

the Whitworth

Audio Descriptions transcript

April 2021

AUDIO DESCRIPTIONS

Audio descriptions of artworks from the collection of the Whitworth, The University of Manchester.



AUDIO DESCRIPTION 2: Henry Bright (1814-1873) - The Coming of The Storm, Yarmouth, Norfolk (1833). Pastel on paper (brown). Drawing. Gifted to The Whitworth, The University of Manchester by Arthur Edward Anderson in 1914.

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Henry Bright - The Coming of The Storm, Yarmouth, Norfolk (1833)

This landscape pastel by English artist Henry Bright depicts the arrival of a storm on a beach at Yarmouth in Norfolk. The pastel is roughly twenty by forty centimetres and is painted onto sandy brown paper. The first thing one notices about this paper, due to the paintings lack of frame, is the torn and crinkled top edge of the piece and the way that the pastel itself does not quite reach the edges, giving the scene a rough and hazy sandy border and a slightly unfinished look. However, this is actually very effective, the brown paper works perfectly with the colour pallet and provides an excellent base on which to create a beach landscape.

<Beach sound effects bed plays and continues underscoring the description>

We appear to be standing on the beach itself facing down the beach. Although not visible you get the sense that the land is off somewhere to the left, while the sea is visible to the right. From where we are viewing the scene the sky takes up three quarters of the pastel from top to bottom, a small sliver of sea on the right half of the pastel emerges, and the bottom quarter of the pastel gives way to sand.

The sky itself is the main focus of the pastel. A great storm, clouds of deep navy blue with black at its core sweeps across from the left. The pastel strokes follow the rain, spraying and sweeping diagonally down across the piece from left to right. This swell of rain only just manages to cross the sky about halfway across and to where the sea becomes visible. On the right half, above the sea, the sky is calmer but still thick with grey – white cloud.

For the storm cloud, Bright has used long diagonal lines of pastel which gives a real sense of movement to the weather, it really appears as if the rain is moving across the paper. Within the long diagonal strokes of navy blue and grey, Bright has included downward curving lines which represent the misty rainfall being whipped and moved by the wind.

The beach in front of us is a pale sandy yellow and in the immediate foreground, some small puddles appear, with a few small pebbles and shells dotted sparsely around in the sand. Slightly left of centre and further into the distance two figures, one seated with their back to us facing towards the sea and one standing facing the seated figure, seem to be preparing for the coming storm, gathering together belongings in two large round baskets. Further, but still close enough to pick out some detail, a small brown fishing boat with a tall mast and long bow spirit extending towards us has been dragged ashore, followed by a smaller rowing boat; a small group of people stand by the boat and one is person standing on top. The whole boat is leaning to the left, beached on the sand. Even further into the distance, just left of centre two more boats have been pulled ashore by a group of sailors. No real detail can be made out, only the grey and white silhouettes of the sails and a smudge of people gathered on the horizon under the angry sky.

<Beach sounds effects bed stops>

Henry Bright was an English artist born in Suffolk in 1810. Famous for his works in oils, watercolour, chalk and pencil of various locations across England, Wales, Scotland and Europe. He was associated with the Norwich School of Painters and was known to be good friends with J M W Turner and highly regarded by John Ruskin. Bright was also associated with the manufacture of coloured crayons and had a profitable career teaching the wealthy and titled, who would then become his patrons. Notably Bright had paintings purchased by Queen Victoria and Grand Duchess Marie of Russia. Bright died in Ipswich in 1873.