



FRENCH ART
At The
SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM
Guide for Educators




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Introduction to the Guide for Educators

French Art at the Saint Louis Art Museum is a learning resource developed by the University of Missouri-St. Louis, with assistance from the Saint Louis Art Museum and the Consulate of France in Chicago.

This Guide is intended to assist the educator in a course of art history or French as a second language. It contains useful information for introducing students to French art, in a cultural and historical context.

Each page of the Guide includes texts which are found on the website of the Learning Resource, <http://frenchart.umsl.edu>. In that site, you can hear the French texts by clicking on the audiophone icon: 

The texts give a short overview of each work, followed by a comment on **The Historical Moment**, **The Artistic Genre**, and **The Artist** (if he or she is known). In addition, the Guide offers several questions for the educator to ask students, in a verbal discussion or written composition.

Below the small images in the Guide, you will find supplementary information that is not found in the website: the **material of composition** (for example, limestone or oil on canvas), the **dimensions** of the work, and the **accession number** (for example, 3:1935) in the Saint Louis Art Museum. This number allows the educator to find the object easily on the Museum website, www.slam.org/search. Here you will find information on the work's provenance and the Museum gallery in which it is found, if it is on view. The second number (3:1935) corresponds to the date when the work was acquired by the Museum. The page also lists the donors or funds from which the work was purchased. **Before visiting the Museum, the educator should consult the Museum website, to verify whether or not the particular works of interest are on view in the galleries.**

In addition, this Guide offers several **Suggested Activities**, which can be carried out in class, at home, or during a visit to the Museum.

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The Middle Ages



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Anonymous artist, *Reliquary Arm*, c. 1050-1100

Wood with sheet gold
 21 1/2 inches high x 4 1/2 inches wide x 4 1/2 inches deep
 75:1949

This wooden sculpture, covered in gold leaf, has a small empty chamber inside it, which once held a religious relic. The form of this sculpture suggests that the relic was a piece of bone from a saint's arm or hand. The raised fingers of the sculpture make a gesture of blessing.

The Historical Moment

The Catholic faith includes the worship of saints and the objects associated with them. Relics that were preserved from the time when Jesus lived, such as a fragment of wood that was believed to have come from the true Crucifix, had the greatest value. Other relics, however, such as a bone or piece of a saint's clothing, also had great value. Even a piece of cloth that had touched a relic became a relic itself. Every cathedral needed to have an important relic, to attract pilgrims and therefore attract trade for the town and its inhabitants.

The Artistic Genre

A reliquary is an object in which a religious relic is placed. According to the type and size of the relic, the reliquary could be small or large, a box or a sculpture. Reliquaries were found in the chapels of kings and in the treasuries or on the altars of great churches, so they were created by the best artists and decorated with the most precious materials.

Questions

Do the proportions of this hand seem realistic to you? If yes, why would the artist want to make the hand seem alive? If not, what is exaggerated, and why would the artist have made that distortion? Discuss why, for a religious believer, praying in front of a relic would be better than praying without one.

Anonymous artist, *Animal Capital*, first quarter of the 12th century



Limestone

25 inches high x 29 1/4 inches wide x 16 1/8 inches deep

86:1949

This capital was part of a group of architectural fragments, found near the church in the town of La Charité-sur-Loire in Burgundy. It represents stylized animals with cat-like ears, perhaps lions, because of the references to this beast in the Bible. The lion was the symbol of the House of Judah, from which King David was descended. It should be noted, however, that the sculptor of this capital had probably never seen a real lion. The one on the right seems to have a mane, and would therefore be a male, and the one on the left is lacking one, and is therefore a female. The half-moon markings on their skins, however, do not resemble the fur of a lion.

The Historical Moment

In the early 1100s, architectural knowledge had not yet progressed enough to enable the construction of gothic cathedrals. Catholic churches had thick walls and rounded arches, in the style called "romanesque." The church of Notre-Dame (Our Lady) in La Charité-sur-Loire, which was consecrated in 1107, was at that time the second largest church in Europe, after the Cluny Abbey in Paris.

The Artistic Genre

The ceilings of a church nave required many support columns. These columns were of stone, and the top part was called a capital, after the Latin word *caput*, meaning *head*. In the romanesque style, capitals were often sculpted with representations of animals, plants, or geometric symbols. They frequently had symbolic images derived from the Old Testament, in order to emphasize the linkage that was believed to exist between the Old and New Testaments.

Questions

What characteristics are associated with a lion? What connection might exist between these characteristics and the Christian faith? Knowing what a real lion looks like, how would you change the carving of this capital? Make a drawing of your version.

Anonymous artist, *Container*, after 1250

Enameled metal

5 1/16 inches high x 5 13/16 inches wide
56 :1949

This box of enameled metal is very small. The main panel on top shows an image of Christ reigning in majesty in Heaven, surrounded by angels, and below that we see a scene of the Crucifixion, with Christ and the saints. The rest of the box shows images of angels. The religious decoration suggests that this box was used for keeping a rosary or a small prayer book. The upper part of the lid suggests the form of a crown, but this probably refers to Christ, rather than to the person who had commissioned the box.

The Historical Moment

In the Middle Ages, religion was the principal subject of art in private houses, as in churches. People wanted to own objects which, in their daily use, would be reminders of Christ and his redemption.

The Artistic Genre

A coffer is a box with an attached lid, that can be locked with a key. Large coffers were used to hold items of value in a noble residence, such as objects of silver and gold or fine fabrics, and a small coffer was used to hold something small, such as jewels or a religious relic.

Questions

What aspects of the decoration do not seem to be inspired by religion? Why did the artist include them? If the person who commissioned this coffer had been very rich, like an important noble or an abbot, how might its construction or its decoration have been different?

Anonymous artist, *Diptych with Scenes of the Passion and Afterlife of Christ*, 1250-70

Elephant ivory with traces of paint
 8 3/16 inches high x 7 1/16 inches wide x 3/8 inches deep
 183:1928

This object reproduces the appearance of a large stone sculpture that one might find in a church. The small size indicates that the object was used for private worship, and the high quality of the decoration indicates that the man or woman who owned this was very wealthy. Eighteen scenes from the Passion and afterlife of Christ are presented, and they appear to start at the lower left and end at the upper right. Each scene is framed by a gothic arch, a reference to the architecture of a church that is emphasized by the vertical projections that decorate the "roof."

The Historical Moment

In the Middle Ages, religion was a principal subject of art in private homes as well as in churches. People wanted to own objects for daily use that would remind them of Christ and his Resurrection, which for a poor family might be a simple wooden cross, but for the wealthy would include decorative objects of many types.

The Artistic Genre

A diptych is a work that has two attached parts, often a scene that folds open or closed. Diptychs or triptychs (with three parts) are often found in church altar painting. The form of this object allows it to be folded shut when it is not being used, for the protection of the delicate sculpture. It was therefore possible to carry it from one place to another.

Questions

Why did the artist create a miniature gothic cathedral to tell the story of Christ's life? Why are there so many different scenes, instead of four or six of the most important ones?

Anonymous artist, *Lancet Redemption Window*, c. 1220

Stained glass and metal
 108 3/8 inches high x 17 1/2 inches wide
 3:1935

This window, from a church in Montreuil-sur-le-Loir in France, represents scenes from the death and redemption of Christ. Below, three women standing in front of the empty tomb listen to an angel who is telling them about Christ's ascension into Heaven. The next higher image shows the crucifixion. This is followed by Christ praying in the garden (a replacement for the original panel, which showed his ascension into Heaven), and at the top of the window, Christ reigns in majesty.

The Historical Moment

Near the end of the twelfth century, progress in architectural knowledge made it possible to construct very tall buildings of stone, leading to the spread of the gothic cathedral. The decoration of a medieval church attempted to reproduce the kingdom of Heaven on earth, and to put the devout worshipper in visual contact with the holy persons and the splendors that would be encountered during eternal life.

The Artistic Genre

The medieval stained glass window was composed of colored glass, and the pieces were joined together with lead. When sunlight penetrated the window during the day, a person inside the building sees intense colors, like precious stones. Since stained glass

windows were normally placed very high in a church, a person could not distinguish the scene or the people who were represented, but he or she knew from the priests that they existed. The window was therefore a metaphor for religious faith, in which one believes without being able to see it. And the artist worked for the eyes of God, not for mankind. The term "lancet" means a small lance, and refers to the resemblance between the shape of the window and the medieval armament.

Questions

Which colors are the most intense? What do they mean? What is the connection between the meaning of the images and the shape of the window?

Anonymous artist, *Seated Malaleel [Mahalalel]*, 13th Century

Painted glass and metal
76 inches high x 31 inches wide
137:1920

In the Biblical book of Genesis, after Cain killed his brother Abel, Adam and Eve had a third son, whom they named Seth. Seth became one of the Patriarchs of the Bible, and was the ancestor of Methuselah, Noah, Jesse, David, Joseph, and Jesus. The possible subject of this window is Malaleel (or Mahalalel), Seth's great-grandson. The representation of Christ's ancestors was a frequent theme in religious images, to reinforce the connections between the Old and New Testaments.

The Historical Moment

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Questions

The man in the image looks to his left, toward someone or something outside of the scene. He holds a parchment scroll and makes a gesture with his index finger. How can you explain these details?

Anonymous artist, *Virgin and Child*, c. 1320

Limestone with traces of paint and gilding
 72 1/2 inches high x 24 1/4 inches wide x 18 1/4 inches deep
 2:1930

This limestone sculpture came from the chapel of a seminary for educating priests, in the town of Meaux, 40 kilometers east of Paris. The town, which existed since Gallo-Roman times, was the site of the Cathedral of St. Etienne, begun around 1180. The sculpture still has traces of paint and gilding, and it is larger than life size (6 feet 2 inches). The Virgin Mary looks at her son with a slight smile; the infant Jesus tugs on his mother's hood with his right hand, and holds a fruit in his left hand that may be an apple. The Virgin is wearing a crown, and she holds in her right hand a bundle of thin stalks from which the heads of flowers may be missing.

The Historical Moment

In the Middle Ages, the decoration of a church or important chapel attempted to reproduce the kingdom of Heaven on earth. Artistic decoration such as sculpture and stained glass windows sought to put the devout believer in visual contact with the holy persons and the splendors which would be encountered during eternal life.

The Artistic Genre

Church sculpture was sometimes large, so that viewers could see it more easily, and to suggest that the person represented was more important than an ordinary mortal. Images of Christ as a child and of the Virgin Mary could be emotionally touching, evoking the universal bond between mother and child. In some cases, the artist invites the viewer to be amused by the baby's childish behavior.

Questions

A crown is associated with a king or a queen. Why does the Virgin wear a crown? How old does the Christ child appear to be? Why did the artist decide not to show him as a newborn infant? The Christ child seems to hold an apple in his hand. This was the fruit with which the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Why did the artist put an apple in this sculpture?

The Renaissance



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Anonymous artist, *Saint Christopher*, late 15th century

Limestone
31 inches wide x 27 inches high x 15 inches deep
3:1934

This stone sculpture was found broken into pieces near Arras, in the region of Artois, in the north of France near modern Belgium (formerly Flanders). Even if it is only a fragment, the realistic representation of the body and face of the saint is striking. According to the legend of St. Christopher, he helped the child Jesus cross a river, and he therefore became the patron saint of travellers. In art, he is often shown with the child Jesus on his shoulder, and we can still see a knee and a small foot on the statue's shoulders. The buckled belt is a modern detail which places this man in the contemporary world of the 15th century, and his lined face shows his maturity.

The Historical Moment

Until 1477, the region of Artois belonged to the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold. After his death, it was rejoined to the territories of France. At this time, there were many rich patrons for artists, and it is not surprising to find a sculpture of such quality in this region.

The Artistic Genre

Artists of the Renaissance were interested in individuality, and portraits in painting or sculpture often evoked a particular person instead of a generalized ideal. Even in religious sculpture, the artist wanted to represent a real man, with whom the viewer could easily identify.

Questions

What do you think the sculpture looked like in its original form? Draw in the parts that are missing. Why did the artist emphasize this man's age and fatigue? Does this portrait influence your ideas about his generosity toward the child Jesus?

Anonymous artist, *Saint Luke*, late 15th century

Limestone with traces of paint
 39 inches high x 21 inches wide x 17 1/2 inches deep
 12:1933

This stone sculpture shows St. Luke, the author of the Third Book of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, seated at a writing desk. He was a medical doctor, and once made a portrait of the Virgin, and therefore he became the patron saint of doctors and artists. The sculpture shows the saint writing or drawing on a tablet, and the angle of his head suggests that he is thinking. One of St. Luke's symbols was the bull, an animal used in ritual sacrifice, and we see a tiny bull at the lower left of the statue. The scroll carrier above the bull was used to carry parchment documents.

The Historical Moment

In the 15th century, after the invention of the printing press, there were many more people who learned to read and write, at least among the nobility and upper middle class. We see St. Luke wearing the clothing of a scholar of the contemporary era of the 15th century, and the decorated desk looks like what one might see in a church or an important school.

The Artistic Genre

Artists of the Renaissance were interested in individuality, and portraits in painting or sculpture often evoked a particular person instead of a generalized ideal. Even in religious sculpture, the artist wanted to represent a real man, with whom the viewer could easily identify.

Questions

What elements of the sculpture seem to you to be the most realistic? How does the artist suggest the saint's divine inspiration? Why is there such a disproportion between the size of the man and the size of the bull?

François Clouet, *Admiral Gaspard II de Coligny*, 1565-70

Oil on panel
8 1/16 inches high x 5 13/16 inches wide
168:1925

The subject of this portrait was a very important man in the political affairs of his time. His clothes indicate wealth, but in a discreet way. His cap of black velvet has touches of gold thread and pearls. The man wears a gold chain, and his white collar is decorated with delicate lace. We see determination in his serious expression, but his pale and lined face suggests fatigue. The portrait is fairly small, which suggests that it was not commissioned to be hung in a salon where guests would be received, but rather in a private room.

The Historical Moment

In the second half of the 16th century, France was divided by political tension and even violent combat between Catholics and Protestants. Admiral Coligny (1519-1572) was a Huguenot, a member of the Protestant sect that the Catholic monarchy was trying to suppress. A few years after this portrait, in 1572, he would be assassinated, having been betrayed by one of his Huguenot colleagues. When this portrait was painted, he was already aware that his life was in danger, but his sense of honor and religious faith inspired him to continue the fight.

The Artistic Genre

In the 16th century, the portrait was a way of preserving not only the appearance of a person, but his or her social rank and identity in relation to others. Artists were very attentive to the tactile qualities of cloth and jewels, and people of noble rank were shown with pale, smooth skin, to indicate their refinement.

The Artist

François Clouet (c. 1516-1572) was the most important portrait artist of his generation. The son of the painter Jean Clouet, he was highly sought after by nobles who wanted him to paint their portrait, because of his realistic style and technical skill.

Questions

Which parts of this painting are the most brightly illuminated? What could the artist mean to suggest through his use of light?

Jean Clouet, *Portrait of a Banker*, 1522

Oil on panel
16 3/4 inches high x 12 7/8 inches wide
32:1925

The subject of this portrait is unknown. He knows how to read and write, according to the pen in his left hand, and the paper indicates that he is thirty-five years old. ("A•35" means "aetas 35 anni" in Latin). His right hand is touching several gold coins, which suggests that he is a banker or an accountant. Even if he is therefore not noble, the red silk of his shirt and the gold rings he is wearing indicate that he is employed by someone of great importance, perhaps the king.

The Historical Moment

At this time, King Francis I (1494-1547) reigned in France and King Henry VIII in England. The royal court at Fontainebleau was famous for its encouragement of fine arts, and it was very fashionable to commission a portrait, both for nobles and for the upper middle class.

The Artistic Genre

In the 16th century, the portrait was a way of preserving not only a person's appearance, but also his social rank and his identity in relation to other people. The artist paid particular attention to the tactile qualities of cloth and precious stones. Realistic detail was much admired, even if the artist always had to idealize somewhat the features of his subject.

The Artist

Jean Clouet (c. 1485-1541) was the most important portrait artist at the French royal court. In 1516, he became one of the official King's Painters, and around 1530 he painted the most famous portrait ever made of Francis I. Clouet is considered the artistic equal of the German painter Hans Holbein the Younger, who made the most famous portrait of King Henry VIII of England.

Questions

What personality traits of this man does the artist suggest? How does he do this? Why do you think Clouet was considered the best portraitist among the artists of the royal court?

Jean II Pénicaud (attributed), *Pentecost*, c. 1550

Enamel and gold on copper
7 1/4 inches high x 5 7/16 inches wide
225:1986
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Lopata

This work, made of enamel and gold on copper, is of very small size. The background of the scene resembles an engraving, but the people are wearing clothes of intense colors, such as blue and yellow. The image tells the story of the Feast of the Pentecost, fifty days (or seven Sundays) after Easter. On that date, the Holy Spirit appeared to Christ's Apostles. The Holy Spirit is represented here as a dove, above the head of the Virgin Mary.

The Historical Moment

During the Renaissance, the subjects of religious art were extremely varied. This scene in particular was a good subject for contemplation, because it tells how the Apostles received the gift of renewed faith. A person looking at this image could hope to be re-inspired in the same way.

The Artistic Genre

Miniature art of this quality was reserved for the very wealthiest people. Its small size indicates that the work was displayed in a private room, intended to be seen only by the man or woman who owned it.

The Artist

The presumed artist of this work is Jean Pénicaud II (c. 1515-before 1588), an enamel artist and painter in Limoges, in the Limousin region of central France. The region was famous for the artistic production of enamels, and later became famous for porcelain.

Questions

What emotions seem to appear on the faces and in the gestures of the Apostles? In addition to its association with the Holy Spirit, what is the symbolism of a dove?

Jean Pénicaud III, *Alexander Giving Money [Gold] to the Priests of Ammon*,
end of 16th century



Enamel and gold on copper
7 11/16 inches high x 8 11/16 inches wide
221:1923

This work of enamel and gold on copper has very small dimensions. However, it is as detailed as a much larger painting. The technique of "grisaille" (painting in black and gray) makes the figures resemble stone sculptures. The subject of the work is the emperor Alexander the Great (born in 356 b.c.e., died in 321 b.c.e.). In 331 b.c.e., Alexander travelled to Egypt, and laid out the site of the future city of Alexandria. When he visited the priests of Ammon-Zeus, a Greco-Egyptian god, one of the priests called Alexander the "son of Zeus." In this scene, the emperor shows them his appreciation.

