landscapes, the commercial canal and the landscaped gardens.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D18141

Windmill and Lock

c.1811
Etching and watercolour on paper

Linking London and the Midlands, the Grand Junction Canal (later part of the Grand Union Canal) was begun in 1793. Turner's close-up focus on the infrastructure of the lock, combined with the windmill, highlights the ways in which people were harnessing nature in productive ways, using water and wind power to fuel the modern world.

Tate. Presented by W.G. Rawlinson 1913
N02941

Kirkstall Lock, on the River Aire

1824–5
Watercolour on paper

Turner witnessed the growth and eventual decline of canal building in England, and included canals in many of his topographical views. Kirkstall Lock, on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, was situated on the outskirts of Leeds, a centre for textile manufacturing. Here Turner invites us to think about the passage of time and how a landscape changes: the medieval ruins of Kirkstall Abbey, quiet and obsolete, form a background to the bustle of the new canal, the road and the builders in the foreground.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D18145

Lancaster from the Aqueduct Bridge

1827
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Robert Wallis 1794–1878

The viewpoint here is from the Lune Aqueduct, which carried the North Lancashire Canal over the river Lune outside Lancaster. Begun in 1794, it was the largest of its kind in the country. Turner sketched it in detail at about the time it opened in 1797. He went to considerable lengths to understand and note the details of the design. This composition celebrates the new view of ancient Lancaster that this modern structure enabled.

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04506

Stamford, Lincolnshire

c.1828
Watercolour on paper

Coventry, Warwickshire

1833
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Samuel Fisher 1802–1855

In the 1820s, Turner often alluded to current debates about political reform. Several of his topographical views show threatening storms. In **Stamford**, lightning strikes the spire of St Martin's church. This reflects fears Church officials had about reform of the Anglican Church. In **Coventry**, made some years later, the brilliant sunshine illuminating the town may allude to the survival of the Church after the enactment of reform.

Usher Gallery, Lincoln
X77251

Tate. Transferred from the British Museum 1988
T06105

England: Richmond Hill, on the Prince Regent's Birthday

exhibited 1819
Oil paint on canvas

This was Turner's largest painting yet when he exhibited it in 1819. It shows him making an unambiguous bid for royal patronage. As its title makes clear, the painting celebrates both the birthday of the Prince Regent (later George IV), and the splendour of the English landscape. The river Thames, a potent symbol of national identity, is at the centre. Despite Turner's best efforts, the painting went unsold, and it remained in his possession until the end of his life.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00502

London from Greenwich Park

exhibited 1809
Oil paint on canvas

London was the largest, busiest city in the world at the time Turner painted this picture. He exhibited it in 1809, accompanied by his own poetry, which described a hectic, oppressive city – a 'world of care' beneath a 'murky veil' of cloud, relieved only by the 'gleams of hope' offered by its architecture. In Turner's painting, Greenwich Hospital is framed by the surrounding trees, while the dome of St Paul's Cathedral towers above the distant city.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00483

George IV at the Provost's Banquet in the Parliament House, Edinburgh

c.1822
Oil paint on mahogany

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N02858

Vitrine

Frontispiece to Walter Scott, 'The Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland' (volume 2)

c.1822–5
Graphite and wash on paper

Turner drew this frontispiece for the 1826 edition of Walter Scott's book. The yacht **Royal George** brings George IV to Edinburgh for his state visit in 1822. Scott is rowed out in a barge to greet him. Their clasped hands, and silk and tartan sleeves symbolise the union between England and Scotland. The royal motto appears above the king's emblems of a white horse and star. A sunburst celebrates a new era in Anglo-Scottish relations.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D13749

Wall

George IV's Departure from the 'Royal George', 1822

c.1822
Oil paint on mahogany

In 1822 George IV visited Edinburgh, making him the first British monarch to visit Scotland in almost 200 years. Turner was one of several artists present to record the visit. He filled sketchbooks with drawings with the intention of making a series of large paintings depicting episodes from the visit. The project was abandoned, however, with only four unfinished paintings having been started. Turner's 'Royal Progress' therefore became another unsuccessful attempt at royal patronage.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N02880

Ploughing Up Turnips, near Slough ('Windsor')

exhibited 1809
Oil paint on canvas

King George III was nicknamed 'Farmer George' owing to the special interest he took in agricultural matters. During his reign, mass land enclosures ushered in modern, capitalistic farming. Turnips were an indication of these changes, as they are a crop which can only be grown effectively in a rotation system. Here, turnips are being ploughed in the shadow of Windsor Castle. The workers are not the cheerful and industrious labourers seen in many landscape paintings, suggesting that Turner wished to highlight the plight of those who had found themselves dispossessed by the new farming practices.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00486

St Mawes, Cornwall

1824
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Allen 1790–1833

Turner's view of St Mawes shows pilchards piled up on the
beach, going to waste as a result of lost access to markets in
mainland Europe during the Napoleonic Wars.

