Gap filling – the Armada portrait and its symbolic power

Read about the symbols you can find in this painting and fill in the gaps with the following words:

Reassertion – calm(x2) – after - chastity(x2)- ships –sailors - chaos - right – virgin – pursuit – symbolise – stormy – circle –imperial – goodness - seamen - constancy

The painting is on permanent public display in the Queen's Presence Chamber in the Queen's House, on the site of the original Greenwich Palace, which was the birthplace of Elizabeth I. In 2016, the Armada Portrait was acquired for the nation following a joint appeal with the Art Fund. The Armada Portrait summarizes the hopes and aspirations of the state as an imperial power, at a watershed moment in history following the British defeat of the Spanish Armada. It was also designed to be a spectacle of female power and majesty, carefully calculated to inspire awe and wonder. Like many Tudor portraits, it is packed with meaning and metaphor.

Pearls

Pearls Elizabeth's and connect her to Cynthia, the Greek goddess of the Moon, who was a and therefore seen as 'pure'.

Mermaid

Mermaids tempt and then ruin them, so the inclusion of a mermaid here could show Elizabeth's might against the Spanish .

Globe

The Globe represents England's striving for power in the Americas. In the painting, Elizabeth is pointing to Virginia, which was named her.

Hair, ruff, and embroidery

The of ruff extends from Elizabeth's face like the Sun's rays. She is shown as the centre and source of warmth, beauty, and .

Colour scheme

Black and white was Elizabeth's key colour scheme and symbolise and . Together the colours portray eternal virginity.

Sea scenes

In the Armada Portrait, Elizabeth faces toward the seas on her right and turns away from the waters where the Spanish are floundering. She is positioned as a force for good, in contrast with the of Catholic Europe.

The crown

The crown depicted in the painting is often suggested to signify the of empire. It acts as a of Elizabeth's to rule.