

# Art Adventure

## People and Their Environments



China,  
Rock Garden, replica of 18<sup>th</sup> century  
garden

## ● **Become a member of the museum today!**

Thank you for participating in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's popular Art Adventure Program! By volunteering as a Picture Person, you build an important link between the museum and our region's schoolchildren.

By becoming a member of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, you can reach even further, bringing the experience of world-class art to thousands of museum visitors a year – some visiting for the first time ever, and many of them schoolchildren. Members help support the museum's free general admission every day. Members also help support the exhibitions, lectures, events, and classes offered for children, families, students, and adults.

As a member of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, you'll enjoy access to special exhibitions, savings, incentives, and information.

For more information or to join, please call the Members' Hotline at (612) 870-6323 (toll-free (888) 642-2787), or visit our website at [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org).

## ● **What are you doing next Family Day?**

Family Days at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts are free monthly events that highlight the museum's collection and special exhibitions for art lovers of all ages. The second Sunday each month, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the museum is filled with hands-on art activities, live music, dance performances, artist demonstrations, family tours, and more. All activities are free and appropriate for children of all ages. Visit our website, [www.artsmia.org](http://www.artsmia.org), for specific Family Day dates, themes, and descriptions.

# About the Art Adventure Program

## What's the Art Adventure Program?

The Art Adventure Program at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts is a way of bringing works of art that can't leave the museum into elementary school classrooms. Each of the ten Art Adventure reproduction sets features eight works of art chosen around a theme of particular interest to children. Students and teachers are encouraged to follow up classroom presentations with a class visit to the museum to see the actual artworks. They can take a tour with an Art Adventure Guide or with their teacher using a self-guide brochure available from the museum.

## What's a Picture Person?

Picture People are the volunteers from the school community who present the reproductions in the classrooms. They are the vital link between the original work of art in the museum and children in the schools. Before they visit any classrooms, Picture People come to the museum for a training session on the reproduction set their school will be using that year. At training they receive printed background material, learn presentation techniques, and—most importantly—experience the enjoyment of interacting with the original objects they will soon be introducing to students.

## What does a Picture Person Presentation consist of?

Each participating school structures its Picture Person presentations differently. A Picture Person may present pairs of images in a series of short visits; all the images at once in a single, longer visit; or some other schedule arranged by the school's Art Adventure Coordinator. The presentation may consist only of a discussion or it may involve hands-on activities. In addition, Picture People bring their own individual creativity to their presentations.

Whatever the format, however, one essential characteristic is constant: the Picture Person encourages the children first and foremost to **look** at the reproduction and **talk** about what they see. Although the Picture Person is knowledgeable about the works of art, she or he facilitates the discussion with thoughtful open-ended questions and related props rather than delivering "lecture"-style information.

## What does the Art Adventure Program do for kids?

Picture Person presentations provide students with a rare opportunity to spend time looking at art and express what they see in words. Students gain confidence in their ability to find meaning in artifacts from a wide range of world cultures. They practice seeing things from another person's point of view, whether it's their classmate's or the artist's. They feel the thrill of meeting an old friend when they later come upon familiar objects at the museum. And, not least, they enjoy meaningful contact with a visiting member of the school community.

# Preparing for a Picture Person Presentation

## **Relax!**

The information provided in this manual is intended as background material to help you feel comfortable when you present the images to children. You are not expected to convey all the details. On the contrary; choose two or three key ideas you think will be compelling for the age group to which you are presenting. Kids love stories—what might you “spin” into a tale? What parallels can you draw with their lives?

## **Be sure everyone is able to see the reproduction.**

Talk with the classroom teacher to find out what routines the class follows when gathering for a visitor. Young groups will often sit on the floor; older students may remain at their desks. Try for a setup that will get the students as close to the reproduction as possible. Keep the students’ eyes on you, too, by making regular eye contact throughout the group.

## **Establish a climate where students can listen to what each child has to say.**

It is very difficult to listen to more than one person at the same time. Let the kids know at the outset that you expect them to take turns speaking. (If you don’t know the children’s names already, arrange with the teacher to have them wear nametags so you can call on them by name.) Paraphrasing what is said emphasizes that you are really listening and encourages them to listen to one another. Your rephrasing may also help expand their vocabulary. Take care to remember, however, that aesthetic judgments are personal and inexact—set your own preferences aside to allow students to form their own opinions.

## **Begin your presentation of each image with a long moment of silent looking.**

Introduce the lesson by explaining who you are and that you have brought reproductions of real works of art from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Review with the class what a museum is and what you’ll be doing with them. Then make a show out of getting the class to understand that their first job is to look quietly. You might build the suspense by keeping each image hidden while you explain that you do not want them even to raise their hands until you ask them to. Model your expectations by spending the time looking too.

**Give children time to talk about what they have discovered by looking.**

Good questions to use are “What’s going on here?” and “What do you see that makes you say that?” Be sure to use your finger to point to the part of the picture the child is talking about. Paraphrase his or her words to clarify the observation for others. You’ll be surprised how quickly students learn to justify their comments with evidence they can see in the picture, with a little prompting. “What else can you find?” can help generate further comments. See the “Tips for Talking about Art” following this section for more ideas.

**Connect your key ideas to the students’ observations.**

When the student’s observations begin to slow down, use what you have learned about their interests to steer the discussion towards the key ideas you have chosen to focus on. Try to ask questions that will draw connections between what they have said and what you would like them to consider. If they pose questions you can’t answer, admit it! Brainstorm together ways to find an explanation.

**Keep the age of your audience in mind.**

A child’s interests and understandings evolve through generally predictable stages of development. Plan your presentations accordingly. Don’t expect young children to be able to focus for more than twenty minutes. Consider your class’s ability to understand time—will students understand a date or phrase such as “colonial times” (fifth graders might) or should you stick with “a long time ago” or “about 100 years ago”? At the same time, try not to talk down to older students.

You can expect developmental differences in children’s aesthetic approaches to art, as well. Younger children will accept abstraction, while older children tend to demand a high degree of realism. Remember, too, that it’s hard for young viewers to look “through” subject matter to notice compositional devices until preadolescence. And it’s surprising to us as adults that children generally do not notice the emotional overtones of a work until the middle years of childhood. (Find out more about the stages of aesthetic development in *Invented Worlds*, by Ellen Winner, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982.)

**Talk to other Picture People and use your own imagination!**

Veteran Picture People have great ideas about how to capture the imagination of a class. Don’t hesitate to borrow and adapt their suggestions. In addition, several Art Adventure sets come with “prop kits,” an assortment of supplementary materials for you to use in your presentation. Talk to your school’s Art Adventure Coordinator to see if the set you are using comes with props.

# Tips for Talking about Art

Remember, a key goal of the Art Adventure program is to help beginning viewers create personal meaning in a work of art. While your impulse may be immediately to begin "teaching," more is gained in the long run if you take the time to help the children establish an emotional connection with the art. The questions below help kids find their own relevance in works of art, and thereby learn to value art as having something to do with their own lives.

**What's going on in this picture?  
What do you see that makes you say that?**

These simple questions work particularly well with artworks that have a narrative thread. You'll notice this question is different than, "What do you see?" Instead of eliciting a list of things in the picture, "What's going on?" invites a consideration of relationships and interactions and taps into children's natural interest in stories. The question, "What do you see that makes you say that?" focuses comments on the evidence at hand and helps kids explain their assumptions.

**How would you feel if you were "in" this work of art?**

What would you hear? How would something feel to touch? What path would you take through the picture? What do you see that makes you say that? Imagining the picture as an environment engages all the senses. The expressive qualities of a work become more concrete, easier to relate to.

**How is this object like something you encounter in *your* life?**

What would you use this for? What do you see that makes you say that? Do you have anything like it? Why do you like to have pictures of yourself? Why do you buy postcards on vacation? Drawing parallels with children's experiences gives them a hook on which to hang new information. Identifying similarities helps illuminate differences as well.

**What person or object in this picture do you think was most important to the artist?**

What are people in the picture looking at? What has a lot of details? Where are there bright colors? What is biggest? Talking about what makes things seem important in a work of art can allow even a novice to address basic compositional principles.

**How would the artwork seem different if you could make a change?**

What would happen if you changed a color? Made something bigger or smaller? Moved an object or person? Left something out? Added more details? Changed the quality of a line? Imagining changes helps identify visual elements and their contribution to the overall effect of the image.

**How is this work of art like or different from another one you've seen in this set?**

"Compare and contrast" is a staple of art historical thinking, but it can be done by anybody, at any level of thinking. Get together with your fellow volunteers to coordinate some provocative pairs.

**How does this work of art relate to the theme of the set?**

Let the students pull it all together! What connections do they see between the theme and what they've noticed and learned about the work of art?

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**Want to take it further?**

Have a look at *The Intelligent Eye: Learning to Think by Looking at Art*, by David N. Perkins (Santa Monica, Calif.: The J. Paul Getty Trust, 1994), a very readable guide on how and why to look carefully at art.

Another good book is *Take a Look: An Introduction to the Experience of Art*, by Rosemary Davidson (New York: Viking, 1994). Written for young readers, it provides a nice example of how to talk with children about art.

# Tips for Using Props

## Why props?

Students normally first encounter the Art Adventure works of art in their classrooms as 20 x 22-inch reproductions. In the reproductions, all the works of art appear to be two-dimensional and similar in size. Props accompany many of the reproductions to help overcome this limitation. Touching a material similar to the work of art, seeing the technique used to create it, or looking at a photograph in which the object is being used adds another dimension to the reproduction of the work of art. The use of props also helps engage learners who prefer hands-on learning styles, and reinforces the understandings of all learners.

## What are the challenges of props?

Be aware that props will do little but distract your group without careful planning. Consideration of the following points can prevent group management challenges from undermining the benefits of props:

- What understanding about the work of art does the prop best illustrate? Present the prop in conjunction with information about a work of art or to help answer a question about the work of art.
- How will you structure the group's interaction with the prop? There are a number of ways to use the prop. Among the variations:
  - Pass the prop around to each student. If you do it this way, give the students a question to consider while they are waiting for the prop and one to consider after they have held the prop. Encourage the students to be ready for discussion when the prop finishes circulating.
  - Ask a single student to come forward and describe how it feels to the whole group.
  - Hold the prop yourself and walk it around the group for the students to touch or look at closely. What should the students be doing while you're doing that?
  - Hold the prop yourself to illustrate relevant parts of the discussion. Then give everyone a chance to examine it more closely at the end of your presentation.
- How will you explain to the group what you expect them to do with the prop? Clear communication of your expectations is essential to getting the students to stay focused on the activity. Will they all get to touch the prop? How should they take turns? What should they do when it's not their turn? How should they treat the prop?
- How will you link the experience with the prop to the rest of the discussion? After the students have explored the prop in some fashion, refer to the experience as you continue the discussion.
- How will you get the prop back? Don't forget to plan how you'll get the props back! Schools are charged significant fees for missing or badly damaged props.



# ***People and Their Environments***

**Art Adventure Program  
An Educational Program of the  
Minneapolis Institute of Arts  
Revised 2014**

# *People and Their Environments*

## Prop Kit Contents

<b>Work of Art</b>	<b>Prop</b>	<b>Replacement Cost</b>
China, Rock Garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Detail from scroll depicting Chinese scholars in a garden (Exalted Gathering in the Green Woods, about 1620, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts)</li> </ul>	\$10
Paul Gauguin, <i>Tahitian Landscape</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Photograph of the island Moorea, Tahiti</li> </ul>	\$10
Baule, Kpele Kpele Mask	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Samples of raffia</li> </ul>	\$15
Berenice Abbott, <i>New York at Night</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Comparison image of New York (Alfred Stieglitz, Old and New New York, 1910, Minneapolis Institute of Arts)</li> </ul>	\$10
Canaletto, <i>Grand Canal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Plexiglass grid to demonstrate relative size of boats as they recede into the distance</li> </ul>	\$30
Camille Pissarro, <i>Place du Théâtre Français, Paris: Rain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Image of another Pissarro painting of the same location in different weather (<i>Place du Théâtre Français</i>, Los Angeles County Museum of Art)</li> </ul>	\$10
England, Tudor room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Sample of oak paneling</li> <li>•Photograph of costumed docent in Tudor room decorated for the holidays</li> </ul>	\$20 \$10
Ida (?) Claymore, Suitcase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Photograph of the reverse side of the suitcase</li> <li>•Sample of beads</li> </ul>	\$10 \$15

**Please make sure that you have enclosed all of the items on this list when you return the prop kit. You will be responsible for the cost of replacing any missing items. Thank you!**

# Contents

	Introduction	
1.	China, Jiangsu Province, <b>Rock Garden</b> , 18th century.....	1
2.	Paul Gauguin, <b>Tahitian Landscape</b> , 1891 .....	5
3.	Baule, Côte d'Ivoire, <b>Kpele Kpele Mask</b> , 19th century .....	9
4.	Berenice Abbott, <b>New York at Night</b> , 1934.....	13
5.	Giovanni Antonio Canal, <b>Grand Canal from Palazzo Flangini to Palazzo Bembo</b> , c. 1740.....	17
6.	Camille Pissarro, <b>Place du Théâtre Français, Paris: Rain</b> , 1898 .....	23
7.	England, Hingham Manor, <b>Tudor room</b> , c. 1600.....	29
8.	Ida (?) Claymore, <b>Suitcase</b> , 20 <sup>th</sup> century .....	35
9.	Glossary .....	39



# Introduction

People react to the world around them in everything they do. **People and Their Environments** focuses on eight works of art that reveal some aspect of their creator's relationship with the natural and built environment. What the works reveal may be as simple as what materials were at hand for the artist to use, or a complex reaction to the uncertainties of the natural world. They may reveal an objective desire to record the look and feel of a place, or a sensuous pleasure in the landscape or city streets. They may capture the rapid change of the modern built environment, or the steady constancy of nature's truths. Considered together, the eight objects in this set introduce us to the many facets of our place in the world.



China, Jiangsu Province, Lake T'ai Region, Tang-li  
**Rock Garden**, replica of 18th century garden  
Tile, rock, and plants  
Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton, 98.61.2

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### **Key Ideas**

The garden was an essential element of the lifestyle of the literati, China's upper class of scholar-officials. This rock garden occupied a small courtyard attached to the study of one such scholar. In his study, the scholar enjoyed the arts of poetry, calligraphy, and painting as an escape from the strictly ordered world of official life. This small courtyard garden served to evoke the wildness of nature in his imagination just as a poem or painting might.

### **The Literati**

When this garden was originally built in the 18th century, the tradition of the literati was well established in China. This prestigious class of scholars arose during the Tang [tahng] dynasty (618-907) with the institution of a rigorous civil service examination to select people who possessed the best minds for government positions. After years of study in philosophy, literature, and history, those who successfully passed the examination might become officials of the government. Whether they took an official position or not, the literati prided themselves on their cultivated interest in the arts, especially calligraphy, poetry, and painting.

### **An Escape for the Imagination**

In their official duties, the literati conformed to the orderly hierarchies of Confucianism that were the foundation of Chinese social structure. However, the contrasting philosophy of Taoism [dow-ism] is at the heart of their interest in a garden like this one and their scholarly pursuits in general. Whereas Confucianism emphasizes the individual's place in society, Taoism speaks to the individual's unity with the natural world. The ideal Taoist was a recluse living in rugged isolation on a mountaintop, at one with the forces of nature. Such hermits were commonly the subject of the literati's poetry and paintings.

### **The Scholar and his Garden**

While there were scholars who actually did give up their official duties to live as hermits in the wilderness, many evoked the experience within the comfort of their own homes by building gardens. As Ji Cheng [jee chung] wrote in the *Yuan Ye* [yu-en yeh], a 1634 treatise on gardens, the purpose of having a garden in the city was "to live as a hermit even in the middle of a marketplace." The traditional Chinese courtyard-style house made it entirely possible to achieve this sense of isolation. The courtyard complex consisted of small buildings clustered around open courtyards, all surrounded by high walls that kept street life far at bay. Some of the open courtyards were devoted to gardens. These gardens could be small little nooks, like this one, or very complex landscapes, with ponds, bridges, and small buildings.

## A Passion for Rocks

Rocks, the more unusual the better, were vital components of any garden. Most of the rocks in this garden are T'ai-hu [tie hoo] rocks from the bottom of Lake T'ai, particularly desirable among literati. These limestone boulders had been worn away by water and sand over centuries to become contorted shapes filled with holes. The great popularity of these rocks encouraged craftsmen to add to the natural supply by carving other rocks and dropping them in the water for several years. These "artificial" rocks had much less value among rock connoisseurs, however; connoisseurs would collect rocks the way they might paintings. Other types of unusual rocks might be used as well. This garden also includes rocks known as "bamboo rocks" for their tall thinness. The passion for rocks ("petromania") peaked in the Tang dynasty (618-907) and again in the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911), the period from which this courtyard dates.

## How to Build a Rock Garden

Garden design was an expression of the scholar's personal sensibilities, and the *Yuan Ye* manual advises that one approach the design as one would a painting. "Take the whitened wall [of the courtyard] as the painting paper, and paint it with rocks." Rocks might be arranged as a configuration of many piled together to make *jia shan* [jee-ah shahn] (meaning "artificial mountains") or as a single monolith to become a *feng* [fung] (meaning "peak"). When skillfully arranged, rock clusters suggest the drama of nature. For example, a rock balanced so that it is wide on top and tapering towards the bottom to look "dangerous but without risk" was greatly admired. Also praised were rock forms with many holes and surfaces for the viewer to "pass through" in an imaginary stroll through this fantastic landscape. In the past, when a mixture of glutinous rice and tung oil was used to bind the rocks together, great care had to be taken in choosing rocks that fit together snugly and gracefully. These days, cement is used.

## The Meaning of the Rocks

The design of a garden is a means for the gardener's personal expression; likewise, viewers of the garden are expected to bring their own interpretations to it. A grouping of rocks may remind one of an actual landscape visited, symbolize the Five Sacred Mountains of China, or suggest the rocky island home of the Buddhist deity Kuan Yin. While usually suggestive of mountains, rock formations may also be appreciated as "natural sculptures" of animals, birds, or deities. The plants in a garden can also inspire interpretations. The bamboo in this garden, for example, might suggest the qualities of a noble man—"upright and modest, yielding but never breaking, enduring through winter days."

## Recreating the Rock Garden in Minneapolis

In 1996, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts purchased a Chinese scholar's study and attached courtyard garden to be rebuilt in the galleries of the museum. Although the primary rocks of the garden had disappeared long ago, the base rocks were still in place. Chinese craftsmen came to the United States to recreate the garden using authentic rocks collected from other abandoned gardens in the Lake T'ai region. The craftsmen imagined different kinds of animals as they arranged the rocks; look for suggestions of a



lion, a turtle, and a dog or wild boar among the mountainous shapes. (It's easier to interpret them as animals in real life than in a reproduction.) The craftsmen also erected a group of rocks outside the windows of ArtsBreak, the museum's coffee shop.

### **Extend the Discussion:**

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas.

### **Look**

The people who made gardens such as this one liked finding contrasts in nature. Can you find contrast in SHAPE – curves and straight lines? Can you find contrast in VALUE – light and dark? Can you find contrast in SIZE –small and large? Can you find any other types of contrast?

What materials would you need to build a garden like this one? What tools would you need? What do you think would be difficult to do? What would take the most time? What do you see that makes you say that?

Many Chinese gardens have water running through them. This one does not, but do you see anything that makes you think of water? What, and why?

### **Think**

The Chinese craftsmen who rebuilt this garden at the museum set up the rocks to remind them of animals, such as a lion, a turtle, and a dog or wild boar. Do you see any shapes here that remind you of animals? What do you see that makes you say that? Look around your classroom. Do you see any accidental shapes (e.g. spills, chipped paint, clouds) that happen to look like something else? What?

To relax, the owners of gardens like this one would imagine they were tiny and "walk" around the garden rocks, in and out of the holes. Look quietly. What path would you take? How would it feel?

How is this garden different from gardens we expect to find in Minnesota? What does it have in common? Would you like rocks like these in your garden? Why or why not?



Paul Gauguin, French, 1848–1903  
***Tahitian Landscape***, 1891  
Oil on canvas  
26¾ x 36½ inches (canvas)  
The Julius C. Eliel Memorial Fund, 49.10

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### **Key Ideas**

Gauguin (go-gan) spent all of his life trying to "return to nature," first in the French countryside and then in the exotic South Sea islands. A true Romantic, he sought to find among people who lived close to nature the pure and untouched and thus, the source of true creation. For Gauguin, this was a spiritual quest, and to express it he developed a style that was concerned not with objective representation but with an evocation of his aesthetic and emotional response to his surroundings.

### **Roots in Romanticism**

By the early 19th century, the Romantic sensibility had developed to a pantheistic view of nature as a "being" that included the totality of things in organic unity and harmony. Nature, according to this view, was "the living garment of God," and the artist a priest-interpreter.

The Romantic philosophers believed that in the act of aesthetic creation the artist duplicated, or became one with, the creative power of nature itself, resolving the contradictions of the inner (subjective) and outer (objective) worlds. The landscape revealed the divine being of nature to the artist who was prepared by innocence, sincerity, and intuitive insight to receive the revelation. As all nature was mysteriously permeated by "being," the landscape painter had the task of interpreting the signs, symbols, and emblems of universal "spirit" disguised as the material things he saw. He was no longer a beholder of the natural landscape but a participant in its "spirit"; he no longer painted mere things but their transcendent meaning, arrived at through his own inspired feelings.

### **An Emotional Response to Nature**

The early Romantic landscapists insisted on the necessity of feeling and truth to appearances simultaneously. By contrast, the generation to which Gauguin belonged, while the inheritors of the Romantic viewpoint, chose to reject objective representation entirely in favor of subjective expression. For these artists, feeling was all, and their task was to render as forcefully as possible their emotional response to nature. No longer content to paint the material things that disguised the universal "spirit," they sought to portray the "spirit" itself.

## Escape to the Pacific Islands

*Tahitian Landscape* dates from Gauguin's first trip to Tahiti and reflects the painter's initial joy and happiness in his new surroundings. Painted on the island of Mooa-rea, it depicts a paradise of palm trees, mountains, and grassy meadows. The scene is exceptionally naturalistic for Gauguin, and is equally rare in that it is one of the painter's few pure landscapes. Only a single figure and a dog have been introduced as secondary accents. Nevertheless, its vibrant colors render it as dramatic as any of his more subjective works. Gauguin was profoundly affected by his new home, especially by a newfound silence and sense of eternity very different, or so it seemed to him, from the activity, struggle, and tension of European life. Writing to a friend in 1891, he said, "I have escaped from the false and have entered into nature confident that tomorrow will be as free and lovely as today. Peace wells up in me." In *Tahitian Landscape* it seems that Gauguin is indeed at peace with nature's spectacle, willing in simple fashion to equate its surface with its secret.

## Forging a Style for Sensual Expression

In order to depict his personal experience of the mysteries of nature, Gauguin developed a style that broke with centuries of artistic tradition. Based on the use of line and color for emotional rather than descriptive effects, this style combined abstraction, motifs drawn from a variety of traditional cultures, symbolism, and a naive, intentionally child-like drawing style to produce sensual, evocative works that were like nothing that had ever been seen before.

*Tahitian Landscape*, while more naturalistic than Gauguin's later works, is still an abstract representation of the scene. The landscape has been conceived as a series of flat planes, superimposed rhythmically one upon another and differentiated by color contrasts: green, pink, and purple. The colors of trees, shrubs, and mountains have been heightened to intensify the beauty which Gauguin saw around him. Repeated, flowing lines help to create a unified composition that emphasize decorative effect. Overall there is an exceptional sense of light and depth, conveying a harmony of man and nature untroubled by overtones of mystery. While not yet rejecting naturalism, the painting serves to communicate Gauguin's highly personal feelings to the viewer.

## A Flamboyant Personality

Vain, quarrelsome, and self-indulgent, confident of his genius and something of a rogue, Paul Gauguin was undoubtedly one of the most flamboyant personalities of his day. As a young man, he spent six years at sea, in the merchant marine and the navy. Then he became a successful stockbroker, married, and took up painting in his spare time. Following a crisis in the stock market in 1882, he found himself without a job, and the following year he left his wife and five children in order to live a bohemian life and pursue his art full time.

After sojourns in Brittany, Panama, Martinique, and Arles, Gauguin sailed for Tahiti in 1891 and settled in the beachfront town of Mataiea. Although he returned to Paris for two years in 1893, he went back to Tahiti and later moved to the Marquesas, where he died in 1903.

## A Legacy of Experimentation

A potter, sculptor, painter, and printmaker, Gauguin's impact on the art of the 20th century was tremendous. Both his independent use of expressive color and his emphasis on symbolism directly influenced later movements. Perhaps his spirit of unbridled experimentation has been his greatest legacy, a position Gauguin himself expressed at the end of his life when he wrote, "The painters who reap benefits of this liberty today owe me something."

## Extend the Discussion:

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas

## Look

Looking at this picture, can you tell what kind of place Tahiti is? What words would you use to describe it in a tourist brochure? What do you see that makes you say that?

Gauguin was more interested in recreating the feeling of a place than showing exactly how it looked. How is this picture different from real life? How would it feel to be "inside" this picture?

If you looked in Gauguin's paint box, what color paints might you find? Which color did he use the most? The least? What do you see that makes you say that? Look closely at the picture. Can you tell anything about the size and shape of his brushes just by looking?

## Think

Gauguin liked living in Tahiti because it was so different from life in France. How would it be different from living in Minnesota? What do you see that makes you say that? From what you can see in the painting, would you like to live in Tahiti? Why or why not?

When Gauguin painted this picture in 1891, people were not used to seeing colorful photographs in magazines and on television. It was also much more difficult to travel to exotic places. How do you think you might have felt seeing this picture if you had been alive then instead of now?

Gauguin titled this painting *Tahitian Landscape*. What other titles could he have used? Why? Which would you pick and why?



Africa, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa region (Baule)

***Kpele Kpele Mask***, 19th century

Wood and reconstructed raffia collar

H.44 x W.26½ inches (Horn H.17½ inches)

The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 62.37

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### **Key Ideas**

Like many African peoples, the Baule [**bah**-oo-leh] of central Côte d'Ivoire [koht dee-voir] perform elaborate masquerades to mark important village events. The plain round face of this mask is immediately recognizable to a Baule villager as *kpele kpele* [kah-peh-lay kah-peh-leh], a character from the *goli* [goh-lee] masquerade. The dancer wearing the kpele kpele mask makes exaggerated movements and menacing gestures and wears a costume of raffia and animal hide. The dance, the costume, and the rough simplicity of the mask together remind the audience of the uncontrolled aspect of the world beyond the civilization of the village.

### **The Bush Versus the Village**

The region of West Africa where the Baule live is a mixture of forest and grassland. They have traditionally lived in scattered small villages, with homes clustered around a central public area. The clear physical division between the village and the bush (the unsettled surrounding area) is matched in the world of the imagination. The Baule believe that an invisible world of spirits inhabits the plants, animals, and land forms outside the limits of the village. These spirits of the bush can be helpful or harmful. People must communicate with them carefully through rituals and masquerades to avoid misfortune.

### **A Mask in Context**

When you look at this mask in the art museum, you must first of all understand how far it is from its original context. People in the communities where masks like these were made view them only during a masquerade performance. The mask itself is one small part of an energetic display of costume and dance. After the masquerade is over the villagers hide the masks; the spirits associated with them can be so powerful that to see them inappropriately can have terrible results—cause an accident, perhaps, or infertility. Although kpele kpele and the other goli masks serve as entertainment rather than as ritual, the Baule still regard them as spiritually potent. Like many of the more powerful masks, the goli masks are stored in a sanctuary in the bush, away from the village.

### **Masquerade as Entertainment**

Baule villagers perform the goli masquerade in the central public area of the village as entertainment for the community at harvest time, to honor special guests, or at funerals. The festival spans a whole day and also features feasting and drinking. Because goli does not have the ritual function that many other masquerades do, it is open to the whole community. (Women and children are not allowed to watch masquerades that are direct encounters with the spirit world.) As with most African masquerades, only men do the dancing.

### **Kpele Kpele up Close**

The kpele kpele mask is highly stylized; that is, the artist has eliminated or exaggerated certain details for expressive purposes. The shape of the face has been simplified to a flat disc. The eyes are large teardrops and the mouth is a square box. A row of jagged teeth fills the mouth, and the curved shapes on top of the head suggest an animal's horns. These clues are enough to convey that kpele kpele is alive and inhuman, wild and mysterious. While kpele kpele is usually rather small, the great size of this example (more than two feet in diameter) makes it all the more awesome. The reconstructed raffia collar ringing the mask like a mane adds to its bulk. The raffia would swish and swirl as the dancer moved, along with the raffia skirt worn at his waist. A hide cape on the dancer's back completed the costume.

### **Kpele Kpele in Goli**

The meaning of kpele kpele as a symbol of the wild, uncontrolled aspect of the environment is amplified in the context of the other goli masks. Kpele kpele is the first of a series of four pairs of masks that might appear in the goli masquerade. Two dancers take turns at a vigorous dance of quick stomping. In many cases they are mischievous, racing around the dance area and teasing young women. An attendant accompanies the pair of dancers to make sure their costumes are in order and they do not get disoriented. (Watch a video clip of a kpele kpele dancer in motion as part of the Interactive Display in the African Gallery.)

The pairs of masks that follow are progressively more realistic. After kpele kpele comes the pair of *goli glin* [**goh-lee glin**] masks, whose wearers dance even more wildly. Goli glin is still very much an animal, with horns and a long snout. While still abstract, it is more complex and carved in three dimensions. Next comes the *kpan pre* [kah-pahn **pray**] pair, the first of the two female pairs. Kpan pre has a rounded human face with realistic features, but still has horns. The dancers again take turns, but their dance is more graceful and fluid. The last and most prestigious mask, *kpan* [kah-**pahn**], has an even more refined human face, this time topped with an elegant hairstyle. She is the height of the Baule ideal of female beauty, and her dance is slow and stately. She symbolizes the civilized nature of the village, the other end of the spectrum from kpele kpele's wildness.

### **An Adopted Tradition**

Goli is a relatively new tradition for the Baule, who did not historically perform masquerades at all. Baule traders were introduced to the dance by the neighboring Wan people around 1900. While some changes in the performance of the masquerade have evolved, the forms of the masks are essentially the same. Even the songs accompanying the dances are still sung in the Wan language, unintelligible to the Baule. "Wan is our Latin," one man told a visiting scholar. Nevertheless, goli has become the most characteristic of Baule masquerades, performed more often than any other and a popular attraction for tourists.



### **Extend the Discussion:**

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas.

### **Look**

What kind of creature does this remind you of? What do you see that makes you say that? How would you describe this mask to a person who can't see it?

Traditional mask makers around the world usually use materials they can find nearby. What kind of materials do you see in this mask? Where could one find these materials? How do you think the mask might have been made? What makes you think so? What do you think would have been the hardest part to make? Why?

When a work of art is not lifelike, we say it is ABSTRACT. Often artists make things abstract by simplifying shapes and playing with details. What shapes do you see in this mask? What details have been left out? What details have been exaggerated? What details have been turned into a pattern?

### **Think**

Masks are used in different cultures around the world. How is this mask like masks you might use? How is it different? How are the ways we use masks different from the way the Baule use masks?

Imagine that you are wearing this mask. What would it feel like? How would it feel to dance while wearing it?

The Baule people of Côte d'Ivoire immediately recognize kpele kpele and the other masks used in the goli masquerade because goli is often performed in their communities. What well-known characters from our culture do *you* recognize immediately? (Snoopy, for example) What helps you recognize those characters? (Snoopy's big white nose and floppy black ears)



Berenice Abbott, American, 1898-1991

***New York at Night*, 1934**

Gelatin silver print (printed 1982)

H.21<sup>15</sup>/<sub>16</sub> x W.17<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub> inches (image)

Gift of the William R. Hibbs Family, -86.108.37

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### **Key Ideas**

Berenice Abbott dedicated herself to photographing the changing environment of New York City in the 1930s. This photograph, *New York at Night*, is one of many Abbott took as a part of a ten-year project titled *Changing New York*. Through these images, Abbott sought to capture the activity and energy of New York and the people who lived there. Although not all of her photographs include people, as Abbott said, "You are photographing people when you are photographing a city, and you don't have to have a person in it."

### **Inspiration in Paris**

Abbott found her inspiration in the French photographer Eugene Atget, whose photographs of Paris documented that city's changing urban environment at the turn of the century. Abbott met Atget in Paris at the beginning of her career and towards the end of his. She met him through the artist Man Ray, for whom she worked as a photographer's assistant. Remembering the first time she saw Atget's photographs, she wrote, "Their impact was immediate and tremendous. There was a sudden flash of recognition—the shock of realism unadorned. The real world, seen with wonderment and surprise, was mirrored in each print." Abbott soon opened her own studio and began making portrait photographs. She was talented and successful and photographed many famous people.

In 1927 she persuaded Atget to pose for a portrait. When she went to show him the prints she found he had died. Afraid that his photographs would be lost, she purchased all his negatives and prints. In 1929 Abbott took a trip back to America in search of a publisher for a book about Atget and his Paris photographs. What started as a business trip ended up being a permanent move back to America.

### **A Changing New York**

Abbott explained her decision to stay in New York, "The new things that had cropped up in eight years, the sights of the city, the human gesture here sent me mad with joy." Abbott was fascinated by the contrast between the old and new ways of life in New York for both the people and their environment. She photographed the contrast between the wealthy players of Wall Street and the poor people deeply affected by the Great Depression. She was also drawn to the contrast between the old and new architecture of the city. During the eight years she had been in Paris, New York had experienced its second great skyscraper boom. In *New York at Night*, she has captured the contrast between the sleek forms of the new skyscrapers and the decorative ornamentation of the older buildings.

In this photograph Abbott also emphasizes the contrast between the lights of the buildings and the darkness of the night sky. Abbott had just a few days out of the entire year to maximize this contrast. Only on the shortest days of the year in December would it get dark early enough so lights would have to be turned on when people were still at work.

### **Pursuing a Passion**

Photographing New York was Abbott's passion and she did it in the face of great odds. Documentary photography was not popularly admired in the late 1920s and early 1930s and Abbott found it difficult to make ends meet. She was able to devote only one day a week to photographing her city, supporting herself with her portrait photography the other days. When the stock market crashed in 1929, most of her clientele was no longer able to afford the luxury of having their portraits taken. Abbott didn't know how she would pay the rent, let alone continue photographing the city. When the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration was formed in 1935 to provide work for artists and craftspeople, she applied for a grant. Abbott later recalled that the day she learned her project was accepted was the happiest day of her life. She was now able to work full-time and get paid to photograph the city she loved.

The job of photographing the city could be strenuous. For this picture, Abbott rejected her smaller handheld camera in favor of a large format camera, such as Atget had used in Paris. This type of camera, which exposes an 8 x 10- inch negative, was heavy and slow to operate, but the large format gave her added detail and more control. Abbott took pictures from interesting and sometimes extreme camera angles. She would position herself precariously high up for a bird's-eye view or down low dodging pedestrians on the street for a worm's-eye view.

### **The Art of the Documentary Photograph**

Abbott's photographs were both documentary and artistic. Pierre MacOrlan, a writer and friend of Abbott, said the art of documentary photography was capturing contemporary life "at the right moment by an author capable of grasping that moment." Abbott's keen sense of composition allowed her to "grasp" many such moments. We see her artistry in *New York at Night* in the unusual shift in perspective. She did not choose to show a city with a typical skyline view, but instead puts the viewer above this exciting city. In this way she succeeds in answering her own question, "How shall the two-dimensional print in black and white suggest the flux of activity of the metropolis, the interaction of human beings and solid architectural constructions, all impinging upon each other in time?"

**Extend the Discussion:**

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas.

**Look**

It's hard to see things in the dark. What do you see in this nighttime picture? How do you know where the buildings are? Which buildings seem closer to you? Which seem farther away? How can you tell?

Photographers are interested not only in what they are taking a picture of (the SUBJECT), but also in the arrangement of shapes, lines, and colors (the COMPOSITION). What shapes do you see in this picture? Do you see any places where several small shapes work together to form bigger shapes?

Berenice Abbott said, "You are photographing people when you are photographing a city, and you don't have to have a person in it." Are there any people in this picture? Where are the people? What do you see that makes you say that? Are they "in" the picture even if we can't see them?

**Think**

Berenice Abbott carefully planned where and when she would take this picture. How would it be different if it were taken during the day? How would it be different if it were in color? How would it be different if the photographer were standing on the sidewalk?

Abbott wanted to photograph the new skyscrapers of New York because they were changing the look and feel of the city. What would you choose to photograph in your community to show how it looks and feels? Where could you go to get a dramatic view? What might be an interesting time of day to take your picture?

What would you ask the artist if she were here?



Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal), Italian, 1697-1768

***Grand Canal from Palazzo Flangini to Palazzo Bembo***, c. 1740

Oil on canvas

24 $\frac{1}{4}$  x 36 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches (canvas)

Bequest of Miss Tessie Jones in memory of Herschel V. Jones, 68.41.11

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### Key Ideas

To the 18th-century traveler, Venice was a captivating city beyond all imagining. Views of the city were in great demand by tourists who were enchanted with its unique beauty and luxurious lifestyle. Canaletto was one of the most successful and popular painters of such views or *vedute* (*vehdoo-tay*). In his detailed, realistic manner he produced painstakingly accurate "portraits" of his environment.

### Pride of Place

Topography, the portraiture of places, reached its highest point in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In that great age of building, kings and princes, wealthy merchants and landed gentry were busy reshaping the cities in which they lived and the houses in which they dwelt. Pride in their possessions inspired a demand for a visual record of their achievements, just as personal pride made portraiture a characteristic activity of the time. *Vedute* or view painting became an important category of painting, valued most highly for its fidelity to the subject.

The 18th century was also an age of travel. Politically, Europe was passing through a period of comparative stability. Wars had far from ceased, but they no longer involved whole populations; religious differences had ceased to be acute; trade and industry were expanding and scientific curiosity was developing. There was an interest in exploring the manners and monuments of those earlier civilizations regarded as the foundation of a common European culture.

### The Grand Tour

With its rich classical and cultural heritage, Italy inevitably became the main focus of such travel. A large proportion of travelers came from England which was then the wealthiest country of the Western world, with an expanded seaborne commerce which promoted travel. The Grand Tour, which included the principal cities and sights of Europe, came to be regarded as an important part of any gentleman's education.

From these many travelers came a demand for pictorial souvenirs of the places they had visited and the sights they had seen. Some tourists brought their own artists with them to paint whatever scenes took their fancy; this practice provided employment for various Swiss, English and Italian watercolor painters. Usually, however, the travelers relied upon local talent. For the most part, they wanted straight topographical views, but almost equally popular were *capricci* (*cah-**pre**-chee*), architectural fantasies made up of more or less recognizable motives drawn from all kinds of different sources, and *vedute ideate* (*ee-day-**ah**-tay*), imaginary views reflecting the character and feeling of some particular place.

## Destination Venice

Venice, beyond question, was the main center of topography in 18th-century Italy. The city was unique in character, and retained its ancient splendor. Its civic and religious ceremonies were unrivaled in magnificence, and a constant round of festivities was a part of the social life in every sphere of society. Venice had an efficient government, which saw to the visitors' safety and health, while its hotels were reputed to be the best in Europe. Venice's many visitors wanted souvenir views of the city, and many skillful topographers and *vedute* painters met this demand.

## A Water Highway

Canaletto shows us a view of Venice from near the head of the main canal that winds its way through the city. Venice's principal economic highway as well as a fashionable promenade, the Grand Canal was lined with palaces alternating with warehouses and churches. All appear in Canaletto's view.

On the far left of the painting is the Palazzo Flangini, begun as a grand nobleman's city home but never completed, due to lack of sufficient funds. Beyond the palace are the walled gardens and water facade of the church of San Geremia. The church is flanked by another waterway, the Canareggio, second only to the Grand Canal in importance. One can just make out, from this angle, where the two join at the corner of the walkway in front of the church. The tower of another church, San Marcuolo, may be seen in the distance, and the view of the left bank of the canal ends with the facade of the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi.

On the right bank is an anonymous-looking structure originally built as a private home but by the 18th century serving as warehouse and headquarters for Turkish merchants in the city. Beyond this may be seen the twin obelisks topping the Palazzo Belloni-Battaglia and the round-arched windows that graced the side facade of Palazzo Bembo. Throughout the scene gondoliers ply their trade, carrying passengers and merchandise in ornate covered "water carriages" or sturdy business-like scows. Canaletto has captured a single moment of time forever, freezing gestures in the middle of expression as though engraving them on the visitor's memory.

## Capturing a View

This painting exhibits Canaletto's mature style before his trip to England in 1745. Its carefully delineated portrait of this fashionable section of Venice reveals his early training in perspective as well as his skillful use of the camera obscura for preliminary drawings. The camera obscura was a favorite device of topographical painters—a lens projected the image of a view onto a ground glass screen, which could then be traced and used as the basis for drawing or painting.



## **A Career of Painting Views**

Canaletto began his career as a theatrical decorator, painting scenery with his father and brother for local theaters and for the opera. Early in 1720, possibly inspired by the work of Dutch and Flemish landscapists seen on a trip to Rome, Canaletto began to paint the views of Venice that were to become the major contribution of his art.

Throughout his career Canaletto had a steady market for his work, primarily among English patrons. The British consul at Venice, Joseph Smith, also a publisher and art collector, acted as his agent to some extent and published numerous engravings of his paintings. In 1745 Canaletto went to England, where he remained ten years. There he painted London views, particularly of the Thames, and scenes showing country houses of the nobility, or sights such as Eton College. Most later critics have less regard for the harder color and more mannered drawing of Canaletto's English period, which might be attributed to the colder northern atmosphere as well as to the influence of Dutch painters who were also in England.

After his return to Venice in 1755, Canaletto seems to have painted very little, and what he produced is extremely hard and mechanical in style. So popular was his earlier manner of painting, however, that it was kept alive in numerous works produced by Canaletto's nephew and the school of studio assistants Canaletto had once employed. In this way the Venetian vedute remained in demand well into the 19th century.

**Extend the Discussion:**

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas.

**Look**

What could someone who had never been to Venice learn about the city by looking at this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? How is it different from where you live?

Artists use a variety of tricks to show distance. What is near us in this picture? What is far away? How can we tell?

What might it feel like to be here? What might you hear? What do you see that makes you say that?

**Think**

Canaletto painted pictures like this one as souvenirs for tourists in the days before there were cameras. In what ways is this painting like a photograph? In what ways is it different? Do you think Canaletto added anything from his imagination? What, and why?

If you were sending this picture as a postcard from a trip, what would you write on the back?

Like many artists of his time, Canaletto used a portable tool called a *camera obscura*, something like an opaque projector, to make this picture look just like the scene in front of him. Do you think that is cheating? Why or why not? Can you think of ways artists use technology in their art today?

**Your Notes:**



Camille Pissarro, French, 1830-1903  
***Place du Théâtre Français, Paris: Rain***, 1898  
Oil on canvas  
29 x 36 inches  
The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 18.19

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### **Key Ideas**

The French Impressionists of the 19th century were a generation of innovators. They broke with artistic tradition to create art that reflected the influence of new scientific theories of light and vision. The work of Camille Pissarro, a central figure among the Impressionists, demonstrates their characteristic concern with the effects of light. *Place du Théâtre Français, Paris: Rain*, one of a series of paintings Pissarro made of that neighborhood, is an example of the Impressionist interest in capturing the changes in a place from moment to moment.

### **A Break From Tradition**

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, writers and artists began to proclaim the autonomy of artists and their right to produce works free from past traditions and technical practices. Artists stated their belief that the world of art had its own "natural laws" and that their first loyalty was to their canvases and their own personal visions and preferences. Rather than working to satisfy public taste, they began executing artworks which pleased themselves. This attitude was prompted, in part, by the then-new technology of photography, which liberated painting from its traditional descriptive role.

### **Painting What the Eye Really Sees**

The French Impressionists were a group of young artists who adhered to these new aesthetic principles. They appeared as a cohesive movement in the 1860s, exhibiting together eight times between 1874 and 1886. Inspired by new scientific theories on light and optics, the group sought to represent a scene or object precisely as the human eye actually perceived it. They learned from these new studies that the actual color of an object is modified by the intensity of the light surrounding it, as well as by reflections from objects and colors next to it. Since these variables were always operating in any given scene, the Impressionists soon realized that it was only possible to represent a single moment in time on the canvas. "Reality," as the eye perceives it, is always changing.

### **Light and the Impression of a Moment**

Thus, light became the dominant subject of Impressionist art. The artists sought to break it down into its component colors and render its play and reflection off of various surfaces. To achieve this, they eliminated modeling, sharp focus, precise detail and outline, the use of black for shadows, and continuous brushstrokes. Instead they painted candid "impressions" of the world—sketchily executed, brilliantly colored works in which pure tints were laid down side by side and "mixed" in the eye of the viewer.

One consequence of the stylistic emphasis on light was that the paintings looked unfinished. Before Impressionism, a finished work had been considered one in which the subject was complete in detail, a subject organized through line rather than light. One of the major criticisms of the new Impressionist works was that they were mere sketches rather than finished paintings. In addition, the Impressionists' untiring fascination with the world of appearances, the momentary, and the transient resulted in a conscious neglect of psychological and emotional depth. