

IMAGE

TEACHER RESOURCES



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Faculty of Classics

Classical Shorts is a series of films created for schools by Lion TV with the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge.

The Films can be accessed via the University of Cambridge YouTube Channel, the Classics for All website, and BBC Teach.

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Image: Teacher Resources

Self-Image in a world of Selfies

In the modern world, almost everyone carries a phone with a camera around with them and, as a result, is able to capture images of themselves and share them on a regular basis.

There are various reasons that people want to share images of themselves online, from sharing their life and memories with distant friends and family to seeking validation about their appearance. But the use of filters available on social media applications has made it very easy to edit these images and this can lead to negative consequences for people's mental health and self-worth when they can't live up to the unachievable beauty standards often shown off in filters.

Sasha Pallari's #filterdrop campaign, which was discussed in the film, encouraged people to post filter-free selfies and had thousands of people taking part. This generated a conversation about filters that has led to the Advertising standards authority (ASA) to rule that "filters should not be applied to social media ads if they exaggerate the effect of a beauty product" and all brands must flag when a filter has been used to advertise skincare or cosmetics to avoid false advertising and aims to increase self-acceptance and confidence in as many people as possible.



Figure 1. Image of Sasha Pallari showing the impact of filters on the appearance of skin

Would you post an unfiltered selfie? Why do you think this is?

List the reasons mentioned in the film for why filters can be harmful. Add some reasons of your own.

Now think about whether filters are ever good- how would you defend the use of filters?

Has social media had an impact on your, or your friend's, mental health?

Do you think influencers and companies should be allowed to use filters in their campaigns?

Come up with your own idea for a social media campaign to bring awareness to self-image online.

The image of Queen Elizabeth I

Queen Elizabeth I (Queen of England from 1558-1603) was well known for controlling her public image throughout her reign. In a time when having a female monarch was considered a weakness Elizabeth had to rely on tactics of 'soft-power' to solidify her position on the throne and inspire confidence and loyalty from those around her. Creating a compelling image was part of that.

The image that Elizabeth wanted to project was one of youth. She was a beautiful virgin queen, dedicated to her country. Even as she aged, she ensured that her portraits remained youthful to project this image and in person she wore thick layers of make-up to make her appear younger than she really was- though the make-up of the time had a high lead content so it probably had the opposite effect in the end!

One reason that an image of youth helped Elizabeth was that it kept the possibility of marriage and the production of an heir a possibility. Factions in her court and international relations were often managed with suggestions of marriage, and thus potential kingship, which proved a powerful motivator for men she wished to influence- maintaining a youthful image worked to make her seem a more alluring marriage prospect and enable her more negotiating power with her 'suitors'.



Figure 2. The Darnley Portrait, 1575



Figure 4. The Woburn Abbey version of the Armada Portrait 1588



Figure 3. The Rainbow Portrait, c. 1600-02, attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

Take a look at these portraits of Elizabeth I. What are the similarities? Do you think they represent her as she really looked at the time (Tip: take a look at the dates)

These portraits also have a lot of symbolism in them. Look up what the various objects might mean and explain what you think each portrait is trying to convey about Elizabeth and her reign.

Augustus: the first roman emperor

Augustus was the first Roman emperor. 2000 years ago, and from 27 BC – 14 AD, he ruled 40-50 million people, the length and breadth of the Mediterranean and beyond. He was named as the heir to Julius Caesar after Caesar's assassination in 44 BCE. Augustus went on to become the undisputed leader of the Roman Empire, after a series of civil wars. He achieved this position through incremental power gains and appearing to uphold the republican traditions of Rome, rejecting the ideas of dictatorship and monarchy- a particularly difficult line to walk when he was setting himself up as an emperor!



Figure 5. Bust of Augustus

In order to establish himself as emperor and maintain his power he had to consider his image. But how did he navigate creating an image of 'a roman emperor' when it didn't exist before?

One thing he did was to change his name! Before he came to power, he was called Octavian, it was only after he came to power that the senate granted him



Figure 6. La Lupa Capitolina "the Capitoline Wolf"
Depicting Romulus and Remus, legendary founders of Rome, being nursed by a she-wolf

the name Augustus, which had religious connotations. He accepted this name more readily than one of the other suggestions- Romulus, after the founder of Rome- as it had too many undertones of monarchy, which Augustus was careful to avoid. This new title was religious and respectable, underlining his position as favoured by the gods without being too arrogant.