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04410

A Country Blacksmith Disputing upon the Price of Iron, and the Price Charged to the Butcher for Shoeing his Poney

exhibited 1807
Oil paint on mahogany

Turner made subtle reference to the effects of war on the lives of British civilians in several of his works. Here a blacksmith argues with a customer over the price of his services. Such trades had been forced to increase their prices after 1806, when a duty on pig iron was introduced to pay government war debts.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00478

Designs for the 'Royal Progress' Series

1822
Graphite on paper

Turner planned a series of paintings depicting George IV's visit to Edinburgh in 1822. The 19 tiny numbered pencil sketches seen here show him planning this sequence. Although the series was never completed, several of the sketches correspond to Turner's paintings and watercolours. These include the two paintings of George IV in Edinburgh on this wall (the sketch numbered 2 and the unnumbered sketch on the bottom row).

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856

ROOM 6
CAUSES AND CAMPAIGNS

CONTENT WARNING:

Artworks in this room depict human suffering and the deaths of enslaved people

Timeline

1795

'Gagging Acts' (Treason Act and Seditious Meeting Act) curb freedoms of expression and association

1819

Peterloo Massacre – Pro-reform demonstrations in Manchester violently suppressed

1829

Roman Catholic Relief Act gives Catholics the right to be elected MPs

1832

Great Reform Act creates new constituencies and widens the franchise / right to vote

1833

Slavery Abolition Act passes

Entering the room, anticlockwise

CAUSES AND CAMPAIGNS

Turner was not an overtly political artist, but he became increasingly liberal during his lifetime. His works contain more references to progressive causes than any other painter of his time. These include the reform of parliament, freedom of expression, religious toleration, Greek independence from Ottoman rule and the abolition of slavery.

Turner's outlook was very probably encouraged by the Yorkshire landowner Walter Fawkes. He was Turner's most important patron from 1802 until he died in 1825, and they became very close friends. Fawkes's politics were radical. He spoke against the slave trade and religious and social repression in England.

Although Turner broached these subjects in over twenty of his oil paintings and watercolours, his references to contemporary events were often subtle. The meanings may have been too obscure for most people, but they would have been noted by viewers who were engaged with these issues.

The Prince of Orange, William III, Embarked from Holland, and Landed at Torbay, November 4th, 1688, after a Stormy Passage

exhibited 1832
Oil paint on canvas

The 1832 Royal Academy exhibition coincided with the Great Reform Bill's final passage through Parliament. This picture appears to be a straightforward historical genre painting. However, given the agitation for greater democracy at this time, this was a pertinent reminder of efforts in the past to reform the constitution. In that light, the 'stormy passage' in its title refers not simply to William's crossing from Holland, but also to the recent legislative fight to extend voting rights.

Tate. Presented by Robert Vernon 1847
N00369

The Burning of the Houses of Parliament

c.1834–5
Watercolour and gouache on paper

Turner was an eyewitness of the fire which destroyed the Houses of Commons and Lords on 16–17 October 1834. A large crowd, held back by soldiers, watches firemen fighting the blaze. Turner exhibited two oil paintings of the fire in 1835, but seen from the other side of the Thames. A watercolour vignette was engraved for the **Keepsake** annual journal in 1836. Turner made these records in the wake of the 1832 Reform Act of Parliament. They perhaps underlined the sweeping away of the old order.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D36235

The Fall of Anarchy (?)

c.1833–4
Oil paint on canvas

This unfinished painting probably depicts the climactic episode in Shelley's poem **The Masque of Anarchy**, written in immediate response to the Peterloo Massacre of 1819. It was not published until 1832, when the Reform Act became law. Shelley imagines Anarchy – one of the oppressors of the people along with Hypocrisy, Murder and Fraud – as a skeleton mounted on a white horse. Turner's depiction perhaps corresponds to the moment in the poem when a mysterious light-filled mist awakens thoughts of resistance in the people. Anarchy falls dead from his horse, which tramples his murderous followers to dust, freeing the world of tyranny.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N05504

A Disaster at Sea

c.1835
Oil paint on canvas

This unfinished painting was probably based on a real incident, the loss of the **Amphitrite** in September 1833. The ship sailed from Woolwich, London, bound for New South Wales. On board were 108 women convicted of crimes in Britain, and 12 children. Gale-force winds drove the ship on to a sandbank off Boulogne, France. The captain refused all offers of rescue. The **Amphitrite** broke up, all the women and children drowned and only three members of the crew survived. Turner had probably seen Théodore Géricault's **Raft of the Medusa** when it was exhibited in London in 1820, and used a similar pyramidal arrangement of the figures.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00558

The Temple of Poseidon at Sounion (Cape Colonna)

c.1834
Graphite, watercolour and gouache on paper

Byron wrote in **Don Juan** about the temple of Poseidon.
It was his ideal final resting place, where he had 'dream'd
that Greece might yet be free' from Ottoman domination.
The poem recalls the destruction of the Persian fleet at
Salamis. Turner includes a distant ship foundering in the
waves. It is watched by wolves or jackals standing in front
of a relief depicting Triton, Poseidon's son. The sinking ship
may also allude to the recent Battle of Navarino (1827) when
the Ottoman fleet was defeated by allied forces from Britain,
France, and Russia. Turner's image links victory over Persia in
480 BCE with the Greeks' successful battle for independence
in his own age.

