



Waking Dreams Teaching Poster

Special Exhibition

Waking Dreams

The Art of Pre-Raphaelites from the Delaware Art Museum

Romeo and Juliet, 1869-1870

Ford Madox Brown

Oil on canvas

53 7/16 x 37 5/16 inches

Courtesy of the Delaware Art Museum

***National Content Curriculum Standards**

English Language Arts

3: Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.

5: Employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Social Studies

1: Culture

2: Time, Continuity, and Change

3: Production, Distribution, and Consumption

Visual Arts

3: Choose and evaluate a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas.

4: Understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

6: Make connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

*Standards as of 2005 and subject to change.



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About the Painting

Romeo is leaving the chamber of Juliet...stepping from the balcony, and yet still burying his face in Juliet's neck...

The above description was given by William Bell Scott, a friend of Ford Madox Brown, after seeing the painting in the artist's studio. To Scott, the lovers seemed oblivious to everything in the world. Scott also recognized that the age of Shakespeare's Juliet (act 1, scene 2) and Brown's Juliet in this painting differed greatly.

For Juliet, some sources say Brown's second wife, Emma, modeled; she was in her late 30's. Another possible model was 25-year-old Marie Spartali, a student, model, and artist; she was a frequent guest at Pre-Raphaelite gatherings, renowned for her beauty and talent.

A passion for Shakespeare swept through Paris during the 1840's when Ford Madox Brown lived there. The French Romantic Eugene Delacroix completed a series of lithographs inspired by Hamlet, and Brown himself produced 16-pen-and-ink drawings inspired by King Lear. In 1869, James Leathart, a manufacturer of lead, commissioned this Romeo and Juliet oil painting, after a watercolor of the subject that Ford Madox Brown had painted for another patron.

About the Artist

Ford Madox Brown (1821-1893) participated in the Pre-Raphaelite circle almost as an adult chaperone to the 19-and 20-year-old youths. He was 27 when the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded.

Born into genteel poverty in Calais, France, Ford Madox Brown moved frequently with his family between England, France, and Belgium. Brown spoke French and English fluently due to his bicoastal upbringing. Following classical training in Belgium, Brown moved to Paris. After copying masters in the Louvre for several years, he returned to England in the mid-1840's.

In 1884, Dante Gabriel Rossetti introduced Brown to the rest of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. He was warmly welcomed by the Rossetti family because he could tell a story as easily in French as in Italian. Brown's work was frequently associated with the PRB in the minds of critics and the public, but he never officially joined the brotherhood. His love of Shakespearean subjects resulted in a commission to design costumes for Henry Irving's 1892 production of *King Lear*, shortly before his death.

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

In 1848, after pursuing the study of traditional techniques and subjects at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, William Holman Hunt at age 21, Dante Gabriel Rossetti at 20, and John Everett Millais at 19, decided that British painting was in the doldrums. Almost as brothers, they drank tea, coffee, or beer; sometimes smoked; and constantly conversed about their ideas. Rossetti's brother William wrote years later, "...each man in the company, even if he did



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not project great things of his own, reveled in poetry and sunned himself in art." They called themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and used the initials P.R.B. to sign some of their paintings, thereby mystifying others.

The name "Pre-Raphaelites" came from the artists' desire to return to art of the medieval period before the Renaissance master Raphael. They admired genuine ideas, what was direct and serious and heartfelt in previous art, and disdained what was conventional, self-parading, and learned by rote. A few visual characteristics to look for in Pre-Raphaelite art:

- Nature painted realistically with precise detail.
- A certain kind of feminine beauty: thick, flowing hair, a pursed rosebud mouth, and dreamy eyes.
- Literary themes of the medieval period and early Renaissance, including some Christian subjects.

The Arts and Crafts Movement

Dante Gabriel Rossetti and other PRB artists influenced the designer and leader of the Arts and Crafts Movement, William Morris. Through his company Morris and Co., Morris and fellow artists produced simple designs and hand-crafted decorative arts that countered growing industrialism and mass production. Meant for transporting jewelry and keepsakes, this 19th century casket served as a beautiful reminder of pre-industrial craftsmanship. Stylized flowers, decorative strap hinges, and use of medieval enameling represent key characteristics of the Arts and Crafts Movement.



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Social Studies Activity:

The Industrial Debate

Managing partner in lead manufacturing company Locke, Blackett, & Co., James Leathart patronized the arts with wealth from his industrial empire. Ford Madox Brown and other PRB artists benefited from the new money generated by Great Britain's role in the Industrial Revolution, but they lamented the cheaply made furniture and interior designs that came from mass production. (See *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* and *The Arts and Crafts Movement* above.)

- Research positive and negative effects of industrialization. Consider new wealth of the middle class, rapid urbanization, new technologies, child labor, and other components.
- Debate the industrialism issue as a class or in small groups using your research as evidence.
- Going further: debate the impacts of technology at the end of the 20th century.

Language Arts Activities:

1. Visual & Literary Symbolism

One reviewer of Brown's *Romeo and Juliet* referred to the painting as a "symphony in red."

- Debate whether or not Ford Madox Brown used colors in *Romeo and Juliet* symbolically. (See *The Language of Flowers* below)
- What could red symbolize?
- Look for other symbols or repeated motifs in *Romeo and Juliet* or other Shakespeare plays.

2. Balcony Scenes

Romeo and Juliet has two balcony scenes; one the night of a masquerade party where Romeo and Juliet meet (act 2, scene 2) and one of the morning after their secret wedding (act 3, scene 5).

- Discuss what scene is depicted in the painting.

3. Juliet's Age

Lord Capulet and Juliet's suitor Paris discuss her age (act 1, scene 2). Nurse and Lady Capulet also discuss Juliet's upcoming birthday (act 1, scene 3).

- How does Brown's Juliet compare to Shakespeare's Juliet in the painting?

4. Pomegranate Trees, Nightingales, and Larks

...It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
That pieced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree...
(act 3, scene 5)

- Study the blooming trees and bird perched in the foreground with a Pre-Raphaelite eye for observation and detail.
- How do Brown and Shakespeare use symbols to add further meaning?
- Make a list of possible symbols. (See *The Language of Flowers* below)



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-Research and use evidence from the play to assign meaning to each symbol.

Visual Arts Activities:

1. Designs in the Painting

Ford Madox Brown, a founding member of Morris and Co., submitted designs for stained glass, furniture, book illustrations, and stage designs. (see *The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood* and *The Arts and Crafts Movement* above.)

Brown also constructed elaborate props for his paintings.

-What structural elements in the painting could also represent designs for Morris and Co.?

2. Popular Perceptions of Romeo and Juliet

-Compare Ford Madox Brown's painting with other Romeo and Juliet images. (Consider films including *West Side Story*, 1961)

-View websites for artwork inspired by *Romeo and Juliet*.

-Compare and Contrast Ford Madox Brown's painting and one additional version in a Venn Diagram. List differences in setting, clothing, perspective, background, and any other relevant details in the two separate circles. Record Similarities in the space where the two circles converge.

The Language of Flowers

In Edward Burne-Jones's painting, the boy receives the corn from the Virgin surrounded by floral symbolism:

Flower	Symbolic Meaning
White lilies	Purity and the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) Lilies frequently accompany the Virgin as her attribute.
Pink & red poppies	Consolation and indicate death, since opium came from the poppy.
Yellow sunflower	Adoration Sunflowers did not grow in medieval England at the time of Chaucer, but Edward Burne-Jones imports it for symbolic reasons.
Pink wall flowers	Fidelity in the face of adversity.