The Historical Moment

Near the end of the 16th century, France was divided by political tensions and even by violent fighting between Catholics and Protestants. This work tells the story of the legend according to which the sovereign was descended from a god, which could be a reminder of the belief that the French king reigned by divine right, that is, with the blessing of God. This subject could be pleasing to either side in the religious wars.

The Artistic Genre

Miniature art of this quality was reserved for the very wealthiest people. Its small size indicates that the work was displayed in a private room, intended to be seen only by the man or woman who owned it.

The Artist

Jean Pénicaud III (active around 1573-1606) came from a family of enamel artists and painters in Limoges, in the Limousin region of central France. The region was famous for the artistic production of enamels, and later became famous for porcelain.

Questions

Why did the artist imitate sculptures, instead of painting the figures in color? How does the small size add to the difficulty of making this work?

Pierre II Veyrier, *The Deposition of Christ* and *The Resurrection*, 1560

Enamel and gold on copper
 6 5/15 inches high x 4 7/8 inches wide
 90 :1988, 91 :1988
 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Lopata

These two works are very small. They represent two important moments in the life of Christ : the deposition of his body in the tomb after his descent from the Cross, and his appearance after the resurrection.

The Historical Moment

During the Renaissance, artists liked to add details of contemporary life to Biblical scenes. In the image on the left, we see the ramparts of a medieval city, and the person in the middle is carrying a bag decorated with tassels. In the image on the right, we see sleeping soldiers, wearing contemporary armor and holding lances.

The Artistic Genre

Miniature art of this extraordinary quality was reserved for the very wealthiest people. Its small size indicates that the work was displayed in a private room, intended to be seen only by the man or woman who owned it.

The Artist

Pierre II Veyrier (active around 1528-1558), was an enamel artist in Limoges. His name may derive from the town of Veyrier, in the canton of Geneva in Switzerland. Another important work by Veyrier is a triptych of enamel on copper, with nine scenes from the life of Christ. This is in the collection of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.

Questions

Looking at these two images, what elements do you see in common? Do you see a touch of humor in the illustration of the sleeping soldiers? If so, is this inappropriate for a religious scene?

The Seventeenth Century



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Philippe de Champaigne, *Vincent Voiture as Saint Louis*, c. 1640-48

Oil on canvas
26 3/4 inches x 22 3/8 inches
719 :1961
Friends Fund

Vincent Voiture (1597-1648) was a poet who was greatly admired by the members of the French court. Champaigne made this portrait during the poet's lifetime. An engraving of this portrait accompanied the publication in 1650 of a book of his poems, after his death. A few years later, Voiture's daughter Madeleine entered a convent to become a nun. She wanted to keep her father's portrait with her. However, because she was allowed to keep only artworks with religious subjects, Champaigne retouched the painting to add a royal crown and robes, a scepter, and Christ's crown of thorns, a relic associated with Saint Louis. In this way, Madeleine was able to keep her father's portrait with her, under the identity of the saint.

The Historical Moment

During the years between 1649 and 1653, when King Louis XIV was a young boy, there was a revolt by some nobles against the absolutist authority of the government that had been created by Cardinal Richelieu. This revolt was called the Fronde. By choosing Saint Louis as the posthumous identity for Voiture, Champaigne was declaring his loyalty to the young king, who had the same name as King Louis IX, Saint Louis.

The Artistic Genre

According to x-rays taken of the painting, we know that the original portrait of Voiture showed him wearing black clothes with a large white collar. The position of his right hand was natural for holding a pen, which was a suitable object to associate with a

writer. The changes made after the poet's death do not alter the gentleness of his expression, but a scepter is held differently from a pen.

The Artist

Philippe de Champaigne (1602-1674) was born into a poor family in Brussels. After apprenticing with a painter, he arrived in Paris in 1621. He was highly admired for his realistic portraits, and obtained important patrons such as the Queen Mother, Marie de Medici, Cardinal Richelieu, and King Louis XIII. In 1648, Champaigne was one of the founding members of the new Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, created by order of Louis XIV.

Questions

Judging by the portrait, what were Voiture's traits of character? How are these traits appropriate for the presumed character of the saint? Look up the life story of Saint Louis, and discuss why he might be an inspirational figure for a nun.

Nicolas Colombel, *Christ Expelling the Money-Changers from the Temple*, 1682

Oil on canvas

47 inches high x 34 3/4 inches wide

11:1957

Gift of Andrew W. Johnson, Mrs. J. Russell Forgan, and Mrs. Bradford Shinkle
in memory of Mrs. Jackson Johnson

This painting represents the New Testament scene in which Christ chased away the merchants and moneylenders who were desecrating the temple with their worldly activities. The background of the painting resembles the Pantheon, an ancient temple in Rome. The diagonal positions of the characters, the lively colors, and the intense light add to the dramatic nature of the scene.

The Historical Moment

In the seventeenth century, a vast quantity of artworks was commissioned for the decoration of churches, royal palaces, and the houses of the nobility. The technical quality of the artwork, and the importance of its subject, reflected the education and good taste of the person who commissioned it.

The Artistic Genre

The most highly regarded category of painting dealt with subjects from mythology or the Bible, and was called "history painting." It was usually done in a large format.

The Artist

Nicolas Colombel (1644-1717) studied painting in Rome. While there, he was very much influenced by the works of Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), a French artist who had spent the majority of his career in Rome. After he returned to France, Colombel was admitted in 1694 to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. He became a Professor there in 1701.

Questions

What are the strongest colors in this painting? What do they mean? Compare the facial expressions of the merchants with the expression of Christ, and explain the contrast.

François Girardon, *Louis XIV, King of France*, 1690s

Bronze

21 1/2 inches high x 22 3/8 inches wide x 9 7/8 inches deep

1118:2010

Donors listed on next page

This bust uses several techniques to inspire the viewer's admiration : the fleur-de-lis on the chest suggest royal rank, the armor indicates military strength, the lace scarf is a sign of wealth, and the eyes turned to the left suggest the "visionary gaze" or contemplation of a profound thought. The strong chin and impressive hair are signs of virility.

The Historical Moment

Louis XIV (born in 1638, became king in 1643, died in 1715) exemplified "absolute monarchy." He centralized power under the authority of the king, and after 1685, he established his court at the palace of Versailles. Many artists portrayed him with the features of a Roman general or the gods Mars or Apollo, and from the latter he acquired the nickname of "the Sun King." At the time of this portrait, he was more than fifty years old, an age considered at the time to be elderly.

The Artistic Genre

The bust imitates sculpted portraits from antiquity, and reinforces the association between Louis XIV and the Roman emperors. Bronze gives permanence to the portrait and is a reminder of the many images of Louis XIV on commemorative medals of the time, which celebrate his military conquests and acts of generosity.

The Artist

François Girardon (1628-1715) was Louis XIV's favorite sculptor. His mastery of technique put him in the top rank of artists. It is interesting to note that he and Louis XIV died on the same day, September 1, 1715.

Questions

How does the artist indicate that his subject is royal, despite the absence of a crown?
What are the differences between a portrait in sculpture and one that is painted?

Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. John Peters MacCarthy, Friends Fund, the Edwin and Betty Greenfield Grossman Endowment, Mr. Christian B. Peper, Lisa and Allan Silverberg; and Museum Purchase, gift of Mrs. Mahlon Wallace and Leicester B. Faust, Mr. Horace Morison, Mrs. Mark C. Steinberg, Mr. Sydney Shoenberg Sr., an anonymous donor, Mr. J. Boyd Hill in memory of his wife, Barbara Johnson Hill, and Friends Fund, by exchange.

Nicolas de Largillière, *Portrait of a Woman*, c. 1696

Oil on canvas
64 1/4 inches high x 51 1/4 inches wide
3:1943

This portrait shows a noble lady in her dressing room. She is surrounded by furnishings that reflect her wealth, such as the Chinese vase, the gilded table, and the box of jewels from which a necklace of pearls is spilling out. She is wearing a lace gown with golden fringe, under a cape of blue velvet.

The Historical Moment

King Louis XIV (1638-1715) established his court at the Palace of Versailles after 1685. In order to restrict the influence of the most powerful nobles, he forced them to live at Versailles with him. One form of royal favor was the permission to be present during the king's private moments, such as when he woke up in the morning or when his servants assisted him to get dressed. The nobles imitated this practice themselves, and it became fashionable to receive friends in one's dressing room or bedroom. Dresses for these occasions were as highly decorated and expensive as dresses that were worn for other social events.

The Artistic Genre

Aristocratic portraits at this time displayed elements that conformed to the subject's high social rank. Men were often seen with military swords, and women were often seen in elegant clothes, with objects that suggested femininity, such as flowers. In this

portrait, the lady's direct gaze reflects her self-confidence, and her gesture of tying a ribbon in her hair implies that she is very attentive to her beauty.

The Artist

Nicolas de Largillière (1656-1746) was one of the most highly praised artists of the second half of Louis XIV's reign. He was admired for his realistic technique and for his talent in capturing the personality of his subjects.

Questions

How many different textures can you identify in this painting? How do they add to the sensual quality of the portrait?

Claude Lorrain, *Villagers Dancing [Village Dance]*, late 1630s

Oil on canvas
38 1/16 inches high x 57 1/2 inches wide
22:1944

In an idealized scene, villagers are celebrating a holiday by dancing. The main interest of the painting is in the landscape, the enormous trees framing the river, and the distant mountains, rather than in the people. The effects of light and shadow are very important, with a nearly-white sky in the center of the painting.

The Historical Moment

In the seventeenth century, a vast quantity of artworks was commissioned for the decoration of churches, royal palaces, and the houses of the nobility. The technical quality of the artwork, and the importance of its subject, reflected the education and good taste of the person who commissioned it.

The Artistic Genre

The most highly regarded category of painting dealt with subjects from mythology or the Bible, and was called "history painting." It was usually done in a large format. Here the artist seems to represent contemporary people, but similar scenes could also contain imaginary shepherds of antiquity, or characters from mythology. The balance of its composition and the subtlety of the colors contribute to a harmonious and peaceful mood.

The Artist

Claude Gellée (c. 1604-1682) is known by the name of "Lorrain" because of the province where he was born. He learned to become a pastry cook, and he is believed

to have invented puff pastry. At the age of fourteen, he went to Rome to become a cook for the painter Agostino Tassi. He first assisted the artist in his studio, and later received painting lessons from him. Lorrain became famous for his luminous landscapes and harbor scenes. His works greatly influenced many landscape artists who came after him.

Questions

Looking at this painting, what first catches your eye? What do you see next? What feelings do you have when looking at this painting?

Pierre Puget, *The Blessed Alessandro Sauli as Saint Augustine*, c. 1665-67

Terra cotta

27 3/4 inches high x 16 inches wide x 12 inches deep

50:1968

This sculpture is related to a large sculpture in marble, commissioned in 1664 for the church of Sainte-Marie de Carignan, in Genoa, Italy. The subject of the sculpture, Alessandro Sauli, was named Bishop of Pavia in 1591. Saint Augustine, the author of the *Confessions* and *The City of God*, is often considered to be the theologian who most influenced Christianity. Augustine is often represented with books or writing instruments.

The Historical Moment

King Louis XIV was undertaking a reconstruction and enlargement of the palace of the Louvre. In France and in Italy, the decoration of royal palaces and churches provided work for a very large number of artists, who competed with each other to make artworks that were more and more awe-inspiring.

The Artistic Genre

This work exemplifies the "baroque" style, a word derived from a term that describes an irregularly-shaped pearl. The artistic characteristics of this style are movement,

originality, and contrast, used to make the subject more dramatic. Baroque sculpture tried to show a person's emotion, at a moment of spiritual intensity.

The Artist

Pierre Puget (1620-1694) was a sculptor, designer, painter, and architect. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many critics considered him to be the "French Michelangelo." He was greatly admired for the dynamic quality of his work and for his refined technique.

Questions

Why did the artist choose to compare Bishop Sauli with Saint Augustine? What emotion is the Bishop feeling in this sculpture? How is this suggested?

Nicolas Tournier, *Banquet Scene with a Lute Player*, c. 1625

Oil on canvas
47 3/4 inches high x 65 3/4 inches wide
90:1942

This scene shows a group of people at a dinner table. The white tablecloth and the presence of a lute player, in conjunction with their elaborate clothing, indicate that the celebrants are people of the upper middle class, not peasants. The presence of only one woman, in the company of men, suggests that she might be a courtesan. The man on her right is emptying a glass of wine, and this gesture suggests the vice of overindulgence. However, the artist respects good taste by giving the people in this scene facial expressions that are serious and dignified. The artist's technical mastery is seen in the realism of the faces, the texture of the surfaces, and the play of intense light.

The Historical Moment

Louis XIII (1601-1643) inherited a kingdom in which there was ongoing conflict between Catholics and Protestants. Cardinal Richelieu was his Prime Minister, from 1624 onward. Richelieu's influence led to a military victory over the Protestants of the city of La Rochelle and the suppression of the power of the highest-ranking nobles.

The Artistic Genre

In the first half of the seventeenth century, "genre" paintings were very popular. These paintings showed scenes of daily life, and often also told a story. Here, the spectator is invited to imagine the reason for this banquet, and who the people might be in this theatrical vignette. Another French artist who was very famous in this style was Georges de la Tour.

The Artist

Nicolas Tournier (1590-1639) was a painter in the realistic style, influenced by the Italian artist Caravaggio. The "French Caravagesques" used exaggerated contrast between light and dark, called *chiaroscuro* in Italian. Tournier's known works are few in number, but of very high quality.

Questions

Describe how the painting evokes the five senses (sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell).

The Eighteenth Century



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Anonymous artist, *Console Table*, c. 1780

Gilded wood and marble

33 1/2 inches high x 27 7/8 inches wide x 16 1/4 inches deep

34 :1989a,b

Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. Warner S. McCall and Samuel L. Sherer Memorial,
by exchange, and donors to the 1988 Art Enrichment Fund

This table is called a console, which means that it rests against a wall. It has only two legs, reinforced by a horizontal support. A delicate garland of flowers seems to hang suspended from three rings, and another, below, embellishes an urn. The legs of the table end in lion's paws.

The Historical Moment

Around the year 1780, the court of King Louis XVI and Queen Marie-Antoinette did not anticipate the troubles of the Revolution that was yet to come. Nobles continued to commission objects of great luxury that reflected their education and their sophisticated taste.

The Artistic Movement

In decorative arts of the end of the eighteenth century, artists often called upon the classicism of Roman antiquity. Columns and architectural elements were found next to cupids and mythological creatures. Artists competed with each other to imagine and create objects that could interpret historical tradition, in this case Roman antiquity, in an original and surprising way.

Questions

For what purpose could this table be used? What might be put on top of it? How does this table suggest nature? Is this nature real, or is it invented by the artist?

Arthur and Robert, *Wall Panel*, c. 1791

Block-printed and stenciled watercolor on paper
 113 3/4 inches high x 53 inches wide x 1/2 inch deep
 42 :1929.1

Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. Warner S. McCall

This panel includes a large variety of fantasy motifs, such as griffins, half eagle and half lion. A small architectural structure in the center resembles a belvedere, which one might find in an aristocratic garden in the 18th century.

The Historical Moment

The French Revolution broke out in 1789, and in the middle of this tumult, many French artists depended on commissions from foreign clients, such as in England. This panel was part of the interior decoration of Kempshott House in Basingstoke. George, Prince of Wales and the future King George IV, spent his honeymoon in this house, in 1784.

The Artistic Movement

In the decorative arts of the end of the eighteenth century, artists often made reference to the classicism of Roman antiquity. Columns and architectural elements were found

next to cupids and mythological creatures. These objects could be pleasing to clients whether their feelings were royalist or republican.

The Artist

Arthur and Robert was an established company in Paris, making painted paper for interior decoration. Named after its two founders, who were British, the company specialized in neoclassical motifs. They often used the style called "trompe l'œil" (fool the eye) to imitate fabrics like velvet and fringe. One of their most famous clients was Thomas Jefferson, when he was the American ambassador to the court of Louis XVI.

Questions

Painted paper is very fragile. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using it for decoration, compared to paintings or sculptures? Why did people enjoy looking at grotesque mythological animals? Do you find them humorous?

Henri Auguste, *Tureen and Stand*, 1797-98

Solid silver

Tureen 10 5/8 inches high x 16 15/16 inches wide x 12 inches deep

Stand 2 1/16 inches high x 19 3/8 inches diameter

414 :1952a, 414 :1952d

Gift of James H. Hyde

This covered soup tureen and stand reflect the taste for objects influenced by the style of Roman antiquity. The decoration includes male faces, imaginary animals, and even a snake, which forms the handle of the lid.

The Historical Moment

Between the years 1795 and 1799, the new Republic of France was under the government of the Directorate, a group of five men. It was hoped that this system would avoid the possibility of a dictatorship by one man. Roman style became fashionable, both in ladies' dress styles and in decorative arts.

The Artistic Movement

In the decorative arts of the end of the eighteenth century, artists often made reference to the classicism of Roman antiquity. Columns and architectural elements were found next to cupids and mythological creatures. These objects could be pleasing to clients whether their feelings were royalist or republican.

The Artist

Henri or Henry Auguste (1759-1816) was a master silversmith in Paris. He created works for King Louis XVI and later for Napoleon.

Questions

How does this work suggest power and wealth, without referring to the monarchy? Imagine how this work might have been different, if the artist had created it for the king or for a noble before the Revolution.

François Boucher, *The Dovecote*, 1758

Oil on canvas
18 5/8 inches high x 28 inches wide
75:1937

This painting shows an idealized landscape, with a large dovecote on the left, from which several doves are emerging. In the center, a man and a child are on an old footbridge. The child is gesturing toward the building, which suggests that it is the subject of their conversation. The dove is a bird that symbolizes peace. In the Bible, a dove returned to Noah's Ark with an olive branch. It also represents the Holy Spirit.

The Historical Moment

King Louis XV (1710-1774) reigned during a period of peace and prosperity. Between 1745 and 1765, his favorite mistress was Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson. She was a married woman from the middle class, and he gave her the title of Marquise de Pompadour. She was educated, intelligent, and charming. She supported writers such as Voltaire, Diderot, and Montesquieu, and encouraged many artists.

The Artistic Genre

Many artists in the eighteenth century imagined romantic landscapes. Here, the natural elements, such as the trees and a stream, form a harmonious composition. The blue sky and the clouds are bathed in sunlight, and the soft color palette of blues and greens creates a peaceful atmosphere.