As well as changing his name he also ensured that way that his physical image was presented was different to that of the typical senators' portraits of the time, which presented these powerful men as old. Choosing a portrait that was young and fit was a revolutionary break with tradition and signified that Augustus was

distinct from those in the senate. A youthful image emphasised his military strength, by suggesting that he was capable of fighting himself, rather than just for his political acumen, and referenced earlier Greek heroic statues which were becoming popular in Roman visual culture. The change in iconography suggests that Augustus was comparing himself to the legendary heroes of the Greek world.



Figure 7. Augustus visits the tomb of Alexander the Great Lionel Royer (1852-1926)

Template moulds of Augustus' 'young' head were created and disseminated throughout the provinces to ensure that his image was known around the Empire. The image of Augustus became commonplace with around 25,000-50,000 statues made and displayed across the world!

If you were to become the emperor of your school, how would you style yourself differently? What visual cues would you use to signify your new position? Is there anything you'd need to be careful of?

What does a young image convey in an emperor? List the positives and negatives of the image Augustus chose to portray.

Why might Augustus want to portray himself as like a Greek Hero? Can you think of any specific Greek figures that Augustus may want to draw comparisons too? Are they good comparisons for his project?

Costume

Here we can see two images of Augustus. The faces are the same but what differs is the 'costume'.

In Figure 9, we see the prima porta- the statue in the film. In this he is wearing a cuirass, or armour. This obviously has military connotations, showing off Augustus' prowess in battle. The armour also provides an opportunity for symbolism with the detailing on the breastplate. Here we can see representations of his victories around the empire, including depictions of tribute and military standards being returned to Rome. This military imagery bolsters



Figure 8. Augustus as pontifex maximus



Figure 9. Augustus Prima Porta

Augustus' image as a strong general- and may even have been chosen to counter a perception of him as weak, when he unexpectedly ended conflict with the Parthians by diplomacy rather than war. There are also depictions of the Gods on the cuirass, which show Augustus' closeness to the gods- further supported by the presence of cupid at his feet, alluding to his divine lineage- and implying that they played a part in establishing him in his position of power.

The statue in Figure 8 looks quite different. Here he is wearing long robes and covering his head. This is clothing associated with the role of pontifex maximus, high priest, the highest religious office in Rome, which Augustus took on in 13/12 BC. Some scholars argue that this title becoming one of the emperor's titles and roles within the state gave them a sort of religious dignity which gave them more control over the religious life of the empire.

Both images of Augustus convey his link to the divine but in different ways.

Imagine they are images of two different people. How would you characterise each person? Is it possible for these statues to both be of the same person?

Which image of Augustus would you choose as a leader?

Statue based on the Greek Type

As Carrie mentioned in the film, the body of the prima porta statue is based on a 'Greek type'. This Greek statue is called the Doryphoros, or "Spear-Bearer". It was the work of Polykleitos the sculptor. It depicts a nude, muscular warrior, standing and carrying a spear resting on his left shoulder.

The original work was cast in bronze circa 440 BC but is now lost. We know about it from several marble copies and it is an early example of Classical Greek realism and the use of the contrapposto stance. Contrapposto is when the sculpture stands more heavily on one foot and thus displays a more naturalistic pose than the stiff statues of earlier periods.



Figure 10. Copy of *The Doryphoros* (after Polykleitos) by unknown Roman artist 27BC-68AD Minneapolis Institute of Art

In ancient Greek art, nudity was often used to represent the heroic ideal and is referred to as 'heroic costume'. This is because the ancient Greeks associated the human body with physical excellence and strength. Therefore, depicting a person as naked was a way of showing that they possessed these qualities.

Painted statues

As we learn in the film, the perception we have of ancient Greek and Roman statues being white marble is not how they would have been presented in the ancient world. Originally, they would have been painted and we know this because of the residue that can be found on the statues. Much of the paint did not survive, because the paint used on ancient statues was made from organic materials, such as plant dyes or ground minerals, which are highly susceptible to degradation over time. Many statues were also situated outside, meaning they were exposed harsh conditions and weathering. Over time, these factors combined to cause the paint to fade, crack, peel, or flake off, resulting in the loss of much of the original colour.

Watch Carrie Vout discuss another painted statue- the Peplos Kore ([here](#))

Images on coins

Another way that Augustus spread his image throughout the empire was one that is familiar to us today. Augustus had his head on coins.

