Grade One
Session One – Exploration of Different Genres in Art

First Grade Overview:

The first grade program will explore various genres in art history. Building upon the concept of portraiture examined in kindergarten, we will begin the first session by comparing traditional and contemporary examples of portraiture as an artistic genre. In subsequent sessions, we will examine the genres of landscape and still life through paintings and prints that embrace cultural, international and gender differences. In the fourth and final session, the subject will return to the idea of portraiture looking ahead to the thematic concepts of rituals and traditions examined in the second grade program.

To begin the session, you may briefly recall some of the works of art studied during the previous year and/or the concepts of portraiture. While not a requirement, it provides a nice introduction for the start of the program and gets the children back in the practice of looking at art.

Grade One
Session One
First Image

(NOTE: DO NOT SHARE IMAGE TITLE OR SOURCE YET)

Jacques-Louis David, **Napoleon Crossing the Alps**, 1801
Oil on canvas, 102 x 87 inches
Collection: Chateau du Malmaison, Rueil Malmaison, France (Napoleon and his wife Josephine lived here; it is now a museum)

Project the image onto the SMARTboard. Remind the students how a portrait sometimes reveals how an artist sees a person and is often a likeness of an individual. A portrait can also depict how someone would like to be seen. Both wealthy and important people often have portraits painted of them in a certain environment or centered around an important event. Artists often create large-scale (BIG) works to show important events or people that are important. A painting evokes more emotion when its size and figures are exaggerated.

What do you see in this image? What do you notice? What is going on in this picture? Make sure they support their comments with specific details from the composition.

You may now reveal the title of the painting and the artist though these details alone may not have much significance to the students. Explain to the children that Napoleon had recently become the leader of France this painting commemorates one his battles.

Art is a very useful tool in influencing people's ideas and perceptions about things and events. Napoleon is shown crossing the Alps in terrible weather conditions but with great strength. In reality the crossing had been made in fine weather and Napoleon rode a mule across the mountains and was led across by a guide a few days after the troops had crossed!

Helpful hints/discussion points:

Ask the students why the artist might have made these changes? How has the artist shown the ruler of France? What is he wearing?

Napoleon is shown pointing towards the summit of the mountain. It seems everything is pointing upward – Napoleon's hand, the mountains, the horse. What might this say about Napoleon?

It is also important to demonstrate the size of the painting (102 x 87 inches). Perhaps you can measure out the scale with a tape measure or use a comparable (like the size of the chalkboard) as an example. You may also tie in the elements of art and question how the artist uses such artistic techniques as line, color and shape to emphasize particular things and to tell us about Napoleon.

Both Napoleon and his horse take up much of the composition. Why might the artist have chosen to make them so big?

The children may notice his name inscribed on the rocks at the bottom of the painting, along with two other names (Karolus Magnus – i.e., Charlemagne and Hannibal – these are two of the greatest military rulers of all time!)

NOTES FOR PARENTS/FACILITATORS ONLY

About the Artist/Artwork

Background
Completed in four months, from October 1800 to January 1801, it signals the dawning of a new century. After a decade of terror and uncertainty following the Revolution, France was emerging as a great power once more. At the heart of this revival, of course, was General Napoleon Bonaparte who, in 1799, had staged an uprising against the revolutionary government (a coup d'état), installed himself as First Consul, and effectively become the most powerful man in France (a few years later he will declare himself emperor).

In May 1800 Napoleon led his troops across the Alps in a military campaign against the Austrians that ended in their defeat in June at the Battle of Marengo. It is this achievement the painting commemorates. The portrait was commissioned by Charles IV, then King of Spain and was to be hung in a gallery of paintings of other great military leaders housed in the Royal Palace in Madrid.

Famously, Napoleon offered David little support in executing the painting. Refusing to sit for it, he argued that: "Nobody knows if the portraits of the great men resemble them, it is enough that their genius lives there." All David had to work from was an earlier portrait and the uniform Napoleon had worn at Marengo. One of David's sons stood in for him, dressed up in the uniform and perched on top of a ladder. This probably accounts for the youthful physique of the figure.

Napoleon, however, was not entirely divorced from the process. He was the one who settled on the idea of an equestrian portrait: "calme sur un cheval fougueux" (calm on a fiery horse), were his instructions to the artist. And David duly obliged. What better way, after all, to demonstrate Napoleon's ability to wield power with sound judgment and composure. The fact that Napoleon did not actually lead his troops over the Alps but followed a couple of days after them, travelling on a narrow path on the back of a mule is not the point.

