

"LEARNING TO LOOK" TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

AMERICAN ART

Grade 3

Sue Massey  
Diane Darst

LEARNING TO LOOK PAINTINGS FOR THIRD GRADE  
AMERICAN ART

STILL LIFE

BALSAM APPLES -- PEALE  
VIOLIN & MUSIC -- HARNETT

NARRATIVE

SNAP THE WHIP -- HOMER  
CIDER MAKING -- MOUNT  
WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE -- LEUTZE

PORTRAITS I

GEORGE WASHINGTON -- PEALE  
GEORGE WASHINGTON -- STUART

PORTRAITS II

THE MUSE -- MORSE -  
MADAME X -- SARGENT -

LANDSCAPE

HEART OF THE ANDES -- CHURCH  
THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS -- BIERSTADT

SCULPTURE

THE BRONCO BUSTER -- REMINGTON  
COMING THROUGH THE RYE -- REMINGTON

## Learning to Look -- Review

### ELEMENTS OF ART:

LINE  
SHAPE  
COLOR  
TEXTURE  
LIGHT

### EYE EXERCISES:

Every Learning to Look art class for students through the fifth grade begins with eye exercises which help to refresh the students' eyes and focus them on the task at hand. The exercises mark a beginning to the session and quiet the group in order to prepare them for concentrated looking.

- a. Open your eyes wide like owls
- b. Shut them tightly like mice
- c. Look up to the ceiling, down to the floor, up to the ceiling, down to the floor. Do not move your head!
- d. Moving only your eyes, look to the right, look to the left, to the right, to the left.
- e. Close your eyes and place your fingertips lightly on your eyelids. RELAX. (During this time the teacher reveals the first work of art to be studied)
- f. Open your eyes: you are now ready to look!

## FIRST CLASS

### I. INTRODUCTION

American Art is usually the second course presented in our Learning to Look series. Since many of your students have completed the first course on 19th Century European Art, they will already be familiar with our methods. After introducing yourself to the class, it is important to determine who the new students are. Then the students who are familiar with the program can be involved in describing Learning to Look to their new classmates.

Sample Dialogue: In what ways is Learning to Look different from other art classes? (The students may need prompting, and of course you will fill in any gaps of information.)

Instead of creating our own artworks, we learn about paintings and sculpture by other artists.

This year we will be looking at works by American artists which we study via reproductions/copies of the artworks. Where can the originals be found?

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

What happens at the end of the year?

We visit the Metropolitan to see the works we studied in class and to tour the museum.

Allow the students to share their experiences at the Metropolitan and other museums. What did they see and do?

When we look at works of art what are some of the things we look for? (Have the Elements of Art book at hand.)  
Color, line, shape, texture, light.

What do we call these properties?  
The elements of art.

As we look for these elements in an artwork we discover how an artist uses them to express himself.

Give the students a brief review of the elements of art.  
For example:

#### COLOR

Color can express feelings or mood. If you were an artist, what colors would you use to convey a lively, happy mood?

Reds, yellows, pinks, etc.

Have you ever heard the expression, "In the pink"?

What colors convey a sad or dull mood?  
Brown, grey, black, dark blue  
Have you ever felt blue?

~~Which~~ Which of these lines in the elements book would you use to express movement of action?

Which would appear calm or peaceful?

~~Which~~ Which shape shows more sense of movement? A circle or a rectangle?

Can a rectangle roll? A square? A triangle?

### TEXTURES

Texture is the surface quality of an object. Artists will often imitate the textures of real objects in paint. These are called visual textures since they give the appearance of real textures. How many objects can you name with the following textures?

Sticky; glossy; crunchy; rough.

(This exercise enhances the students' abilities to associate abstract qualities and to categorize.)

### LIGHT

What are the two basic sources of light?  
Natural and artificial.

What supplies our natural light?  
The sun, moon, and stars.

What supplies artificial light?  
Electric light bulbs, candles, gas lamps.

In a play where does the director focus the light?  
On the actors who are performing.

In a painting where does an artist focus the light?  
On the subject or most important parts of the painting.

Please review the elements section in the handbook. It is helpful to include a few questions at the beginning of each class that would highlight the elements of art emphasized in the paintings to be discussed.

### MOST IMPORTANT

Remind the students that you are looking at these artworks together. You will make discoveries together and you are eager to hear their ideas and responses to these artworks.

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CLASS - STILL LIFE

I. REVIEW OF THE ELEMENTS OF ART

How many of you can name the "Elements of Art" which go into making any art work?

Color, Light, Line, Shape, Texture, Space, and Movement.

We have been studying them all along but now is an especially good time to review them with the aid of something we call the "Elements of Art Book." Show large chartbook if you have made one. We can illustrate four of the "Elements of Art" quite easily. It is harder to demonstrate "light," "space," and "movement" on paper.

Turn to the first page of the chartbook. What element of art is this?

Color

Can you identify the primary colors?

Red, yellow and blue

The secondary colors?

Green, orange and purple

Do you know what happens when an artist blends colors? Ask the students to give examples.

Blue and yellow equals green

Red and white equals pink etc.

Younger children understand this concept better when they can visualize it with the use of a color paddle. There are also any number of books on color for elementary age children which you might also consider showing.

Ask the children what are the quiet tones? loud tones? hot colors? cool colors?

See the section of this handbook on "Elements of Art" for further information.

Turn to the next page of the chartbook. What element of art are these examples of?

Texture

Have each child come up and touch one of the textures and describe it in words. To make it harder for the older ones, do not let them use the words "soft" or "hard."

Turn to the next page in the chartbook. What do we have here?

Shapes

Can you name them all?

Tell them that lines come together to form shapes.  
Repeated shapes form patterns.

Ask the older children where they think one finds more irregular shapes, in nature or man-made?

In nature

Turn to the next page in the chartbook. What element of art is this?

Line

Do lines have direction?

Yes

What kinds of lines do we have here?

Let the children identify them one by one. Help the younger children with unfamiliar terms such as horizontal, vertical and diagonal.

What type lines make you feel motion?

Curvy lines

What type suggest stability?

Straight lines, especially horizontal ones.

We are going to look at a new type of art today called "still life." It will be easy for us to study how the artist has used all the elements of art in a still life painting because this category of art does not tell about people or events. But first let's refresh our eyes by doing our eye exercises.

## II. EYE EXERCISES

These can be done before the discussion of the "Elements of Art" if the teacher so chooses. (See Activity #1 on page 31 for a description of them.)

### III. STILL LIFE

#### A. Still Life: Balsam Apple with Vegetables

Artist - James Peale - American (1749-1831)

Year Painted - c.1820s

Medium - oil on canvas

Props - Elements of Art Book, color paddle, poster of painting, red cabbage, blue-green cabbage, crinkly Savoy cabbage, hubbard squash, eggplant, tomatoes, balsam apple or substitute (e.g., an oblong pod filled with red currants).

Activity - recreate a still life

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

James Peale was a member of one of America's most artistic families. Born in 1749 in Maryland, he was the youngest brother of Charles Willson Peale, the multi-talented artist who painted the standing George Washington examined in our first class. Four of Charles Willson's sons were also artists of note. James Peale began his career as a saddlemaker, carpenter and cabinetmaker. He did not decide to become a painter until he was twenty-one. His brother Charles gave him his first lessons and the two worked together for much of their lives. James Peale served in the Continental Army as a captain until 1779. Thereafter he devoted himself to his art. In 1786 the brothers announced that James was specializing in miniatures while Charles would concentrate on larger portraits. In fact, James never gave up painting larger portraits, landscapes and historical scenes. After 1818 weakening eyesight forced him to abandon miniatures and turn to still life painting.

Charles Willson's work served as a model for his younger brother's early paintings but as James matured his style took on its own characteristics. The still life we are studying here is unusual among Peale's work in this genre for its informal arrangement of the fruits and vegetables, its rich, juicy application of the paint and its lighter tonality. James Peale died in 1831.



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## DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

This painting is by an artist named James Peale (reveal poster). He was born in Maryland over 200 years ago. He came from a very artistic family. His brother was Charles Willson Peale who painted the portrait of George Washington as a general which we saw in the first class. Four of Charles Willson Peale's sons were artists.

If you were the artist, what would you call this painting?  
(Hint: what type of art is this?)

Let the children use their imagination in coming up with titles based on what they see. Then tell them that the real title of the painting is Still Life: Balsam Apple with Vegetables. It was probably painted in the 1820s (i.e., over 160 years ago).

Can anyone try to make a definition of a still life?  
For younger children ask, "what is a still life?"

An arrangement of inanimate (non-living, non-moving) objects. The objects may have once been alive but they are not now.

What kinds of things can be used in a still life?

Flowers, fruits, vegetables, books, letters, musical instruments, dead game, china, glassware, almost anything that is fairly small and does not move. To help the children answer this question, ask them what Peale used and show them other examples of still lifes from books and magazines you might have at home or in the library.

What must an artist do first before he or she can paint a still life?  
If the students have difficulty, ask the following question.

Does he or she look out the window, at a model or into his or her dreams?

Not usually.

The artist first selects his or her objects and arranges them in the fashion he or she wants.

What does an artist have to consider when arranging the objects for a still life?

How the elements of art work together.

How the colors, textures, sizes and shapes balance one another.

How the light falls on the objects.

Whether he discovers a pattern or patterns by placing them together.

What does the choice of objects tell about the artist?

His personal likes and dislikes.

His interest in color, texture or shape.

The objects may have symbolic meaning for the artist; they may represent something in his or her life.

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What has Peale chosen and why?

Fruits and vegetables.

Their varying colors, shapes and textures appealed to him.  
They are a challenge to paint realistically.

Before the class have purchased as many of the fruits and vegetables shown here as possible. Hold up a fresh fruit or vegetable and have the class identify its name and where it is depicted in the painting.

Okra - left side of painting

Blue-green cabbage - next to okra on left

Savoy cabbage - crinkly large cabbage in center back

Hubbard squash - yellow green gourd next to the blue-green cabbage

Eggplant - dark purple shiny object near center

Purple-red cabbage - on right side of painting

Tomatoes - in foreground

Balsam apple - strange looking object with red seeds

The balsam apple is sometimes called a balsam pear. It grows on a vine and has leaves like those in the painting. It may prove difficult to find a balsam apple. One can substitute any fruit or vegetable which approximates the shape and color, e.g., a pod or pickle filled with red currents.

Would Peale have found these fruits and vegetables placed this way when he brought them in from the garden or purchased them from a greengrocer?

No. He has chosen and arranged the objects himself.