By having his head on coins, he ensured that his image was part of everyday life for many people, visually promoting his image and creating a sense of personal connection between him as a ruler and people throughout the empire. By having his portrait on the coins, Augustus was also able to visually assert his power and control over the Roman monetary system. His image and, by implication his power, gave legitimacy to the currency and in turn the importance of the coinage in people's lives lent the person depicted on that coinage credibility. These are some of the reasons that have led to the custom of having the monarch's head on coins, which we continue to this day.

Coins also have other symbolism on them that represent the values, beliefs, or history of the society or country that produced them. These symbols can take many different forms, such as animals, plants, objects, or even abstract designs. Some common examples of symbolism on ancient coinage include the use of the owl of Athena on Athenian coinage, and the imperial eagle on Roman coinage. In the modern world we might think of Lions on British currency or the maple leaf on Canadian coins. Additionally, many coins also feature inscriptions or phrases that further communicate the values or beliefs of the society in question.

Take a look at this image of a British Pound Coin:



Here are some of the symbols. They work in ways similar to roman coins. What do you notice? What does this tell us about modern UK society?

Is there anything that might be misleading? For example, just because these coins have Latin on them (not pictured) doesn't mean that everyone using them reads Latin. The same caution needs to be taken when we look at ancient coins.

Visit the Royal Mint website and take a look at some more designs of modern coins. What do they tell us? Do you remember them? Is this important for how we look at ancient coins?

Verism

The style of having statues and portraits looking older with wrinkles and warts emphasised, became popular in the late Roman Republic when age was valued as a signifier of wisdom and power- one needed to be old to be a member of the Senate*, a key governing body in Rome.

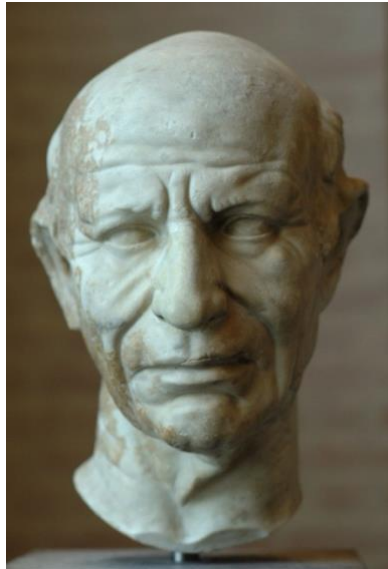


Figure 12. Portrait bust of a man, Ancient Rome, 60 BC an example of Verism

*'Senate' derives from the Latin 'senex', meaning "old man" and implying that it is literally an assembly of elders.

This 'warts and all' style has traditionally been called 'Verism'. This term implies that it is more truthful (think of the English word 'verify')- but this isn't necessarily the case. Choosing to present yourself as old is just a different choice, and needs to be treated with as much caution as younger looking images.

The first 5 Roman emperors- known as the Julio-Claudian dynasty, starting with Augustus moved away from Verism. However, Vespasian the first of the next dynasty of Emperors chose a veristic style portrait as a way of visually differentiating himself from the previous emperors and more closely aligning himself with the traditions and values of the Republic.



Figure 11. Figure 12. Veristic portrait on the coinage of Vespasian

What were the benefits of looking older in Roman society? What are the benefits of looking older today?

Is this the same for women? Why and/or why not?

Take a photo of yourself and make it look older (either with an app, filter, or print it out and add wrinkles the old-fashioned way!) How do you describe your appearance? What does this tell you about how our society views older looking people?

Bronze statues- why they survive and eyes etc.

A lot of art in antiquity was made of bronze, typically with glass eyes, which would have given a striking effect- as we can see on the Augustus head in the film.

Bronze casting, the process of making a sculpture in Bronze, is a highly skilled work that can be done using several techniques, including lost-wax casting and sand casting. The lost-wax method involves creating a full-sized model of the sculpture using clay, which is then used to make a mould. A wax version of the sculpture is cast from the mould, and then invested in another mould or shell, which is heated until the wax melts and is replaced by molten bronze. The shell is then chipped away to reveal the bronze sculpture. Lost-wax casting is a very old and basic form of casting, but it is still the most commonly used method today. Sand casting involves creating a mould using sand, into which the molten bronze is poured. After the final polishing, a patina (coating) can be created by applying corrosive materials, which allows some control over the colour and finish of the sculpture.



Figure 13. The Victorious Youth, Greek bronze sculpture, made between 300 and 100 BC, preserved underwater and discovered off the Adriatic Coast

For large sculptures, the artist may create smaller study models and intermediate-sized models before constructing a full-size model, which is used to make a mould for casting. The ancient Greeks made significant advancements in bronze sculpture, including the creation of life-size, free-standing bronze statues by casting and welding the pieces together.

Unfortunately, very few examples of bronze sculpture survive. Bronze is a highly valuable and malleable metal, making it a prime target for looting and destruction throughout history as it could be melted down and re-purposed. Some of the ways bronze sculpture was refashioned was into weapons or currency. The majority of bronze sculpture survivals are down to disasters such as volcanic eruptions, landslides, and shipwrecks that put the statues beyond the reach of looters and preserved them from corrosion. We know about most of the famous Greek bronzes through Roman marble copies.

Story of Augustus' head

The bronze head of Augustus that Mary looks at in the film is called the Meroe Head because it was found in Meroe- an ancient Nubian site in Modern day Sudan.

The head was once attached to a larger than life-sized bronze sculpture of Augustus, which was originally on display in Egypt.

We think of this statue is particularly realistic due to the preservation of the eyes, which are often lost from ancient statues. The eyes are inset with glass pupils and calcite irises, and give this Augustus a more engaging look than we are used to. However, this would have been quite typical for the looks of ancient Bronze sculpture.



Figure 14. The Meroe Head, British Museum

The reason that this head survived is quite unusual. It was looted from Roman Egypt by the invading army of Queen Amanirenas of Kush in 24 BC, during a series of raids in Lower Egypt. The statue was decapitated and the head was buried under a temple staircase, which led to an altar of victory, as a symbol of contempt for Augustus and the Roman Empire.

How does art play a role in expressing political ideologies? Think about the original statue and what happened to it. Is it effective in conveying these points

Write a short story or historical fiction piece based on the passage, imagining the events leading up to the looting of the Augustus statue and the burial of the head.

Just for fun: Find images of other ancient bronze statues and edit/draw on them to give them more realistic eyes! What does this do to how they look?

Modern statue wars

The term "modern statue wars" refers to the ongoing debate and controversy over the display and preservation of statues, monuments, and other public artworks. This controversy often centres around historical figures who were associated with slavery, racism, colonialism, or other oppressive ideologies and actions. In recent years, there has been a growing movement to remove or deface these statues, arguing that they celebrate and glorify individuals who do not deserve to be honoured in public spaces.



Figure 15. Statue of Edward Colston Being Pulled down by Demonstrators

As a counter to this argument, there are also those who argue that these statues are important historical artifacts and should be preserved as a reminder of the past, even if the individuals they depict are not admirable.

This debate has led to a series of high-profile conflicts and controversies over the removal or preservation of statues in various cities and countries around the world. You may have heard of the “Rhodes must fall” movement in Oxford and the toppling of the statue of Edward Colston during the Bristol Black Lives Matter protest in 2020.

Research the arguments for and against taking down statues. What is your position on the issue?

Think about the following people:

- Ghandi
- Cristiano Ronaldo
- Lord Baden Powell
- JK Rowling
- Cleopatra
- Queen Elizabeth II
- Augustus

Research their lives and consider the following- if there was a statue of them would you want to keep it up or take it down and why? If you were choosing to create a statue today, would you consider this person a good subject for a statue and why?

Consider why people put statues up in public places.

Damnatio memoriae

Damnatio memoriae, or "condemnation of memory," was a punishment used in ancient Rome that involved the complete erasure of a person's name and image from public record and memory. This punishment was typically reserved for individuals who had committed particularly heinous crimes or had betrayed the Roman state in some way. The punishment was carried out by physically chiselling or scraping the person's name from inscriptions, monuments, and other public records, and by prohibiting anyone from mentioning the person's name or remembering them in any way. They would even remove their faces from statues!



Figure 16. The Severan Tondo, c. 199 CE. One face has been obliterated, possibly that of Geta



Figure 17. Bust of Nero, National Museum in Oslo

One famous example of a person who was subjected to *damnatio memoriae* was the emperor Nero. He was declared an enemy of the state by the Senate and, while no official senatorial decree was passed to eradicate any trace of his reign from history, his name and images were attacked and removed from public view.

Several other emperors also suffered this fate, including Caligula, Domitian, and Geta (above).

If these people were subjected to *damnatio memoriae*, how do we still know about them and their lives?

Do you think it is ever possible to remove someone from history completely? Do you think we should do this?

Is this like an ancient version of cancelling? Discuss why and why not?

Considering that *damnatio memoriae* was a practice in ancient Rome, does this change how you think about modern debates concerning the removal of statues? Why?

Read More

Ancient Texts

For the life of Augustus try

Augustus' Res Gestae

Suetonius' Twelve Caesars