



BANK OF ENGLAND

News release

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J.M.W. Turner to appear on the next £20 banknote

Today, Bank of England Governor, Mark Carney, announced that J.M.W. Turner will appear on the next £20 banknote due to be issued by 2020. At the announcement at Turner Contemporary in Margate, the Governor revealed the image of Turner that will be used on the note.

The selection of Turner is the first time the Bank of England has used the more open and transparent character selection process announced in December 2013. The process began in early 2015 with the formation of the Banknote Character Advisory Committee which as its first act selected the visual arts field. This was followed by a two month nomination period in summer 2015 during which members of the public could suggest a figure from the visual arts. The Bank received 29,701 nominations covering 590 eligible characters. The Committee, with input from public focus groups, then produced a shortlist which it discussed in detail with the Governor who made the final decision.

Commenting on the decision, the Governor said: "I am delighted to announce that J.M.W. Turner has been chosen to appear on the next £20 note. Turner is perhaps the single most influential British artist of all time. His work was transformative, bridging the classical and modern worlds. His influence spanned his lifetime and is still apparent today. Turner bequeathed this painting to the nation, an example of his important contribution to British society.

"I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the people who got involved in the process and that sent us their suggestions for visual artists to celebrate. The range and breadth of these nominations is testament to the UK's achievements in the arts and the public's passion for it. The Banknote Character Advisory Committee did an outstanding job of working through these nominations. Their help in reaching today's decision was invaluable."

Speaking at the announcement, renowned artist Tracey Emin said: "It's so amazing that an artist has been chosen for the £20 note and an artist who was a wild maverick. It's wonderful that Britain's creative side is being honoured in this way and of course I am especially happy because it is Turner and he loved Margate."

The new £20 note will enter circulation by 2020 and as with the next £5 and £10 notes will be printed on polymer. The new polymer £5 note will be unveiled at Blenheim Palace on 2 June 2016 and enter circulation in September.

As shown in the concept image, the design on the reverse of the note will include:

- J.M.W. Turner's self-portrait, painted c. 1799 and currently on display in the Tate Britain.
- One of Turner's most eminent paintings *The Fighting Temeraire*; a tribute to the ship *HMS Temeraire* which played a distinguished role in Nelson's victory at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.
- The quote - "Light is therefore colour" from an 1818 lecture by Turner referring to his innovative use of light, shade, colour and tone in his pictures.
- Turner's signature from his Will, the document with which he bequeathed many of his paintings to the nation.

The full design of the note and its security features will be unveiled closer to it entering circulation.

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Notes to Editors

1. The design includes:
 - J.M.W. Turner's self-portrait. Oil painting on canvas c. 1799 from the Tate Collection and accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856.
 - *The Fighting Temeraire* painted by Turner in 1839, currently on display in the National Gallery and accepted by the nation as part of the Turner Bequest 1856. The painting pays tribute to the HMS Temeraire and in a 2005 BBC poll was voted Britain's greatest painting.
 - A quote "Light in therefore colour" from his 1818 Royal Academy lecture concerned with light and shade, colour and tone. The quote is accessible in Appendix II of John Gage's authoritative study *Colour in Turner: Poetry and Truth*, London 1969, p. 206.
 - The signature of J.M.W. Turner is taken from his Will which can be found at The National Archives with catalogue reference PROB 1/96.
2. Biographical details of J.M.W. Turner follow at the end of this release
3. The full text of the Governor's remarks today will be available at 16:05 on the Bank's website: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/speeches/2016/898.aspx>
4. The image of Turner that will appear on the banknote will be available at 16:05 on the Bank's Flickr page: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bankofengland/>
5. A short video from the Banknote Character Advisory Committee describing the process of choosing the new character will be available at 16:05 on the Bank's website: <https://youtu.be/1CpP6zLGBNo>
6. Situated on Margate seafront, on the same site where Turner stayed when visiting the town,

Turner Contemporary presents a rolling programme of temporary exhibitions, events and learning opportunities which make intriguing links between historic and contemporary art. The gallery offers a space for everyone to discover different ways of seeing, thinking and learning.