Yet this is not a stiff, formal arrangement in a bowl or basket. It is more casual, almost as if Peale had just brought them in and left them on the table.

What are the main colors in this painting? Ask older children what color tones predominate.

Yellow, green and purple-red.

Peale has used lighter colors here than he normally did in his other still lifes.

What do you notice about the way Peale has arranged the colors?

The greens are mostly on the left, yellows and reds near the center and purples on the right.

The warm, blond color of the table lightens the whole picture.

Do you think Peale has done a good job of making his fruits and vegetables look as they would feel in real life? Ask older children the same question in this way: Has Peale rendered the textures of the objects realistically?

Yes.

Have the children try to describe in words the different textures Peale has depicted. For example, the smooth

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eggplant with its sharp, thorny stem, the slippery, shiny tomatoes, the bumpy hubbard squash, the ridges of the skin and veins of the blue-green cabbage, the crinkly Savoy cabbage, and the rough skin of the balsam apple.

Has Peale applied his paint thickly or thinly?

Thickly

This is sometimes hard to tell from the reproduction. Remember to point it out to the children during the museum tour.

Why does he apply his paint thickly here?

To add to the juicy feeling of the objects themselves.

What is the main shape in this painting?

Circle

We could call this painting "variation on a theme of roundness!" Point out the many different regular and irregular circles. Some students might want to consider the okra, stems and leaves exceptions to this.

Do these circles give a sense of motion?

In most paintings circles do give a sense of motion. Here, however, Peale has flattened their bottoms so that they appear to sit still on the tabletop.

Where is the light coming from? Hint: look for shadows.

Upper left corner

Note how the light brightens the left side of the canvas while the right side is darker.

Can you find any reflections?

The clearest ones are on the eggplant and the tomatoes.

Now let's see if we can arrange our fruits and vegetables into a still life like Peale's.

Where has he placed the largest object (i.e., the Savoy cabbage)?

Almost in the middle and slightly to the back to anchor the composition. It holds the other objects in place.

Where is the exact center of the composition?

Where the top of the balsam apple points down.

Is the space deep or shallow?

Fairly shallow.

Try to illustrate this point by having the children realize that they have arranged the objects on almost the same vertical plane.

Peale's still life appears very real, as if we could take a bite out of the fruits and vegetables. Other still life painters, such as the one we are about to see, went even further in painting objects so realistically that they trick the eye into thinking they are the real thing. Show the next poster.

B. Still Life - Violin and Music

Artist - William Michael Harnett - American (1848-1892)

Year Painted - 1888

Medium - oil on canvas

Props - poster of the painting, wooden board or door if possible, metal hinges, padlock, violin and bow, horse shoe, hasp, piccolo, matchbox, string and nails, calling card, sheet music and flashlight.

Activity - recreate a still life

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

William Michael Harnett was born in Ireland in 1848 and came to Philadelphia as a young child. His first training was as a silver engraver, although he did study painting for two years (1867-68) at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Moving to New York in 1869, he worked as a jewelry engraver and continued his art training at the National Academy of Design and Cooper Union. His first canvases already indicate an affinity for still life. Returning to Pennsylvania in 1876, he perfected his trompe l'oeil (French for "fool the eye") style of painting. These still lifes of books, mugs, pipes, bric-a-brac subjects and letter racks are so carefully drawn, their textures so convincingly correct that they appear to be real. Like so many other American painters, Harnett traveled to Europe where he worked and studied in London, Frankfurt, and Munich for five years. His European still lifes tend to be more elegant, decorative and reduced in scale.

The works of his last years, 1886-1892, which were spent largely in New York, represent the culmination of his virtuoso, trompe l'oeil style. The still life we are studying belongs to this latter period. Although actively painting for only two decades, Harnett exerted a strong influence upon his fellow still life painters, such as Jefferson D. Chalfant, John F. Peto and John Haberle. Trompe l'oeil painting was extremely popular during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. After Harnett's death, however, his work was eclipsed by a new generation of American artists, known as the Eight, who, like their European contemporaries, wished to free art from academic constraints. Interest in Harnett's paintings began to revive in 1935 although much of Harnett's work continued to be confused with that of other artists such as Peto or was believed to be forgeries.



# DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

What is the first thing that strikes you about this painting?

How real everything looks.

It looks as if we could reach out and touch the objects.  
Tell the students that there is a specific name for this type of still life painting. It is called trompe l'oeil (write on blackboard) which means "fool the eye" in French.

Can anyone find where the artist has signed his name?

On the card.

This type of card is called a "calling card." It was customary one hundred years ago to leave one's calling card when paying a visit to someone.

Ask older children, can you read the name?

This painting was painted by an artist named William Michael Harnett who painted during the last quarter of the nineteenth century (i.e., one hundred years ago) when trompe l'oeil painting was very popular. He was considered a master of this type of painting and most of his canvases were done in this style. His paintings were often copied or faked and his signature forged.

Can anyone find the date of this painting?  
1888 on the wooden frame

How does Harnett "trick" us into thinking these objects are real?

He has painted the different textures of the wood, metal and paper very carefully. Point out the contrast between the rough wood of the door and the smooth, polished wood of the violin.

He has painted in all the details very accurately. Point out the precise drawing of the door hinge.

Does anyone know what the white powder that covers part of the violin here is supposed to be?

Rosin which violin players rub on their bows.

What things has he painted that are not exactly as we would see them in real life?

In reality we would be able to see all the notes on the sheet music. Here Harnett only sketches some of them in. Tell older children that Harnett himself said: "In painting from still life I do not closely imitate nature. Many points I leave out and many I add. Some models are only suggestions."

What about the way the artist has recreated space? What gives the objects a sense of depth?

Some of the children may already have commented on the shadows in this painting. This question tries to get the children to see how the spatial dimensions of the

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painting are in fact most important to creating the realistic effect. Point out all the shadows and have the students look carefully at how Harnett has used shadows to create depth. The following questions will help increase their understanding of depth in art.

Who remembers what the three dimensions are?  
Length, width and depth

Does a painting have depth?  
No. Only two dimensions, length and width.

How does Harnett create the illusion of depth?  
By flawlessly painting in all the shadows that real objects would cast. Have the children look especially at how the tear in the sheet music appears to stand out as well as the bend in the calling card.

Are these objects laying flat?  
No.  
They are mostly hung from nails.

What are they hanging on?  
A wooden door.  
Point out the metal hinges.

Is this door open or shut?  
Partially open. Note its shadow.  
This above all gives the painting its sense of three dimensionality.

Is the space in this painting shallow or deep?  
Shallow (explain word for younger children).  
The door is only open a crack and the objects hang close to it.

Are the objects arranged in a horizontal or vertical format?  
Vertical  
Review these terms with younger children and show how most of the lines in this painting run up and down.  
Have them point out the violin, bow, hasp, wooden boards of the door, matchbox.

If the children have not already done so in the course of discussion, help them to identify all the objects. Discuss their textures and show examples you have been able to gather.

Metal matchbox with DM or MD initial

Metal hinges on wooden door

Violin bow and nineteenth century type wooden violin with rosin dust on the bridge below the strings

Paper sheet music

Metal horseshoe

Metal nails

Nineteenth century piccolo made of granadilla wood, ivory and silver

Paper calling card

Metal hasp - used for fastening

Metal padlock with all-seeing eye

Are most of these man-made or natural objects?

Man-made

What do some of them have in common? For younger children ask how they are related to one another.

The piccolo, violin, bow and sheetmusic all relate to music. We know that Harnett loved music. He was said to own a flute and among the items sold after his death was a bow and piccolo like the ones painted here as well as much sheet music. Harnett painted other still lifes with a musical theme.

Does this painting tell a story or have any symbolic meaning?

At first the children will probably say no or they may make up very elaborate tales with little relation to Harnett's life. After some discussion, tell them that many paintings, especially still lifes, had hidden meaning. Their objects refer to something either in the artist's life or which had a general meaning for all people.

Does anyone know what a horseshoe stands for?

Good luck

How is the horseshoe shown here?

Upside down.

Can you guess what an upside down horseshoe might mean?

Bad luck because the luck runs out of it.

Harnett was born in Ireland. The Irish are typically very superstitious. Harnett did not name this painting. At one time art historians called it Music and Good Luck. But then they noted the upside down horseshoe. They also discovered that the sheet music, entitled "Saint Kevin" or "By that Lake Whose Gloomy Shore" was from a melancholy (sad) ballad by the Irishman, Thomas Moore (from his Irish Ballads of 1807). This is hardly the type of music to inspire good luck. Now the Metropolitan Museum of Art simply calls this painting, Still Life - Violin and Music.

What is the mood of this painting?

Still, quiet, melancholy, sad.

The children may not agree with them. Explain to them that much of what we say about a work of art reflects our own feelings. Thus everyone's reaction to a painting is slightly different.

Do the objects in this painting balance one another?

Yes

Where is the largest item?

The violin is almost in the center.

The other objects are arranged around it in the shape of a rectangle.

What objects mark the four corners of the rectangle?

The horseshoe, calling card, and metal hinges.

Where are their diagonals that repeat one another?

The sheet music, the piccolo and the calling card.

Is the light here strong or weak and why?

Strong because it casts dark shadows.

This painting is a very effective one to recreate with the students because it shows how faithfully Harnett has reproduced the shadows. Gather as many of the objects in the painting as possible and suspend them from nails off a board. Shine a flashlight on the still life from the left. If you are unable to recreate the entire still life, at least demonstrate to the children with a flashlight and a piece of sheet music or a calling card how the bent edge creates its own shadow.



## SECOND CLASS - HISTORY AND GENRE PAINTING/NARRATIVE

### I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

What type of painting did we look at in our first two classes?  
Younger children might remember "pictures of people"  
while older children should now be familiar with the  
term portrait.

Today we are going to look at another different category or  
type of art. Its subject matter is scenes from history or  
literature (books). It is called History Painting. Individual  
people or objects are less important than the overall action or  
scene in this type of art.

Which type of art, history painting or portraiture do you think  
was rated the most important one hundred years ago?

Up until the end of the nineteenth century, history  
painting was rated by the French and English Royal  
Academies of Art as the highest and most noble type  
of painting. Portrait painting came next and then still life.

Why do you think this was?

Because the scenes depicted in history painting could  
inspire people to do great deeds, to be heroes. In  
the past, art was judged accorded to its moral content,  
its ability to teach the viewer a lesson. Scenes  
from history and literature, especially the Bible,  
could do this very well. These canvases are often  
huge and frequently show moments of great heroism.