The Artist

François Boucher (1703-1770) was an artist often associated with rococo style, but he also had considerable talent in many other artistic genres. He painted landscapes in the style of Claude Lorrain, mythological scenes, and erotic paintings. Admitted to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1734, he became Madame de Pompadour's

favorite painter, and he made several portraits of her in a precise and realistic style. He was named King's First Painter in 1765, one year after the death of Madame de Pompadour.

Questions

Why did the artist put the people, and not the dovecote, in the center of the painting?
What indicates the passage of time and what seems to be eternal?

Jean Siméon Chardin, *The Silver Goblet*, c. 1728

Oil on canvas
16 7/8 inches high x 19 inches wide
55:1934

This painting is a still life. It is composed of ordinary objects that one might find in a house, but not a house of peasants. The silver goblet and the glass carafe, instead of vessels made of clay, reflect an elevated social status. The objects probably belonged to the artist himself. The painter was interested in the play of light and in the reflections on the smooth surfaces of the silver, the glass, and the fruit.

The Historical Moment

The middle class expanded in the first half of the eighteenth century, and buying paintings was no longer an activity reserved for the nobility. Familiar subjects of daily life attracted as much attention as scenes from mythology had attracted previously, especially in public exhibitions.

The Artistic Genre

Since the early seventeenth century, the still life was a subject of artists' interest, especially in Holland. Chardin is considered to be a descendant of this tradition. He was interested in the forms and textures of objects, rather than in their symbolic importance, and he influenced many artists of later generations, such as Cézanne, Matisse, and Braque.

The Artist

Jean Siméon Chardin (1699-1779) was a student at the Academy of Saint Luke in Paris, and later he was admitted to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in the category of painters of "animals and fruits," a less prestigious category than history

painting or portraiture. He is recognized today for his still lifes, such as *The Ray* (1728) and for his genre scenes, such as *Soap Bubbles* (1734) and *Saying Grace* (1740).

Question

How does the artist appeal to the senses of sight, touch, taste, and smell?

Antoine Coysevox, *Madame du Vaucel* (at SLAM)
and *Monsieur du Vaucel* (private collection), 1712



Madame du Vaucel : Marble
29 3/8 inches high x 13 1/8 inches wide x 7 inches deep
42 :1954
Gift of Paul Rosenberg

On the left, the subject of this marble bust is Madame Renée du Vaucel. A preliminary version in terra cotta is in the Louvre Museum. On the right, the subject of the terra cotta bust is her husband, François-Jules du Vaucel (1672-1739). He was a wealthy financier who later was named counselor-secretary to the King, and he also would have had a bust in marble. She is looking toward her left, and he is looking to his right, each one with a slight tender smile. They are also wearing matching clothing, her dress having a lace neckline and his shirt having similar lace on the chest.

The Historical Moment

During the last years of the reign of Louis XIV (who died in 1715), the atmosphere of the court was more restrained than it had been earlier. This was partly because of the king's advanced age and partly because of the influence of his second wife, the Marquise de Maintenon, who was very religious.

The Artistic Genre

The marble bust was a reminder of the sculptures of classical antiquity, which originally represented gods and goddesses. Many nobles had their portraits done in painting, but a portrait in sculpture was even more prestigious.

The Artist

Antoine Coysevox (1640-1720) was one of the most important sculptors of the reign of Louis XIV. He made several portraits of the king, such as the low relief in stone of *Louis XIV on Horseback* in the Salon of War at Versailles, at the entry to the Hall of Mirrors. His bust of Louis XIV is considered the artistic rival of the famous bust executed by Bernini.

Questions

How did the artist suggest the personality traits of Monsieur and Madame Vaucel? Compare these busts with the one of Louis XIV done by François Girardon (1118 :2010).

Jean Fauche, *Ewer et Basin*, c. 1740

Solid silver

Ewer 9 1/4 inches high x 6 5/8 inches wide x 4 5/8 inches deep

Basin 2 11/16 inches high x 13 inches wide x 8 7/16 inches deep

96 :1939a,b

This ewer (pitcher) and its matching basin are created out of curved and fluid lines. The decorative elements, such as seashells, reeds and cat-tails, have a thematic harmony which suggests that these objects are for use in washing one's hands and face.

The Historical Moment

Louis XV (1710-1774) reigned during a time of peace and prosperity. Nobles commissioned works from artists who transformed everyday objects into objects of luxury, because of their visual beauty as well as their high price.

The Artistic Movement

In the decorative arts, the baroque style of the seventeenth century evolved into the "rococo" style of the eighteenth century. This was named for its frequent use of patterns from nature, such as one might find in a rock garden or "jardin de rocaille." Some of the preferred characteristics of this style included movement, delicacy, and novelty.

The Artist

Jean Fauche (c. 1706-1762) was a master silversmith from 1733 onward, and he worked in Paris. Another example of this ewer and basin is in the collection of the Museum of Metropolitan Art in New York City.

Questions

Washbasins and pitchers were often made of ceramic. Why would one make these in silver, which is less durable? What other motifs could suggest water? Imagine and draw another ewer and basin, decorated with different images.

Jean-Honoré Fragonard, *The Laundresses*, c. 1756-61

Oil on canvas
 28 3/4 inches wide x 24 3/16 inches high
 76:1937

This painting shows a group of women doing laundry. It is a scene of daily life that could take place in any noble residence, but which was not seen by the aristocrats who lived there. In the foreground of the painting, on the right, children are playing, undressed because of the heat. On the left, a woman who is almost invisible in the shadows is carrying a basket. She is observed by another, older woman. In the background, several women are tending to the fire and the cauldron of water.

The Historical Moment

The subject of this painting is not directly connected to political events, but one might have said later on that it reflects the extreme divisions among the social classes that existed under the Old Regime. Some nobles took advantage of their social position to violate rules of propriety in regard to those who were poor. This seems to be suggested by the detail of the young man with the red cloak, who is playing half-naked with a much younger child.

The Artistic Genre

Many artists such as Jean Siméon Chardin and Jean-Baptiste Greuze were interested in scenes of daily life, to which they gave a romanticized aspect. The peasants or servants seem to be in good health, the work does not appear difficult, and there are often small amusing details, such as here, with the child on the right who is trying to capture the dog's attention.

The Artist

Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) was a student of Jean Siméon Chardin and of François Boucher. He received the Grand Prize for painting from the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1752. He became very successful for erotic paintings such as *The Bathers* and *The Swing*. He became a favorite painter of Madame du Barry, the last important mistress of Louis XV.

Questions

Where does the light shine most intensely in this painting? Why?

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne II, *Madame du Barry*, 1771

Terra cotta
14 inches high x 8 inches wide x 10 1/4 inches deep
1:1967
Friends Fund

This terra cotta bust is a portrait of Madame du Barry, the mistress of King Louis XV. It was the model for a marble bust, now lost. The angle of the head, tilted and turned toward the right, suggests modesty, but the sideways glance may also seek to conceal a cast in one eye. The facial features evoke youth and beauty without any ornamentation of clothing or hairstyle.

The Historical Moment

In 1768, King Louis XV, who was then 59 years old, took as his mistress Jeanne Bécu, a 25-year-old illegitimate milliner who was then the mistress of the Count du Barry. The king arranged a marriage between Jeanne and the Count's brother, and the royal affair continued until the king's death in 1774. Criticized for her common origins, Madame du Barry was despised by the court and by the common people. She was guillotined during the Revolution, in 1793.

The Artistic Genre

The realistic portrait was very much admired at the royal court, ever since the great success of the artists Nicolas de Largillière, Hyacinthe Rigaud, and Maurice Quentin de La Tour. Noble subjects were often represented in informal clothing, and the artist emphasized their personality traits rather than symbols of their wealth or social rank.

The Artist

Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne II (1704-1778) was the son of the sculptor Jean-Louis Lemoyne and the nephew of Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (who is called Jean-Baptiste I). He received the Rome Prize for sculpture in 1725, and he was a member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Lemoyne was the official portrait sculptor of Louis XV.

Questions

How would this portrait be different, if the artist had added clothing and jewelry? What personality traits does the artist try to suggest?

Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier, *Pair of Candlesticks*, c. 1740-50



Gilded bronze

Each one: 12 1/16 inches high x 7 5/16 inches wide x 6 1/2 inches deep
2:1993.1, 2:1993.2

Gift of Mr. Gregory Flotron and Museum Purchase, by exchange;
and funds given by Aurelia and George Schlapp

This pair of candlesticks has the appearance of solid gold. Their curved lines seem to have the fluidity of flowing water. We see flowers, seashells, and scroll-shaped decoration. The horizontal decoration on top, called a "bobeche," keeps the candle wax from melting on to the tablecloth.

The Historical Moment

Louis XV (1710-1774) reigned during a time of peace and prosperity. Nobles commissioned works from artists who transformed everyday objects into objects of luxury, because of their visual beauty as well as their high price.

The Artistic Movement

In the decorative arts, the baroque style of the seventeenth century evolved into the "rococo" style of the eighteenth century. This was named for its frequent use of patterns from nature, such as one might find in a rock garden or "jardin de rocaille." Some of the preferred characteristics of this style included movement, delicacy, and novelty.

The Artist

Juste-Aurèle Meissonnier (1695-1750) was the greatest goldsmith and silversmith of Louis XV's royal court. He also designed porcelain soup tureens that were often

embellished with the creatures found in the soup, such as rabbits or crayfish. Meissonnier's works later inspired artists of the style called "art nouveau," such as Hector Guimard, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Questions

How does the metal resemble folds of cloth? Do these candlesticks seem to you to be moving? Should Meissonnier be called a craftsman or an artist? Why?

Claude-Étienne Michard, *Armchair*, c. 1760-65

Beechwood with reproduction silk brocade upholstery
 36 1/2 inches high x 26 inches wide x 23 inches deep
 14:1935

This armchair imitates a very popular furniture shape from the seventeenth century, but with new elements. The legs and arms are very delicate, as if the chair were intended for the use of a person who does not weigh very much, such as a woman. The brocade silk fabric, which is a modern reproduction, is as elegant and fragile as the fabric used for fashionable dresses of the time.

The Historical Moment

Louis XV (1710-1774) reigned during a time of peace and prosperity. Nobles commissioned works from artists who transformed everyday objects into objects of luxury, because of their visual beauty as well as their high price.

The Artistic Movement

In the decorative arts, the baroque style of the seventeenth century evolved into the "rococo" style of the eighteenth century. This was named for its frequent use of patterns from nature, such as one might find in a rock garden or "jardin de rocaille." Some of the preferred characteristics of this style included movement, delicacy, and novelty. For interior decoration, an architect often worked with painters and furniture makers to assure a harmonious visual effect in every room of the house.

The Artist

Claude-Étienne Michard (1732-1794) was a furniture maker who created works for noble French families. This chair was not part of the original furnishings of the room where it is found today, a parlor of the Hôtel Gaillard de La Bouëxière in Paris, which

the Saint Louis Art Museum purchased in 1929. The Museum acquired the chair in 1935, in order to furnish the room in period style.

Questions

How does the decoration of the wood harmonize with the decoration of the fabric?

If you are at the Museum, look at the furnishings of the room and describe other objects (walls, mirrors, etc.) which harmonize with the chair.

Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1738

Oil on canvas
31 3/4 inches high x 25 11/16 inches wide
30:1974
Bequest of Edward Mallinckrodt Sr.

This portrait shows a lady whose identity is unknown to us. She is a noblewoman of the contemporary era, because of her silk dress and the pearls on one shoulder, but she may be shown as the goddess Flora. Her dark hair and eyes contrast with the luminous whiteness of her skin. There is an abundance of flowers in the painting, in her hair and in a garland that she holds in her right hand. Her left hand holds a rose that seems to have been plucked from the rosebush to her left.

The Historical Moment

In the eighteenth century, in many countries of Europe such as France and England, it was fashionable for portraits to show noble ladies as goddesses of mythology.

The Artistic Genre

The idealized and flattering portrait always remained popular among the nobles who commissioned them. Artists often called upon many of the senses to represent feminine grace, such as touch (the silk and chiffon of her robe, the smooth surface of the pearls) and smell (flowers, especially roses).

The Artist

Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766) was a very successful portrait artist at the royal court. A member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture since 1718, and a Professor at the Academy since 1746, he was named the official portraitist of Louis XV in 1748.

Questions

Look at the varied colors of the flowers, and find where the artist used the same colors elsewhere in the painting. Does this have a special meaning?

Jean-Baptiste Pater, *Reste [Leisure] in a Park*, early 18th century

Oil on canvas
21 1/2 inches high x 25 7/8 inches wide
13:1967
Friends Fund

This painting represents a group of people relaxing during a walk in the park. The group includes several couples and some children playing on the left. In the background, we see another group doing the same thing. On the left and right, there are statues, so this is not a natural forest, but the park of a noble estate. The strongest light falls on the lady in the center. She is turning her back slightly on the admirer who is leaning towards her, but she seems to be listening to him just the same.

The Historical Moment

When King Louis XIV died in 1715, the young king Louis XV was only five years old. The Regent was his great-uncle Philippe, Duke of Orléans (1674-1723), who was very fond of flirtatious amusements and the arts of music and painting. Artists responded to the court's taste with images that were sentimental and light-hearted.

The Artistic Genre

Idealized landscapes, in which young couples in love are shown relaxing in the outdoors, were a popular genre, often called the "fête galante." The characters are often imaginary, such as shepherds and shepherdesses, but they resemble nobles in the elegance of their bodies, gestures, clothing, and hairstyles. In addition, the painting often tells a romantic story that the spectator must guess.

The Artist

Jean-Baptiste Pater (1695-1735) was the son of an artist and the student of Antoine Watteau, a painter famous in the style of the "fête galante." Pater was accepted as a member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1728.

Questions

How does this painting resemble a scene from a play? Imagine the possible subject of the play, and the identity of each of the characters. Is it realistic to think that people who are so well dressed would want to sit on the ground? Why did the artist show them this way?

Porcelain Factory of Sèvres, *The Flute Lesson*, 1757-66

Porcelain

8 3/4 inches high x 9 1/2 inches wide x 5 1/2 inches deep

2:2012.1

Marjorie Wyman Endowment Fund, the Mary Elizabeth Rosborough
Decorative Arts Fund, and the Lopata Endowment Fund

This porcelain figure shows a young couple taking advantage of a music lesson in order to embrace. The young woman is leaning back against the young man's shoulder, and his arms are around her neck under the pretext of showing her how to play the flute. The small sheep suggests that she is a shepherdess. In an amusing detail, on the boy's left, a little dog is barking.

The Historical Moment

The technique of making ceramics, already known in China, was further developed in 18th-century Europe. This allowed artists to create very delicate works. Each piece had to be fired in the kiln several times, at very high temperatures (2,012° F), and therefore could break easily. A ceramic sculpture as detailed as this one was considered rare and valuable.

The Artistic Genre

In the artistic style known as "fête galante," young couples in love are shown relaxing in the outdoors. The characters are often imaginary peasants, such as shepherds and shepherdesses, but they resemble nobles in the elegance of their bodies, gestures, clothing, and hairstyles. Fine porcelain sculpture imitated characters and situations from the "fêtes galantes," as well as characters from the popular theater of the time.

When porcelain is not painted, it resembles stone sculptures from antiquity, which makes it appear even more "noble," even if its subject is contemporary.

The Artist

The porcelain factory in Sèvres was founded in 1756, by the order of Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour. It was intended to rival the famous factory of Meissen in Germany. The Sèvres artists were men, and the one who created this work is unknown, but François Boucher made designs for many Sèvres porcelain figures.

Questions

What are the differences between a painting and a porcelain figure of the same subject? Which one would you rather look at? Why?

Porcelain Factory of Sèvres, *The Grape Eaters*, 1757-66

Porcelain

8 11/16 inches high x 9 1/4 inches wide x 7 inches deep

2:2012.2

Marjorie Wyman Endowment Fund, the Mary Elizabeth Rosborough
Decorative Arts Fund, and the Lopata Endowment Fund

This small porcelain figure shows a young couple who have just picked some grapes. The young man is feeding grapes to the young woman. They are wearing clothes and hairstyles of the upper class, but their bare feet associate them with country people. The presence of the dog, who is alert to something off to its right, adds an amusing touch.

The Historical Moment

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Questions

What are the differences between a painting and a porcelain figure of the same subject? Which one would you rather look at? Why?

Hubert Robert, *The Ruin*, 1789

Oil on canvas

95 5/8 inches high x 77 inches wide

22:1958

Gift of Mrs. Frederic W. Allen

In this imaginary scene, the colonnade of an important building is all that remains of it. Several men, who may be soldiers because of their helmets, are leaning over a piece of broken column. Another man, with a red cape, is speaking to them beneath the sculpture of an unknown goddess. On the right, a ladder shows that the temple is now used as a dwelling or a barn. In the distance, we see a classical obelisk.

The Historical Moment

In Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries, an important part of a wealthy young man's education was a trip to Italy, called "the Grand Tour." It was believed that seeing historic sites from classical antiquity, especially in the city of Rome, would have a positive influence on his taste and his morals. Classical ruins were the subject of admiration, but were also a reminder that the Roman Empire had fallen, in spite of its former greatness.

The Artistic Genre

Many French and Italian artists made paintings and engravings, sometimes embellished by their imagination, to sell as travel souvenirs. It was very fashionable, especially in England, for noblemen to have paintings of ancient ruins. In addition, they enjoyed decorating the gardens of their estates with statues and architectural fragments that they had purchased during their own "Grand Tour."

The Artist

Hubert Robert (1733-1808) anticipated romanticism in his works. The luminous atmosphere in his paintings evokes the sublime. His preference for the subject of antique ruins earned him the nickname of "Robert of the Ruins."

Questions

Why is the title of this painting "The Ruin," and not "The Temple?" In the painting, the men are not looking at either the sculpture or the temple. Why?

Hubert Robert, *Fantastic [Imaginary] View of Tivoli*, 1789

Oil on canvas
 95 inches high x 75 1/8 inches wide
 524:1955
 Gift of Mrs. Frederic W. Allen

This painting presents an imaginary scene of Tivoli, a town near Rome. In classical antiquity, many wealthy people had country villas there. The scene takes place in the contemporary era, since we see the ruined Temple of the Sibyl on top of the hill on the left. In the center, we see a half-ruined bridge, on which very small figures are in danger of falling off. On the lower left, a man with a red cape and his companion appear to be a tourist and his shepherd guide, while on the lower right another man is dragging a tree branch for some unknown purpose.

The Historical Moment

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The Artist

Hubert Robert (1733-1808) anticipated romanticism in his works. The luminous atmosphere in his paintings evokes the sublime. His preference for the subject of antique ruins earned him the nickname of "Robert of the Ruins."

Questions

If the tourist site was the Temple of the Sibyl, why isn't the temple larger and why isn't it in the center of the painting? Why did the artist add the broken-down bridge?

Joseph Vernet, *A Harbor in Moonlight*, 1787

Oil on canvas
 24 inches high x 32 inches wide
 37:2006
 Gift of Christian B. Peper

The subject of this painting is the port of Naples in Italy. We see a large sailing ship and a lighthouse, lit up on top of a cliff. The intense blue of the sky and the gray clouds suggest the hour of twilight. The small scenes of fishermen on the right and people around a campfire on the left, preparing the evening meal, introduce an element of the picturesque. The full moon is almost in the center of the painting, and its reflection is seen in the water.

The Historical Moment

Maritime scenes were a reminder of the importance of travelling by ship in this era, for commerce and for colonial expansion. France had territories in Canada and Louisiana. Aristocrats enjoyed scenes of working life, as long as they were idealized.

The Artistic Movement

Romanticism was a movement that began near the end of the 18th century and had its highest point in the 19th century. Artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with exotic settings and dramatic effects of color and light. The image sometimes told a familiar story from literature, and the word "romantic" derives from the word "roman" in French, meaning "novel" in English, a literary work of fiction.

The Artist

Joseph Vernet (1714-1789) anticipated romanticism in his works. The luminous atmosphere of his paintings evokes the sublime. Vernet specialized in maritime scenes, with precise detail of the ships of his time.

Questions

In this painting, which lights are "created" by men, and which ones by nature? How are they different from one another? How does the artist make reality seem more gentle in this scene?

Élisabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *The Artist's Brother*, 1773

Oil on canvas
24 1/4 inches high x 19 7/8 inches wide
3:1940

This painting is a portrait of Étienne Vigée, a young man of fifteen who was interested in literature and will later become a well-known author. The artist, who was eighteen, shows him holding a book and a quill pen or paintbrush in his right hand. The turn of his head suggests a spontaneous moment, and his smile reflects the shared affection between brother and sister.

The Historical Moment

In 1770, the royal prince Louis (1754-1793) married a young archduchess of Austria, Marie-Antoinette, when he was fifteen and she was fourteen. On the death of his grandfather Louis XV in 1774, he rose to the throne at the age of nineteen, as Louis XVI.

The Artistic Genre

The realistic portrait was very much admired at the royal court, ever since the great success of the artists Nicolas de Largillière, Hyacinthe Rigaud, and Maurice Quentin de La Tour. Noble subjects were often represented in informal clothing, and the artist emphasized their personality traits rather than symbols of their wealth or social rank.

The Artist

Élisabeth-Louise Vigée-Lebrun (1755-1842) was the daughter of an artist, Louis Vigée. She established herself as a professional painter at the age of fifteen. In 1776, Mademoiselle Vigée married a distant nephew of Charles Le Brun, former First Painter of Louis XIV. Vigée-Lebrun was the same age as the king and queen, and despite being

of middle-class birth, she became the official portraitist and a personal friend of Marie-Antoinette. In 1783, Vigée-Lebrun was named a member of the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture, an extraordinary accomplishment for a woman at that time.

Questions

Why did the artist choose to "capture a moment" rather than having her brother sit in a formal pose? According to the portrait, what personality traits can you associate with Étienne?

François-André Vincent, *Arria and Paetus*, 1784

Oil on canvas

39 3/4 inches high x 48 inches wide

27:2008

Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. John Peters MacCarthy, Director's Discretionary Fund,
funds given by Christian B. Peper, and gift of Mr. Horace Morison by exchange

The subject of this painting is the confrontation between a Roman general, Paetus, and his wife Arria. Paetus had been part of an attempted revolt against the Emperor, but it had failed and he is now a prisoner. Arria visits him in prison, and tells him that honor demands that he commit suicide rather than suffer this humiliation. When her husband hesitates, she demonstrates courage by killing herself. The first name in the work's title, and the more central character in the painting, is Arria.

The Historical Moment

The French Revolution had not yet begun, but there was already strong public feeling against the monarchy. For Royalists, this painting could have represented a moral lesson about what might happen to traitors, but critics of the government could see in it an example of the courage of those who stand up to tyrants.

The Artistic Genre

Since the Renaissance, the most prestigious paintings were those that dealt with mythological or historical subjects, called "history paintings," usually in a large size. Painters of the 17th-century baroque period added elements of movement and contrast between light and dark, to make the subject more dramatic. This type of painting remained popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, and often won awards in artists' exhibitions.

The Artist

François-André Vincent (1746-1816), the son of a painter, won the Rome Prize in 1768, and was admitted to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1777. He was considered the leader of the neoclassical school of painting, and was the major rival of Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). He was named a Professor at the Paris School of Fine Arts in 1792. At first he had royalist leanings, but after the Revolution he was named as one of the first members of the Academy of Fine Arts of the Institute of France, which replaced the Royal Academy in 1795.

Questions

How do the gestures of the two characters convey courage or fear? Why is Arria touching her forehead? What might she be saying to Paetus?

The Nineteenth Century



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Antoine-Louis Barye, *Tiger Devouring a Gavial*, 1831

Bronze

7 3/4 inches high x 19 1/2 inches wide x 8 inches deep
256:1915

This sculpture shows a tiger attacking a gavial, a type of crocodile from India. The artist has captured a moment of action in a fight to the death. We can imagine the feverish battle that is about to take place. The realistic anatomy and muscle tension of the tiger convey menace and violence, but since the victim itself arouses our fear, the viewer's reaction is one of curiosity rather than sympathy.

The Historical Moment

France had just endured a civil revolt, the July Revolution of 1830, which brought the Bourbon dynasty to an end. During this same year, French troops seized the city of Algiers, beginning the war of Algerian conquest (1830-57). This conflict in Africa inspired interest in foreign cultures and in representations of heroism, even in the case of animals.

The Artistic Movement

Romanticism was a movement that began near the end of the 18th century and had its strongest impact in the 19th century. Artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with exotic settings and dramatic effects of color and light. The image sometimes told a familiar story from literature, and the word "romantic" derives from the word "roman" in French, meaning "novel" in English, a literary work of fiction.

The Artist

Antoine-Louis Barye (1796-1875) was a sculptor who was considered the counterpart of Delacroix in painting. He studied animals at the Botanical Garden of Paris, and he imagined them in dramatic situations in far-off countries. This sculpture is a small version of a larger one that was displayed at the Paris Salon in 1831.

Questions

How would your reaction to the sculpture be different if the victim were a lamb? Or a person? Look at the sculpture from as many angles as possible (in the Museum or on the website). What details do you observe, and how do they add to the sculpture's realism?

Rosa Bonheur, *Relay Hunting*, 1887

Oil on canvas

18 inches high x 26 inches wide

7 :1917

Gift of Justina G. Catlin in memory of her husband, Daniel Catlin

This painting shows three horses, waiting their turn in a relay hunt. The luminous white color of the horse in the center stands out against the brown and gray of its companions. The unusual angle, viewing the horses from behind, seems to place the viewer physically in the scene, like someone approaching them on foot.

The Historical Moment

The 1880s, under the Third Republic, were a time of prosperity in France. Hunting was a popular amusement among the nobles, and a hunter would often ride several horses during the day, in order to prevent each one from becoming exhausted.

The Artistic Genre

Artists of the naturalist style favored subjects from everyday life, shown in a realistic manner. One popular genre was the depiction of animals, such as cows or horses. In this type of "animal painting," people played a secondary role, and the viewer's attention was drawn to the form and movement of the animals.

The Artist

Marie-Rosalie Bonheur (1822-1899), called Rosa, was born in Bordeaux. The daughter of a painter, she showed great talent from an early age, and at nineteen, she exhibited a painting in the Paris Salon of 1841. She won a gold medal in the Salon of 1848, and quickly gained international fame. Her animal paintings were much admired by contemporary artists and by influential people such as Empress Eugenia and Queen

Victoria of England. In 1864, she was the first female artist to be named a Knight in the Legion of Honor, and in 1894, she was the first woman to be named an Officer of this order. Bonheur was a woman of independent and modern ideas, and she resisted the customs of the time by wearing pants in public.

Questions

What are the values of "academic" painting illustrated by this painting? Why was the painting of horses associated with male artists of this time, and not with female artists? What is the importance of light and shadow in this painting?

Eugène Boudin, *The Beach at Trouville*, 1869

Oil on canvas
8 7/8 inches high x 14 3/8 inches wide
5:1934

This painting shows a group of people, mostly women, on the beach. They are protecting themselves against the sun with parasols, they are wearing fashionable clothes in bright colors, and they are seated on wooden chairs. The cabana on the right and the heads of a few swimmers in the sea suggest that the weather is warm.

The Historical Moment

In 1869, France was shaken by political turmoil that would lead to the Franco-Prussian War and the Revolt of the Commune. However, people continued to visit the seaside, and Trouville in Normandy was a popular destination.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." Artists also began to leave their studios, to paint outdoors. This allowed them to capture atmospheric effects with techniques that became more rapid and less detailed.

The Artist

Eugène-Louis Boudin (1796-1875), the son of a sailor, was born in Honfleur, in Normandy. While working in a stationery shop, he met artists who encouraged him, and he dedicated himself to painting after 1846. He specialized in paintings that showed the sea and beaches, with striking effects of light. Camille Corot called him "the king of skies." He is considered to be an important influence for the Impressionists.

Questions

Boudin is called a painter of seascapes, but is the sea the real subject of this painting? Why or why not? Compare this painting with the one by Camille Corot, *The Beach, Étretat* (63 :1932).

Adolphe-William Bouguereau, *Peace*, 1860

Oil on canvas
33 1/2 inches high x 42 1/4 inches wide
304:1925
Gift of Miss Lillie B. Randell

This painting shows two young children, a boy and a girl, in a forest setting. Their nudity evokes mythological allegories, but they do not directly represent known figures. Instead, it is their affectionate relationship which suggests the title of the painting. There is a companion painting, in a museum in Mexico, called *War*, in which two different children, also a boy and a girl, are fighting over a piece of fruit.

The Historical Moment

At this time, France was governed by the Second Empire of Napoleon III. The 1860s were a period of prosperity and economic development, which supported the careers of many artists. This painting enjoyed great success at the Paris Salon of 1861, at which it was exhibited.

The Artistic Movement

Allegorical painting became popular in the 16th century among artists of the School of Fontainebleau. These subjects were also frequent in the 17th and 18th centuries, which gave them historical significance. The familiar genre and the realistic technique reflect the traditional values of the Academy of Fine Arts, sometimes called the “academic style.”

The Artist

Adolphe-William Bouguereau (1825-1905) was born in La Rochelle, the son of a wine merchant. He entered the Paris School of Fine Arts in 1846, and became a professor there in 1888; in 1876 he was named to the Academy of Fine Arts. He was very successful among American art collectors. His work was so closely associated with the Paris Salon that the painter Cézanne called it the "Bouguereau Salon," which was not intended as a compliment.

Questions

Why did this painting win a prize? What seems to you to be admirable in the composition, technique, or concept? How does this painting contrast with paintings in the naturalist or impressionist styles?

Jules Breton, *The Wounded Sea Gull*, 1878

Oil on canvas

36 1/2 inches high x 30 3/8 inches wide

27:1917

Gift of Justina G. Catlin in memory of her husband, Daniel Catlin

This painting shows a realistic image of a young Breton woman on the seashore. She is holding in her arms a bird that seems to be looking up at her, but she is looking at something far away, or dreaming of something invisible. The painting suggests a romantic story, in which the woman's compassion may be inspired by heartache for an absent or deceased lover. The life of sailors and fishermen was very dangerous.

The Historical Moment

In 1878, the world's attention was drawn to France for the Universal Exposition (World's Fair) in Paris. Painters who could combine the stylistic realism of the Academy with sentimental subjects found a large and admiring public.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." Romanticism, however, remained very popular, and there were many works which seem to have elements of both movements.

The Artist

Jules Breton (1827-1906) was a recognized poet whose literary works were admired by Victor Hugo. He was elected to the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris, in 1886. He is considered part of the second generation of painters of the Barbizon School, but his works also show the influence of romanticism. This may be seen in idealized images of peasants.

Questions

Why does the artist show the woman and the seagull in shadow, while the sky and the sea in the background are very bright? How does the artist evoke the atmosphere of the beach? Can you imagine any sounds or odors?

Paul Cézanne, *Bathers*, 1890-92

Oil on canvas

21 3/8 inches high x 26 inches wide

2:1956

Funds given by Mrs. Mark C. Steinberg

This painting shows a group of men who are preparing to bathe or swim in a river. The disproportionate figures, with small faceless heads, suggest that the artist was reacting against the anatomical perfection admired by the Academy. Instead, this is a study of colors and movements, with visible brushstrokes. In the background, we can vaguely see Mount Sainte-Victoire, to which Cézanne devoted a series of paintings.

The Historical Moment

Cézanne's father died in 1888, and he inherited a sum of money sufficient for living comfortably. His works, however, had not yet been featured in an exhibition. This would take place in 1895, at the gallery of the Parisian dealer Ambroise Vollard. At the moment of this painting, Cézanne was therefore still an unknown artist. This painting was shown in Vollard's gallery, and was purchased by the painter Claude Monet in 1906, a few months before Cézanne died.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of expressionism uses geometric forms and bright colors, sometimes leaning towards abstraction. This painting is also impressionistic, in the sense that it seeks to capture visually a moment of experience.

The Artist

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), the son of a banker, was born in Aix-en-Provence, and he later studied law there. In addition, he took courses at the School of Drawing. In 1869, he went to Paris, where he made friends with impressionist painters, but a few years later he returned to the south of France. He was very interested in color and in volume, for example in still lifes, and he is considered to be a forerunner of cubism.

Questions

Nude women bathing are a familiar subject in art. How does the meaning of the painting change when the bathers are male? Why does the artist use the same colors, light blue and orange, for both the landscape and the people?

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, *The Beach, Étretat*, 1872

Oil on canvas
14 inches high x 22 3/16 inches wide
63:1932

This painting shows boats on the beach of a small town in Normandy which was popular in the summertime. We see in the background the cliff of Amont, with a small chapel on the top right. The boats are caïques, fishing boats that have been used since the time of the Vikings.

The Historical Moment

In 1872, France was emerging from a period of turmoil, after the Franco-Prussian War and the Revolt of the Commune. The artist, who was then 76 years old, travelled through France, in spite of having problems with his health. He may have been seeking subjects that were calm and far removed from any politics.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." The "Barbizon School" was the name given to a group of painters who lived for a while in the village of Barbizon, near the Fontainebleau forest, and who loved to paint landscapes and peasants.

The Artist

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (1796-1875) was born in Paris, to a family of merchants. He was able to pursue a career as a painter thanks to the financial support of his parents. Corot is considered to be one of the founders of the Barbizon School, and he had an

important influence on the Impressionists. His works include a wide variety of styles and techniques.

Questions

What is the color palette in this painting? Why did the artist use black for the boats? What are the people in the scene doing? How would the painting be different if the people weren't there? Compare this painting with the one by Eugène Boudin, *The Beach at Trouville* (5 :1934).

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, *Girl [The Dreamer] with a Mandolin*, 1860-65

Oil on canvas
20 1/4 inches high x 15 7/8 inches wide
3:1939

This painting is the portrait of a young woman, who seems to look at the musical instrument without playing it. This inspired the title of "The Dreamer," although we do not know if this was the title given by the artist. The contrast between light and dark is reminiscent of works of the 17th century, and the Italian costume worn by the girl creates a theatrical look. Corot is best known as a painter of outdoor scenes with peasants, but this work, which was created in a studio with a posed model, shows that an artist can resist labels.

The Historical Moment

During this time, France was under the Second Empire, ruled by Napoleon III. The 1860s were a period of prosperity and economic development, which sustained the careers of many artists.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." The "Barbizon School" was the name given to a group of painters who lived for a while in the village of Barbizon, near the Fontainebleau forest, and who loved to paint landscapes and peasants.

The Artist

Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (1796-1875) was born in Paris, to a family of merchants. He was able to pursue a career as a painter thanks to the financial support of his parents. Corot is considered to be one of the founders of the Barbizon School, and he had an important influence on the Impressionists. His works include a wide variety of styles and techniques.

Questions

Does the painting seem to you realistic or romantic? What are the arguments in favor of each choice? What would the members of the Academy have thought about this painting, and why?

Gustave Courbet, *The Greyhounds of the Comte de Choiseul*, 1866

Oil on canvas
35 1/4 inches high x 45 7/8 inches wide
168:1953
Funds given by Mrs. Mark C. Steinberg

We see here two dogs in a place that they know well, a beach under a stormy sky. In this double portrait, the artist represents not only the elegant appearance of these animals, but also their two distinct personalities. One of the dogs is looking a little timidly at the viewer, while the other one is looking at something outside of the scene.

The Historical Moment

Courbet spent the summer of 1866 in Deauville, on the Normandy coast, as the guest of the Count de Choiseul. During his stay, he made a portrait of the count's two greyhounds, who may have been racing dogs. From the 18th century onward, animal portraits were fashionable, allowing a wealthy person to preserve the memory of a beloved dog or horse.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism," even if the style does not imitate the technical realism favored by the Academy.

The Artist

Gustave Courbet (1819-1877) studied both law and fine arts, finally choosing a career in the latter subject. From the 1840s onward, he was part of the bohemian life in Paris,

and considered himself to be an artistic and political rebel. Courbet used the term realism to describe his own style, and did not hesitate to shock the viewer with untraditional subjects like burials or sexualized female nudes.

Questions

Why did the artist choose a beach for the setting, instead of a house or a yard? According to the portrait, what do you think the relationship was between these two animals?

Charles-François Daubigny, *Banks of the Oise at Auvers*, 1863

Oil on canvas

35 inches high x 63 1/2 inches wide

84:2007

Friends Endowment, and gift of Justina G. Catlin
in memory of her husband, Daniel Catlin, by exchange

This landscape is an example of the style of the "Barbizon School." This was a group of painters who loved to paint outdoors, with nature as their favorite subject. Here we see a very calm river reflecting the colors of the green trees and the light blue sky. A single, very thin tree creates a vertical line in the center. There are people present, but they are almost invisible, and their activity of fishing or walking adds to the tranquillity of the atmosphere.

The Historical Moment

In 1863, France was under the reign of Napoleon III, and Daubigny exhibited this painting in the Paris Salon. In that same year, the "Salon of the Refused" showed works by artists whose works had been refused by the Academy, including Manet, Pissarro, and Fantin-Latour. Daubigny sold this painting in 1867 to Monsieur Pérrier, the deputy mayor of Épernay, and the painting stayed in the same family until 2007.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." The Barbizon School, which was inspired by nature as it appeared in real life, became a forerunner of Impressionism.

The Artist

Charles-François Daubigny (1817-1878) had a father and an uncle who were both painters. He was influenced by Camille Corot and Gustave Courbet, and he is considered to be one of the greatest naturalist painters of the 19th century.

Questions

How does this painting contrast with the dramatic style of romanticism? Is there movement in the painting? If so, what kind? Why did the artist put the tree almost exactly in the center of the painting?

Edgar Degas, *Ballet Dancers in the Wings*, c. 1890-1900

Pastel
28 inches high x 26 inches wide
24:1935

This pastel drawing seems to show several dancers in different poses, but it may in fact be a single red-haired young woman, captured in different contiguous movements in a diagonal composition. They are warming up their muscles in a realistic way, instead of striking artistic poses. The soft colors of yellow and blue are repeated in the scenery, in their tulle dresses, and in the fan.

The Historical Moment

The years between 1885 and 1900 are called the "Belle Époque" (beautiful era) of Paris, because of relative prosperity and enjoyment of the arts. There was also a "demi-monde" (half-world) of dancers at the Paris Opera or clubs like the Moulin Rouge in Montmartre. They were sometimes prostitutes or mistresses of wealthy men, as described in Colette's famous novel *Gigi*.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of Impressionism was a revolt against academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists attempted to show a moment of life as it was lived. They tried to capture the light with rapid brushstrokes of vivid color.

The Artist

Edgar Degas (1834-1917) was the son of a banker. Early on, he studied law. His artistic training was in a neoclassical style, but later he became allied with the Impressionists,

especially in his pastel works. Racehorses and ballet dancers were frequent subjects for Degas, because of their elegant form and movement. From the 1880s onward, Degas began to lose his sight, and he became more and more interested in sculpture.

Questions

Why does the artist choose to show these dancers behind the scenes, and not during a performance? Discuss how the artist uses curved and angular lines in this drawing.

Edgar Degas, *Galloping Horse*, c. 1889-90

Bronze

12 1/4 inches high x 18 1/4 inches wide x 8 inches deep

187:1946

This bronze sculpture is very small. It represents a racehorse galloping, and the raised tail suggests speed. The realism of the horse's anatomy and muscular action illustrates the artistic values of the Academy, but the pose is not conventional and we are surprised by how the sculpture seems to be balanced.

The Historical Moment

The years between 1885 and 1900 are called the "Belle Époque" (beautiful era) of Paris, because of relative prosperity and enjoyment of the arts. Horse races were a popular entertainment, and wealthy men often had their own horses and professional jockeys. They liked to bet on the races, sometimes winning or losing fortunes.

The Artistic Movement

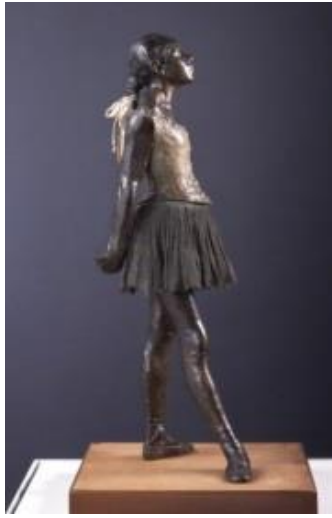
Impressionist artists sought to capture a moment of life as it was lived. We do not often associate sculpture with impressionism, but Degas provides the exception.

The Artist

Edgar Degas (1834-1917) was the son of a banker. Early on, he studied law. His study of art was in a neoclassical style, but later he became allied with the Impressionists, especially in regard to his pastel works. Racehorses and ballet dancers were frequent subjects for Degas, because of their elegant form and movement. From the 1880s onward, Degas began to lose his sight, and he became more and more interested in sculpture.

Questions

What are the differences between a sculpture, a painting, or a drawing of the same subject? Why did the artist choose to show the horse without a bridle, a saddle, or a jockey?

Edgar Degas, *Little Dancer of Fourteen Years*, c. 1880

Bronze, tulle and satin
 38 1/2 inches high x 16 1/4 inches wide x 13 3/4 inches deep
 135:1956
 Funds given by Mrs. Mark C. Steinberg

This bronze sculpture has the unusual aspect of being dressed in fabric, tulle and satin. The original version was in wax, and this bronze version was cast around 1920, after the artist's death. It portrays a real person, Marie van Gothen, who was a student in the School of Dance at the Paris Opera. Her feet are in the "fourth position," and the thinness of her legs and facial features reveals her youth.

The Historical Moment

The years between 1885 and 1900 are called the "Belle Époque" (beautiful era) of Paris, because of relative prosperity and enjoyment of the arts. There was also a "demi-monde" (half-world) of dancers at the Paris Opera or clubs like the Moulin Rouge in Montmartre. They were sometimes prostitutes or mistresses of wealthy men, as described in Colette's famous novel *Gigi*.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of Impressionism was a revolt against academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists attempted to show a moment of life as it was lived. They tried to capture the light with rapid brushstrokes of vivid color.

The Artist

Edgar Degas (1834-1917) was the son of a banker. Early on, he studied law. His study of art was in a neoclassical style, but later he became allied with the Impressionists, especially in regard to his pastel works. Racehorses and ballet dancers were frequent subjects for Degas, because of their elegant form and movement. From the 1880s onward, Degas began to lose his sight, and he became more and more interested in sculpture.

Questions

What are the differences between a sculpture, a painting, or a drawing of the same subject? Is the artist's observation of this girl neutrally objective or sympathetic?

Edgar Degas, *The Milliners*, c. 1898

Oil on canvas
29 5/8 inches high x 32 1/4 inches wide
25:2007
Donors listed on next page

This painting shows two milliners, women who are making hats for fashionable ladies. The large flat surfaces of their dresses and aprons, and of the hat in the middle, draw our attention to the intense colors. The individual identity of these women does not seem to be important, and the face of the woman on the left is almost completely hidden. However, the lively color of her red dress suggests that she has a bold spirit, and also that she is an artist, in the realm of making hats.

The Historical Moment

At the end of the nineteenth century, women who worked as milliners came from a low social class, and could neither buy nor wear the decorative hats that they made for women who were more wealthy. A successful milliner could become the owner of a shop, but the work of making the hats was difficult and poorly paid.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of expressionism uses geometric forms and bright colors, sometimes leaning towards abstraction. In contrast with impressionism, artists did not seek to capture visually a moment of life, but rather to suggest an emotional aspect of the subject. The style of this painting is close to what we often associate with Cézanne or Manet.

The Artist

Edgar Degas (1834-1917) was the son of a banker. Early on, he studied law. His artistic training was in a neoclassical style, but later he became allied with the Impressionists, especially in his pastel works. Racehorses and ballet dancers were frequent subjects for Degas, because of their elegant form and movement. From the 1880s onward, Degas began to lose his sight, and he became more and more interested in sculpture.

Questions

How would this painting have been different, if the artist had followed the Academy's rules for painting?

Director's Discretionary Fund; and gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur D. May, Dr. Ernest G. Stillman, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney M. Shoenberg Sr. and Mr. and Mrs. Sydney M. Shoenberg Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Irving Edison, and Harry Tenenbaum, bequest of Edward Mallinckrodt Sr., and gift of Mr. and Mrs. S. J. Levin, by exchange

Eugène Delacroix, *Weisslingen Captured by Götz's Men*, 1853

Oil on canvas
29 inches high x 24 inches wide
75:1954
Emelie Weindal Bequest Fund

The subject of this painting is an episode from the play *Götz von Berlichingen* (1773), by the German author Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Weisslingen has been taken prisoner by the soldiers of the heroic knight Götz, and despite the violence of the combat, we see that the protagonist (in yellow) is not injured. The three rearing horses add dramatic vitality, and they are an artist's inspiration that would be impossible to show on the stage of a theater.

The Historical Moment

In the year 1853, the Emperor of the Second Empire, Napoleon III (1808-1873) married a Spanish noblewoman, who became Empress Eugénie. Baron Haussmann (1809-1891) became Prefect of the Seine, and he began his project to develop the Grand Boulevards and the numbered districts of Paris. In October, the Crimean War began, joining France in an alliance with Germany and England against Russia. The works of Goethe became popular again, because of how much they showed admiration for knightly valor.

The Artistic Movement

Romanticism was a movement that began near the end of the 18th century and had its strongest impact in the 19th century. Artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with exotic settings and dramatic effects of color and light. The image sometimes told

a familiar story from literature, and the word "romantic" derives from the word "roman" in French, meaning "novel" in English, a literary work of fiction.

The Artist

Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) was inspired by Rubens. He was interested in movement and colors, rather than in the clarity of line. He travelled in North Africa, and his paintings reflect a taste for the exotic. He had a strong stylistic influence on the Impressionist painters of the next generation. His best-known work is the large painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830).

Questions

Imagine how this scene would be different if it were being played by actors in a theater, and draw it.

Gustave Doré, *Loch Lomond*, 1875

Oil on canvas
48 inches high x 75 inches wide
88:1913

This very large painting shows several scenes. In the foreground, on the lower left, we see a rocky trail with two tiny figures. The largest part of the painting is devoted to a dramatic view of the loch (a lake, in the Scottish language) surrounded by mountains. The surface of the loch is a thin white band, reflecting the visible rays of the sun penetrating through stormy clouds. The painting seems to evoke the traditional ballad *Loch Lomond*, of which the refrain is "you'll take the high road and I'll take the low road, and I'll be in Scotland afore ye." The song tells the story of two young soldiers, one of whom is dying and will therefore reach Heaven (for which Scotland is a metaphor) before his friend.

The Historical Moment

The Third Republic (1870-1914) was a time of peace in France. The fine arts flourished, with an educated middle class that wanted to acquire works of art. Romantic subjects, inspired by historical and literary tradition, remained popular until the beginning of the first World War.

The Artistic Movement

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The Artist

Gustave Doré (1832-1883) was born in Strasbourg and later lived in Paris. While very young, he showed a talent for drawing, including caricature. He became a well-known painter, engraver, and illustrator, and made very famous illustrations for the *Works* of Rabelais, the *Fables* of La Fontaine, and the *Fairy Tales* of Perrault, among many other books.

Questions

How does knowing the story of the ballad change your understanding of the painting?

Louise-Adéone Drölling, *Interior with Young Woman Tracing a Flower*, c. 1820-22

Oil on canvas
 22 1/4 inches high x 17 7/8 inches wide
 160:1946
 Miss Lillie B. Randell by exchange

In this painting, a young woman is tracing the shape of a flower against the glass of a tall window. One of the accepted activities of a young woman of the upper middle class was to draw flowers, in addition to reading, embroidery, and playing a musical instrument. The girl has turned her head to look at her pet, which is a squirrel. The animal has perhaps cracked a nut, and the noise has distracted the girl.

The Historical Moment

After the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815, the French monarchy was restored under King Louis XVIII. France regained peace and prosperity, and the middle class grew larger. Women artists became more numerous.

The Artistic Genre

Scenes of everyday life were very popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, with a realistic setting and people carrying out familiar tasks. The portrait or self-portrait was a genre considered appropriate for women artists, while historical or religious painting was reserved for men.

The Artist

Louise-Adéone Drölling (1797-1831) was born in Alsace. Her father and brother were painters. She presented this painting to the Royal Salon of Painting and Sculpture in 1824, and the work received a Gold Medal. The painting was purchased by the Duchess de Berry, who had a prestigious art collection.

Questions

How does the furnishing of the room reflect the girl's activities? For the judges of the Salon, what technical aspects of this painting deserved a medal?

Julien Dupré, *Haying Scene*, 1884

Oil on canvas

48 5/8 inches high x 59 1/2 inches wide

25:1917

Gift of Justina G. Catlin in memory of her husband, Daniel Catlin

This painting shows a young peasant woman who is part of a group harvesting hay. The painting has vivid colors, and one can observe that the woman's clothing has the colors of the French national flag. The style is very realistic, with brushstrokes that suggest the bit of hay flying through the air. The scene is nevertheless idealized, because it gives no idea of the strenuous and difficult nature of the work. The only negative element is the clouds at upper left, which indicate a coming storm. This might require the participation of women in a task that was normally for men, to bring in the harvest before the rain arrived.

The Historical Moment

In 1884, the "Belle Époque" flourished in Paris. The middle class had grown due to economic prosperity, and many people wanted to beautify their houses with paintings of attractive scenes. A well-executed image of farm fields, with industrious peasants, would be easy to sell.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This

movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." Romanticism, however, remained very popular, and there were many works which seem to have elements of both movements.

The Artist

Julien Dupré (1851-1910) studied at the School of Fine Arts in Paris. He received the Gold Medal at the Paris Universal Exposition in 1889, and he was named to the Legion of Honor in 1892. He is associated with the second generation of painters of the Barbizon School, but his works also show the influence of romanticism, with idealized images of peasants.

Questions

Does the painting show equality between men and women? Why or why not?

Henri Fantin-Latour, *The Two Sisters*, 1859

Oil on canvas
38 3/4 inches high x 51 3/8 inches wide
8:1937

In this painting, the artist made a double portrait of his two sisters. Nathalie, on the left, interrupts her embroidery to look at the artist, and Marie, on the right, continues reading. Their black dresses with white collars seem to be school uniforms. The composition is balanced by two white diagonal lines forming an X shape, made up of the embroidery, Nathalie's sleeve and Marie's collar, and of Nathalie's sleeve, the book, and Marie's sleeve.

The Historical Moment

In the mid-nineteenth century, the education of young middle-class girls included domestic arts such as embroidery, in addition to fine arts such as drawing and watercolor painting. Girls went to school, not to find a career, but to become intelligent wives and to become capable of managing a household.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism, which emphasized imaginary and idealized scenes. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism," even if the artist's style did not imitate the technical realism favored by the Academy.

The Artist

Henri Fantin-Latour (1836-1904), the son of a Grenoble painter, attended the School of Fine Arts in Paris. He is considered to be a link between realism and impressionism. His works include still lifes showing the influence of Chardin. He also made many

portraits, sometimes in a soft style as in this painting, and sometimes with an almost photographic realism.

Questions

Although the two girls are engaged in different activities, they are very close to each other. What does this suggest about their personal relationship? In your opinion, what are the personality traits of each sister?

Paul Gauguin, *Landscape with a Horse*, 1899

Oil on burlap
27 7/8 inches high x 17 1/2 inches wide
27:1974
Gift of Sydney M. Shoenberg Sr.

This painting was done with oil paint on burlap wrapping cloth, which adds to the rustic appearance. We see a landscape with a large tree-trunk in the foreground, a horse in the middle, farther away some native huts, and a background of mountains. In this work, the painter uses a variety of styles, sometimes vague patches and sometimes clean lines. The natural elements near the bottom are difficult to distinguish, but the horse is drawn with precision. The soft colors of the landscape contrast with the visual drama of the dark mountains against the white clouds.

The Historical Moment

In 1899, Gauguin was living in Polynesia, having permanently left behind his life in Europe. He died in 1903, in Atuona, a village in the Marquesas Islands.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of expressionism uses geometric forms and bright colors, sometimes leaning towards abstraction. These paintings also sometimes reflect the influence of

japonisme, which is the imitation of Japanese artworks. In this case, the work's vertical composition suggests an Asian scroll.

The Artist

Paul Gauguin (1848-1903), who worked at the Paris stock exchange, lived a middle-class life with a wife and five children. He dedicated himself to painting in 1882, but without financial success. Leaving his family with his parents-in-law in Denmark, he began to travel. After his stay in Arles, where he became friends with Vincent van Gogh, he spent long periods of time in Polynesia. His paintings of the native people and landscapes made him famous to future generations, and influenced the Fauvists of the twentieth century.

Questions

What appears to be the focal point of this painting? Are there several of them? Does the atmosphere of this painting seem to you to be peaceful or dramatic? Why?

Paul Gauguin, *Madame Roulin*, 1888

Oil on canvas

19 7/8 inches high x 25 inches wide

5:1959

Funds given by Mrs. Mark C. Steinberg

This portrait shows a woman with a calm and pensive air. She possesses a simple beauty, without any ornamentation of clothing or hairstyle. She is offset from the center of the image, and her hair and hands extend beyond the visual frame. She seems to be looking in the direction of the light that creates a shadow behind her chair. There is a diagonal line between that shadow and her face, which looks yellow from the sunlight, and this echoes the yellow diagonal in the painting on the wall.

The Historical Moment

In 1888, the painter made a trip to Arles, in the south of France. He made this portrait of Madame Augustine Roulin, the wife of the village postman, when she was thirty-seven years old. The painting on the wall is *The Blue Trees*, which Gauguin painted during this time. Vincent van Gogh also made portraits of Madame Roulin, as part of a series of paintings of the postman's entire family.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of expressionism uses geometric forms and bright colors, sometimes leaning towards abstraction. In contrast with impressionism, artists did not seek to capture visually a moment of life, but rather to suggest an emotional aspect of the subject. These paintings sometimes reflect the influence of *japonisme*, which is the

imitation of Japanese artworks, often woodblock prints, with clean lines surrounding blocks of color.

The Artist

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Questions

How does this portrait go against the conventional ideal of feminine beauty? What personality traits does the artist seem to want to emphasize?

Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Sentinel [Vigil] at the Sultan's Tomb*, c. 1880

Oil on canvas
32 1/4 inches high x 26 1/8 inches wide
77:1915

The subject of this painting is a 15th-century mausoleum in Bursa, Turkey. It shows two men holding a religious vigil, making their prayers in front of the tomb of the deceased sultan. The light seems to come from behind the viewer, and our eye is drawn to the bright colors of the tomb and the flags. The precise details of the costumes and the realistic style make it seem like the stage setting of a play.

The Historical Moment

During the 1870s and 1880s, France was beginning an expansion of its colonies in Africa, Indochina, Madagascar, and other countries. The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire was an ally of the French government. Images of Turkish life were therefore a subject of curiosity without any political threat.

The Artistic Movement

Romanticism was a movement that began near the end of the 18th century and had its strongest impact in the 19th century. Artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with exotic settings and dramatic effects of color and light. The image sometimes told a familiar story from literature, and the word "romantic" derives from the word "roman" in French, meaning "novel" in English, a literary work of fiction.

The Artist

Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) was a painter and sculptor. He taught for many years at the School of Fine Arts in Paris. His style reflected the admired Academic virtues, which were opposed to the Impressionism of the same period. He was often inspired by scenes of the Middle East, which had been popular ever since Ingres (*The Grand Odalisque*, 1814). During his lifetime, Gérôme was considered one of France's most important artists.

Questions

How did the artist create a mysterious atmosphere? Can you imagine this scene taking place in a church in France? What would be the similarities, and the differences?

Sophie Lienard, *Louis-Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, King of the French*, c. 1830-45



Enamel on porcelain
5 1/16 inches high x 4 1/16 inches wide
28:1933.93

Gift of Mrs. Frank Spiekerman, The Frank Spiekerman Collection

This is a miniature portrait. It is made of enamel on porcelain, in an oval frame of gilded metal. The portrait shows a very dignified man with curly gray hair. The only indication of his royal blood is the discreet red sash on his chest.

The Historical Moment

Louis-Philippe (1773-1850) was the last French king. He was named king during what is called the "July Monarchy." This portrait was probably a copy of a large oil painting by Franz Xaver Winterhalter, an official painter at the court of Louis-Philippe. Winterhalter also made portraits of Queen Victoria of England.

The Artistic Genre

The miniature portrait was known since the Renaissance. It was often an object given as a sign of affection, exchanged between spouses or friends, and which could be worn on clothing like a jewel. The realistic technique represents the traditional values of the Academy of Fine Arts, sometimes called "academic style." In addition, the extraordinary difficulty of painting with very delicate brushes required the use of a magnifying glass in order for the artist to see the details of the image.

The Artist

Sophie Lienard, who died in 1845, was a miniaturist who worked in Paris. She exhibited works at the Paris Salon between 1842 and 1845.

Questions

What are the differences between a life-size portrait and one that is bigger or smaller? Which one seems to you to have the most value or importance, and why?

Edouard Manet, *The Reader*, 1861

Oil on canvas
39 1/4 inches high x 32 inches high
254:1915

The artist made this portrait of his friend Joseph Gall, another Parisian painter. The large size of the book, in folio format, suggests that it is a very old book, from the man's own library. The absence of details in the clothing gives a timeless quality to the portrait, which could have been made in the 17th or 18th centuries as well as in the nineteenth century.

The Historical Moment

This portrait predates the works by Manet that created a scandal. Manet had ended his studies (1850-56) with the painter Thomas Couture, who favored the academic style. He had just recently exhibited his first paintings, in 1860.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism, which emphasized imaginary and idealized scenes. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism," even if the artist's style did not imitate the technical realism favored by the Academy.

The Artist

Édouard Manet (1832-1883) was a Parisian, the son of a government worker. He was friends with the Impressionist painters, and the painter Berthe Morisot married his

brother Eugène. However, he preferred the naturalist style, and was influenced by Diego Velázquez and Franz Hals. Some of his most famous works created a scandal because of their eroticism: *Luncheon on the Grass* (1862) and *Olympia* (1863). His last major painting was *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1881-82), a work that was sympathetic to a barmaid in the bohemian world of Montmartre.

Questions

If Monsieur Gall is a painter, which is he shown with a book and not a painter's palette? Why did the artist decide to eliminate all references to the contemporary era? How is the shape of a triangle important in the painting's composition?

Jean-François Millet, *The Knitting Lesson*, 1869

Oil on canvas
39 7/8 inches high x 32 3/4 inches wide
106:1939

This painting shows a woman and a child, perhaps a mother and daughter. Their simple clothing and the tanned face of the woman identify them as peasants. The universal subject of teaching, and the absence of contemporary details in the dark interior, make this painting a thematic and stylistic counterpart to Dutch works of the 17th century. The slightly idealized face of the girl, and the tender gesture of the woman putting her hand on the girl's shoulder, give a sentimental quality to this scene.

The Historical Moment

In 1869, France was under the rule of Napoleon III, but there were political troubles on the horizon. The Franco-Prussian War would break out in 1870, and the French defeat at its end would result in the Revolt of the Commune in 1871. By observing closely the life of poor people in the countryside, artists like Millet were making an indirect comment on the politics of the time, and on the unequal distribution of wealth.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." The Barbizon School was the name given to a group of painters who lived for a time in the village of Barbizon, near the forest of Fontainebleau, and who loved to paint landscapes and peasants.

The Artist

Jean-François Millet (1814-1875) was born a peasant, and spent his childhood working on a family farm. Thanks to an uncle, he was able to receive a good education. After living in Cherbourg and Paris, he settled in Barbizon until his death. He always retained sympathy for the working class, and his most famous work is *The Gleaners* (1857).

Questions

Does this painting seem to you to be more realistic or romantic? What are the arguments in favor of each opinion? What would the Academicians have thought about this painting, and why?

Claude Monet, *The Promenade with the Railroad Bridge, Argenteuil, 1874*

Oil on canvas
21 1/8 inches high x 28 3/8 inches wide
45:1973
Gift of Sydney M. Shoenberg Sr.

This scene shows a woman and a young boy walking on the banks of the Seine river, near the village of Argenteuil. They may be the artist's wife and son. The presence of the railroad bridge reminds us of modern industrialization, a subject that was not considered worthy in the academic tradition, but which was part of everyone's real life. The people seem to play a secondary role in comparison with the river and the sky, the movement of clouds and water, and especially the light.

The Historical Moment

Around 1870, France suffered not only defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, having lost the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, but also the civil revolt of the Commune in 1871. The concept of a stable and unchanging ideal seemed to evaporate, both in politics and in art. Many artists who had received an academic training turned away from those ideas and were looking for a different kind of truth.

The Artistic Genre

The impressionist movement was a revolt against the academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists sought to capture a moment of experience as it was lived. They left the studio to paint outdoors, and tried to re-create effects of light with soft brushstrokes and bright colors.

The Artist

Claude Monet (1840-1926) is considered to be the father of impressionist painting. His work *Impression Rising Sun* (1872) inspired the title of the movement. He is best known for a series of paintings of the waterlilies that he cultivated in the pond of his garden at Giverny.

Questions

Is the bridge the most important element in this painting? Can you suggest another title? How would this painting be different if the artist had drawn the objects in a more precise way?

Camille Pissarro, *The Bell Tower of Bazincourt*, 1885

Oil on canvas

25 5/8 inches high x 21 1/8 inches wide

178:1955

Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. John E. Simon

This scene represents the village of Bazincourt-sur-Epte, in Picardy, near Éragny-sur-Epte where Pissarro lived after 1884. We see the belltower of a church, reduced to a shadowy silhouette in front of a luminous sky. The church is seen through thickets and trees, suggested by waving brushstrokes.

The Historical Moment

During a period of relative peace and prosperity, France was preparing to celebrate the centennial of the beginning of the French Revolution, in 1889.

The Artistic Movement

The impressionist movement was a revolt against the academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists sought to capture a moment of experience as it was lived. They left the studio to paint outdoors, and tried to re-create effects of light with soft brushstrokes and bright colors.

The Artist

Camille Pissarro (1830-1903) was born on the island of St. Thomas in the Antilles, which was a Danish territory at the time. His father was a French citizen of Portuguese heritage, and was a hardware merchant. As a young man, Pissarro left the family

business to study art in Paris, from 1855 onward. He was a student of Corot and a friend of Cézanne, Seurat, Gauguin, and Monet. During his lifetime, he was never very successful, but some of his painting are viewed today as masterpieces of impressionism and pointillism.

Questions

In which season of the year did the artist create this painting? At what time of day? Explain the reasons for your choice. Identify the numerous nearly-vertical lines or shapes that you can see in the grass, the trees, and the sky. What is the importance of vertical movement in this painting?

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *The Dreamer*, 1879

Oil on canvas
20 1/8 inches high x 24 3/8 inches wide
5:1935

This portrait of a young woman evokes beauty and sensuality. Her tilted head, her direct gaze at the viewer and her gesture of bringing her little finger towards her mouth suggest flirtation. The background is an abstract study of colors, which could represent flowered wallpaper, or could be a visual metaphor for the girl's dream.

The Historical Moment

At the time of this painting, Renoir had developed his own impressionist style. He preferred scenes with people, such as *The Ball at the Moulin de la Galette* (1876). He had his first success at the Paris Salon in 1879, which brought an end to several years of poverty.

The Artistic Movement

The impressionist movement was a revolt against the academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists sought to capture a moment of experience as it was lived. They left the studio to paint outdoors, and tried to re-create effects of light with soft brushstrokes and bright colors.

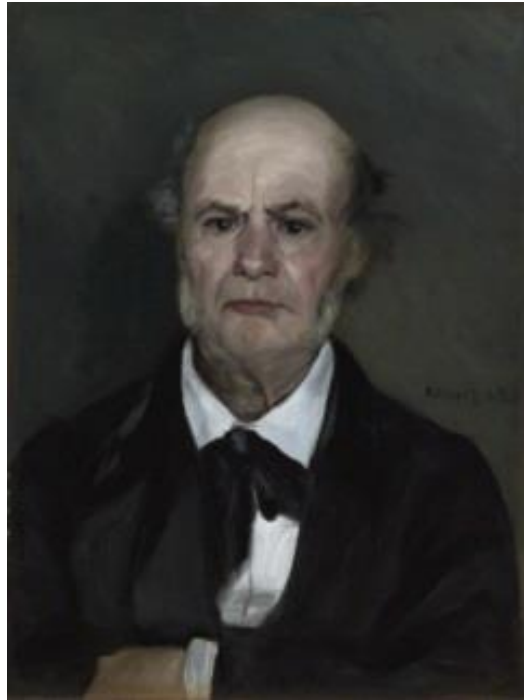
The Artist

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) was born in Limoges. He was the son of Léonard Renoir, a tailor who moved his family to Paris. When he was thirteen, Pierre-Auguste became an apprentice in a porcelain workshop, and he took classes in art and music. In 1862, he was admitted to the School of Fine Arts in Paris, but he did not stay there for

long. He became a member of the painter's circle that included Monet, Caillebotte, and Sisley, who introduced him to outdoor painting. Today Renoir's work is considered to be part of the impressionist movement, but he adopted several different styles throughout his very long career.

Questions

Compare this portrait with the one that Renoir made of his father, ten years earlier. What are the differences, stylistically and emotionally? What is the young woman dreaming about?

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Léonard Renoir, The Artist's Father*, 1869

Oil on canvas
24 1/2 inches high x 18 1/2 inches wide
37:1933

The artist made this portrait of his father with a serious expression, and his left arm is held across his chest. His face and neck are lined, and his bald head also reflects his advanced age. However, his direct gaze at the viewer (his son, the artist) sparkles with intelligence. The style of the portrait is very realistic, which seems to be a mark of respect toward the subject, who does not seem to want to be idealized.

The Historical Moment

In 1869, Renoir had rejected academic style and was working with the future impressionists, but his style in this portrait reflects the technique that he had acquired. His father was 70 years old at the time, and it is possible that the style of the portrait seeks to please the taste of his aging parents, rather than his own preferences.

The Artistic Movement

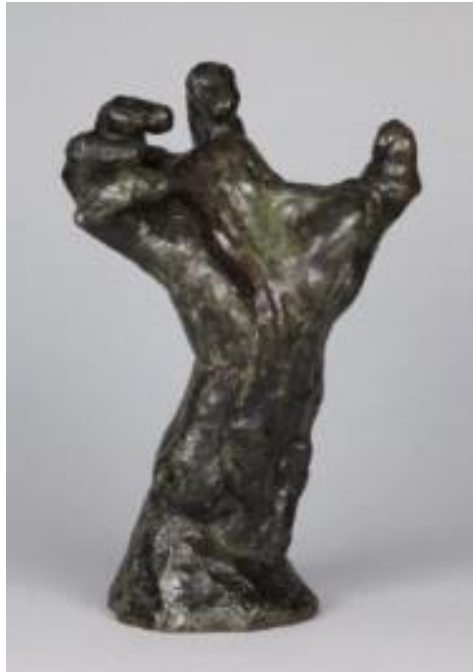
Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism, which emphasized imaginary and idealized scenes. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism."

The Artist

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Questions

Compare this portrait with *The Reader* by Manet, who was a friend of Renoir. What are the visual parallels between the two?

Auguste Rodin, *The Clenched Hand*, c. 1885

Bronze

18 1/8 inches high x 10 3/8 inches wide x 8 1/4 inches deep

3:1957

Funds given by Lanlee Realty Company

Rodin made several sculptural studies of separate body parts, which nevertheless communicated a strong emotion. This sculpture was possibly a study for the monumental work *The Burgers of Calais*, and this hand may belong to one of the condemned prisoners.

The Historical Moment

The Third Republic (1870-1914) was an era of peace in France. Prosperous cities commissioned works of art for public display, and anecdotes of local interest were favorite subjects. The Hundred Years' War had great importance for the city of Calais, because of its strategic location on the English Channel.

The Artistic Movement

Romanticism was a movement that began near the end of the 18th century and had its strongest impact in the 19th century. The image sometimes told a familiar story from literature, and the word "romantic" derives from the word "roman" in French, meaning "novel" in English, a literary work of fiction. In romantic sculpture, artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with dramatic effects of facial expression and movement.

The Artist

Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) was born in Paris to a family of low social status. He was admitted to the School of Decorative Arts, and he studied sculpture with Antoine-Louis Barye. He did not have success at the beginning of his career, because his sculpture contradicted the rules of classicism by incorporating intense emotion and eroticism. Later, however, he became the most famous French sculptor in the world. He often made several versions of his sculptures in different sizes. His best-known works are *The Thinker* (1882) and *The Kiss* (1886).

Questions

What emotions does this hand express? Look at another work by Rodin, *The Cathedral* (1908), and compare it to this one.

(<http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/collections/sculptures/cathedral>)

Auguste Rodin, *Despair*, 1890

Marble

13 3/4 inches high x 23 inches wide x 17 1/4 inches deep

58:1921

This marble sculpture is a larger version of a figure from *The Gates of Hell*, based on the poem by Dante. The face of this man is hidden, and the fingers of his right hand are buried in his hair. His left arm ends in a closed fist, and his toes are clenched.

The Historical Moment

The Third Republic (1870-1914) was an era of peace in France. Prosperous cities commissioned works of art for public display, and the French government commissioned *The Gates of Hell* in 1880, for a museum of decorative arts in the Louvre. Rodin spent the rest of his life working on this masterpiece, but it remained unfinished. Several figures from *The Gates* were nevertheless remade in larger format and presented as individual sculptures, like this one.

The Artistic Movement

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Question

Look at *Danaïde*, another work by Rodin which dates from 1885, and compare it with this one. (<http://www.musee-rodin.fr/en/collections/sculptures/danaid>)

Auguste Rodin, *Jean d'Aire (The Burgbers of Calais)*, c. 1895

Bronze

Jean d'Aire figure: 18 5/16 inches high x 5 7/8 inches wide x 6 1/16 inches deep
31:1984

Gift of Sarah Jane May Waldheim, Mary Kay Waldheim Lemmon,
and Lesley Ann Waldheim, in memory of Morton J. May

The Burgbers of Calais is a monumental sculpture commissioned by the city of Calais. There are twelve copies, in addition to small figures such as these in the Saint Louis Art Museum. In 1347, during the Hundred Years' War, a group of citizens agreed to be executed, in order to save the life of the town's other inhabitants. The English queen, touched by their courage, persuaded the king not to condemn them to death. We see the burghers at the moment when death seems certain, and their expressions evoke despair or resignation. The character of Jean d'Aire is the fourth one from the left.

The Historical Moment

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Questions

How does the artist exaggerate the anatomy of these figures? Why?

Auguste Rodin, *Saint John the Baptist*, 1878

Bronze
79 1/4 inches high
2:1946

This sculpture is larger than life, to prove that the artist had sculpted it without making a mold from a living body. The saint is walking and speaking, and this natural movement is accentuated by his visible muscles. The artist's decision to show the saint without clothing was shocking to the public of his time, but one may see in this a desire to show the universal nature of the human condition. Another version of this sculpture is in the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The Historical Moment

The Third Republic (1870-1914) was an era of peace in France. In 1878, Paris held a Universal Exposition (World's Fair), to celebrate progress in technology, commerce, and the arts. The French government would commission Rodin to make several public monuments.

The Artistic Movement

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Questions

How did the artist make this sculpture seem "alive?" Is nudity appropriate for this religious subject? Why or why not?

Auguste Rodin, *Bust of Victor Hugo*, 1884

Bronze

16 7/8 inches high x 10 3/4 inches wide x 9 1/4 inches deep

50:1967

Gift of Mrs. Edward Mallinckrodt

This bust is a portrait of Victor Hugo (1802-1885), the most famous writer of his generation. The author of the books *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables*, a poet, and a playwright, he was also involved in politics, and Rodin admired him as a true genius. This portrait is based on drawings that Rodin made in Hugo's home, because his aging subject could not sit and pose for hours. The artist tried to evoke the visionary spirit, intelligence, and dignity of a modern hero nearing the end of his life.

The Historical Moment

The Third Republic (1870-1914) was an era of peace in France. In 1884, people were looking forward to the Universal Exposition (World's Fair) of 1889, celebrating the centennial of the beginning of the French Revolution. The public adored Victor Hugo, and when he died, one year after this bust was made, he was buried in the Pantheon in Paris, near the tombs of Voltaire and Rousseau.

The Artistic Movement

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literature, and the word "romantic" derives from the word "roman" in French, meaning "novel" in English, a literary work of fiction. In romantic sculpture, artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with dramatic effects of facial expression and movement.

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Question

Compare this portrait with one that Rodin made of another famous writer, Honoré de Balzac, in 1898. How did the artist's idea change from one portrait to the other?

Théodore Rousseau, *Landscape*, c. 1842

Oil on canvas
11 1/4 inches high x 15 1/2 inches wide
551:1957
Gift of J. Lionberger Davis

The dimensions of this painting are fairly small. It represents, however, a vast landscape. We see a man and several cows at the edge of a tranquil pond or river, but the sky is turbulent, with a white light penetrating through the clouds.

The Historical Moment

The first constitutional monarchy of France, called the "July Monarchy," lasted from 1830 to 1848. Louis-Napoléon was the last French king. France had a period of prosperity, marked by the expansion of the railroads and a major urbanisation. This inspired many artists to turn their attention to the natural landscape that was still untouched by industry.

The Artistic Movement

Around the middle of the nineteenth century, many artists reacted against romanticism. They made works about daily life, shown just as it was, without embellishment. This movement is called "naturalism" or "realism." The "Barbizon School" was the name given to a group of painters who lived for a while in the village of Barbizon, near the Fontainebleau forest, and who loved to paint landscapes and peasants.

The Artist

Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867) was born in Paris. His works were exhibited at the Paris Salon between 1831 and 1835, but after they were refused in 1836, he settled in Barbizon. He became one of the first painters associated with what later became the "School" of that name.

Questions

Is there a conflict between tension and calm in this painting? How is it represented by the artist? Why did the artist give such small proportions to the living beings, in comparison with the elements of nature?

François Rude, *Head of a Gaul*, 1833-35

Bronze

24 1/2 inches high x 12 3/4 inches wide x 12 1/4 inches deep

124:1987

Gift of J. Lionberger Davis by exchange

This sculpture is a copy of part of a monumental relief sculpture on the Arch of Triumph in Paris. It is called *The Departure of the Volunteers of 1792*, and is also known as *The Marseillaise*. Rude created this sculpture to symbolize the gathering together of the French people in defense of their country. The man's thick beard shows his maturity, and the wind blowing through his long hair makes the sculpture more dynamic.

The Historical Moment

France had just endured another civil revolt, that of the July Revolution of 1830, which ended the Bourbon dynasty. The Arch of Triumph had been commissioned by Napoleon in 1806, to commemorate his military victories, but the work still continued until 1835. Napoleon had finally lost all power in 1815, and so the images of heroism in the sculpture do not refer directly to the Emperor, but rather to soldiers of antiquity who are being led by the allegorical character of Victory.

The Artistic Movement

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"novel" in English, a literary work of fiction. In romantic sculpture, artists sought to engage the viewer's emotions with dramatic effects of facial expression and movement.

The Artist

François Rude (1784-1855) was born in Dijon. He studied at the National School of Fine Arts in Paris, and received the Rome Prize in 1812. The sculpture of *The Departure of the Volunteers* is his most important work. The French government issued a ten-franc coin in honor of François Rude in 1984, to commemorate the bicentennial of his birth.

Questions

What does a Gaul symbolize to a French person of a more modern era? What emotion is this man feeling?

Georges Seurat, *Pont-en-Bessin, The Outer Harbor (Low Tide)*, 1888

Oil on canvas
21 3/8 inches high x 26 1/4 inches wide
4:1934

In this painting, we see the docks of the town of Port-en-Bessin-Huppain, in Lower Normandy. In the foreground, we see the mast of a sailboat which is otherwise hidden from our view. In the background, we see exposed rocks and a boat leaning on its side, waiting for the high tide to set it afloat. We see the houses of the town and green hills on the horizon. Seen from a distance, the touches of strong color like red and green dissolve into pastels, and the atmosphere of the painting seems calm and static.

The Historical Moment

In 1888, the city of Paris was preparing for the Universal Exposition of 1889, for which the Eiffel Tower was being built. The Exposition would celebrate advances in industrial technology, and sciences such as optics were attracting interest. Seurat spent his summers in Normandy.

The Artistic Movement

The impressionist movement was a revolt against the academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists sought to capture a moment of experience as it was lived. They left the studio to paint outdoors, and tried to re-create effects of light with soft brushstrokes and bright colors. Seurat used an original technique, today called "neo-impressionism" or "pointillism," because the painting was created from small touches of contrasting colors. When seen

from up close, the effect is confusing, but when seen from a distance, they form objects through optical illusion.

The Artist

Georges-Pierre Seurat (1859-1891) was born in Paris. His father worked for the civil courts. He studied at the School of Fine Arts in Paris. In 1886, with the painter Paul Signac, he developed a visual technique that they called "divisionism," based on dividing colors into their primary elements. Seurat died young, at the age of thirty-one. During his lifetime, he completed only seven major paintings, of which the most famous is *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1885).

Questions

How does the artist give you the feeling of being present in this scene?

The Twentieth Century



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Jean (Hans) Arp, *Pistil*, 1950

Limestone

33 1/2 inches high x 15 1/2 inches wide x 12 inches deep

654:1958

Gift of Morton D. May

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

This stone sculpture seems to represent an abstract form growing out of a female body. The title refers to the female sexual organ of a flower, suggesting sensuality. The work has been described as "biomorphic," because its shape resembles something living, without necessarily being realistic or recognizable.

The Historical Moment

In 1918, Europe had seen the end of the First World War and the terrible epidemic of influenza, two phenomena which caused the deaths of millions of people. For many young artists and intellectuals, logical reason had disappeared forever, giving way to cynicism and the notion that the world is absurd. These feelings continued after the Second World War (1939-1945).

The Artistic Movement : Surrealism

During the 1920s, many artists tried to explore the world of dreams and the unconscious. This world was considered more real and true than the so-called "reality" perceived by the intellect, and therefore it was "surreal." The most famous artists of surrealism were Salvador Dali, René Magritte, and Man Ray. Surrealists were inspired by the French painter Henri Rousseau (called Rousseau the Customs Agent, who died

in 1910), and by French writers like Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Éluard, and André Breton.

The Artist

Jean Arp (1886-1966) was born in Strasbourg, first under German citizenship, and later under French citizenship. He was a poet, a friend of Paul Éluard, and in 1916, the co-founder of the *Dada* group. This group borrowed the word *dada*, which means hobby horse, from the vocabulary of young children, in order to make fun of "serious" art and literature. His sculptures, which became more and more abstract, brought him international fame.

Questions

In what sense is this sculpture "surreal," meaning more real than the reality that we can observe with our eyes? How does this work appeal to your sense of touch?

Pierre Bonnard, *The Basket of Fruit*, 1922

Oil on canvas

19 7/16 inches high x 13 1/2 inches wide

581:1958

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Weil

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

This still life represents pears and apples in a red basket, on a black tabletop. We see a damask linen tablecloth on the right. The geometry of the table, with diagonal, vertical, and horizontal lines, contrasts with the rounded forms of the fruit and of the wicker basket.

The Historical Moment

In 1922, Europe was slowly emerging from the hardships caused by the First World War (1914-18). Even if impressionism was no longer in fashion among younger artists, this style evoked a sense of peace of mind, and still lifes and interior scenes were still popular among art collectors.

The Artistic Movement

This artistic style is that of a group of impressionists called "Nabis," a Hebrew word which means "prophets" or "those who are inspired by God." The Nabis were

interested in spiritual and symbolic ideas, and some critics called them "post-impressionists." Their works, however, were produced at the same time as some impressionist works, and often in a similar style.

The Artist

Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947) received a degree in law before becoming an artist. He studied at the Paris School of Fine Arts, where he was a co-founder of the Nabis group. They proposed a new method, called "synthesis," based on memory and imagination rather than on direct observation. Bonnard admired Japanese art so much that his contemporaries gave him the nickname of the "Japanese Nabi."

Questions

Where can you find the colors of the fruit (such as yellow and red) in the table and in the wall? Where do you see the colors of the table in the fruit? How does this painting seem to blend the techniques of realism and impressionism?

Georges Braque, *The Blue Mandolin*, 1930

Oil with sand on canvas
46 inches high x 35 inches wide
125:1944

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

This still life shows us a group of objects on a table. We can see a mandolin, a glass, a bowl with round objects (perhaps fruit), pages of printed sheet music, and one page showing the word "WALTZ." The texture of the wall is made up of a mixture of oil paint and sand, and there is a false wood grain on the lower wall and on the legs of the table. We also see a tablecloth decorated with polka dots.

The Historical Moment

In the early 1930s, France was suffering an economic depression. Braque was a soldier in the First World War, and he had received a serious head injury. After he recovered, he declared that he was not interested in politics, and he dedicated himself to showing everyday objects in his paintings.

The Artistic Movement

The term cubism derives from the word "cube," in reference to the geometric form. Artists like Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and Marcel Duchamp wanted to reduce visual images to elementary forms and colors, to achieve a new way of looking. Cubism applied not only to paintings of still lifes, but also to landscapes, portraits, and sculptures.

The Artist

Georges Braque (1882-1963) was born in Argenteuil, and was trained as a decorator. While living in Paris, he became a friend and collaborator of the Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, and together they founded cubism. Today Braque is sometimes called "the French Picasso." Braque loved music, and often used musical instruments in his paintings.

Questions

In cubist art, we often see an object from several angles at a time. Do you see several angles of some of the objects in this painting? Analyze how, in this painting, the artist used lines and circles to create visual movement.

Georges Braque, *Carrières-Saint-Denis*, 1910

Oil on canvas

13 1/16 inches high x 16 1/4 inches wide

67:1956

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Marcus Rice

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

We see in this painting a group of trees and village houses, reduced to lines and irregular forms. The colors are in the palette of blues, grays, greens, and yellows. The brush strokes are very visible, often indicating a direction, perhaps to suggest the movement of the wind.

The Historical Moment

In 1910, France was in a period of relative peace, under the Third Republic (1870-1940). Carrières-Saint-Denis was the historical name of a commune, 8 kilometers west of Paris, which today is called Carrières-sur-Seine.

The Artistic Movement

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The Artist

Georges Braque (1882-1963) was born in Argenteuil, and was trained as a decorator. Becoming a painter, he began as an impressionist, then adopted fauvism and finally cubism. Toward the end of his long life, he returned to a realistic style. Today he is considered to be the most famous of the French cubist painters.

Questions

How does this painting contrast with a naturalist landscape? Or an impressionist landscape? Compare it with works by Daubigny (1815-1878) and Pissarro (1830-1903). Why did the artist choose not to put people or animals in this painting?

Desny (Desnet and René Nauny), *Tea and Coffee Service*, c. 1927

Silver-plated brass and ebony
 5 1/4 inches high x 15 inches wide x 8 3/4 inches deep
 58:1997a-e

This tea and coffee set is made of silver-plated brass, with ebony handles. It is entirely composed of geometric forms, with a horizontal opening instead of a traditional curved spout. When we look at the teapot, coffee pot, sugar bowl, and creamer lined up on the tray, we might have the impression of looking at a steamship, which was a popular mode of transportation in the 1920s.

The Historical Moment

In 1925, Paris was again the site of a world's fair. The International Exposition of Decorative and Modern Industrial Arts inspired the term "art deco." This style preferred geometric forms over the curved lines of the earlier style of "art nouveau." The art deco style also celebrated technological progress and the development of transportation such as the automobile, the airplane, and the steamship.

The Artistic Genre

Decorative arts related to table service are tempting to an artist's creativity. There are always some people wealthy enough to buy new furniture, according to the fashion of the moment, but there are many more people who can buy items to decorate their tabletop. These works are sometimes mass produced, and are sometimes one-of-a-kind, made to order.

The Artist

Desny is the name of a company. It was formed by contracting the two names of Desnet (whose first name is unknown), who died in 1933, and René Nauny. Both

French, they worked in Paris between 1927 and 1933. Their works are considered avant-garde, both for the 1920s and for today.

Questions

Design a traditional tea service, and discuss how it is different from this one. How could you describe the personality of a person who would buy this tea set?

Max Ernst, *Long Live Love or Charming Country*, 1923

Oil on canvas

51 3/4 inches high x 38 5/8 inches wide

885:1983

Bequest of Morton D. May

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

This painting shows two nude bodies with legs intertwined. The female body is painted in naturalistic colors. She wears a pink ribbon on her thigh, suggesting a garter. She hugs the back of the male figure, who is painted in blue, the same color as the background sky. Their two faces are hidden by a cape surrounding them, the color of which suggests rusty metal. The title of "charming country" seems ironic, because in spite of the blue sky, the landscape is a desert, with mysterious pink forms that resemble veins or dissected organs.

The Historical Moment

In 1918, Europe had seen the end of the First World War and the terrible epidemic of influenza, two phenomena which caused the deaths of millions of people. For many young artists and intellectuals, logical reason had disappeared forever, giving way to cynicism and the notion that the world is absurd.

The Artistic Movement : Surrealism

During the 1920s, many artists tried to explore the world of dreams and the unconscious. This world was considered more real and true than the so-called "reality" perceived by the intellect, and therefore it was "surreal." The most famous artists of

surrealism were Salvador Dali, René Magritte, and Man Ray. Surrealists were inspired by the French painter Henri Rousseau (called Rousseau the Customs Agent, who died in 1910), and by French writers like Guillaume Apollinaire, Paul Éluard, and André Breton.

The Artist

Max Ernst (1891-1946) was born in Germany, but lived in France for most of his career. He became part of the surrealist and Dada movements. In 1923, he was living in Paris with the poet Paul Éluard and Eluard's wife, Gala. Gala was an artistic inspiration for Éluard, Ernst, and Dali, and Ernst's paintings sometimes resemble Dali's works, with their anatomical shapes and references to the unconscious.

Questions

What is the connection between the work's title and the image? According to this painting, what are the artist's feelings about love?

Hector Guimard, *Balustrade*, 1905 and *Pair of Door Grilles*, before 1907

Cast iron, painted cast iron
 Balustrade 16 5/8 inches high x 34 inches wide x 1 1/4 inches deep
 Grills 38 1/2 inches high x 20 3/4 inches wide x 7/8 inch deep
 193 :1993, 34 :2004.1,2
 Donors named on next page

These cast iron objects were intended as part of the exterior decoration of a house. The supple lines suggest interwoven vines, but do not resemble any real plant. These objects combine form and function, both in protecting the inhabitants of the house and in offering people passing by in the street something beautiful to see.

The Historical Moment

In anticipation of the Universal Exposition of 1900 in Paris, the city invited architects to design the entrances of the Metropolitan Train, which would be inaugurated at the time of the fair. Hector Guimard won this competition. His Metro entrances have remained symbols of "Parisian style."

The Artistic Movement

The Art Nouveau style, associated with the early twentieth century, celebrates the artist's individuality in contrast to the industrialized modern society. Painting, architecture, and decorative arts work together to create domestic environments of great beauty and originality. The style is characterized by the organic quality of its

curved lines. Among the most famous artists of this movement are Alphonse Mucha, Victor Horta, Émile Gallé, and Louis Majorelle.

The Artist

Hector Guimard (1867-1942) is recognized as the leader of the Art Nouveau movement in France. Before achieving success with the Paris Metro, he had built the Castel Béranger in the Auteuil neighborhood (16th district) in Paris. He designed not only houses, but also furniture and other decorative objects.

Questions

What are the differences between these objects and ordinary grills for windows or doors?

Balustrade : Richard Brumbaugh Trust in memory of Richard Irving Brumbaugh and in honor of Grace Lischer Brumbaugh; additional funds given by Isabelle and Jean-Paul Montupet, Dr. and Mrs. F. Thomas Ott, and David and Molly Ott

Pair of Door Grilles: Funds given by William B. McMillan Jr., the Richard Brumbaugh Trust in memory of Richard Irving Brumbaugh and Grace Lischer Brumbaugh, the Anne L. Lehmann Charitable Trust, Jane Stamper, and Victor Porter Smith

Hector Guimard, *Tea Table*, 1907

Pearwood, gilded bronze, glass
 33 inches high x 35 inches wide x 26 1/4 inches deep
 173 :2003a,b

Director's Discretionary Fund, Museum Purchase by exchange,
 and funds given by Susan and David Mesker and Zoe and Max Lippman

This small table was intended for serving tea. A glass platter on top can be detached from the wooden table below it. This table comes from the Hotel Guimard, the personal residence of the artist and his wife in Paris. It was located in the dining room.

The Historical Moment

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Questions

Why did the artist prefer to invent naturalistic but stylized forms, rather than imitating a real plant? What are the differences between works that are made of wood and of cast iron?

Jean Hélion, *Composition*, 1933

Oil on canvas

19 1/8 inches high x 24 inches wide

11:1946

Bequest of Mrs. Leticia Parker Williams by exchange

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

In this painting, we see geometric but irregular shapes, elongated or compressed in unexpected directions. The colors are in the palette of blues and grays, except for a block of orange in the upper middle.

The Historical Moment

The period between the two World Wars was a difficult time in Europe. After the financial crash of 1929, the economy suffered in Europe, as well as in the United States. Frustration with traditional values led many artists to reject the art of previous generations.

The Artistic Movement

Artistic abstraction abandons any attempt to represent "things," in favor of exploring ideas. Freed from the obligation to create art that resembles anything at all, the artist could concentrate on color, form, or technique. For the abstract artist, self-expression often plays a more important role than communication with the viewer.

The Artist

Jean Hélion (1904-1967), born as Jean Bichier, was an architectural draftsman before becoming a painter. He admired the Dutch painter Piet Mondrian, who made

geometric compositions with primary colors. Héliou was the founder and a member of a group called "Concrete Art," which was dedicated to pure abstraction.

Questions

In this painting, which elements attract your eyes, moving from left to right? From right to left? From top to bottom? From bottom to top? Which forms seem to be in the foreground, and which ones in the background? Why? How does the artist use visual contrast in this painting? Think about forms (straight lines and curves) and about colors.

Aristide Maillol, *Venus with Necklace*, 1928-29

Bronze

69 1/4 inches high

1:1941

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

This statue is life-sized. The goddess of beauty is nude, and wears only a pearl-like necklace around her neck, which she is holding with her right hand.

The Historical Moment

In 1925, Paris was again the site of a world's fair. The International Exposition of Decorative and Modern Industrial Arts inspired the term "art deco." This style preferred geometric forms over the curved lines of the earlier style of "art nouveau," and human figures often emphasized their physical vigor.

The Artistic Movement

Maillol was part of the painters' group of the "Nabis" (or prophets). When he became a sculptor, he was inspired by the classicism of ancient Greece. His female nudes lean towards abstraction and represent allegorical themes. *The River* (1938), which is in the

Citygarden of St. Louis, is an allegory not only of a geographical feature, but also of the suffering caused by war. Many art critics consider Maillol to be the first modern sculptor.

The Artist

Aristide Maillol (1861-1944) was born in the Eastern Pyrenees region, in a Catalán family. He studied at the Paris School of Fine Arts, with the painter Gérôme. He only began to make sculpture at the age of forty. His works were exhibited in the important gallery of Ambroise Vollard, and received praise from the sculptor Auguste Rodin.

