



Wendy McMurdo, *Girl with Bears*, Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.1999 © Wendy McMurdo. All Rights Reserved, DACS 2017.

This is one of a series of resources exploring the theme **Scottish identity: who decides who we are?** This section uses *Monarch of the Glen* and other relevant artworks to focus on *constructed reality*, offering images, questions and activities for learners of all ages to explore.



Sir Edwin Landseer, *The Monarch of the Glen* (about 1851)

On a visit to Scotland, Landseer visited the famous novelist Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832). He journeyed to the Highlands and was entranced by the dramatic landscapes, the people he met and what he considered to be the romance of Scottish history.

When he painted, Landseer's subject matter was tailored to suit his patrons. Landseer created *Monarch of the Glen* in his studio in London and constructed a picture of Scotland from his own personal memories and ideas.

In his lifetime, his paintings helped to inspire the growing romantic, tourist image of Scotland, rather than documenting the reality of a period of turmoil and deprivation caused by the forced evictions known as the Highland Clearances.

Images Constructed reality

Here are some other artists who have constructed reality through their art.



Benjamin West, *Alexander III of Scotland Rescued from the Fury of a Stag by the Intrepidity of Colin Fitzgerald ('The Death of the Stag')* 1786 © National Galleries of Scotland



Sir David Wilkie, *Distraint for Rent* 1815 © National Galleries of Scotland



Julian Calder, *Queen of Scots, Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle and Chief of the Chiefs.* Date unknown. Copyright Julian Calder



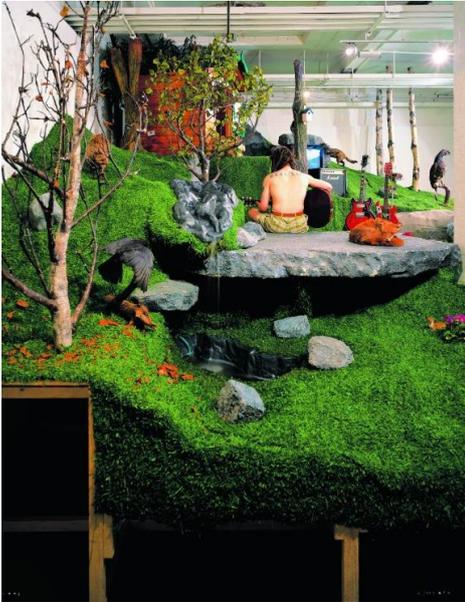
Ron O'Donnell, *The Great Divide.* 1987 © RON O'DONNELL



Alexander Hutchison, *St Kilda.* Made about 1890 © National Galleries of Scotland



Ross Sinclair *After, After, After the Monarch of the Glen - Real Life Is Dead* at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery. Photographer Ewen Weatherspoon



Ross Sinclair, *Real Life Rocky Mountain*
 Installation view: CCA, Glasgow 1996



Sir Henry Raeburn, *Colonel Alastair Ranaldson Macdonnell of Glengarry (1771-1828)* © National Galleries of Scotland



Murdo MacLeod, *Tom Kitchin, b. 1977 Chef*.
 2010 copyright & photography Murdo MacLeod



Strohmeier & Wyman Publishers, *Scotland's Pride - The Great Forth Bridge and the Highland Kilt*, 1896

Questions Constructed Reality

We wonder... ...can we always tell fact from fiction?

What do your students wonder about constructed reality?

Ask your students to come up with questions, or try some of the questions below.



Ron O'Donnell, 'Constructed Narratives' 7. *Woodland Animals III* 1984 © RON O'DONNELL

FACT OR FICTION

- Do you think *Monarch of the Glen* portrays a realistic version of Scotland or is it more romantic?
- Why do you think people who commission artists might want to avoid certain facts, e.g. the Highland Clearances?
- Should art always tell the truth or is art always fiction?
- When someone pays an artist to make an artwork, are they allowed to decide what it shows?



David Williams, *Senior and Junior Girl* from 'Pictures from No Man's Land' 1984 © DAVID WILLIAMS

ABOUT YOU

- Do you use social media? How do you invent and control how people see you on social media?
- Can photographs lie? What can't you see beyond the frame?
- What images do you know that don't tell the whole truth?



Ross Sinclair 'After, After, After the Monarch of the Glen – Real Life is Dead' at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery. Photographer Ewen Weatherspoon

IDENTITY

- Is *Monarch of the Glen* a Scottish painting if painted by a non-Scot?
- Who has control over images of you?
- Who decides who we are?

Activities Constructed Reality

Here are three activities that explore *constructed reality*. We have purposely suggested activities that are not aimed at a particular level as we believe in teachers' professional judgement; you can adapt activities to suit any group and any time frame.

Can pictures lie?

1 session



Wendy McMurdo, *Girl with Bears*, Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh.1999 © Wendy McMurdo
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- Ask pupils to take photos of any images they find around the school
- Spread the photos on the floor and ask pupils to choose photos that are eye catching, confusing, or present a question.
- List everything that could be true / false about the images e.g. is it computer enhanced, has the artist missed something out, used imagination, exaggerated?
- What is happening beyond the frame?
- Create captions to accompany the photos that reveal what they think might be the true story behind the image.
- You could create an online exhibition or create a slide-show for other classes.

Creativity skills being developed are hypothesising, researching productively, crafting, delivering and presenting solutions.

Possible links to the Curriculum for Excellence are Literacy, Expressive Arts and Health & wellbeing.



Verena Jaekel, *Mona Siddiqui with her Family, Dullatur*, 2010. From *A Scottish Family Portrait* series. 2010 © Verena Jaekel

- Ask the class to pose the question 'What makes you Scottish?' to people they know from different generations, e.g. grandparents, friends, community groups etc. Find different ways of recording the responses, i.e. film, audio recordings, photos.
- Write down key phrases from the interviews and make them into signs.
- Ask pupils to place these signs in the community, in places relevant to their meaning; e.g. a sign about Scottish food might go outside a supermarket. Take photos of the signs.
- Use the photographs to facilitate a discussion

Creativity skills being developed are being open-minded, exploring multiple viewpoints, problem solving and generating and refining ideas.

Possible links to the Curriculum for Excellence are Social Studies, Literacy and Expressive Arts.



Ross Sinclair *After, After, After the Monarch of the Glen – Real Life is Dead* at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery.
Photographer Ewen Weatherspoon

- Contemporary Scottish artist Ross Sinclair created an art installation in Inverness Museum & Art Gallery in 2017, inspired by *Monarch of the Glen*. Compare the images of his exhibition with the original painting. Split the class in two: those who prefer Landseer's *Monarch of the Glen*, and those who prefer Ross Sinclair's work above.
- One side must create a speech supporting Sinclair's work. The other side should create a speech that defends Landseer's work and how it shows Scotland.
- What kind of language should you use e.g. persuasive, manipulative etc?
- What should happen to the painting? Does Scotland today need new art?

Creativity skills being developed include exploring multiple viewpoints, understanding and defining problems, crafting, delivering and presenting solutions.

Possible links to the Curriculum for Excellence are politics in Social Studies, speaking in Literacy and drama in Expressive Arts.