Another category of art which is often discussed at the same  
time as history painting is called genre. Genre painting  
shows scenes from everyday life and depicts common people  
not the great heroes remembered in history books.

Both history and genre painting are sometimes called narrative  
painting because they tell a story.

### II. EYE EXERCISES

Before we look at today's paintings, let's get our eyes  
ready for looking. (See Activity #1 on page 31 for a  
description of the eye exercises.)

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1 GENRE PAINTING

Artist - Winslow Homer - American - (1836-1910)

*Back ground for Snap the Whip*

*Dialogue Suggestions follow this*

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

Winslow Homer was born in Boston in 1836. He displayed an early interest in art which was encouraged by both parents. His mother, Henrietta Maria Benson Homer, was a skilled watercolorist, while his father, Charles Savage Homer, who was an importer of hardwares, sent his son lithographs from London to study and copy. Homer's formal art training was limited. At nineteen he served a two year apprenticeship at the lithographic firm of J.H. Bufford in Boston after which time he established himself as a freelance illustrator. When he moved to New York in the fall of 1859 he declined a staff position at Harpers because as he told his biographer: "I had had a taste of freedom. The slavery at Bufford was too fresh in my recollection to let me care to bind myself again. From the time I took my nose off that lithographic stone, I have had no master, and never shall have any." (New York Art Journal 4 [August 1878], p.226). Homer continued to work as a freelance illustrator til 1875. In addition to his apprenticeship Homer took some drqwing classes in Brooklyn, attended night school at the National Academy of Design in 1861 and studied painting for one month with French genre and landscape painter Frederick Rondel.

During the Civil War he served as an artist-correspondent for Harper's. The war provided subject matter for most of Homer's early paintings with Prisoners from the Front becoming his most celebrated work. This painting established Homer's reputation when it was exhibited at the National Academy in 1866 and at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867.

Homer's compositions display a strong sense of design. The influence of Japanese prints so popular in Europe at that time were especially evident in his work from the late 1860s and 1870s. His artistic style derived more from direct observation of nature than any other influence. Homer is reported to have

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remarked during his apprenticeship at Bufford's: "If a man wants to be an artist, he should never look at pictures" (Goodrich, p.6).<sup>no</sup> Although he lived in the city for twenty years it held ~~little~~ interest for him as subject matter for paintings or illustrations. Summer trips to the White Mountains, Saratoga, Lake George, and Long Branch provided him with settings and subjects for his depictions of rural life. Children were often the focal point of these country scenes. Homer presented them realistically and without the strong sentimentality so prevalent among most genre painters of his day. Later the Adirondacks became one of his favorite retreats providing more material for his oils, watercolors, and illustrations.

In 1881 Homer went to England and settled in Cullercoats, a small village in the North Sea. During his two years there he devoted himself to watercolor painting. The sea and the lives of the North Sea fishermen became his one great theme, and according to Downes in 1911 "...even the earliest and least pretentious of his marine motives had the ring of that inalienable veracity.... which....made of his sea pieces the incomparable masterpieces that they are."

Henry James condemned Homer's choice of subjects, especially his depiction of very commonplace people or settings which he treats ".... as if they were every inch as good as Capri or Tangier; and to reward his audacity he has incontestably succeeded." James does, however, give a perceptive view of Homer's painting style, "... Mr. Homer has the great merit, moreover, that he naturally sees everything at one with its envelope of light and air. He sees not in lines but in masses, in gross, broad masses. Things come already modelled to his eye (Galaxy 20 [July 1875], p.94).

Homer, a very private person, spent his last sixteen ~~in his~~ years in Prouts Neck, a rocky peninsula on the coast of Maine. It was at this solitary retreat that he died in 1910.

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B. Snap the Whip ( *suppose to be one where in East Hampton N.Y.* )

Artist - Winslow Homer - American - (1836-1910)

Year Painted - 1872

Materials - oil (study) on canvas

Props and Activities - Slide of the painting  
compare and contrast

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)  
See page 2

DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

Our next work is another highly realistic scene from American life by Winslow Homer. How would you compare it to Prisoners from the Front?

"Wow! It's a total opposite! -- Lots of color, active, cheerful, young boys instead of men, grass, flowers, trees!"

What is the subject of this picture?  
Children playing

Where does this take place?  
In a country field

How do you know they are in the country?  
"The way they're dressed, the bare feet, the wide open field, the view of the town in the distance."

Do you know what the red building is in the distance?  
Most recognized it as a school house.

What are the children doing?  
Playing a game at recess

Do you know this game?  
A few recognized it and described how it is played, but they knew it by the name "Dragon". Sometimes it is played on ice skates. I explained that these children knew the game as Snap the Whip which is also the title of the painting.

What mood has Homer created in this painting?  
Happy, lively

What elements of art does he use to express the mood?  
Color - lively, bright, reds, yellows, greens, and blues.

Line - more action lines ie. diagonals and curves to convey movement.

*Look at movement of sky, flowers, even trees.*

Mountain is not in the sketch 18



Butler Institute of American Art's *Snap the Whip* by Homer.

The one at the top is a oil sketch. 1



Homer, study for *Snap the Whip*, pencil on paper. Butler Institute of American Art.

Wood engraving by Lagarde for *Harper's Weekly*, September 20, 1873







Homer, *Snap the Whip*.



Homer, study for *Snap the Whip*, black chalk on green paper. Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

Infrared reflectography of the Metropolitan painting shows children that Homer painted out by the side of the schoolhouse.



Can you find any ways the paintings are similar?  
 The figures are arranged in a line across the canvas.  
 (again the classical Greek frieze-like arrangement)

Both have parallel lines progressing from the lower left of the painting.

All the figures are males although different in age.  
 (The children remembered that often the girls stayed home to learn crafts and domestic duties from their mothers while the boys were sent to school.)

How does Homer use light in this painting?  
 He floods the scene with bright light which contrasts sharply with shadows to give clear definition to the figures.

Children were popular subjects in 19th century genre painting, often used to symbolize or represent our young nation. Snap the Whip is probably Homer's best known genre painting. Infact, Homer painted two versions of this work. Both were dated 1872. The other is in the collection of the Butler Institute of American Art in Youngstown, Ohio. The Butler version is larger. It has additional figures and mountains in the background. Sometimes artists do a study in oil paints before they do the finished painting. Homer usually did not do oil studies, but in this case he did. The Metropolitan's picture is the study. Explain that infrared reflectography, (a kind of x-ray) shows that Homer made many changes in our version. Point out the illustration which shows there were originally two more children by the school house. He also made changes in the trees and, more importantly, "our" painting once had a mountainous background like the Butler version.

Do you think the figures in Snap the Whip look sentimental?  
 (You might need to ask first for a definition of sentimental.)  
 "No, these boys look tough, as if they like to 'rough house'"

Following the Civil War images of high spirited, independent, rebellious youth filled the American canvases. What made this work outstanding was Homer's truthful objectivity and lack of sentiment.

Snap the Whip became a popular <sup>of</sup> image of rural America which was described along with some of Homer's other works as "A chapter in the life of an American boy." John Ferguson Weir also commended Homer during the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 for depicting "subjects exclusively from American life and customs, and with marked individuality of treatment."

*Compare this to other of 1. the in Currier & Ives. Print Preparation for Market How is it diff. similar*

## II. EYE EXERCISES

Before we start, let's get those eyes ready for looking.  
(see Activity #1 on page 31 in the "Learning to Look"  
Handbook for a description of the eye exercises.)

## III. GENRE PAINTING: EAST COAST

### A. Cider Making

Artist - William Sidney Mount - American - (1807-1868)

Year Painted - 1841

Materials - oil on canvas

Props and Activities - slides of the painting (one whole scene and four detail shots), post-cards of the painting

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

William Sidney Mount was born in Setauket, New York in 1807. Many of his paintings depict places he knew well from his childhood in Stony Brook, Long Island as is the case with our picture, Cider Making. Mount received his first artistic training from his brother, a sign painter, to whom he was apprenticed at the age of seventeen. Mount also spent nearly a year at the National Academy of Design before making his way in the world as a portrait painter. Mount's greatest talent proved not to be for portraits but for genre paintings, or scenes from daily life. After returning to Stony Brook in 1836, he excelled at painting canvases of farm scenes with their relaxed air and gentle humor. Mount was also one of the first important American artists to depict Blacks in his paintings in a sympathetic fashion. His canvases are carefully painted, with no traces of the brushstroke, but with a fine attention to the surrounding landscape and atmospheric conditions. He died in 1868.



## DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

Can anyone describe what is going on here?

They are making cider.

(Ask the following questions to help them discover this.)

Can anyone see any apples? (Show the detail slide of the left background of Pressing the Apples.)

Yes.

In the circular bin on the ground near the house.

What is happening to them?

Their juice is being squeezed out of them.

What is another name for apple juice?

Cider

What is the name for the structure in the middle of the painting?

A cider press.

This painting is called Cider Making and was painted by William S. Mount.

Can anyone find where the artist has signed the date on this painting?

In two places: 1840 on the large barrel in the front left and 1841 in the lower left hand corner with his name.

Where are we?

On a farm, in the countryside.

Notice the farm animals, the haystacks, the fields, the split rail fences. This particular cider mill was said to have survived at Setauket, Long Island until the 1940s.

Let's see how many animals we can identify.

Dogs, pigs, geese, ducks, chickens, hen, horses, birds on the roof.

What picture of country life does Mount depict?

Happy, cheerful, relaxed.

Mount was born in 1807 on Long Island when it was still farmland. He went to study art in New York City at the newly-opened National Academy of Design in 1826 and stayed in the city for over ten years. Mount was really happiest in the countryside and he moved back permanently to his childhood village of Stony Brook, Long Island in 1837.

How many people do you think there are in this painting? Count them.

Fourteen are clearly visible.

We will see more when we can look more carefully at the painting in the Museum.

Are the people working hard? Describe what they are doing?

Not really.

On the far left, a man is carrying a jug near the barn. One child is keeping the horse walking while two others go around for the ride.

A man is waving his hat to the three children.

Show slide of the detail of the figure pushing the press bar.

What are the people doing here?

One man pours cider into a container while another drinks it from a jug and a third man easily pushes the press bar.

Back to foreground!

Show detail slide of the Background Landscape. What are these figures doing?

In the distance three men are talking over a split rail fence. One man may be reading to the others from a paper.

to the background

Show the detail slide of the boy and girl in the center foreground. Who remembers how many children were sitting in front by the barrels?

There are three children, two boys and a girl.

They are relaxing.

