

### **Introduction to Ekphrastic Poetry**

Ekphrastic Poetry is a form of poetry inspired by works of art. Ekphrastic poems may find new stories about art pieces. It is not simply writing a description about a piece of art. It is more about reinterpreting art works in a new and different way. It can be like having a conversation with the artist or the artistic subject. It is about looking and experiencing artworks in a sensual way and putting your thoughts, feelings, ideas and sensations into words. Information about artworks may inform your response.

### **EXERCISE ONE: Warm up writing exercise - Shadormas**

The Shadorma is a poetic form consisting of a six-line stanza (or sestet). The form is alleged to have originated in Spain. Each stanza has a syllable count of three syllables in the first line, five syllables in the second line, three syllables in the third and fourth lines, seven syllables in the fifth line, and five syllables in the sixth line (3/5/3/3/7/5) for a total of 26 syllables. A poem may consist of one shadorma, or a series of shadormas.

Look at these examples of shadormas <https://www.josieholford.com/the-shadorma-meaning-origin-and-examples/> and <https://puffofsmokepoems.com/2013/03/22/shadorma/> and <http://poems.citaped ia.com/by.php?a=Oskar+Hansen> and <https://alanjwrightpoetrypizzazz.blogspot.com/2018/11/shadorma-poems.html>

Write a shadorma or series of shadormas on a theme, for example: feelings such as love, loss, joy, anger etc; seasons; weather; food & drink; family; the natural world...

### **EXERCISE TWO: The theme for this exercise is COURTROOM ART**

This information is contained in an article *Drawn in the dock: the story of courtroom illustration* by Jenny Brewer (06/04/2020) <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/courtroom-illustration-060420> with additional material from <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/uk-world-news/gallery/pictures-best-high-profile-court-2049550> and <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/court-artists-quick-draw-9091848.html>



#### **SLIDE 1: The Trial of Charles Ingram, Diana Ingram and Tecwen Whittock - Priscilla Coleman for ITN**

*Charles William Ingram is a former British Army major who gained infamy for his appearance on the television game show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* In episodes recorded in September 2001, Ingram correctly answered fifteen questions to win the show's maximum prize of £1 million, but was denied the winnings due to suspicion of cheating. Following a lengthy trial at Southwark Crown Court, Ingram was convicted on a single count of*

*procuring the execution of a valuable security by deception. He was subsequently convicted of an unrelated offence involving insurance fraud in 2003, and ordered to resign his commission as a major by the Army Board.*

In the UK, a courtroom illustrator is an incredibly niche trade, and a dying one. There are four professional courtroom sketch artists in total: Priscilla Coleman, Siân Frances, Julia Quenzler and Elizabeth Cook. All four artists are self-taught. Not only are they a rare breed, but the trade's very existence is also now under threat as new laws were passed in January 2020 allowing cameras into the country's Crown Courts, including the Old Bailey, to broadcast the sentencing remarks on high-profile criminal cases.



**SLIDE 2: Naomi Campbell and Piers Morgan - Priscilla Coleman for ITN**

2004: Naomi Campbell won her privacy case against the Daily Mirror after the law lords ruled she was entitled to "invasion of privacy" damages against the newspaper after it published a photograph of her attending a Narcotics Anonymous clinic.

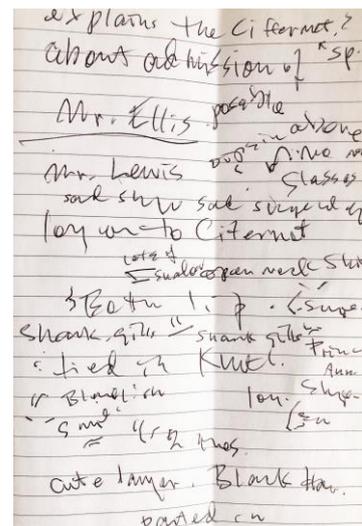
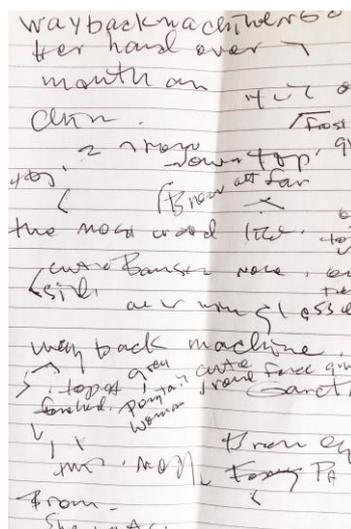
If you've read a newspaper at some point in your life, you've most likely seen the work of one of these four women, and would recognise the style