Like many equestrian portraits, a genre favored by royalty, *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* is a portrait of authority. Napoleon is pictured astride a rearing Arabian stallion. Before him to his left we see a mountain, while in the background, largely obscured by rocks, French troops haul along a large canon and further down the line fly the tricolore (the national flag of France).

Bonaparte's gloveless right hand points up towards the invisible summit, more for us to follow, one feels, than the soldiers in the distance. Raised arms are often found in David's work, though this one is physically connected with the setting, echoing the slope of the mountain ridge. Together with the line of his cloak, these create a series of diagonals that

are counterbalanced by the clouds to the right. The overall effect is to stabilize the figure of Napoleon.

The landscape is treated as a setting for the hero, not as a subject in itself. On the rock to the bottom left (below), for instance, the name of Napoleon is carved beside the names of Hannibal and Charlemagne—two other notable figures who led their troops over the Alps. David uses the landscape then to reinforce what he wishes to convey about his subject. In terms of scale alone, Napoleon and his horse dominate the pictorial plane. Taking the point further, if with that outstretched arm and billowing cloak, his body seems to echo the landscape, the reverse might equally hold true, that it is the landscape that echoes him, and is ultimately mastered by his will. David seems to suggest that this man, whose achievements will be celebrated for centuries to come, can do just about anything.

Napoleon was obviously flattered. He ordered three more versions to be painted; a fifth was also produced which stayed in David's studio. Reflecting the breadth of Napoleon's European conquests, one was hung in Madrid, two in Paris, and one in Milan.

In 1801, David was awarded the position of Premier Peintre (First Painter) to Napoleon. One may wonder how he felt about this new role. Certainly David idolized the man. *Voilà mon héros* (here is my hero), he said to his students when the general first visited him in his studio. And perhaps it was a source of pride for him to help secure Napoleon's public image. Significantly, he signs and dates *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* on the horse's breastplate, a device used to hold the saddle firmly in place. The breastplate also serves as a constraint, though, and given his later huge commissions, such as *The Coronation of Napoleon*, one wonders if David's creative genius was inhibited as a result of his hero's patronage. *

* https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/neo-classicism/a/david-napoleon-crossing-the-alps

Grade One
Session One
Second Image

Kehinde Wiley, **Napoleon Leading the Army Over the Alps**, 2005
Oil on canvas, 108 x 108 inches
Collection: Brooklyn Museum, New York City

Project the second image on the Smartboard. Again ask the students to take a few moments to just look at the image and think about what they see.

Before you begin the discussion, the students are going to do a compare and contrast activity in groups. Divide the room in half with one volunteer leading half the class and the second parent leading the other. Progress to the next slide with the two paintings shown side by side.

One group of students will come up with at least three differences (though you may probably have a lot more) and the other group with three similarities that they noticed between this image and the David portrait of Napoleon. The children should be seated in small work groups and the volunteer can write down the responses for each group to share when the class reconvenes. (NOTE: please let the teacher know ahead of time that you will need to divide the class in two for a brief activity, as he/she may want to divide the groups him/herself).

Once you reconvene as a whole class, the volunteers can present the similarities/differences. You may further the conversation by asking questions (many of these may have already come up in the compare/contrast conversation)/

Does the sitter look like someone you might see today? Or someone from a long time ago? How can you tell?

You may now reveal the artist, title and date of the painting, as well as the size (it is roughly the same size as David's portrait of Napoleon). Explain to the children that this artist asked people he would see on the street to serve as his models and substitute them for the powerful historical figures depicted in famous paintings that are in some of the great museums of the world.

Why might have Kehinde Wiley chosen to do this?

What happens to these ordinary people when they are painted like these powerful rulers from the past?

How does this painting make you feel?

NOTES FOR PARENTS/FACILITATORS ONLY

About the Artist/Artwork

Historically, the role of portraiture has been not only to create a likeness but also to communicate ideas about the subject's status, wealth, and power. During the eighteenth century, for example, major patrons from the church and the aristocracy commissioned portraits in part to signify their importance in society. This portrait imitates the posture of the figure of Napoleon Bonaparte in Jacques-Louis David's painting *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Grand-Saint-Bernard*. Wiley transforms the traditional equestrian portrait by substituting an anonymous young African American man dressed in contemporary clothing for the figure of Napoleon. The artist thereby confronts and critiques historical traditions that do not acknowledge Black cultural experience. Wiley presents a new brand

of portraiture that redefines and affirms Black identity and simultaneously questions the history of Western painting.