Tate. Accepted by HM Government in lieu of tax and allocated
to the Tate Gallery 1999.
T07561

Nottingham

1831
Watercolour on paper

The Duke of Newcastle evicted tenants who voted for reform candidates in the general elections of 1829 and 1830. After the second Reform Bill was defeated in the House of Lords in 1831, his mansion in Nottingham Castle was burnt down. Turner's inclusion of burning stubble in this watercolour alludes to that. The opening lock gates symbolise progress, blessed by a double rainbow. One of the boats flies a Greek flag, emblematic of democracy, and perhaps a reminder of Lord Byron who supported Greek independence in the 1820s. In 1812 Byron had defended rioting Nottingham weavers from the Tory government's repressive measures.

Nottingham City Museums
X78751

Stoneyhurst, Lancashire

1830
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Allen 1803–1876

In 1829, fearful of armed conflict in Ireland, George IV and his ministers allowed the passing of the Roman Catholic Relief Act. This allowed Catholics to hold public office for the first time in 150 years. Stonyhurst is home to a Roman Catholic school.

Reading this composition allegorically, the mounted figure's pose represents the government's U-turn, the crowd on the left the Protestants who opposed emancipation, and on the right the Catholics and their supporters welcoming the legislation. Storm clouds are moving away, leaving the college bathed in light and crowned with a rainbow's symbol of hope.

Tate. Purchased 1988
T05085

Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire

1833

Line engraving on paper
Engraver Thomas Higham 1795–1844

The traditional security of the Anglican Church and the
political establishment were both under threat in the
later 1820s as demands grew for Catholic emancipation
and electoral reform. Here, the children throwing stones
personify popular anger at the bishops' resistance to change.

Tate. Purchased 1988
T05092

The Northampton Election, 6 December 1830

c.1830–1
Watercolour, gouache and ink on paper

Agitation to reform the voting system and extend the franchise finally succeeded with the passing of the Reform Act in 1832. Here, the reformist Whig MP Lord Althorp is being carried through the streets after winning his seat. One of the banners reads 'The Purity of Elections and Triumph of Law'. A man sits at the balcony at the bottom left. He wears an old-fashioned tricorne hat, his gouty foot on a stool. Marianne, the personification of France, taps this reactionary emblem on his shoulder. The French Revolution in 1830 had shown the danger of resisting reform and frustrating the will of the people.

Tate. Purchased 2007
T12321

Vitrine

Chesworth & Robinson Reform Mug

c.1832
pink lustreware with transfer print

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum,
University of Cambridge
X78718

Wall

Salisbury, from Old Sarum

c.1827–8
Watercolour on paper

Turner's vantage point here is the notorious rotten borough of Old Sarum. Formerly the location of a castle and cathedral, it stood uninhabited for centuries but still sent two MPs to Parliament, voted in by eleven absentee electors. Here, the storm breaking over Salisbury Cathedral may suggest tensions at the time between reform aspirations and the conservatism of the Church. The 1832 Reform Act redrew constituencies and removed the seat of Old Sarum.

On loan from The Salisbury Museum
X76510

Wycliffe, near Rokeby

c.1816
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

Wycliffe Hall was believed to be the birthplace of John Wycliffe, the 14th-century religious reformer and translator of the Bible into English. When John Pye engraved this watercolour, Turner told him that the children driving away the geese represented Wycliffe's followers driving out superstition, the geese were 'overfed priests' and the light over Wycliffe's house symbolised the Reformation. Turner cited Wycliffe as an early champion of reform and freedom of expression in the text accompanying some engravings of this watercolour.

National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery
Bequeathed by Miss Eva Melly, 1944
X76505

Sidmouth, Devon

1825–7
Watercolour on paper

The end of the Napoleonic Wars was followed by social and economic hardship. This led to civil unrest. In response, the Tory government's Home Secretary, Henry Addington (Lord Sidmouth), introduced highly repressive measures to stamp down on civil liberties, including freedom of assembly. In progressive circles he was blamed for the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, when cavalry killed and injured many of the 60,000 people who gathered in Manchester to demand reform of Parliament. In 1823, Sidmouth married a much younger woman, attracting bawdy comments. The priapic sandstone rock stack emerging from the sea seems to indicate Turner intended a lewd association.

The Whitworth, The University of Manchester
X76508

SLAVERS THROWING OVERBOARD THE DEAD AND DYING – TYPHON COMING ON

This reproduction stands in for one of Turner's most important and resonant paintings. **Slavers** is Turner's impassioned attack on the transatlantic slave trade, depicting the horrific murder of captive people. The original painting was shown at the Royal Academy in June 1840. It is on display at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, USA but it is too fragile to travel.