anywhere: busy, emotive and dynamic, all for good reason. There is a widespread misunderstanding among those who see pictures on TV or in the newspapers that an artist can sketch as much as they like in court. As lawyers know, far from taking a palette and easel into the public gallery, any attempt at photography, drawings or visual representations is strictly forbidden. Artists have to memorise in court the colours, shades, clothing, facial mannerisms and physical idiosyncrasies then go out and draw a likeness from memory . . . against the clock.

Drawing in court – or making an image of any kind, be that a photograph, doodle or otherwise – is illegal in British courts. So these artists not only have to be expertly skilled portraitists but also have elephant-like memories for faces and spaces. To make their artworks, they take written notes during the case, before running outside to the press room to draw and paint as fast as possible, usually with an hour or two deadline to make it to their client, the publisher or broadcaster.

**SLIDES 3 & 4: Notebook Pages - Priscilla Coleman**

Priscilla Coleman has been doing this job since the 1980s, when she moved over from the US following a career as an art director with ad agencies and print companies. Her mother was a fashion illustrator, another industry trained in high-speed draftsmanship, and she grew up "seeing artists depict the Watergate hearings". With newspapers wanting to show the inner workings of courts more

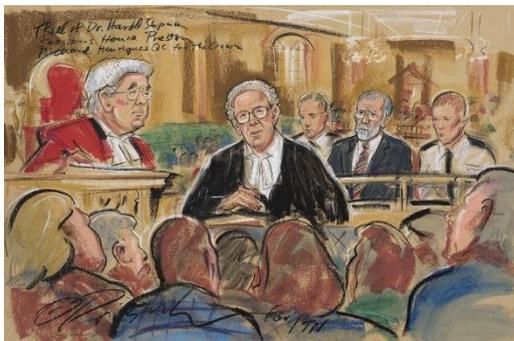


heavily on their pages, Priscilla took a chance commission from ITN to draw the Jeffrey Archer libel case, and hasn't looked back since. Her portfolio and the pictures collected in her book mark many of the most important trials such as Rose West, Ian Huntley, Harold Shipman, the Guinness trial and the Hutton enquiry for ITN, Channel 4 and others.



**SLIDE 5: The Trial of Rose West - Priscilla Coleman**  
*Rosemary Pauline West collaborated with her husband, Fred West, in the torture and murder of at least nine young women between 1973 and 1987; she was also judged to have murdered her eight-year-old stepdaughter, Charmaine, in 1971. She was convicted in 1995 of ten murders; Fred committed suicide in prison that same year while awaiting trial.*

**SLIDE 6 (below left): The Trial of Harold Shipman - Priscilla Coleman**  
*Harold Frederick Shipman was an English general practitioner who is believed to be one of the most prolific serial killers in modern history. In 2000, he was found guilty of the murder of 15 patients under his care; his total number of victims was approximately 250.*



**SLIDE 7 (above right): Harold Shipman - Priscilla Coleman**  
Priscilla distinctly recalls Shipman's manner in court. She said: "He was very self-important, you could see his domineering and bossiness and that he was thinking he was hard done by to have been charged with anything and how could anyone question him. Very cold-blooded."

In the context of such horrific crimes, a recounting of the artist's working day makes for brilliantly light relief. Priscilla has countless anecdotes about the mad scramble to make her work, often under almost comically difficult circumstances. "It's as if you're memorising for a test," she says. "You forget the details so you have to write something that will trigger your memory. Once I had to draw a line of airline hijackers, and they all had black hair but different hairstyles. One had long sideburns so I wrote Elvis in my notebook, one was skinny so I wrote 'skeleton man', for others I wrote 'potato nose' or 'fried hair' or for another, I wrote the name of an ex-boyfriend he reminded me of! People's faces are fascinating."