This detail slide only shows the boy and the girl on the left.

right side

What is the girl's expression?

Shy interest in the boy who is looking out at the viewer smiling.

What is the weather?

Sunny. Blue skies with some clouds.

Is this a realistic depiction of farm life?

There are several different answers to this question. Mount has painted all the details very carefully of a scene he saw around him in real life.

Yet, the overall feeling of ease and pleasure creates a flattering portrait of farm life which eliminates all references to the hard work, long hours and natural catastrophes (storms, dry spells etc.) which also characterized life in the country.

How does Mount's choice of colors contribute to this calm, relaxed mood?

The colors are mostly soft and muted.

The green of the grass and blue of the sky are pale.



What color stands out as the strongest?

The red of the girl's shawl.

Where does the light come from in this painting?

All over.

It is meant to suggest the sun shining on a brilliant day. Everything seems clear and clean.

Are there any shadows?

Yes, by the horse, the man pushing the bar and the girl, but they are not strong.

Do you think the art critics of 1841 liked Mount's work? Why or why not?

Many art critics did not like Mount's choice of subject matter from rural (country) and village life of the common man.

Do you remember what subject matter was most highly praised by critics in the mid-Nineteenth century?

Portraits and historical canvases showing scenes of great heroism or emotion.

Do you think this genre scene could have any deeper meaning than just an everyday farm scene?

In fact, it does.

Cider was associated with the common man, not the rich. When William Henry Harrison ran for President in 1840 his campaign distributed free cider from log cabins in order to create the image of Harrison as a man of the people. This was one of the first times in American political elections where a candidate used gimmicks and slogans to win people's vote. American painting was becoming a popular art, not just something for the well-to-do to enjoy.

The cider scene did exist till 1940's  
in Long Island

This picture had giving a impression  
That farm life is easy but real  
farm & life is hard. Therefore this  
picture is realistic in the sense of  
describing the activity but idealize  
the farm life.

In 19th century, painting was supposed  
to have a message, supposed to be  
'high' art. Therefore these painting  
was not thought highly by the critics

This painting was associated with cider  
man. Because cider was considered  
the common man's drink.

### III. HISTORY AND GENRE PAINTING

#### A. Washington Crossing the Delaware

Artist - Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze - American (1816-1868)

Year Painted - 1851

Medium - oil on canvas

Props - slide of the painting, American flag, five oars, blue blazers and other jackets, variety of hats (fur, cowboy, tricorner, tam o'shanter), play sword and rifles.

Activity - posing the painting

*bring camera \**

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze was born in Germany in 1816. His family moved to the United States and settled in Philadelphia when he was nine. He began his art training by 1834 and earned his first money as a portraitist. Impressed by his natural abilities, two Philadelphia businessmen provided him with funds to study abroad. Leutze enrolled in the Royal Art Academy in Düsseldorf, Germany. The Düsseldorf School was well known for painting Romantic subject matter in a strictly academic style. Leutze eventually chafed under the Academy's requirements of "perfect fidelity to nature, in form, color and expression; minuteness in detail, delicacy of finish, and perfectness of rendering the language of every subject." He left to form his own studio in Düsseldorf. In 1843 he traveled throughout Germany and Italy, returning to Düsseldorf in 1845. Many American artists visited or studied with Leutze there in the 1840s and '50s, among them Eastman Johnson and Albert Bierstadt. Leutze expressed a great interest in the history of liberty. He was politically active as a liberal in the Revolution of 1848 and a key figure in the founding of several associations to help artists. Many of his canvases depict dramatic episodes from American and British history.

Leutze began his most famous work, Washington Crossing the Delaware in Düsseldorf in 1849. The painting took two years to complete. The first rendering of it was partially destroyed in a fire and Leutze had to begin anew. He had difficulty recruiting models because the German ones were too small and too closely set in their limbs to portray Americans. The American artist, Worthington Whittredge, who was studying in Düsseldorf at the time, posed for both Washington and the steersman. The painting became extremely popular more for its heroic celebration of Washington's victory over the British at Trenton than for its esthetic qualities. Leutze gained widespread fame from this one work. He visited the United States in 1851 where the work was exhibited in New York and Washington. He moved to the States permanently in 1859 and worked both in New York and Washington. His huge mural, Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way, decorates the Assembly rooms of the Capital in Washington. He died in 1868.

# DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

What is this a picture of?

Help the children describe what they see: a boat filled with people; the American flag; one man standing above the others; ice in the water; boats with horses on them in the background.

Who do you think is the most important person in this painting and why?

The man standing tallest.

He is in the center.

The light shines on him.

He is the tallest.

We can see the details of his face and clothing easiest.

Can anyone identify this person? Hint: we have already seen a portrait of him? Another hint: his birthday is February 22. (This painting is usually studied near Washington's birthday).

George Washington, the first President of the United States of America.

Do you think he was already President in this painting? Hint: What does he appear to be wearing?

A uniform.

He was not yet President but rather a general and head of the Continental Army in their battle against the British during the American Revolution.

Can you guess what the title of this painting might be?

There are many interesting responses to this.

After the children have had some fun using their own imagination, tell them the real title is Washington Crossing the Delaware. It is one of the best known and most famous of American paintings. It is reproduced all over the country. Bring in any examples you might have noticed.

What is the Delaware?

A river which runs from New York to Pennsylvania to New Jersey before emptying into the Delaware Bay that separates New Jersey from the state of Delaware. Show the students where the river is on a map if possible.

Is this a portrait?

No

What type of painting is it and why?

A history painting because it shows a scene from American history.

Tell the students that the painting depicts a true event during the American Revolution: Washington's



daring plan to cross the Delaware River on Christmas night (December 25, 1776) and attack the Hessian (German) soldiers who were fighting for Britain against the Americans. Washington's victory was a turning point in the Revolution.

Can anyone tell what the weather was from looking at this painting?  
Cold. The men are bundled up.

• Ice in the river

Windy. The flag is blowing and it takes two men to hold it up. Read to the older children an excerpt from the diary of Thomas Rodney, a captain in the Delaware militia. He wrote that it was "...as severe a night as I ever saw -- the frost was sharp, the current difficult to stem, the ice increasing, the wind high and at eleven o'clock it began to snow."

What was the condition of Washington's men? Look carefully at the painting. How are they dressed?

No one has on the same uniform.

Washington's men didn't have a regulation uniform because they were not yet a real army. It was too early in the war. The man next to the helmsman has his head bandaged.

The older children might be interested to know that Washington said that seven out of every ten of his soldiers were sick, wounded or unable to fight.

After losing the first battles of the war, Washington and his men were without proper clothes and supplies and losing hope. In a bold move, Washington decided to cross the Delaware river at night and surprise the unprepared enemy soldiers on the other side.

Why do you think the enemy soldiers were surprised by Washington's attack?

The weather was so bad.

Washington's army had lost most of the battles so far.

Washington's men were exhausted and lacked supplies.

It was Christmas and the Hessian soldiers had celebrated by drinking too much.

It took all night to cross the river and then Washington's men had to march nine miles to Trenton where the enemy were encamped. One American soldier wrote in his diary: "It will be a terrible night for the soldiers who have no shoes. Some of them have tied old rags around their feet, but I have not heard a man complain." A messenger was able to follow the army by the bloody tracks in the snow. Despite these conditions, Washington's plan was a total success. The attack was a complete surprise and after some fighting, the enemy surrendered. An American at the scene counted twenty-two enemy dead, eighty-four wounded and 918 captured. No Americans were killed in the action although a few froze to death during the trip. The American victory at the Battle of Trenton was a very important one because it convinced the American soldiers to reenlist in the army. Many of their terms of service were to expire five days later. It also showed that the Americans could win a battle and proved Washington's great skill and endurance as a general.

Do you think this painting was painted at the time of the Revolution over two hundred years ago?

No.

It was painted seventy-five years after the event by Emanuel Leutze. He was born in Germany and moved with his family to the United States when he was nine. Later he returned to Germany to study art. He had an art studio in the German city of Düsseldorf for nearly twenty years. There he taught many American artists such as the landscape painter Albert Bierstadt. Washington Crossing the Delaware was painted in Düsseldorf in 1851.

Do you think it funny (older children can learn the word "ironic") that one of the most famous paintings in American history was painted by a German-born artist in a German city?

Yes because the painting seems so American.

Do you think Washington's Crossing took place as it is shown in this painting?

Let the children comment first.

Then tell them that there are many historical inaccuracies (mistakes) in Leutze's work. Let's see how many of them we can find.

Do you think Washington would actually have been standing up in this pose during the crossing?

No.

He would have lost his balance in the stormy weather.

Why does Leutze show him this way?

He seems stronger, more brave, determined and heroic.

What view of Washington's face do we see and what does Washington's pose tell us about the man?

We see Washington in profile.

He is looking to the far shore.

His jaw is firm, set.

He seems ready to go forward.

He seems certain of victory.

Tell older children that Leutze copied Washington's head from a cast he owned of the French sculptor Houdon's bust of Washington.

What time of day does Leutze's painting show and how do we know?

Dawn. Light is breaking on the far shore.

Point out the morning star (the last star of the night).

Does anyone remember when the real crossing took place?

In the dark of night.

Washington's men left after dark and arrived on the New Jersey shore at 4:00a.m. In December it is still dark then.

Where does Leutze's light shine and why?

On Washington and on the far shore.

It emphasizes his bravery.

It increases the sense of drama and excitement.

It acts like a spotlight in the theater.

Do you think the ice was this thick and chunky?

No.

Washington told the Continental Congress there was a thin covering of ice.

Why does Leutze make the ice look as if it were broken into small icebergs?

To make the crossing seem even more dangerous.

See also the dangerous broken branch of a tree floating in the water.

This type of ice could cut a hole in the boats.

Do you think the actual boats were this size?

No. These are too small.

The real boats were "Durham boats." They were normally used to carry iron, grain or whiskey on the Delaware.

They were larger (i.e., 60' long, by 8' wide, by 2' deep) than what Leutze shows and were pointed at both ends.

They used oars to go downstream and poles to go upstream.

A single boat could hold thirty to forty people.

How many men does Leutze show in Washington's boat. Count them.  
Twelve

Why does he show a smaller boat?

Again to make the scene appear more dangerous.

Also to let him paint the people in more detail.

Forty people would have been too crowded to see the faces clearly.

Do you think the horses were on the same boats with all the soldiers?

No.

The horses and cannon were brought over after the men.

Were these the men who were really with Washington during the crossing?

No. They were models.