7. The Banknote Character Advisory Committee is made up of Ben Broadbent (chair), Victoria Cleland, Professor Sir David Cannadine, Sandy Nairne, Baroness Lola Young, Alice Rawsthorn, Andrew Graham-Dixon and John Akomfrah. For more information, please see <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Pages/characters/advisorycommittee.aspx>
8. The full list of 590 eligible nominations from the public can be found on our website: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Pages/characters/nexttwenty.aspx>
9. Minutes detailing the selection process will be released on May 11 alongside minutes of a regular meeting of the Bank's Court of Directors
10. It was announced in September 2015 that the next £20 note will be printed on polymer: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/news/2015/068.aspx>
11. More information about Bank of England banknotes can be found on the banknote pages of the Bank's website: <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Pages/default.aspx>
12. For further enquiries, please contact the Bank's Press Office on 020 7601 4411

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) – a brief background

J.M.W Turner, born in Covent Garden, was the son of a barber and wig maker, who became renowned as one of the 'great masters' of painting. He was ahead of his time, and exerted lasting influence on future movements in art, both in Europe and America.

He first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1790 (aged just 15) and continued to exhibit there throughout his life. In 1799, at the youngest permitted age (24), Turner was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and in 1802 he became a full Royal Academician. Turner also lectured at the Royal Academy, and served as the Professor of Perspective from 1807 until 1837. Turner was a prolific artist and produced more than 550 oil paintings, 2,000 watercolours, and 30,000 sketches and drawings.¹ He travelled widely across the UK and Europe in search of inspiration for his paintings.

He became known as 'the painter of light' because of his remarkable gift for conveying the subtlest shifts in colour and atmosphere, above all in his landscapes and seascape paintings. His key works include *Dutch Boats in a Gale* (1801), *The Fighting Temeraire* (1839), *The Slave Ship* (1840), and *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway* (1844). In his personal life, Turner took a keen interest in architecture as well as landscape. He was close friends with the leading English architect Sir John Soane (who designed large parts of the original Bank of England building); and in 1807 Turner bought a plot in Twickenham where he designed and built a house where he lived with his father, Sandycombe Lodge

¹ <http://www.turnersociety.org.uk/>

Turner's later work is widely considered to have been profoundly innovative. Many believe he altered the conventions of painting by shifting the viewer's focus from the apparent subject matter to the fluctuating conditions of atmosphere in which it was seen: ultimately, solid objects like ships or buildings are given less importance, in his work, than the ever-changing and elemental realities of light and nature. Turner had a keen interest in depicting nature – natural catastrophes, extreme weather, and the violent power of the sea. Art critic John Ruskin (1819-1900) described Turner as the artist who could most 'stirringly and truthfully measure the moods of Nature'.²

His innovative focus on light was heavily influential on French Impressionist painters. In the 1880s a letter from painters including Monet, Degas, and Renoir acknowledged their debt to Turner - "A group of French painters united by the same aesthetic tendencies, struggling for ten years against convention and routine to bring art back to the scrupulously exact observation of nature.....as well as to the fugitive phenomenon of light, cannot forget that it has been preceded in this path by a great master of the English School, the illustrious Turner."³

His influence has extended across continents and through time to touch the artists of the modern period. The Museum of Modern Art in New York, dedicated to contemporary art, recognised Turner's immense contribution to the language of modern, abstract painting by staging an exhibition of his work in 1966 - the first such show held to honour an artist who had died more than a century ago.

Turner bequeathed a huge range of his works to the British nation, including the largest ever donation of art to the National Gallery,⁴ with the intention that his works be viewed free-of-charge by the public. He even bought back some of this own artwork to include in the bequest. Much of this collection remains on show in the National Gallery and the Clore Gallery at the Tate Britain. In 2005, Turner's *The Fighting Temeraire* (1839) was voted Britain's "greatest painting" in a public poll organised by the BBC. His legacy and influence continues today with, for example, the Turner Prize which has celebrated British artists since 1984, and the Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate, which displays a wide range of modern art influenced by Turner.

² John Piper, *The Illustrated History of Art*, p.321

³ Andrew Graham-Dixon, *A History of British Art*, p. 158

⁴ <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/history/the-turner-bequest/>