**SLIDE 8: The Trial of Gary Glitter - Priscilla Coleman**  
Gary Glitter looked flamboyant in a 1999 trial where he was cleared of sexual assault. Priscilla said: "He appeared more as if he was going to go on stage and perform a concert than go on trial. His make-up was very dark with a matte finish and his hair was so huge." Glitter was later jailed for underage porn offences.



**SLIDE 9: Drawing of Ian Brady at an Appeal - Priscilla Coleman**

Priscilla said: "You had heard so much about him down the years. His skin was very smooth, as if he had been just preserved in time."

Sometimes Priscilla would only see defendants for a few moments before they sat down in the dock, and that's all she had to go on for their portrait. On plenty of occasions she couldn't see over the person sitting in front of her so started bringing a big book or bag to sit on. Once when documenting an IRA case, Priscilla had to battle to find anywhere to sit at all. "The nuns want your seat and those old ladies are vicious," she laughs. "It's like every man for himself. Basically, I'm

trying to work and I'll do anything to get a better view."

Once notes are made, the fun begins, as artists make their way to what Priscilla describes as the "primitive" press room to quickly try to encapsulate the people – the prosecution, the judge and the defendant (not the jury) – and the atmosphere of the court in one image. Priscilla uses water-based inks and oil pastels, and sometimes huge sheets of paper as wide as her arm span, standing over the page to survey it in full. Her drawings can be defined by the vibrant colours and white outline around her forms, making them more animated.



**SLIDE 10: Trial of Amy Winehouse in 2009 - Priscilla Coleman**

*During her trial for an alleged assault in 2009, Amy Winehouse lifted her legs to show the judge how small she was in flat shoes.*

"Priscilla's drawings show movement, and the white pastel outlines are almost like caricatures," comments curator Katie McCurrach for the House of Illustration (the UK's centre for this art form). "It's so busy in court, very cramped and full of people. The way her

illustrations are composed reflects the atmosphere of the courtroom. The edges aren't quite defined, they're almost dreamlike."



**SLIDE 11: Divorce Trial of Sir Paul McCartney & Heather Mills - Priscilla Coleman**

At the 2008 divorce of Sir Paul McCartney and Heather Mills, sketch artists were not permitted inside, so this image of Mills dumping a jug of water over Paul's lawyer Fiona Shackleton was based on detective work. Priscilla said: "When they came out, I noticed the solicitor's hair was dark and wet. I put together what Heather did."

In contrast, Julia Quenzler and Elizabeth Cook's drawings, also pastel, are more static. "Julia chooses to focus on one or two of the key characters while the background fades out," says Katie McCurrach, "like she's focusing on the key detail of a memory."



**SLIDE 12: Fictional Trial of Helen Titchener in The Archers - Julia Quenzler**

**SLIDE 13: Julia Quenzler at work**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-37257910>

Julia Quenzler was commissioned by the BBC to depict the trial of Helen Titchener, as it progressed on air in the radio show *The Archers*. In the week-long trial, Helen faced charges of attempted murder and wounding with intent after stabbing her husband Rob.

Elizabeth Cook, a court artist since 1992, might spend a few moments in court (“I can be in and out in a couple of minutes”) before taking about 15 minutes to sketch each person. “It’s rolling news, so it demands instant pictures,” she says. “The media outlets want them stuck outside the Old Bailey as quickly as possible. My work is very fast.”



**SLIDE 14: Nigella Lawson at Isleworth Crown Court - Elizabeth Cook**

*Two former personal assistants to Nigella Lawson and her ex-husband Charles Saatchi were accused of using their credit cards on the account of Saatchi's private company between January 2008 and December 2012. The jury found them not guilty.*

Working on an already familiar face does not make it easier for artists. Celebrities, Cook says, are the hardest to draw. “We’re used to seeing them smiling on television, all animated,” she explains. “When they appear in court, they don’t have the same demeanour. It’s quite hard to make the person recognisable as the bright and smiling celebrity that everybody is used to seeing on screen.”