(Excerpted from:
http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/169803/Napoleon_Leading_the_Army_over_the_Alps)

By applying the visual vocabulary and conventions of glorification, wealth, prestige, and history to subject matter drawn from the urban fabric, L.A. born and NY-based artist Kehinde Wiley engages the signs and visual rhetoric of the heroic, powerful, majestic, and sublime in his representation of urban black and brown men found throughout the world. Wiley's larger than life figures disturb and interrupt tropes of portrait painting, often blurring the boundaries between traditional and contemporary modes of representation and the critical portrayal of masculinity and physicality as it pertains to the view of black and brown young men.

Initially, Wiley's portraits were based on photographs taken of young men found on the streets of Harlem. As his practice grew, his eye led him toward an international view, including models found in urban landscapes throughout the world – such as Senegal, Dakar and Rio de Janeiro, among others – accumulating to a vast body of work called, "The World Stage." The models, dressed in their everyday clothing--most of which are based on the notion of far-reaching Western ideals of style--are asked to assume poses found in paintings or sculptures representative of the history of their surroundings. This juxtaposition of the "old" inherited by the "new" – who often have no visual inheritance of which to speak – immediately provides a discourse that is at once visceral and cerebral in scope.

http://www.skny.com/artists/kehinde-wiley

1st Grade – Session 1

Project: Self-Portrait and Linear Landscape

Materials:

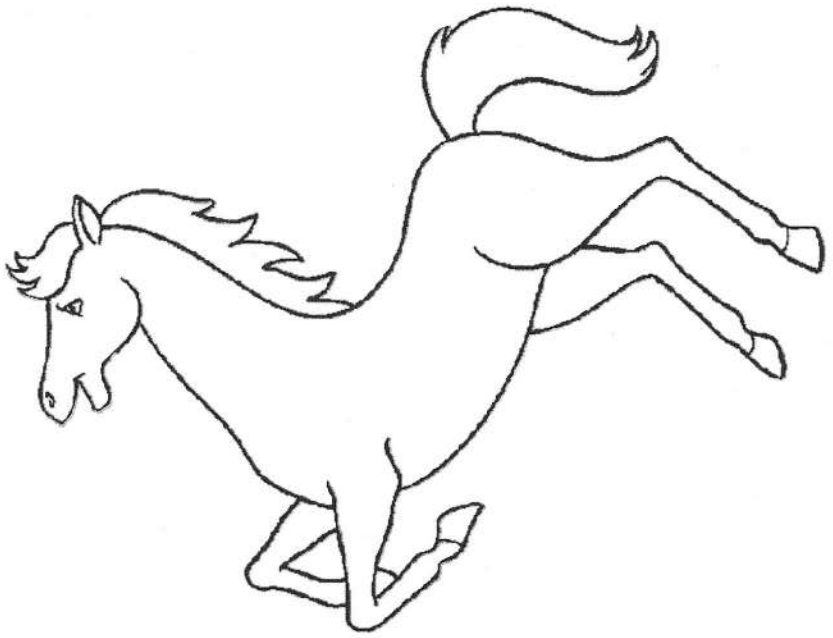
Paper with a horse image (see following page and make copies for each student)

Crayons, markers or colored pencils

Directions:

Have the children draw a self-portrait astride a horse incorporating a special symbol that tells a story about who they are. The symbol can be something that represents a favorite hobby, activity or talent or something else special that they would like people to know about themselves.

Also, have the children create and decorate the background of their self-portraits using lines and/or patterns. For example, the children may incorporate vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines to construct a landscape, like David, or they can use lines in a repetitive pattern to create a wallpaper-like effect, like Wiley, or both.



Grade One
Session Two
Image One

(NOTE: DO NOT SHARE IMAGE TITLE OR SOURCE YET)

Katsushika Hokusai, **The Great Wave** (from the series, "Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji")
c. 1830-1832
Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper
10 1/8 x 14 15/16 inches
Collection: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Project the image onto the SMARTboard. Allow the students to look for a minute or two then you can begin the dialogue.

Some helpful questions:
What do you see going on in this artwork?
How does this image make you feel?

Before turning attention to the artist's technique, you may reveal the name, title and date of the work (date relevance might be questionable due to the students' ages, however it's significant in that Hokusai's work preceded and greatly influenced Van Gogh's work – next image). You may also indicate that the mountain in the background is Mt. Fuji, the

tallest mountain in Japan. A fun fact is that Hokusai didn't create this, his most famous work of art, until he was in his 70's.