Leutze had difficulty finding American models for his soldiers. The German models were too small and too compactly built in comparison to Americans. The man who posed for both Washington and the steersman (point him out) was the American artist, Worthington Whittredge. Leutze had had a copy of Washington's uniform made and he asked Whittredge to wear it because he was one of the only ones tall enough to fit into it correctly.



Can anyone find a black man in this painting?

He is on Washington's right holding an oar.  
He is supposed to be Prince Whipple, a freed slave who fought in the American Revolution. He was at the Battle of Trenton and was Washington's aide but we don't know if he was in Washington's boat during the crossing.

What type men does Leutze show crossing with Washington?

Farmers and hunters (see the man with the rifle). Only two of them are wearing uniforms, Washington and the man holding the flag who appears to be Colonel James Monroe who later became President of the United States.

What are the men wearing?

Heavy clothes, different hats, all bundled up against the cold.

Leutze does not in fact show the correct clothes of the men who manned the boats. They were sailors and fishermen from the regiment of John Glover's Marbleheaders. They would have been wearing blue seaman's jackets, white caps and tarred pants to keep out the water. Leutze doesn't seem to have known this.

Do you think Leutze has painted the tricorner hats correctly?

No.

He has painted a more German style hat with a flatter front.

Does this look like our American flag? Let's count the stars.

No.

Our flag has fifty stars and this one has thirteen stars in a circle. It was the flag used during the American Revolution. Yet even here Leutze is probably wrong because this flag was not approved by Congress until six months after the Battle of Trenton. America's earliest flag had thirteen red and white stripes and a blue canton with the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew

Why do you think Leutze has changed things from what really happened?

In some cases (the American flag, the clothes) because he didn't know any better.

In other cases (Washington standing, smaller boat, lighting) he did it to heighten the drama, to make Washington appear more like a hero. Tell older children that the painting is a romanticized view of Washington stressing his faith and bravery in the face of danger and discouragement. The painting convinces us by its storytelling not by its artistic merits. It is not a very interesting painting technically. It is a great painting for its subject matter not in the way it is painted.

What does this painting make you feel? Ask older children, what is the mood of this painting? Look at the faces.

This is a tricky question because Leutze has two emotions at work: the calm assurance of Washington contrasts with the worried struggle of his men. The next questions will help the students to see this.

How does Washington look?

Calm, determined, assured, confident.

How do his men look?

Scared, anxious, worried.

Some are struggling to hold the flag, others to row or push the ice floes away. The man in the center is watching carefully. The man at the helm is steering with an oar.

What were the dangers?

Ice floes - could damage the boat

Strong river current - could push the boat off course

Cold - the men could freeze to death

Strong wind - adds to the cold

Snowing - can't see well

Let's see how Leutze has used the elements of art to create these feelings both of calm and of great turmoil and movement.

How do the lines in this painting increase the sense of motion and excitement? Hint: look for diagonals

The flag, the oars and pole and the ice floes are diagonals.

They move the eyes up and down creating a sense of motion.

What about the way Washington's men are positioned? Do you think their poses are easy or hard to hold?

Many of the men are twisted and straining to keep the boat from tipping over. These poses are full of action and hard to hold as we shall see.

Who is calm?

Washington

Does his pose seem shaky or firm?

Firm.

He stands balanced with most of his weight on one leg and his other leg bent.

He doesn't appear to rock with the boat.

What is the basic shape of this painting? Hint: Help the children to imagine lines along the base of the boat and from the bow and the stern to the top of the flagpole. What shape have we drawn?

A triangle.

Can a triangle roll?

No. It is a stable shape.

It sits firmly on its base.

This large triangular composition is one of the reasons

why the overall feeling of the painting is one of calmness.

Can anyone find any more triangles?

The space between Washington's leg, Washington's whole body, his left arm, the head and body of the man in the center front leaning over and watching, some of the ice floes, the steersman and his rudder, the oars of the black man and the man with the red tam o'shanter hat. All of these triangles (and the children will undoubtedly find more) make the canvas appear balanced, stable and strong. This is what Leutze wanted the viewer to think about Washington's leadership.

Can you see where Leutze has repeated certain colors?

Red, white and blue appear in many places.

What do the colors red, white and blue make you think of?

The American flag.

They underline the patriotic theme of the painting.

Ask older children to define the word "patriotic" (i.e., love of one's country).

Can anyone see where Leutze signed his name? In what color?

On the ice floe in the lower right hand corner.

In red, like blood.

Do you think this painting is large or small?

Very large. Twenty feet by fourteen feet.

Life size. It is one of the largest paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Let's see if we can recreate this life-size painting ourselves!

This is a wonderful painting for younger children to pose not only to emphasize the diagonals, twisted positions and triangular composition, but also to fix the story in their mind. Tell the children that in order to get into the feeling of the painting, Leutze had flags, cannon and real guns brought into his studio. He shot off the guns whenever they had a visitor. A friend wrote that the walls of the studio were scarred with bullets! Use chairs to form a boat. Borrow oars from a local boat store or friend if possible. If not, use long sticks. Bring in old blazers, jackets, hats, a spy glass, play swords and guns, an American flag, anything else to heighten the realism. Use twelve children for the main boat and some extras for the background if you can handle that many children. Let those who are not posing view and correct the poses of their classmates. Say, one, two, three, freeze. This usually makes a great photograph. Let any other children take their turn posing. This is a time-consuming but memorable activity.

Project possibility for NARRATIVE:

- (1) Set up games of "Snap the Whip" outside in the style of the Homer painting and take pictures of the students for a narrative photograph.
- (2) Pose the students in the "Washington Crossing the Delaware" pose, using the props available, and take a picture.

## SECOND CLASS - STYLES OF PORTRAITURE

### I. REVIEW OF LAST CLASS

What was the subject matter of our last class?

Some answers might be: "paintings of people," "Daniel Verplanck," "George Washington," or portraits.

What does subject matter mean in art?

A good answer is "what the artist chooses to paint."  
Tell the students that the subject matter of our last class and this class make the paintings we are looking at qualify as portraits.

Who remembers the definition of a portrait?

A painting in which a person is the most important thing.  
For the older child, a more sophisticated definition of a portrait is, "An artistic representation of a person as rendered in painting, sculpture or photography."

Today we are going to look at two portraits by different artists, one who lived in the Eighteenth Century (i.e., two hundred years ago) and one who lived in the Nineteenth Century (i.e., one hundred years ago). We are also going to look at another rendering of George Washington by an artist who lived at the same time as Washington. First, let's get our eyes ready for looking.

Project possibility for PORTRAITS:

Have the students buddy up and interview each other and then each draw a portrait of his/her partner.



C. George Washington

Artist - Charles Willson Peale - American (1741-1827)

Year painted - 1779

Medium - oil on canvas

Props: slide

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (For the teacher)

Charles Willson Peale was another young American artist who went to England to study at Benjamin West's studio, but he returned to America in time to join the colonial militia during the Revolutionary War. Peale actually took his painting kit onto the battlefield right along with his military gear. He later used the miniature works he painted around this time in developing his larger portraits of Revolutionary War officers. These portraits became the core of a gallery he established near his home in Philadelphia in 1782. As a result he became known as the first painter of the American Revolution.

Peale was a man of many talents and unusual accomplishments. Not only was he a prolific, versatile artist, he was also an author, naturalist, inventor, saddler, an archeologist who discovered two mastodons, an engraver, a silversmith, and a museum director. He married three times, and sired 17 children, some of whom became artists in their own right. Charles Willson Peale was one of the most unusual and engaging American artists and clearly a representative of 18th century enlightenment. It is interesting to note that Peale was also the son of a convicted felon who was sent to America rather than hanged.

DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

Can you guess which Revolutionary War figure is the subject of this portrait?

General George Washington. Ask younger children how George Washington is best remembered today? (Our first President of the United States or "Father of Our Country".)

Tell the students that the artist of this work, Charles Willson Peale, knew George Washington personally. He actually fought in the Revolutionary War and took his painting kit onto the battlefield where he managed to paint miniature portraits of the officers from life. As a result he became known as first painter of the American Revolution. Ask younger students if they know what the American Revolutionary War was about and with whom it was fought?

Peale was commissioned by the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania to do a full length portrait of Washington in 1779.

For older students read the actual resolution so they can gain a sense of the language of the day:

"that His Excellency General Washington be requested to permit this Council to place his Portrait in the Council Chamber, not only as a mark of the great respect which they bear to His Excellency, but that the contemplation of it may excite others to tread in the same glorious and disinterested steps which lead to public happiness and private honor."

If we didn't know who Washington was, what could we learn about him just by carefully looking at his portrait? First, what is he wearing?

A military uniform.

What status does his uniform indicate?

An officer or commander.

The blue ribbon across his chest is the result of Washington's order of 1775 which stated that all general officers were to wear a ribbon across the breast between waistcoat and coat. The Commander-in-Chief was distinguished by a light blue ribbon. All the others wore pink or green.

Notice the sword. Does this look like a battle sword?

No. This is a rapier or dress sword (now at Mt. Vernon) not the battle sword usually depicted.

It would be wonderful to have a real dress sword or battle sword to show to the students.

What other items are included in the painting?

Cannon, horse, soldier, flag - all related to Washington's military accomplishments or leadership.

What kind of flag is depicted? How many stars?

Thirteen.

What would these stars represent?

The thirteen colonies.

This was the colonial flag.

Notice the trees, river, and town in the distance. This was supposed to be Trenton, New Jersey, the site of one of Washington's most important victories and the turning point of the revolution.

What time of year?

Winter.

The actual battle was fought Christmas night.

(During a later class we will elaborate on this historic event.)

How would you describe the pose Peale has given to Washington?

Stiff or relaxed? (relaxed)

What kind of mood or attitude does Washington express?

Strong, important, self-confident, a leader, imposing, powerful?

How old do you think Washington was when this portrait was painted?  
Actually, he was 47.

Let's look at the physical representation of Washington.

Does he appear to be a large person?

Yes. He was six feet, two inches - quite tall for that period of time.

Compare the size of his shoulders to his hips.

The shoulders are narrow but he is broad through the waist and hips.

Does the size of his head look in proportion to his body?

No. It is small.

It is interesting to compare this portrait to the one painted by Gilbert Stuart four years before his death. (see second class)

Peale's likeness of Washington is considered to be the best of Washington as a general.

In this portrait he has presented an icon - "The Father of Our Country".

This work was so successful that Peale received many orders for replicas of the painting. Some of these were for palaces in Europe, but it is believed that the Metropolitan's version may have been commissioned by Washington's wife, Martha and descended through the General's family.

B. George Washington

Artist - Gilbert Stuart - American - (1734-1805)

Year Painted - 1795?

Medium - oil on canvas

Props - slide of painting, dollar bill

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

Gilbert Stuart was the most famous American portrait painter of his time. Born in Rhode Island in 1755, he demonstrated early a facility with drawing. His first teacher, a Scotsman, took him to Edinburgh in 1772 but Stuart was forced to return to America upon his teacher's death. Lacking commissions for his work because of the unsettled conditions in the American colonies on the eve of the Revolution, Stuart set sail for London in 1775. Things did not go well for the impoverished Stuart until he met Benjamin West in 1777. Stuart lived and worked with the kindly West for five years. By that time Stuart had established himself as a remarkably gifted portraitist, on a par with his English contemporaries, Gainsborough, Reynolds and Romney. His elegant portrait style was noted for its rich, painterly technique and vivid likenesses. An extravagant, financially inept man, Stuart outspent even his sizeable commissions and was compelled to flee his London creditors in 1787. He moved to Dublin where he worked steadily until his return to New York in 1792.

The success of his first portrait of Washington in 1795 assured his status as the premier portraitist of the new nation's elite. Stuart did three portraits of Washington from life: the Vaughn type of 1795 (a bust with right side of face showing), the Lansdowne type of 1796 (a full-length portrait) and the Athenaeum Head of c. 1796 (an unfinished head commissioned by Martha Washington and used as the basis for the engraving on the one dollar bill). From these three types Stuart made over one hundred copies. He worked in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, and Boston where he settled permanently in 1805. During his long and prolific career, Stuart shared his knowledge and talents with the next generation of American portrait painters. He died in 1828.

# DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

Can anyone identify who this is a portrait of?

George Washington, Commander-in-chief during the Revolutionary War and first President of the United States.

It was painted by a man named Gilbert Stuart who had lived and studied with West in London from 1772 to 1782. Stuart had been so poor that West fed and lodged him in his own house until Stuart began to make a career as a portraitist in London. Stuart returned to America in 1793 where he made a name for himself as a painter of famous Americans.

Can we tell much about Washington's life from this portrait?

No.

There are few details of background or clothing to tell us anything about Washington. This was typical of Stuart's elegant style which focused mainly on the subject's face. This makes it very different from the full-length portrait of Washington by Charles Willson Peale we examined in the first class.

How old do you think Washington was in this painting?

Sixty-three

What can you say about Washington's personality from this portrait?

He seems serious; his mouth is closed tightly (perhaps to hide his false teeth!); there is no smile. The firm set of his jaw suggests he is a strong leader. He seems like a hero. Stuart is deliberately creating an idealized (explain word) image of Washington.

Stuart painted over one hundred paintings of George Washington. Why do you think this was?

Washington was very popular. He had won the war and established America's freedom. People wanted an image of him in their homes. Photography had not yet been invented so well-to-do people commissioned artists to create a likeness. Engravings of these portraits were often sold to many thousands.

It was said that whenever Stuart wanted to earn another hundred dollar gold piece he painted another portrait of Washington.

Older children might be interested in the story behind this painting. Our portrait of Washington is known as the Gibbs-Channing-Avery Washington from the names of the three families who owned it prior to its acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum. Stuart only sketched Washington from life three times. From these sittings he made over one hundred copies. Our portrait is of the type known as the Vaughn portrait of Washington



which Stuart did from life in Philadelphia in 1795.

Yet the high quality of our copy in comparison to other copies as well as certain differences (deeper set eyes, more severe expression, wider ribbon) suggest that Stuart may have had a chance to work on this portrait from life. Family tradition holds that this was the case.

Does anyone know what President is on the dollar bill?

George Washington.

The engraving is after one of three portrait types that Stuart did of Washington from life (i.e., Washington posed three times for Stuart. All the copies that Stuart made are from these three types.)

In our portrait of Washington do you think he looks bored? This question should raise some lively discussion. Have the students give their reasons. Then tell them that this view of Washington was painted during the first time Washington sat (i.e., posed) for the artist. Stuart was known to be a great talker but he couldn't seem to loosen Washington up. Stuart complained that Washington was silent, distant, and almost bored and the artist felt that this portrait was a failure although people praised it.

B. The Muse -- Susan Walker Morse

Artist - Samuel Finley Breese Morse - American (1791-1872)

Year Painted - c. 1835-37

Materials - oil on canvas

Props - slide of the portrait

Activity - compare to portrait of Molly Whales Leonard

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

Samuel Finley Breese Morse was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts in 1791 and graduated from Yale University in 1810. He traveled to England where he studied with Washington Allston. Upon his return to the United States in 1815 he began painting portraits with considerable critical acclaim. Morse's father, a minister, never wanted his son to become an artist. Morse studied further in Europe and continued to try to eek out a living as a painter. His wife died, leaving him children to raise. When he painted this portrait of his oldest daughter, Susan Walker Morse, Morse was an unsalaried Professor of Painting and Sculpture at New York University. It was his last major portrait painting before he gave up art to pursue his scientific interests. Morse had been interested in electricity since college days. He worked for twelve years to perfect Ampère's idea of an electrical telegraph. In 1844 he succeeded in demonstrating the usefulness of the telegraph by transmitting the message "What God hath wrought" from Washington, D.C. to Baltimore, Maryland over the wire. Morse code signals are received as audible clicks. In International Morse Code each letter is assigned a significance in dots (short presses of the key) or dashes (three times longer presses of the key) so that S.O.S. becomes ...---... Morse's invention gained him widespread fame and fortune. His reputation as an artist today is also held in high regard.

# DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for the classroom)

What type of painting is this? What is the subject?  
A portrait of a young girl.

Tell the class her name was Susan Walker Morse and she was sixteen at the time her father, Samuel F.B. Morse, painted this portrait.

Ask the students what she is doing?

She is seated with a sketchbook in her lap and a pencil in hand.

Has she drawn anything yet?  
No.

What kind of expression does she have on her face?

She looks like she is daydreaming or as one student said, "She looks as if she is trying to think of something to draw." Other good vocabulary words to describe her expression are musing, meditative, thoughtful, pensive (for older children).

Where is she looking?

Upward, as if for inspiration.

How do you get ideas for writing, drawing, etc.

Let the children talk about this for a few moments.

The title of this painting is The Muse. Does anyone know what a muse is?

The muses were nine sister goddesses in Greek mythology who presided over the arts, poetry, and the sciences. They were considered a source of inspiration, a type of guiding genius.

What else has her father, Samuel F.B. Morse, included in this painting?

A Grecian urn, ballustrade, pillars with relief carvings, a Grecian style chaise longue, all of which allude to classical Greek antiquity. Explain to the students that this style is known as Greek Revival and was very popular in the early nineteenth century.

What do you see on the couch beside Susan?  
A monocle on a ribbon.

What kind of life do you think Susan had?

Usually the response is very elegant or comfortable or rich because of her dress and surroundings.

Next tell the story of how Morse was struggling as an unsalaried Professor of Painting and Sculpture at the newly-founded New York University when he painted this portrait. All of her sumptuous surroundings were purely from the artist's imagination. Possibly even the dress she was wearing was imaginary since her father was quite poor at this time. Susan's mother had died when she was six so her father had to rely on the generosity of Aunts and Uncles to care for her since he could not provide a proper home.

I like to tell the children that this story has an almost fairy tale ending because shortly after finishing Susan's portrait around 1837, her father gave up painting all together to devote full attention to his scientific invention, the electric telegraph.

Ask the children if they have heard of the telegraph or Morse Code.

Give a brief description of the telegraph (see Background Information) and explain that Morse's later years were filled with wealth and enormous fame resulting from the worldwide recognition of the value and usefulness of the telegraph. Morse was quite a philanthropist. It may interest the students that he contributed funds toward the founding of the Metropolitan Museum and he became a trustee and Vice President of the Museum.

Ask the students if they like the way Susan is represented in this portrait?

Usually the response is favorable.

Let them know that the critics highly praised the painting as well, calling it "the most perfect full-length portrait that we remember to have seen from an American Artist."

How does this portrait compare in terms of realism and sophistication to the portrait of Molly Whales Leonard?

Tell the students that Morse was one of the artists who received professional training in England with Washington Allston.

He paints figures that appear real and three-dimensional.

What type colors does Morse use?

Muted colors - golden brown of dress, rich deep red of cushions, green of drapery.

What two complementary colors stand out?

The red of the cushions and the green of the dress.

How many different textures can you find?

Lace, satin, taffeta, velvet, stone, paper, wood, glass.

C. Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)

Artist - John Singer Sargent - American (1856-1925)

Year Painted - 1884

Medium - oil on canvas

Props - poster of painting, tape recorder and tapes of Haydn's "Clock Symphony" and Elgar's "Enigma Variations."

Activity - playing music of the period

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

Like West, Pratt and Stuart a century earlier, John Singer Sargent received his formal art training in Europe. Born in Florence, Italy to American parents, he began studying art at the age of twelve in 1868. Six years later he traveled to Paris to study under the portraitist Emile Auguste Carolus-Duran. Close scrutiny of the Old Masters, particularly Velázquez and Hals, during trips to Spain and Holland in 1879 and 1880 also left its mark on his developing style. Sargent first exhibited in the Salon of 1878 at the age of twenty-one. His works were greeted with enthusiasm.

Sargent's Parisian career received a setback, however, when he exhibited his infamous portrait of Madame Pierre Gautreau at the Paris Salon of 1884. Entitled only Madame X to protect the sitter's reputation, the painting created a scandal because of the subject's daring décolletage, lavender-colored skin, striking profile and notorious behavior. She was readily identified as the former Virginie Avegno, an American who had married the Parisian banker, Pierre Gautreau. Sargent was asked to withdraw the painting and demand for his portraits declined. In 1886 he moved to London where he rapidly became the most fashionable portraitist of his time. Sargent made frequent trips to America and worked for a quarter of a century on the design and execution of murals for the Boston Public Library. As a portraitist, Sargent's style was free and direct. He easily captured his subject's likeness with quick brushstrokes that revealed a brilliant sensitivity to texture.



# DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

What is the subject matter of this painting?

A woman, a lady

What do you call a painting where the person is most important?

A portrait

What do you think of this woman? What was she like?

The children's reactions to this painting are wonderful and worth recording. They are usually very accurate.

"She has a pointy, witchy nose."

"She looks like a show off."

"She thinks she's so great."

Help the older children to translate these sort of comments into adjectives: haughty, spoiled, snobby, unfriendly, conceited, imperious, disdainful.

Do you like her?

Usually a unanimous "no."

Tell the children that their reaction is similar to those who first viewed this painting by John Singer Sargent when he exhibited it in the Paris Salon of 1884.

The painting was hung without the name of its subject and thus was called Madame X. (Madame means Mrs.) The public and most French art critics did not like it either.

Why were people shocked?

Her dress is too low cut.

In the original painting, her right strap was shown falling off her shoulder. See if the children can find how it has been repainted.

What about her skin?

"It looks lavender."

"It looks fake, as if it had been painted on."

"She looks like a ghost."

In fact, the subject used heavy theatrical makeup which gave her skin a lavender tone.

The woman's name was Madame Pierre Gautreau. She had been born in America (New Orleans) of Italian ancestry and had moved to Paris with her mother and later married a Parisian banker. She was a well known beauty of her time (i.e., over one hundred years ago). Sargent had probably met her in 1881 and was determined to paint her.

How old do you think she is here?

Twenty-five

Can you see anything in her hair? What shape is it?

A headdress, shaped like a crescent moon.

This is a symbol of Diana, goddess of the hunt in Greek mythology.

Why was an American artist in Paris painting portraits?

To earn money!

Like Benjamin West, John Copley, Gilbert Stuart and other American artists, he found more work and a more cultivated life style in Europe. In Sargent's case, he was born in Italy and although his parents were American he spent most of his life in Europe. He did travel to the United States frequently and for twenty-five years worked on the murals which decorate the Boston Public Library.

Do you think people wanted their portraits painted by Sargent after the scandal of Madame X?

First explain to smaller children what the word "scandal" means. Then let the students offer their own arguments as to whether people would employ Sargent. Tell them that Sargent actually lost out on commissions (money paid for making a work of art) because of the scandal. He eventually moved to London. There he reestablished himself as a portraitist of fashionable people. He tended to flatter his rich and important clients and make them look better than in real life.

Let's look at how the elements of art are used in this painting.

What are the main tones or colors of the painting?

Dark browns of the table, floor and background.

Black of dress

White of skin

Do the colors complement or contrast one another? For younger children ask, do the colors look mostly the same or are they opposites of one another?

Strong contrasts of light and dark.

Tell older children that Sargent was influenced by the seventeenth century Spanish painter, Velasquez, who used dark, rich tones.

What about Sargent's use of lines? Can you see a clear outline?

Yes. Follow the line of her face and body for the children with your finger.

Many of those who did praise the painting at the time mentioned its striking outline and curvy lines.

Does Sargent use mostly horizontal or vertical lines?

Verticals.

Have the children point these out: table legs, body, straps, neck, arms.

Why can we see the outline of Madame X's head so clearly?

Because she is turned sideways.

Who remembers what the side view of a face is called?

Profile

What is unusual or different about Madame X's profile?

She had a long, pointed nose.

Which way can you tell more about a person's personality, when shown full face or in profile?

Usually full face because we can see the eyes and the expression on the face better. But in Madame X's case the profile view seems to emphasize her haughty beauty.

How has Sargent posed her?

She's standing, leaning with one arm on the table, turned away from the viewer. All this gives her a superior, "I'm better than you" attitude.

We know Sargent worked very hard on this painting. He made many sketches of Madame X in different poses (seated or kneeling on a sofa, seated with papers in her lap, and drinking a toast). He also reworked (painted over) the finished painting a number of times. He wrote down how one day he was quite dissatisfied with the painting and dashed a tone of rose over the former gloomy background. He turned the picture upside down, went to the other end of the studio and looked at it under his arm and decided this was a great improvement! Later in his life he came to believe that "I suppose it's the best thing I have done." He sold it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1916 for \$2,000.

A nice way to end this class is to play music contemporary with the three portraits in order to give the students an understanding of how culture changes over time. First play a selection from Pratt's contemporary, the Austrian composer, Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809). A fun choice might be his Clock Symphony which he wrote in London in 1794. Then play an excerpt from the Enigma Variations (1899) by the English composer, Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934). Ask the students which music do they think was written at the time of Matthew Pratt (the Haydn) and which could Sargent himself have heard (the Elgar).

## FIFTH CLASS - LANDSCAPE

### I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

Let's review the types of painting we have studied so far this year.

A painting of a person is called?

A portrait

A painting of an important event that took place in the past is called?

An historic painting

A painting of a scene from everyday life is called?

A genre painting

A painting of an arrangement of inanimate objects such as fruit or vegetables is called?

A still-life

What would the painting of the countryside - the land, the trees, and the sky be called?

A landscape

Landscape paintings were rather late in gaining acceptance in America.

Do you know which type of painting was considered most important in colonial America?

Portraiture

Do you remember which type of painting was considered most important in Europe at the Royal Academies in the 17th and 18th centuries?

Historic painting

It wasn't until the 1800's that landscape painting became popular in America. Can you guess why?

In the early colonial period was our land settled and civilized?  
No. It was wild and uncultivated. Most of our land was uncharted frontier.

From where did the Indian attacks originate?  
The unsettled land.

The landscape was not considered an inspiration for art. It was viewed instead as a threat - an element of nature to be feared or to tame.

It wasn't until the last of the 18th century (1790's), after winning our independence from England and becoming a separate nation, that a sense of national pride caused artists to look admiringly on

our American landscape as a fresh source for art.

## II. EYE EXERCISES

Before we begin, let's get those eyes refreshed and ready for looking. (See activities section, page 31, for a description of the eye exercises.)



B. The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak

Artist - Albert Bierstadt- American (1830-1902)

Year Painted - 1863

Medium - Oil on canvas

Props - slide of the painting

Activity - Search and Find

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

As interest in New England and Hudson River landscapes began to wain, westward expansion opened new panoramas for American painters. Interest in western territories was intensified by the concept of "Manifest Destiny", the belief that divine will intervened on behalf of the national interest to push America's borders to the Pacific.

All of this worked to the advantage of Albert Bierstadt, an artist of the West who achieved great popularity during the third quarter of the century. Bierstadt maintained the same dominance in Western landscape painting that Coles had established in the East.

Bierstadt was born near Düsseldorf, Germany but settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts with his family at the age of one. By 1850 he was teaching monochromatic painting to the citizens of New Bedford. He was determined to return to his native Düsseldorf which was considered to have one of the prestigious art schools of the day. While there he received training from his American colleagues, Emanuel Leutze and Worthington Whittredge. After travelling through Europe he returned to the United States in 1857 to see how the American frontier might compare. He joined a wagon train expedition in 1859 led by Colonel Frederick W. Lander to survey and improve the existing overland route from Fort Laramie, Wyoming to the Pacific coast.

Bierstadt made his customary sketches of the surroundings and in addition made many stereoscopic views (an early photographic process) of the wilderness and Indian inhabitants. Upon his return East, he went to live in New York, where he opened a studio in the popular Tenth Street Studio Building. Here he began his first series of Western landscape paintings, including The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak. All of these compositions were unified with dramatic lighting and often combined the German stylistic conventions with spatial relationships he observed in photography. It has been said that his Rocky Mountains actually look more like the German Alps.

By 1864 Bierstadt's dramatic visions of the American West had captured the imagination of the American public. This success was due in part to The Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak, which caused a sensation when it was exhibited in New York at the 1864 Sanitary Fair. It was one of the focal points of the

1864 exhibition and increased the public demand for similar subjects. Bierstadt gained financial success and was soon hailed as America's pre-eminent landscape painter. Later in his career public taste changed in favor of the "new impressionist style". In fact, by 1889 his work had fallen so out of favor that his painting, The Last of the Buffalo, was rejected by the selection committee of the Exposition Universelle on the grounds that it was out of keeping with the French influence on American painting. The subject of his work, however, did prompt the first official census of America's remaining buffalo and their subsequent protection.

#### DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

Provide older students with a time line:

- 1849 - California gold rush
- 1869 - Transcontinental railroad completed  
(Discuss the concept of "Manifest Destiny".)
- 1890 - Marks the end of the continuous frontier

All of America was captivated by the idea of Westward expansion. Albert Bierstadt represented one of a new breed of explorer-painters who actually travelled West by wagon train to the Nebraska territory to make first hand studies of the American frontier. (It would be helpful to show an early territorial map of the United States to the students.) In 1859 he accompanied a government survey expedition headed by Frederick W. Lander. By summer he had reached the Wind River Range of the Rockies in what is now Wyoming. This painting was a result of this expedition.

What kind of a painting is this - a portrait or a landscape?  
A landscape

Even though there are many human figures in the painting, what dominates or takes up the most space?  
The Mountains -- hence the title Rocky Mountains, Lander's Peak. (Actually the peak is Fremont's Peak.)

Bierstadt appears to have divided his canvas into sections.

Which part is closest to us?  
The bottom of the painting.  
What is the art term for this?  
Foreground.

How does Bierstadt make it appear closer?  
Much more detail  
Larger figures.

This is actually an encampment of Shoshone Indians along the Green

River at the base of the Wind River Mountains.

If you were going to walk into the painting where would you enter?

Near the left bottom corner.

What is the second tier or middle ground of the painting?

The waterfall, its reflection in the river and the second cluster of Indian tepees. (Notice how this area is in the middle of the canvas.)

How does Bierstadt emphasize this middle ground of the painting?

With light.

Notice the diagonal path of light across the mountain, the waterfall and the Indian camp.

How do the sizes of the figures and tepees compare to the foreground?

(Have a ruler at hand to illustrate the difference in scale.)

Which part of the painting is farthest from us?

The mountains and sky.

What do we call the most distant part of a painting?

The background.

How does Bierstadt indicate the distance of the mountains?

We see the haze of the atmosphere.

There is much less detail.

Snow indicates the altitude of the peaks.

The background is in the upper third of the canvas.

What are the strongest lines and shapes of the composition?

Horizontals:

River bank in the foreground.

Band of light and water across the middle ground.

Diagonals:

They appear to criss cross the entire canvas.

The path of light across the middle ground.

The slopes of the mountains.

Even the line of horses.

Shapes:

Many triangular teepees and mountain peaks

Using your eyes to look very closely, let's try a "hunting game".  
Who can find the woodchuck or prairie dog sitting up on his hind legs?

Do you see the skull of a steer?

A bear brought in from the hunt?

A papoose?

At least eight dogs?

So that all the younger students have a chance to participate, ask if they can point out other interesting objects or aspects of Indian life.

Mention that Bierstadt not only made colored sketches during this trip, but he also used a very early form of photography to capture the details.

What seems to have happened in this scene?

The braves have just returned from a hunting trip .

What kind of a mood does the painting project?

calm and tranquil

The exhibition of this painting in 1864 at the New York Sanitary Fair made Bierstadt's reputation. The painting hung just as it does now at the Metropolitan - across from Church's Heart of the Andes. In another area of the fair authentic wigwams were set up before a painted backdrop, while Indians danced, whooped, and demonstrated native crafts.

C. Heart of the Andes

Artist - Frederic Edwin Church - American (1826-1900)

Year Painted - 1859

Medium - oil on canvas

Props - Poster of the painting and a magnifying glass,  
and index cards

Activity - Telescope

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (for the teacher)

Frederic Edwin Church was the son of a wealthy Hartford, Connecticut businessman. His early training in painting came from local artists, but in 1844, thanks to the influence of art patron Daniel Wadsworth, Church became the first and only official pupil of Thomas Cole, the renowned Hudson River School painter. After two years in the Hudson River School method, Church moved to New York and set up his own studio in the Art-Union building. He became quite involved in the artistic community there and by 22 was one of the youngest ever elected to the National Academy of Design.

For the next few years Church continued to emulate Cole by painting large romantic landscapes of the Hudson River and New England scenery. Gradually he developed his own personal style. A contemporary work by John Ruskin titled Modern Painters (1843) influenced Church to paint the details of nature, especially the effects of weather and atmosphere in the manner of J.M.W. Turner. Church was also inspired by the scientific writings of Alexander von Humboldt, a German naturalist and explorer, and began seeking a more scientific approach to nature.

In April of 1853 accompanied by Cyrus Field, who later earned international recognition for his part in the transatlantic cable project, Church became the first American artist to explore South America. He retraced Humboldt's route of 1802 from Colombia to Ecuador working outdoors on color sketches and small studies which he later incorporated into large canvases in his New York studio. He spent two years of intensive work recording his impressions of the tropical landscape, placing powerful emphasis on light and shadow. The resulting canvases were met with universal praise and the demand for similar subjects prompted Church's second expedition in 1857. He spent nine weeks exploring Ecuador. The numerous oil sketches and pencil drawings made during this trip indicate that he had already begun to formulate the composition for Heart of the Andes, his great summary of the tropics.

In 1859 when he exhibited this painting in his Tenth Street studio, it was viewed amid exotic palms and each area of canvas could be closely scrutinized through a magnifying glass. The public was captivated by the work! Twelve to thirteen thousand



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people paid twenty-five cents a piece to file by the canvas each month. According to John Ferguson Weir, this reaction was "phenomenal in the history of single-picture exhibitions" (see Sizer, ed. [1957], p.44).

In 1864 the painting was exhibited in "a position of honor" at the great Metropolitan Fair (or Sanitary Fair of New York) where it hung opposite Albert Bierstadt's Rocky Mountains and with Emanuel Leutze's Washington Crossing the Delaware. Following this exhibition it travelled to London and Edinburgh where it drew international attention to American landscape painting.

Church continued to travel, and in 1867 set off on a year and a half tour of Europe and the Middle East. He frequently exhibited in numerous competitions and his work was continuously reproduced. He also maintained active participation in New York cultural activities. Infact, he became one of the founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

#### DIALOGUE SUGGESTIONS (for classroom presentation)

This painting is by Frederic Edwin Church, the only painter to officially study with Thomas Cole.

Do you remember who Cole was?

Father of the Hudson River School of painters

Church was from Hartford, Connecticut and although he began his career by following in Cole's footsteps, he soon expanded his travels to remote areas of the world. Infact, he was the first American artist to explore South America.

This painting is the result of one of his South American expeditions.

Can you imagine how it must have looked when Church first exhibited it in his New York studio!? The room was darkened, the canvas was illuminated by hidden gas lamps and it was surrounded by tropical dried palms which he brought back from Ecuador.

What kind of impression was Church trying to create?

Dramatic, powerful, exotic, as if we were there?

This kind of theatrics totally captivated the public's attention. Explain that each month 12 -13,000 people paid 25¢ a piece to file past the painting. This was considered a first in the history of single picture exhibitions.

What is the subject of this painting? What type of painting is it?

A landscape

Tell the students the title, Heart of the Andes, and explain that the Andes are a mountain chain in South America. Locate them on a map.

This scene represents an elevated valley in the Andes about 6,000 feet above sea level. Yet if you had visited Ecuador you would not have been able to find this exact view. That is because Heart of the Andes is a composite of many views from that region. Explain that wherever Church travelled he made scores of oil sketches and detailed studies from nature. Then when he returned to his studio he worked these studies into full scale paintings. For example, the trees on the right were initially palms but Church changed them to the sturdier New England variety.

What element of art is strongest in this painting?  
light

As you scan the painting, let's see how many areas you can find that are illumined with light?

When this work was exhibited at the large Metropolitan Fair in 1864 cardboard tubes were distributed to viewers so they could isolate various details of the painting..

Let's look closely through our own tubes to see the areas Church has emphasized with light. (see telescope activity)

Beginning at the left of the canvas ask the students to focus first on the tree.

Do you see anything unusual?

Church has carved the date of the painting on the trunk.

Can you find the people in the painting?

At the cross?

At the mission?

How does their size compare to the total painting?

They are minute. How does the landscape appear by comparison?

Awesome, enormous.

Tell the students that when Church exhibited this painting at his studio he had a magnifying glass available through which visitors could examine the details. Let the students take turns with the magnifying glass.

Point out the patches of flowers, trees with lichen growing on the bark, birds, and ask the students what other details of nature they can discover?

Explain that Church was a special breed of painter known as an artist-naturalist. He studied nature and painted it in such detail that natural scientists could actually recognize the botanical specimens from his work.

Ask the students what areas of the painting are in the foreground? Middle ground? background?

Where would you enter this painting?

One student suggested the path on the left foreground, leading toward the mission.

Actually, it is difficult to say. We have many points of view thanks to the way Church emphasized different areas with light.

What time of day has the artist represented?

Two hours before sunset.

This work was considered Church's masterpiece and received worldwide acclaim. Church maintained a prominent position in New York cultural affairs and was, in fact, one of the founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Another activity that is effective with the study of landscape is sketching. Tell the students that you are going to ask them each to be early American landscape artists. If possible, it is nice for them to go out of doors with a sketch pad the way Church, Cole, and Bierstadt had done.

Guide their work with questions:

Where will you put the foreground and background on your page?

How will you make part of your landscape appear closer?

Bigger- more details

How will you make areas appear farther away?

Smaller- less detail

How do you want to organize your picture?

What is most important? What will take up the most space?

What colors and details do you want to include?

## SIXTH CLASS - SCULPTURE

## I. Introduction:

Because sculpture and painting are very different art forms we begin this class by LOOKING at a variety of sculptures of different materials and discussing their special properties.

Ask the students if they know the term for this kind of artwork?

The response is usually "statue".

Introduce the term SCULPTURE and ask in what ways sculpture differs from the paintings we have been studying ?

Usual responses:

Sculpture is not flat.

Sculpture has depth.

Sculpture has 3 dimensions.

Can you walk around a painting and see artwork from all sides ?  
(Rodin once said that a sculpture is a painting with 1,000 facets.)

What is one thing that a painting has which a sculpture does not need?

A frame.

What else is different ?

Sculptures are made of different materials.

The tools used to make them are different.

Display pieces of stone, or wood, metal, and clay sculpture, plus a constructed work (i.e. tinker toys or legos) to illustrate the three primary processes:

Cut away -- the carving or chiselling process used with wood and stone sculptures.

Build - up -- the process used with clay and wax sculptures.

Construct -- the assembly of parts often used with metal or plastic sculptures.

Have tools available for each and demonstrate how they are used.

Now point out the ways in which sculpture and painting are alike.

Does sculpture have texture ?

Let students touch sculptures of different materials to feel natural grain as well as textured surfaces applied by the artist.

Does sculpture have shape ?

Suggest that the students walk around the sculpture viewing it from different angles.

Does sculpture have light ?

Point out reflections of light on metal, glass and polished marble.

Does sculpture have color ?

Yes - color inherent in the materials and sometimes applied colors.

All of the same elements used by an artist in painting are also found in sculpture.

#### CLAY ACTIVITY:

Clay is a wonderful tool to communicate the difficult concepts of relief sculpture and positive/negative space.

#### RELIEF SCULPTURE:

Give each student a clay board and a small handful of clay to flatten like a pancake.

Explain that each student is a SCULPTOR and shall SCULPT or create a face out of the clay.

Have different clay tools available for gouging eyes or creating hair texture such as toothpicks, pencils, etc..

Demonstrate the "building-up" process with small bits of clay to make the nose, cheeks, chin, mouth...

As the students exhibit their wonderful variety of faces ask if these works of art have three-dimensions ?

Yes.

But instead of being a sculpture that we can walk around and view from all angles, there is one surface or side that is flat and unfinished.

This kind of sculpture is called:

RELIEF SCULPTURE

The sculpture we can walk around and see from all angles is:  
SCULPTURE IN THE ROUND

Who can name a common relief sculpture that we carry in our pockets every day?

Coins.

#### POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE SPACE:

Starting with a round ball of clay ask the students what shape you are holding.

Sphere.

One definition of sculpture is:  
A shape in space.



Make a hole through the center of the sphere.

Now what shape do we have ?

A doughnut.

Would this be a doughnut shape without the hole in the center ?  
No.

Therefore the hole is important to the shape of this sculpture.

This hole or empty space is called NEGATIVE SPACE.

The solid part of the doughnut or filled space is called POSITIVE SPACE.

Standing with your feet slightly apart and your hands on your hips ask the students to pretend you are a piece of sculpture and to identify the positive and negative spaces.

#### SUPPORTING AND POSITIONING SCULPTURE:

Have the students make a snake with their clay and hold it in the air.

Is this a sculpture in the round ?  
Yes.

Now ask them to stand the snake on its tail.

As the snakes collapse, it is demonstrated that the proper support and positioning of a sculpture is important.

How can you arrange this snake in an interesting way ?  
Usually a wide variety of poses ensue...some using supports, some that are coiled.

Looking at sculpture from a two-dimensional reproduction is less than satisfactory, but we do discuss at least one reproduction of sculpture from the Metropolitan Museum of Art with the students, just to familiarize them with what they will see during the museum tour.

Be sure to show slides which view the sculpture from different angles.

#### II. EYE EXERCISE. (See Activities Section)