Court illustrators often make little mistakes and judges and barristers will joke that the artist gave them the wrong glasses, or extra chins. And it would seem that these kinds of jokes are welcome. “Light-hearted moments are few and far between,” notes Cook. “I attend trials that really are the most extreme. I hear the worst things as the evidence unfolds. I’m constantly aware that I’m sitting in on someone else’s tragedy.”

As Cook points out: “The judge doesn’t write with his pen and ink any more. He taps away on his computer. Stenographers were phased out in 2012. All the barristers bring in their laptops. Journalists are allowed to tweet in court. We’re becoming so technologically aware that some might view the person who goes in to do a drawing as a little outmoded. But there’s a charm to the pictures.”

John Hewitt, an illustrator and senior lecturer in illustration with animation at Manchester School of Art, who did a PhD in the subject of courtroom sketches, says Julia Quenzler and Elizabeth Cook’s

styles are equally fitting of the in-court atmosphere. “Courts are very still places,” he describes, “it’s better for memory, lawyers can recite their lines.”



**SLIDE 15: Christine and Neil Hamilton for The Times - Siân Frances**

By contrast, Siân Frances’ drawings are more conventionally illustrative, as she uses pencil lines and washes of watercolour – “also a skill to do so quickly,” says Katie McCurrach. “She renders the whole courtroom to the edges of the page, showing urgency and speed.” Siân learned the trade from her father, also a courtroom artist, while Julia apparently trained by drawing portraits in nightclubs.



**SLIDE 16: The Trial of Ian Huntley and Maxine Carr - Siân Frances**

*Ian Kevin Huntley was convicted of the murder of two girls in Soham, Cambridgeshire in 2003; his girlfriend, Maxine Ann Carr was convicted of conspiring with Huntley to pervert the course of justice.*

Prior to his career as an illustrator and lecturer, John Hewitt worked as a clerk for solicitors, so for his PhD subject he chose to focus on one of the few places the worlds of law and art intersect. He researched particular cases, one being the Soham murder trials in which Ian Huntley and Maxine Carr were tried and eventually convicted. John chose this because it was so heavily reported in the media. “45 drawings were published over 16 days. It was intense, I’ve never seen courtroom illustration used in such a way, before or since.” From John’s perspective, while the press generally demonised Carr and called her “the new Myra [Hindley]”, the courtroom artists portrayed a more measured view. “[The artists] said there are limitations to self-expression in what they do, and that it was important not to sensationalise, and to be truthful.”



**SLIDE 17 (above left): Rose West for The Times/TV News - Siân Frances**

Making an image in British courts was banned following the 1922 trial of Edith Thompson and Frederick Bywaters, a British couple eventually convicted of murdering Thompson’s husband Percy.

**SLIDE 18 (above right): (L to R) Frederick Bywaters, Edith Thompson and Percy Thompson**

The couple were young and glamorous, and therefore attracted a fashionable crowd to the court. The press began to report the trial as if it were an event of high society, with photos of the attendees, and eventually, the judge complained that the media circus was interfering with the

fairness of the trial. As a result, in 1925 it was made illegal to make any image in court in the UK. Similarly in the US, the trial of OJ Simpson and its ensuing media frenzy led to cameras being banned from many courts, and a resurgence of illustration. This is exactly the cause for concern around cameras being allowed into the British courts.

John says, "If we lose courtroom drawing, we lose the last grip of the regularity of an artist being part of news reporting. The memory of the trial is considered to be owned by the artist, and it validates the use of memory as an evidential tool. The illustration is a narrative, a visual story, all the moments are conflated, unlike a photo which just shows one moment."

"A lot of the legal process is really boring," says barrister Anna McKenna QC. "Illustrations always capture the most dramatic moments, with more emotion and body language than a camera could." Courtroom artists "are looking for a moment of drama," John says. "Cameras will be a poor replacement." The reality is that publishers and broadcasters might still use both, depending on editorial decisions and budgets. Now, in the era of social media, editors can grab photos of a prosecuted criminal online and therefore don't need a courtroom artist nor even a photographer to stand outside the courts waiting for the shot. But they may still choose to use courtroom artists because of the historical and social significance they have accumulated over the past century. "It's showing a scene and an atmosphere to the public, it's a completely unique insight," Katie McCurrach says. "These illustrations are still in the papers, this is how most of us see trials, so there's familiarity and weight to them. It gives the case formality and solemnity and there's reverence there. Glum photos might take away some of that weight."