Questions

The necklace is made of round black stones that suggest pearls. What are the characteristics of a pearl necklace? How can you compare its qualities with the qualities of Venus herself? How would this sculpture have been different if it had been made of marble, instead of bronze?

Henri Matisse, *Bathers with a Turtle*, 1907-08

Oil on canvas

71 1/2 inches high x 87 inches wide

24:1964

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pulitzer Jr.

Image © 2014 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Three nude women are looking at a small red turtle. Their nudity and the blue background suggest that they are at the beach, but the color behind them is green. The grayish face and gestures of the women in the center seem to reflect anxiety, but the other women are leaning toward the animal, with curiosity or tenderness.

The Historical Moment

By the early twentieth century, a series of World's Fairs (Chicago in 1893, Paris in 1900, and St. Louis in 1904) had introduced many people to the contemporary art being produced in Europe. Galleries encouraged collectors' interest in works considered "avant-garde."

The Artistic Movement

Toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, many artists tried to express their personal emotion. They liked subjects of nature and the human body, and sought to find the true essence of these, by using pure colors and simple forms. Certain artists called "expressionists" also considered themselves to be "fauvists." The word "fauve" means "wild beast" in French, and in 1905, an art critic described a show by painters including Matisse and Vlaminck as "a cage of wild beasts." Those artists adopted the term to describe themselves. They used intense colors, strong lines, and

shapes that were sometimes childish-looking, which they found to be more "true" and to have more depth of feeling.

The Artist

Henri Matisse (1869-1954) was considered the leader of the fauvists. His paintings were shown in the New York Armory Show in 1913, and represented the most modern art that had ever been seen. In 1925, Matisse was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. His works include painting, sculpture, drawing, and cut-out watercolor, a form of collage.

Questions

Do you think the artist wanted this scene to be mysterious? What elements do you find unexpected or difficult to explain? What emotion seems to be conveyed by the "body language" of each woman?

Henri Matisse, *Interior at Nice*, c. 1920

Oil on canvas

26 1/4 inches high x 21 5/8 inches wide

74:1945

Image © 2014 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

In this painting, the viewer is inside an apartment, in front of an open door leading to a small balcony overlooking the beach, the sea, and the sky. The curtains gently frame this view, and the composition is balanced by the young woman seated on the left and the vase of roses on the right.

The Historical Moment

After the First World War, many artists wanted to restore their physical and mental well-being by spending time in peaceful places. Matisse spent long periods of time in Nice, on the Mediterranean coast, where he made several paintings of the ocean, the beach, and interiors like this one.

The Artistic Movement

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Questions

Imagine that you are in this room. What feelings do you have, looking at this scene? Who is the woman?

Henri Matisse, *Decorative Figure [Seated Nude, Leaning on her Elbow on a Cube]*, 1908

*For this image,
please consult the Museum website,
www.slam.org/Collections/*

Bronze
28 1/2 inches high x 20 inches wide x 12 inches deep
173:1959
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Weil

This sculpture represents a nude woman who is leaning on her elbow, and seated with precarious balance on the edge of a square block. The exaggerated proportions, especially of her head and right hand, and the hand-worked surface, contrast with the idealized form of traditional sculpture. The woman seems to have come down from a pedestal, in order to sit on it.

The Historical Moment

By the early twentieth century, a series of World's Fairs (Chicago in 1893, Paris in 1900, and St. Louis in 1904) had introduced many people to the contemporary art being produced in Europe. Galleries encouraged collectors' interest in works considered "avant-garde."

The Artistic Movement

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that had ever been seen. In 1925, Matisse was made a Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. His works include painting, sculpture, drawing, and cut-out watercolor, a form of collage.

Questions

What are the differences between this sculpture and a female nude like the Venus de Milo? Do you think the artist had satirical intentions? Explain your answer.

Claude Monet, *Charing Cross Bridge*, 1903

Oil on canvas
 28 3/4 inches high x 41 inches wide
 22:1915

In this painting, the city of London seems to have disappeared in a thick morning fog, and we only see the Thames river, a solitary boat, the bridge, and the smoke of a passing train. The palette of colors is subtle, dominated by violet. The artist has captured the ephemeral quality of the light, which would have changed from one moment to the next.

The Historical Moment

In the second half of the 19th century, industrial manufacturing and the railroad systems were greatly expanded throughout Europe. Urban centers like London and Paris became much larger as people moved from rural areas to the city, to find jobs.

The Artistic Movement

The impressionist movement was a revolt against the academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists sought to capture a moment of experience as it was lived. They left the studio to paint outdoors, and tried to re-create effects of light with soft brushstrokes and bright colors.

The Artist

Claude Monet (1840-1926) is considered to be the father of impressionist painting. His work *Impression Rising Sun* (1872) inspired the title of the movement. Monet went to London for the first time in 1870. While there, he was greatly inspired by the works of the British painter J.M.W. Turner (1775-1851). Twenty years later, Monet made several more trips to London between 1899 and 1901. After returning to his studio in Paris,

he continued to work on sketches from his travels, until 1904. He produced nearly 100 paintings representing scenes of London.

Questions

How does this painting contrast with the usual idea of a bustling city center? Why does the artist choose not to show any people? Do you think this painting reflects exactly what the artist saw? If not, what changes may he have made?

Claude Monet, *Water Lilies*, c. 1915-26

Oil on canvas
78 3/4 inches high x 13 feet 11 3/4 inches wide
134:1956
The Steinberg Charitable Fund

This monumental painting was part of a triptych that was separated when it was sold in 1956. The three parts are now in the art museums of St. Louis, Cleveland, and Kansas City. Toward the end of his life, Monet was progressively losing his sight, but he continued to paint his favorite subjects such as this one. The presence of unexpected colors, such as yellow and red, creates a hypnotic visual play, and the artist seems to be experimenting with abstraction.

The Historical Moment

The First World War began in Europe in 1914 and ended in 1918. This violent and disruptive time inspired some artists to become involved in political arguments, and led others to keep their distance. It is difficult to know how Monet felt about the crises of his time, but his search for beauty in nature may express his feelings of opposition to the war.

The Artistic Movement

The impressionist movement was a revolt against the academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists sought to capture a moment of experience as it was lived. They left the studio to paint outdoors, and tried to re-create effects of light with soft brushstrokes and bright colors.

The Artist

Claude Monet (1840-1926) is considered to be the father of impressionist painting. His work *Impression Rising Sun* (1872) inspired the title of the movement. He is best known for a series of paintings of the waterlilies that he cultivated in the pond of his garden at Giverny.

Questions

Why did the artist choose to create a series of paintings that were so large, and impractical to have in the home? What colors seem to be unexpected, and why may the artist have used them?

Maurice de Vlaminck, *Le Havre: Le Grand Quai* [The Main Dock], 1906

Oil on canvas

32 inches high x 39 1/2 inches wide

527:1957

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur D. May

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

This scene represents the port of Le Havre, in the northwest of France. The artist is looking out from the dock, but it is not visible in the painting. The primary colors of red, yellow, and blue are noticeable, in the water as well as in the sails and the roofs of the houses.

The Historical Moment

By the early twentieth century, a series of World's Fairs (Chicago in 1893, Paris in 1900, and St. Louis in 1904) had introduced many people to the contemporary art being produced in Europe. Galleries encouraged collectors' interest in works considered "avant-garde."

The Artistic Movement

Toward the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, many artists tried to express their personal emotion. They liked subjects of nature and the human body, and sought to find the true essence of these, by using pure colors and simple forms. Certain artists called "expressionists" also considered themselves to be "fauvists." The word "fauve" means "wild beast" in French, and in 1905, an art critic described a show by painters including Matisse and Vlaminck as "a cage of wild beasts." Those artists

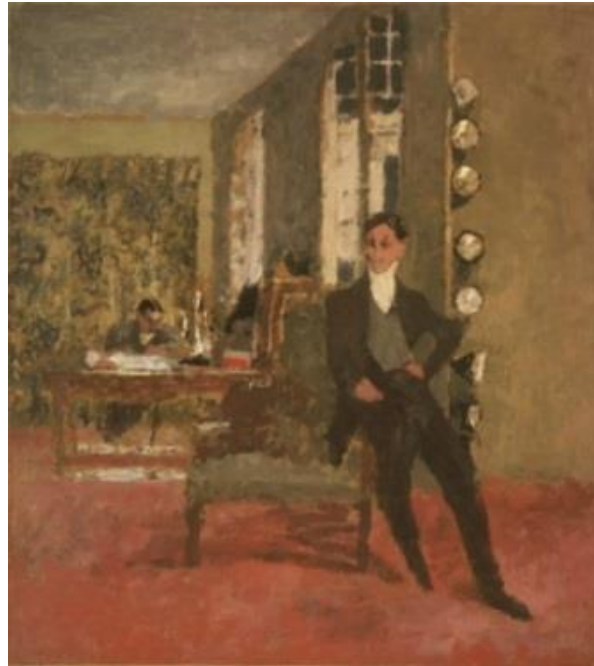
adopted the term to describe themselves. They used intense colors, strong lines, and shapes that were sometimes childish-looking, which they found to be more "true" and to have more depth of feeling.

The Artist

Maurice de Vlaminck (1878-1958) was a painter in the fauvist and cubist movements. He was a violinist and professional cyclist, in addition to being a painter. Vlaminck was inspired by the painter Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), in using colors "straight from the paint tube" and whirlpool effects.

Questions

What geometric forms can you distinguish (squares, triangles, etc.)? How does the artist suggest the movement of the water and the wind?

Édouard Vuillard, *The Art Dealers (The Bernheim-Jeune Brothers)*, 1908

Oil on canvas

23 13/16 inches high x 26 inches wide

66:1953

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richard K. Weil

Image © Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

This painting is a double portrait of two brothers who were art dealers in Paris. We see them in their gallery, with electric lights on the wall to illuminate the artworks. In the foreground, one brother is sitting in a nonchalant way on the arm of a chair, while in the background, the other brother is seated behind a desk. Neither one is looking at the artist, as if they were unaware of his presence as an observer.

The Historical Moment

The relationship between artists and art galleries was very important in this time, as it still is today. An influential dealer could assure an artist's success, especially in regard to those who were working in an avant-garde style, against the popular taste of the general public.

The Artistic Movement

This movement is that of a group of impressionists called "Nabis," a Hebrew word which means "prophets" or "those who are inspired by God, were interested in spiritual and symbolic ideas. Some critics called them "post-impressionists." Their works,

however, were produced at the same time as some impressionist works, and often in a similar style.

The Artist

Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) was born in Paris, and studied at the School of Fine Arts. He began painting in a realistic style, but later he was influenced by the Nabis. They proposed a new method, called "synthesis," which is based on memory and imagination rather than on direct observation. Vuillard created theatrical scenery and decorative panels for private homes. He also had a large collection of Japanese art, in which he found inspiration.

Questions

According to this painting, what are the two brothers' two different personalities? How does the painting suggest that an art gallery is like a theater?

Édouard Vuillard, *The Fireplace*, 1901

*For this image,
please consult the Museum website,
www.slam.org/Collections/*

Oil on canvas
18 3/16 inches high x 24 1/2 inches wide
177:1955
Funds given by Mr. and Mrs. John E. Simon

In this scene, we see a woman seated beside a hearth with a burning fire. She is reading a paper held in her hands, perhaps a newspaper or a letter. Her face is hidden from the viewer. It is the heart, in the center of the painting, which seems to be the main subject, and not the woman.

The Historical Moment

For several years, Vuillard lived with his mother in an apartment in Paris. He painted many intimate interior scenes of daily life.

The Artistic Movement

The movement of Impressionism was a revolt against academic tradition. Instead of representing objects in a realistic manner, with precise lines and perspective, artists attempted to show a moment of life as it was lived. A group of impressionists called "Nabis," a Hebrew word which means "prophets" or "those who are inspired by God," were interested in spiritual and symbolic ideas. Some critics called them "post-impressionists." Their works, however, were produced at the same time as some impressionist works, and often in a similar style.

The Artist

Édouard Vuillard (1868-1940) was born in Paris, and studied at the School of Fine Arts. He began painting in a realistic style, but later he was influenced by the Nabis. They proposed a new method, called "synthesis," which is based on memory and imagination rather than on direct observation. Vuillard created theatrical scenery and decorative panels for private homes. He also had a large collection of Japanese art, in which he found inspiration.

Questions

What are the sources of light in this painting? What idea do you have of the personality of this woman, even without being able to see her face?

The Twenty-First Century



List of Works

Patrick Jouin, *Solid C2 Chair*, 2004 195

Patrick Jouin, *Solid C2 Chair*, 2004

Painted epoxy resin
30 1/2 inches high x 15 1/2 inches wide x 20 inches deep
12:2007
Funds given by Zoe and Max Lippman in honor of Cara McCarty
Image © Patrick Jouin

This chair, or rather this sculpture in the form of a chair, is composed of epoxy resin. According to the artist, he was inspired by nature, especially the blades of grass in a field.

The Historical Moment

The beginning of the twenty-first century is an era of experimentation between art and computer technology. In the twentieth century, there were already many examples using photography. Now they may be seen in the creation of three-dimensional objects.

The Artistic Genre

Three-dimensional printing is called "stereolithography." The artist draws the image on a computer, which then converts the drawing into a three-dimensional model. A laser hardens the liquid resin when it makes contact, and an object is created by a process of building up layers.

The Artist

Patrick Jouin (born 1967) is an industrial designer. He worked with Philippe Starck, the artist who created the "Louis Ghost Chair" out of transparent plastic. Jouin has also designed interiors for hotels, restaurants, and the most chic fashion boutiques in Paris. His works are found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Pompidou Center (Museum of Modern Art) in Paris. In 2010, the Pompidou Center held an exhibit entitled *Patrick Jouin – The Substance of Design*.

Questions

Is this chair intended to be sat upon? Why or why not? Would you want to sit on it yourself? (Careful : this is not allowed in the Museum.) Are there other forms of nature that this chair makes you think about?

Suggested Activities



Animals in French Art 198

Artists and their Families 199

Dreamscapes 200

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Animals in French Art

Find an artwork (painting, sculpture, or decorative object) in the French collection that includes an animal. Describe the attributes of the animal represented in the artwork. What special qualities does it have that would inspire an artist to portray it? Then imagine and draw your own version of that artwork, featuring another animal of your choice.

Artists and Their Families

Many artists have chosen to make portraits of members of their own families. Examples of this include Elisabeth Vigée-Lebrun's portrait of her brother (3:1940, Gallery 202), Henri Fantin-Latour's painting of his sisters (8:1937, Gallery 217), and Pierre-Auguste Renoir's painting of his father (37:1933, Gallery 217).

- 1) What kind of information can a portrait reveal about the sitter? What has the artist revealed about the sitter and his or her relationship to the person? What symbols or objects provide clues about the sitter?

- 2) Draw a portrait of a member of your family, and include objects or symbols which relate to the person, or portray the sitter engaged in a favorite activity.

Dreamscapes

Find an artwork in the French collection that does not represent a real place, but somewhere in the artist's imagination. What elements of the work seem "unreal" to you, and why did the artist put them there? How does this work accomplish the goal of being "better than reality?"

Love and Art

Artists have often chosen to express feelings of love through their work. Find examples of this in the works of the French collection, and explain how the artist shows this feeling. This may include romantic love between two people, or love between members of a family.

The Main Dock of Le Havre in Impressionist Art

Look at the website <http://havredisparu.wordpress.com/category/en-peinture>

Compare the different views of Le Havre's main dock (*grand quai*), by artists Claude Monet (1872), Camille Pissarro (1903) and Maurice de Vlaminck (1906, Saint Louis Art Museum 527:1957). Describe how each artist had a different concept, based on the following elements:

- ♦ the choice of colors
- ♦ the type of brushstrokes and what effect they create
- ♦ the angle of perspective and the “focal point” of the image
- ♦ the presence or absence of people and commercial activity

Matisse and African Art

At the beginning of the 20th century, African art became popular in Paris. Many French artists were inspired by African art, having viewed it in art museums and galleries. They were interested in the ways that this art was different from the European art of that time. They also believed that African art was a more truthful expression of human nature.

- 1) In the African Art galleries, find examples of art that suggests to you some aspect of universal human nature such as love for children, fear of danger, or respect for ancestors. Draw each object and describe the feelings you have when looking at it.
- 2) In the gallery of “The Modern Body” (215), look at the two works by Henri Matisse, “Bathers with a Turtle” and “Decorative Figure.” How might Matisse have been influenced by African art? Draw one of these works as if it were made by an African artist.

Scavenger Hunt! Looking at Decorative Arts

In Gallery 124, how many objects can you find with the following items? Look closely, and name as many objects as possible.

1. a butterfly
2. an imaginary animal, half-lion and half-???
3. human feet
4. a lyre (Grecian harp)
5. an archer's bow
6. pearls
7. flowers
8. a snake
9. a sword
10. lion paws

This Isn't Art!

Find artworks or objects in the French collection that might provoke a viewer to make this comment. Explain why you think the curator thought it belonged in a museum. (And do you agree?)

Understanding Artists and Art Movements

I. We can learn a lot about artists by looking at any one of their works, but in order to develop a deeper understanding, we should look at a wider variety. Perform an internet image search for other works by any of the artists in this resource. Describe these works, and discuss what you can observe about how themes, techniques, and styles may appear more than once or may change over time.

II. Many of the works in this resource are part of larger artistic movements which involved many artists. To understand these artistic movements more fully, compare the works of the artists represented at the Saint Louis Art Museum with other examples created by their contemporaries.

A few examples are given here:

Impressionism: Claude Monet (French), Berthe Morisot (French), Pierre-Auguste Renoir (French), Mary Cassatt (American), Paul Cornoyer (American), Childe Hassam (American)

Art Nouveau: Emile Gallé (French), Hector Guimard (French), Louis Majorelle (French), Antoni Gaudí (Spanish), Alphonse Mucha (Czech), Victor Horta (Belgian)

Cubism: Georges Braque (French), Robert Delaunay (French), Marcel Duchamp (French), Fernand Léger (French), Pablo Picasso (Spanish), Juan Gris (Spanish)

Surrealism: Jean Arp (French), Max Ernst (German/French), Salvador Dalí (Spanish), René Magritte (Belgian), Giorgio di Chirico (Italian), Man Ray (American)