The students may have noticed that the subject of this painting is much different from the last session, as the focus is not on people but rather nature. Works of art that focus on nature are called landscapes. Paintings of nature can also focus on the sea, as Hokusai did here. This type of subject is called a "seascape". You may introduce three important words that relate to seascape and landscape paintings: foreground, middle ground and background.

Foreground: the part of the scene that is nearest to and in front of you, the viewer

Background: the part of a scene that appears most distant from you, the viewer

Middle ground: the area between the foreground and the background

Have the students consider the following:

How has this artist chosen to show the sea in this work of art?
What kind of lines does the artist use to create this print?
Why do you think the artist may have put the wave in the foreground (in the front) and the "tallest mountain in Japan" in the background?
What colors do you see?
The wave is so big and the fisherman are so small. Why might Hokusai have painted them in this way? (Nature is more powerful than we are).

Continue to conversation on the massive cresting wave in the foreground. The ends of the wave almost look like fingers getting ready to crash down on the three fishing boats below. The mountain, made tiny by the use of perspective, appears as if it too will be swallowed up by the wave. The spray from top of the crashing wave looks like snow falling on the mountain.

The writing in the upper left corner is where Hokusai signed his name (outside the box) and titled it (the text inside the box).

You may elaborate on the process by which this print was created:

This is a print made by a woodcut technique. The artist cuts into a block of wood with a sharp hand tool and he/she forms an image. Next, ink is applied with a roller onto the remaining wood surface. Finally, the painted wood block is pressed face down onto the paper. What makes this different from a painting is that many prints can be made from one woodcut, much like the same photograph can be printed again and again from the same negative or digital file. Before cameras were invented, printmaking was a very useful way to make the same picture many times and enable lots of people to see it. In fact, not only does the Met own one, but this print is also in the collections of museums in Chicago, Los Angeles, London and Australia. It is believed that there were between

5,000 - 8,000 prints made of this series. This concept – printmaking as a means of enabling many, many people to see the works of art before there were cameras…or computers! – is a nice segue into the next work of art.

NOTES FOR PARENTS/FACILIATORS ONLY

About the Artist/Artwork

Katsushika Hokusai was a Japanese artist and printmaker of the Edo period. Born in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1760, Hokusai is best known as the creator of the woodblock print series, "Thirty-six View of Mount Fuji" which includes the iconic and internationally recognized print, "The Great Wave off Kanagawa," created during the 1820's. Hokusai created the "Thirty Six Views…" both as a response to a domestic travel boom and as part of a personal obsession with Mount Fuji. It was this series, specifically "The Great Wave" print and "Fuji in Clear Weather" that secured Hokusai's fame both within Japan and overseas. As historian Richard Lane concludes, "Indeed if there is one work that made Hokusai's name, both in Japan and abroad, it must be this monumental print series…" While Hokusai's work prior to this series is certainly important, it was not until this series that he gained broad recognition and left a lasting impact on the art world. It was also "The Great Wave" print that initially received, and continues to receive, acclaim and popularity in the Western world.
(Excerpted from http://www.katsushikahokusai.org/)

Beginning in 1640, Japan was largely closed off to the world and only limited interaction with China and Holland was allowed. This changed in the 1850s, when trade was forced open by American naval commodore, Matthew C. Perry. After this, there was a flood of Japanese visual culture into the West. At the 1867 International Exposition in Paris, Hokusai's work was on view at the Japanese pavilion. This was the first introduction of Japanese culture to mass audiences in the West, and a craze for collecting art called Japonisme ensued. Additionally, Impressionist artists in Paris, such as Claude Monet, were great fans of Japanese prints. The flattening of space, an interest in atmospheric conditions, and the impermanence of modern city life—all visible in Hokusai's prints—both reaffirmed their own artistic interests and inspired many future works of art.

(Excerpted from https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-asia/art-japan/edo-period/a/hokusai-under-the-wave-off-kanagawa-the-great-wave)

First Grade
Session Two
Image Two

Vincent Van Gogh, **The Starry Night**, 1889
Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 ¼ inches
Collection: Museum of Modern Art, New York

Put the image onto the SMARTboard. Ask the students to take a few moments to look at the image and think about what they see. What do you notice in this work of art? What is happening here? As the students speak, you may point to their observations. Some students may recognize the painting immediately and you may disclose the artist's name and title of the painting now.

Just as Hokusai's "Great Wave" was a seascape, Van Gogh's "The Starry Night" could be considered both a landscape or a cityscape painting. A landscape painting is a picture of natural scenery and a cityscape focuses on a city scene. Here we have both.