Priscilla says, though it's a tough gig, it's ripe for younger artists to take it in a different direction. "I'd love to see some great art in courtroom illustration."

Further Info: [www.priscilla-coleman.co.uk](http://www.priscilla-coleman.co.uk)  
[www.houseofillustration.org.uk](http://www.houseofillustration.org.uk)

Now look at the following poems:

*Lawyer* - Carl Sandburg

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/lawyer/>

Cuspidor - a large bowl, often of metal, serving as a receptacle for spit, especially from chewing tobacco: in wide use during the 19th and early 20th century.

*The Public Defender First Approaches The Box* - Kathleen McClung

<https://www.rattle.com/the-public-defender-first-approaches-the-box-by-kathleen-mcclung/>

*Covid Limerick No 5* - Anon / *Lockdown Lyrics* - Anon; from the collection *Lockdown Lawyers*

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/31/lawyers-poems-deal-with-trials-of-delivering-lockdown-justice>

### **EXERCISE THREE: Courtroom Poetry**

Write a poem/piece inspired by the theme and/or the artworks and artists we have explored. Here are some suggestions for ways to begin your writing:

- Choose an image to work with. Write a sentence or two about why you chose this image, how it makes you feel, and/or what it makes you think about.
- Next, write a detailed description of the image. Be sure to include words that indicate size, shape, colour, light/shade, objects, figures, etc.

- Finally, write a poem in response to your image. If you need inspiration, look back at your answers above.

There are many different ways to go about writing your poem. Here are some further suggestions:

- Write a poem about your thoughts and feelings as you experience the artwork. Consider the relationship between the criminal justice system and/or individual cases and art. Does it change your appreciation, experience or feelings about the artwork?
- Speculate about how and/or why the artist has created this artwork.
- Write from the point of view of a person in the image.
- Write a poem from the point of view of the artist. Imagine what was happening while the artist was creating this work.
- What is being revealed and what concealed in the artwork?
- Write a poem about your own or someone else's experience that is triggered by any of the artworks / the theme.

Your poem could be written in the style of a poem we've looked at, for example, shadormas; a prose poem (*Lawyer*) / a structured rhyme and repetition poem like a villanelle\* (*The Public Defender First Approaches The Box*); a series of limericks or two-line rhyming lines (*Lockdown Lyrics*).

\*A villanelle consists of five stanzas of three lines (tercets) followed by a single stanza of four lines (a quatrain) for a total of nineteen lines. It is structured by two repeating rhymes and two refrains: the first line of the first stanza serves as the last line of the second and fourth stanzas, and the third line of the first stanza serves as the last line of the third and fifth stanzas. The rhyme-and-refrain pattern of the villanelle can be schematized as 1b2 ab1 ab2 ab1 ab2 ab12 where letters ("a" and "b") indicate the two rhyme sounds and numerals (1 and 2) indicate Refrain 1 and Refrain 2, both of which rhyme with a. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Villanelle>

And, of course, you may write a poem about the theme in your own way and in your own style!

Transcripts of all the Segments and Poetry & Pictures workshops are on the LPF website here: <https://www.poetry-festival.co.uk/workshop-transcripts/>

Do check out Ledbury Poetry Festival's website <https://www.poetry-festival.co.uk> for news about the LPF Poetry Competition <https://www.poetry-festival.co.uk/poetry-competition-2021-announced/> and the current Ley Lines online submissions - details on how to contribute to this are here: <https://www.poetry-festival.co.uk/ley-hunt-ways-lines-and-tracks/>

Many thanks for your interest, support and poems!

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This workshop was only made possible thanks to public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England

Poetry and Pictures is a joint partnership with Herefordshire Mind.



Supported using public funding by  
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