During the journey between Africa and the Americas, there were numerous incidents when slavers pitched captives overboard into shark-infested waters to avoid arrest by the Royal Navy. Enslaved people were classed as 'goods' and would usually only be noted in ships' logs on death, if at all.

In the 1830s, the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade were debated in Parliament and reported in books. Turner's painting does not represent a particular incident, but he was probably inspired by reports of these outrages, as well as one of the most notorious early massacres. In August 1781, the crew of the **Zong** forced 133 sick captives overboard to capitalise on the terms of their insurance.

Slave Ship (Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying – Typhon Coming On)

1840
Oil paint on canvas

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Henry Lillie Pierce Fund, 99.22
Reproduction. Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Quote above

...For days afterwards the sea is strewn with companions:

The gods have taken revenge on all of us.

We float together for days before the waves

Divide us. I have known them all, briefly,

I have always known them, year after year

David Dabydeen **Turner** 1997

David Dabydeen (born 1955) is a Guyanese-born poet. His poem **Turner** 1997 is written from the perspective of a captive person, thrown overboard the ship in Turner's painting. In his preface to the work he states: 'My poem focuses on the submerged head of the African in the foreground of Turner's painting. It has been drowned in Turner's (and other artists') sea for centuries.'

This poem is one of many contemporary responses by artists who have used Turner's **Slavers** painting as a starting point for their own work. The painting has a powerful legacy in recent art, literature and cultural studies.

The Otolith Group's film installation **Hydra Decapita** 2010, material from Detroit techno duo Drexciya, and other contemporary responses are on display upstairs on the Rothko and Turner route.

Vitrine, left to right

after Thomas Hosmer Shepherd 1792–1864

Exeter Hall: The great Anti Slavery Meeting, 1841

1841
Line engraving on paper
Engraver Henry Melville 1792–1870

The World Anti-Slavery Convention's inaugural meeting was held in London in June 1840, while Turner's painting was on view at the Royal Academy (reproduced on this wall).

Private collection
Z75236

Joseph Davis

British & Foreign Anti-Slavery Society medal

1840

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, Michael
Graham-Stewart Slavery Collection. Acquired with the
assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund
X78717

Description of a Slave Ship

1789, printed 2020
Facsimile of woodcut on paper

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Wall

The Deluge

1828
Mezzotint on paper
Engraver John Quilley 1812–1842

Turner dedicated this print of his painting **The Deluge** (c.1805) to John Joshua Proby. Proby was the first Earl of Carysfort, a Whig politician who had recently died. Proby was an active opponent of the slave trade. He may have commissioned the original picture. A Black man appears in a heroic role, rescuing drowning white women. The print's publication coincided with the campaign of the Anti-Slavery Society whose activities influenced the passing of the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833.

Tate. Purchased 1986
T04838

BRITAIN AND THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Slavery was a major part of the British economy. By the start of the nineteenth century, it is estimated that Britain had transported 3.1 million people from Africa to the British colonies in the Caribbean, North and South America and other countries. Hundreds were shackled together and packed into the cramped decks of slaving ships in inhumane conditions. Some ten to twenty percent are estimated to have died on the journey.

The Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was established in 1787 but it took twenty years to secure legislation to end the trade in 1807. It was not until 1833 that slavery itself was outlawed in British overseas territories. Emancipation for enslaved people was finally achieved in 1838, at least in principle. The British government compensated slave owners for their loss, but gave nothing to those people who had been enslaved. Although British slavery was now illegal, the number of enslaved people crossing the Atlantic increased in the 1820s and 1830s, with Brazil, Cuba and the US the principal destinations. The Royal Navy's West Africa Squadron was charged with arresting slave ships and resettling their victims in Sierra Leone, but it had insufficient resources and was hampered by legal restrictions.

The personal fortunes of some of Turner's early patrons came from slavery. Turner also sought to benefit from it: in 1805 he invested £100 in a proposed cattle farm in Jamaica to be worked by enslaved people. It was never realised and all the investors lost their money. Other patrons were opponents of the slave trade, among them Turner's closest friend Walter Fawkes. Perhaps with Fawkes's encouragement, by the later 1820s, Turner had converted to the cause of Abolition. This is shown by his dedication of an engraving to an opponent of the slave trade.

ROOM 7
STEAM AND SPEED

Timeline

1814

World's first passenger-carrying steam locomotive built by George Stephenson

1821

First iron steamship built in Dudley

1829

Government enquiry into air-borne pollution and public health

1831–32

Cholera epidemic in Britain

1838

First stretch of Great Western Railway opens, including Maidenhead Bridge, subject of **Rain, Steam, and Speed**

Entering the room, anticlockwise

STEAM AND SPEED

Steam power was the most conspicuously modern feature of Turner's lifetime. It was used in industry during the eighteenth century and applied to locomotion in the nineteenth. Steam reduced journey times at home and to mainland Europe. It had such varied purposes in Britain that American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson called it 'almost an Englishman'.

Steamboats became common in British waters in the 1820s. Turner used them regularly and often painted them. Robert Stephenson's first steam locomotive ran on a public railway in 1825. Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Great Western Railway, called 'the most gigantic work… in the entire world', was constructed in the 1830s.

Fellow artist John Constable said he thought Turner painted with 'tinted steam'. This characterised the way Turner's style developed alongside his subject matter. His pictures of steam power produced between 1831 and 1844 are not just documents of innovation. They register the transition from older technologies, and their elemental

and mechanical energies show a world in flux. Turner suggests that coal-burning steam engines cannot wholly control the forces of nature. The pollution they pump into the atmosphere makes these forces more unpredictable.

William Daniell 1769–1837

Steam Boat on the Clyde near Dumbarton

1817
Aquatint on paper

This view by William Daniell, from the print series **A Voyage Round Great Britain**, was one of the first pictures to show a steamboat as well as sailing ships. Early steamboats like this one typically had very tall, thin funnels.

Tate. Presented by Tate Gallery Publications 1979
T02783

The Tower of London

1831
Line engraving on paper
Engraver William Miller 1796–1882

This print was based on a watercolour made around 1825 and reproduced in **The Literary Souvenir** with an article on the history of the Tower of London.

Steamboats moor below. One is the **Lord Melville**, a 'Superb, new and commodious, Steam Packet' recently introduced to the route to Calais. Alongside is the **Talbot**. Each is loaded with passengers' horse-drawn coaches.

On the right is the **Perseus**, an old hulk used as a 'receiving ship' or depot for sailors. The number of sailing vessels show how crowded the Thames was even before steamers arrived.

Tate. Transferred from the British Museum 1988
T06137

Dover

1851
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Tibbetts Willmore 1800–1863

As well as conventional sailing vessels, Turner shows a ship recently converted to steam power. This brings the view of the port, castle and cliffs at Dover up to date. Dover to Calais steamer services began in 1821.

This work was based on a watercolour Turner made in 1822.

Tate. Purchased 1990
T05791

Dover

c.1825
Watercolour on paper

Several kinds of vessels can be seen here navigating choppy waters off the port of Dover. In the foreground traditional rowboats ply their way. Behind them is a majestic sail ship. At the centre, a packed modern steamship charts its course under mechanised power. Turner has scratched away the painted surface to indicate the white steam of the engine, and added a quick, calligraphic zig-zag to show smoke trailing from the steamer's funnel.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D18154

Between Quillebeuf and Villequier

c.1832

Le Havre: Tour de François Ier

c.1832
Gouache and watercolour on paper

Steam power enabled more tourists to visit mainland Europe from the 1820s. British engineers were often employed aboard the vessels, leading one passenger on a steamboat in France to remark that 'only the food was French'.

Depicting the river Seine, Turner observes the same contrasts of old and new that he saw in Britain. At Le Havre, a steamboat passes a historic tower. On a bend of the river between Quillebeuf and Villequier, notorious for tidal waves and shoals, steam tugs escort sailing vessels to safety.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D24669, D24699

Seascape with a Boat

1835
Watercolour, bodycolour and chalk on paper

Lent by Museums Sheffield
X78589

Steamer and Lightship; a study for 'The Fighting Temeraire'

c.1838–9
Oil paint on canvas

This sketch has been recently cleaned and restored. It was described by Turner on the back as a 'first sketch' for **The Fighting Temeraire** (on display alongside). There are significant differences. The steamer passes the Nore lightship, much further down the Thames. If present at all, the Temeraire is a faint ghost.

Verse, also scribbled by Turner, makes a closer connection. Although only partly legible it describes light 'blushing red at her disgrace'. This describes the sale of the **Temeraire** to recoup the value of her timber.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N05478

**The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth
to be broken up, 1838**

1839
Oil paint on canvas

Turner's elegy for the age of sail and 'British oak', embodied in seamen, men-of-war and ships of the line, also ushers in the steam age. Sold, like other outdated warships, for the price of her timber, the **Temeraire** is towed to the breakers by a steam tug.

Much later, Turner's picture was described as his 'first, almost prophetic idea of smoke, soot, iron and steam'. Turner called it his 'darling' and refused to sell it. He intended it for the National Gallery, which sits in Trafalgar Square, named after the battle in which the **Temeraire** had served.

The National Gallery, London. Turner Bequest, 1856
X79303

The Thames above Waterloo Bridge

1835–40
Oil paint on canvas

The first steamboat built on the River Thames was constructed in 1832 near Waterloo Bridge. Here two steamboats are moored at Hungerford Pier, belching smoke into air already polluted by industry.

Steamboats were not universally welcome on the Thames. Their wash eroded its banks, paddle wheels churned its filthy water, and their traffic competed with livery barges and wherries. Parliamentary committees in 1831 and 1837–8 discussed disputes with the Watermen's Company. A commission considered urban smoke pollution in 1829. Cholera epidemics beginning in 1831–2 were attributed to 'miasma' from contaminated water.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N01992

Newcastle-on-Tyne

c.1823
Watercolour on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D18144

An Industrial Town at Sunset, Probably Birmingham or Dudley

c.1830–2
Watercolour on paper

A haze of mist and smoke hangs over a Midlands industrial town in this colour study, turning the sunset red. Turner often painted this phenomenon, but may not have understood that it was an effect of atmospheric pollution.

The town is probably Dudley, where a steam engine was first operated in 1712 and the first iron steamboat, **Aaron Manby**, was built at the Horseley Iron Works in 1821.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D25250

Shields, on the River Tyne

1823
Watercolour on paper

Turner made this watercolour, and that of Newcastle (displayed nearby), for his engraved series **Rivers of England**. In them he celebrates the Tyne and its role in trading and shipping the coal that fuelled Britain's steam age. Newcastle was the 'great emporium of the coal trade'. At Shields, 'keelmen' worked all hours loading colliers with coal delivered on elevated iron rails known as 'hurries'.
In fact, as their work became mechanised, keelmen became victims of British technological progress.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D18155

Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth making Signals in Shallow Water, and going by the Lead. The Author was in this Storm on the Night the Ariel left Harwich

exhibited 1842
Oil paint on canvas

In a contest of natural and mechanical energies, a steamboat battles a blizzard. It is taking soundings 'by the lead line' to determine the depth of water. The title specifies what is happening in precise nautical terms but Turner added some autobiographical narrative, claiming he experienced the storm. Later he said he had been lashed to the mast and had not expected to survive. There is no record of a steamboat called **Ariel** leaving Harwich in 1841–2 but a brig, **Fairy**, sank with all hands in November 1840.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00530

Life-Boat and Manby Apparatus Going off to a Stranded Vessel Making Signal (Blue Lights) of Distress

c.1831
Oil paint on canvas

Turner highlighted safety at sea and life-saving marine technologies in several of his pictures. Captain George Manby, seaman and inventor, developed his 'apparatus' in 1807 after seeing a shipwreck off Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. The 'Manby mortar' fired a stone attached to a rope to an endangered ship as a lifeline for its crew. Here, onlookers watch anxiously as the device is activated.

Turner knew Manby and may have intended this picture for him, or to mark his election to the Royal Society in 1831.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Given by John Sheepshanks, 1857
X76511

Rockets and Blue Lights

1852
Chromolithograph on paper
Engraver Robert Carrick 1829–1904

Although steamboats were fast and strong, they were as vulnerable to storms and treacherous conditions as any other ship. Turner pictured them in threatening situations as well as assisting or guiding other vessels.

Here steamboats approach shallows over a submerged sandbank off Margate pier. Rockets and blue distress lights fire to warn them of the danger. Turner's original painting was exhibited in 1840. This print was made using chromolithography, a new colour printing process.

Tate. Purchased 1992
T06627

Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway

1844
Oil paint on canvas

Turner was the first artist to bring 'railway mania' into the arena of academic oil painting with this picture of the Great Western Railway. A Firefly engine pulls a train across the Thames on Maidenhead bridge at 50 or 60 miles per hour, outrun – or perhaps not – by a hare on the track. Misty rain mirrors water condensed in the white-hot engine to produce steam. The old road bridge (left) recalls slower journeys in the past. The open carriages are third class, leaving passengers exposed to the elements. The exhibition of this painting in 1844 coincided with new safety legislation, following a fatal derailment at Sonning on this line in 1841.

The National Gallery, London. Turner Bequest, 1856
X05312

Vitrine

Joseph Clement 1779–1844

Model of a 'Firefly' locomotive

1838
Metal and wood

The Firefly class of engine seen in this model was designed by Daniel Gooch, Isambard Kingdom Brunel's locomotive engineer. Large boilers enabled it to pull 80-ton trains at speeds up to 60 miles per hour. It was used by the Great Western Railway and depicted in Turner's picture **Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway**, on display nearby.

On loan from the Science Museum Group
X78752

ROOM 8
MODERN PAINTER

Timeline

1839

Treaty of London establishes independence and neutrality of Belgium

1840

Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha

1840

Napoleon's remains interred in Les Invalides, Paris

1842

Opening of the Walhalla, Bavaria

1844

State visit of French king Louis-Philippe to Queen Victoria

1848

Revolutions across Europe, including Naples

Entering the room, anticlockwise

MODERN PAINTER

In the 1840s, Turner started experimenting with the presentation of his ideas. He used shaped formats (such as square, circular or octagonal frames), exhibited subjects in pairs and worked in more extensive series. His exploration of colour was unparalleled, and his style became increasingly adventurous. Turner was forging a new language of representation. He dispensed with the hard outlines and the artificial divisions of the visual field that characterised more traditional approaches. He also gave greater prominence to the effects of light and atmosphere. This approach chimed with the latest scientific thinking on how vision actively shapes what we experience.

The subject matter of many works from the final years of his career shows Turner's continued interest in modern life. In addition to paintings of steam technology, he meditated on the legacy of Napoleon's rise and fall. He also responded to current events. Perhaps prompted by the Treaty of London in 1839 that established Luxembourg's independence, Turner visited the country that summer to make new studies. After Queen Victoria married Prince Albert in 1840, Turner painted

the castle in Saxe-Coburg (now Bavaria, Germany), where the prince was born. In two unfinished oil paintings, he captured the October 1844 state visit to Britain of the French king Louis-Philippe and in one of his very last watercolours he reflected on the uprising in Naples of May 1848.

In 1843 a reviewer commented, 'No painter of the present-day dare attempt such pictures as Mr. Turner produces.' Art critics agreed he had developed a completely distinctive approach to painting. By the end of his career, modernity was not limited to Turner's subject matter, it had also transformed his style and practice.

Distant View of Luxembourg from the Bourbon Plateau

c.1839
Gouache, graphite and watercolour on paper

**The Bock and the Rham, Luxembourg, above
the Alzette Valley**

c.1839
Gouache, pen, ink and watercolour on paper

The Treaty of London (1839) established the independence
of the German-speaking part of Luxembourg. Perhaps in
response to this, Turner revisited Luxembourg that autumn.
The distant view here combines an accurate depiction of
Luxembourg with imaginary fortifications in the foreground.
Its companion concentrates on two fortified plateaux
defending Luxembourg from attack.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D20284, D20246

Schloss Rosenau, near Coburg

c.1840

Watercolour on paper

Tate.

Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856

D35889

Schloss Rosenau, Seat of HRH Prince Albert of Coburg, near Coburg, Germany

1841
Oil paint on canvas

Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha in February 1840. In September of that year Turner sketched the prince's birthplace of Schloss Rosenau, near Coburg, on his way home from Venice. Perhaps he was hoping for royal patronage, but neither Victoria nor Albert showed any interest and this painting was sold to an enthusiastic collector in 1845. When it was exhibited, the reviewers were almost all hostile. They criticised the painting's colour and handling, 'the fruits of a diseased eye and a reckless hand.'

National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery
Bequeathed by Emma Holt, 1944
X76501

The Market Place, Coburg

1840
Watercolour and gouache on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D32187

'Hurrah! for the Whaler Erebus! Another Fish!'

exhibited 1846
Oil paint on canvas

No whaling ship was actually called **Erebus**, but the survey ship **HMS Erebus** had recently explored Antarctica, and Turner borrowed the name.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00546

Whalers

exhibited 1845
Oil paint on canvas

Turner exhibited four paintings of whaling at the Royal
Academy: two in 1845 and two in 1846. His patron Elhanan
Bicknell was a partner in a whaling firm. Bicknell bought one
of the 1845 paintings but disliked its finish and returned it.
The three oil paintings exhibited here did not find buyers.

Whalers (Boiling Blubber) Entangled in Flaw Ice, Endeavouring to Extricate Themselves

exhibited 1846
Oil paint on canvas

The Southern Whale Fishery was a major industry in Turner's lifetime. Whale oil was a valuable commodity for lighting and lubrication, with market prices listed in the newspapers like Brent Crude oil is today. By the 1840s the British operation was in terminal decline. Its ships were increasingly uncompetitive, especially after the import tariff on foreign oil was reduced in 1843.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00547

Burning Blubber

c.1844–5 Chalk and watercolour on paper

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D35246

A Steamer Leaving Harbour

c.1845

Chalk and watercolour on paper

Tate.

Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856

D35244

**The Arrival of Louis-Philippe:
The 'Gomer' in Portsmouth Harbour**

1844
Watercolour on paper

Turner travelled to Gosport on 8 October 1844 to witness the arrival of the **Gomer**, carrying the French king Louis-Philippe on his state visit to Queen Victoria. He probably viewed the ceremonial proceedings from a boat.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D35981

The Disembarkation of Louis-Philippe at the Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, 8 October 1844

The Arrival of Louis-Philippe at the Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, 8 October 1844

c.1844–5
Oil paint on canvas

These two unfinished oil paintings make much of the eager crowds witnessing the king's arrival. The uncompromising style Turner was using in the mid-1840s usually baffled his critics. Even if he had completed these paintings, their depiction of the occasion would almost certainly have been ridiculed in the press.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N04660, N02068

Vitrine

A Dinner Table at the Château d'Eu

1845
Graphite, gouache and watercolour on paper

In September 1845 Turner dined with the king of France, Louis-Philippe, at his chateau at Eu. He recalled it in this watercolour sketch. Turner had known Louis-Philippe since the 1810s, when the French king was living in exile at Twickenham. In 1836 the king sent Turner a medal and received in return a set of prints. A couple of years later Turner was also presented with a jewelled snuffbox.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D35482

Wall

The Arrival of Louis-Philippe at the Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, 8 October 1844

The Disembarkation of Louis-Philippe at the Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, 8 October 1844

c.1844–5
Oil paint on canvas

These two unfinished oil paintings make much of the eager crowds witnessing the king's arrival. The uncompromising style Turner was using in the mid-1840s usually baffled his critics. Even if he had completed these paintings, their depiction of the occasion would almost certainly have been ridiculed in the press.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N02068, N04660

Entering the second section of the room, clockwise

Venice by Moonlight, with Boats off a Campanile

1840
Watercolour on paper

Turner made this sketch during his last visit to Venice in 1840. Evoking the magical transformation of the city as day turns to night, it is not an exact view but a poetic reverie.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D32126

Figures in the Piazzetta, Venice, at Night, with the Basilica and Campanile of San Marco (St Mark's)

1840
Watercolour and bodycolour on paper

This view of Venice at night, made during Turner's last visit in 1840, shows his political awareness. An Austrian soldier and his striped sentry box remind us that for all its former grandeur and picturesque fascination, Venice was now a city under foreign rule.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D32220

'Sauve Qui Peut': Column of Red Figures, Some on Horseback

c.1841–2
Watercolour on paper

The phrase 'Sauve qui peut' ['every man for himself'] is found in Walter Scott's biography of Napoleon. It is used to describe the turmoil in the streets of Paris as news of his abdication spread. It also recalls the French army's defeat at Waterloo, which may be the subject here.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D27550

Adieu Fontainebleau

c.1841–2

Graphite and watercolour on paper

This sketch returns to a subject Turner had illustrated in Walter Scott's **Life of Napoleon Buonaparte** (1834–6), Napoleon's farewell after his abdication in 1814.

Tate.

Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856

D27546

Ehrenbreitstein: 'The March of N from Cob[lenz]'

c.1841–2
Graphite and watercolour on paper

By the 1840s, Napoleon's career had featured in Turner's output for over 30 years. This is one of a series of late watercolour sketches, some of them inscribed with the letter 'N', in which Turner developed further Napoleonic ideas. It may represent Napoleon's visit to Koblenz in 1804. Turner travelled on the new road Napoleon's engineers had constructed.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
D27544

War. The Exile and the Rock Limpet

exhibited 1842
Oil paint on canvas

A pair to **Peace**, on display nearby, **War** shows Napoleon in exile on St. Helena, watched over by a British sentry. Perhaps painted as a response to the pomp of Napoleon's state funeral held in December 1840, Turner shows him instead meditating on his fall from power. Even a mollusc has more self-determination than the former emperor.

The lurid sky and a sluice gate in the shape of a butcher's cleaver bring carnage and bloodshed to mind, the deaths of thousands being the price of Napoleon's ambition.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00529

Peace – Burial at Sea

exhibited 1842
Oil paint on canvas

The painter David Wilkie died of typhoid on his return from the Holy Land in 1841. The Governor of Gibraltar refused to allow the body ashore and Wilkie was buried at sea.
Turner painted this in his memory, placing a funeral carriage on the deck of the ship to stand for the public funeral Wilkie should have had. When asked about the unnaturally black sails, Turner said he wished he could make them blacker still, revealing his personal response to Wilkie's premature death. Turner paired this painting with **War. The Exile and the Rock Limpet**, on display nearby, setting up an ironic comparison with Napoleon's reputation.

Tate.
Accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856
N00528

Oberwesel

1842
Line engraving on paper
Engraver James Tibbits Willmore 1800–1863

Turner made the original watercolour for this print in 1839, changing the topography to strengthen the composition. He contrasted a contemporary vision of peace and plenty with the war against Napoleon. The smoke from a steamer indicates where Prussian Field Marshall Blücher crossed the river in 1814 to drive the French army out of the Rhineland. The women and children in the foreground bring to mind Byron's **Childe Harold's Pilgrimage**, where the Rhine is identified with renewal: 'Maternal Nature! For who teems like thee / Thus on the banks of thy majestic Rhine?'

Private collection
Z75932

Naples

1851
Watercolour and pencil on paper

Turner depicts the medieval fortress Castel Sant'Elmo on its hill to the left, with Naples spread out below. The arches of the Ponti Rossi aqueduct are visible beyond the trees to the right. The soldiers belong to the Carabinieri Reale, formed in the aftermath of the failed uprising in Naples on 14–15 May 1848. One of them points to the Castel Sant'Elmo. Its guns had signalled the counter-revolutionary forces to begin their successful recapture of the city. As with **Oberwesel** (on display nearby), the image portrays the return of peace once hostilities have ended.

Manchester Art Gallery Mr James Thomas Blair bequest, 1917
X79108

CREDITS

TURNER'S MODERN WORLD

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Co-curated by David Blayney Brown, Senior Curator, Historic British Art, Amy Concannon, Curator, British Art 1790–1850, James Finch, Assistant Curator, 19th Century British Art and Sam Smiles, Honorary Professor, Art History and Visual Culture, University of Exeter with Hattie Spires, Curator, British Art

Interpretation by Sam McGuire and Kirsteen McSwein

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EVENTS

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AUDIO GUIDE

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