Artists paint outdoors at different times of the day, during different seasons and in many different locations around the world. Van Gogh painted this scene in the South of France in the town of St. Remy.

How has Van Gogh chosen to show the outdoors in this painting?
What type of mood has the artist created?

How does it make you feel?
What colors has the artist used to create the mood?
What type of lines has he used?
What is going on in the bottom half of the picture?

See if the students can count the number of stars they see. Discuss the brush strokes with the students. Brush strokes refer to the use of paint, specifically the amount and speed with which an artist applies it to the canvas. Ask the students to show you with their hands the manner in which the artist put the paint on the canvas. Discuss how the landscape is full of movement, energy and light. The swirling sky keeps the viewer's eye moving from one star to the next and also to other points of interest within the painting (the church steeple, the large cypress tree…)

Now you may refer back to the "Great Wave" and compare the "wave" to the sky in Van Gogh's painting. You can explain to the students that Van Gogh and many of his artist friends were great admirers of the Japanese printmakers, especially Hokusai who was among the most famous, and collected many of their prints themselves.

NOTES FOR PARENTS/FACILITATORS ONLY

About the Artist/Artwork

Largely self-taught, van Gogh produced more than 2,000 oil painting, watercolors, drawings and sketches, which became in demand only after his death.

It was nature, and the people living closely to it, that first stirred van Gogh's artistic inclinations. Landscapes remained a popular subject in late-nineteenth-century art. Driven in part by their dissatisfaction with the modern city, many artists sought out places resembling earthly paradises, where they could observe nature firsthand, feeding its psychological and spiritual resonances into their work. Van Gogh was particularly taken with the peasants he saw working the countryside; his early compositions featured portraits of Dutch peasants and rural landscapes, rendered in dark, moody tones.

In 1886, van Gogh moved to Paris, where he encountered the works of the Impressionists and Neo-Impressionists, and the Pointillist compositions of Georges Seurat. Inspired by these artists' harmonious matching of colors, shorter brushstrokes, and liberal use of paint, he brightened his own palette and loosened his brushwork, emphasizing the physical application of paint on the canvas. The style he developed in Paris and carried through to the end of his life became known as Post-Impressionism, a term encompassing works made by artists unified by their interest in expressing their emotional and psychological responses to the world through bold colors and expressive, often symbolic images.

Observation and Imagination in *The Starry Night* (1889)

"This morning I saw the countryside from my window a long time before sunrise, with nothing but the morning star, which looked very big," wrote van Gogh to his brother Theo, describing his inspiration for one of his best-known paintings, *The Starry Night* (1889). The window to which he refers was in the Saint-Paul asylum in Saint-Rémy, in southern France, where he sought respite from his emotional suffering while continuing to make art.

This mid-scale, oil-on-canvas painting is dominated by a moon- and star-filled night sky. It takes up three-quarters of the picture plane and appears turbulent, even agitated, with intensely swirling patterns that seem to roll across its surface like waves. It is pocked with bright orbs—including the crescent moon to the far right, and Venus, the morning star, to the left of center—surrounded by concentric circles of radiant white and yellow light.

Beneath this expressive sky sits a hushed village of humble houses surrounding a church, whose steeple rises sharply above the undulating blue-black mountains in the background. A cypress tree sits at the foreground of this night scene. Flame-like, it reaches almost to the top edge of the canvas, serving as a visual link between land and sky. Considered symbolically, the cypress could be seen as a bridge between life, as represented by the earth, and death, as represented by the sky, commonly associated with heaven. Cypresses were also regarded as trees of the graveyard and mourning. "But the sight of the stars always makes me dream," van Gogh once wrote. "Why, I say to myself, should the spots of light in the firmament be less accessible to us than the black spots on the map of France? Just as we take the train to go to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to go to a star."

The Starry Night is based on van Gogh's direct observations as well as his imagination, memories, and emotions. The steeple of the church, for example, resembles those common in his native Holland, not in France. The whirling forms in the sky, on the other hand, match published astronomical observations of clouds of dust and gas known as nebulae. At once balanced and expressive, the composition is structured by his ordered placement of the cypress, steeple, and central nebulae, while his countless short brushstrokes and thickly applied paint set its surface in roiling motion. Such a combination of visual contrasts was generated by an artist who found beauty and interest in the night, which, for him, was "much more alive and richly colored than the day."

(Excerpted from https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/vincent-van-gogh-the-starry-night-1889)