

Teachers' notes

Entrance to Hyde Park, 1930

by Mary Adshead

- Mary Adshead was born in 1904 and lived to become 91 years old. She was an English painter who specialised in murals, which she painted in houses, clubs and for shops and restaurants. (A mural is a painting on a wall or ceiling, though often they were painted on boards, which were then attached to a wall.) Mary studied painting at the Slade School of Art and was an immediate success, being one of the best painters of her year. She won joint first prize with another famous painter, called Rex Whistler, in 1924. Interestingly, Mary did not only work on large murals – but also worked on postage stamps and illustrated books.
- Mary Adshead painted *Entrance to Hyde Park, 1930* in 1933. She was about to have her second child and the painting was carried out very rapidly from her imagination. She was recalling visits to the park and stringing together memories and scenes, as well as inventing and drawing together a host of characters and events.
- The painting was done in oils on canvas and is now held in a private collection. It is 142 by 203cm in dimension.
- Mary's son, Sylvester Bone, told me that the painting must have been completed in the month of May because the flower seller is holding lily-of-the-valley. At the time of painting Mary was waiting for Sylvester to be born. Interestingly, the painting is set in springtime when the leaves are coming out and flowers are blooming. He explained that his mother had created it entirely from memory and described it as 'an assembly of different images about the park' showing 'things that she enjoyed in London parks in one decorative ensemble'. He pointed out to me the different people and parts of the painting, especially noting how his mother had liked the uniforms of the guardsmen.
- The following museums and galleries exhibit work by Mary Adshead:
 - The Tate
 - The Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield
 - The Imperial War Museum
 - Manchester City Art Gallery
 - The London Transport Museum
 - The University of Liverpool Art Gallery.

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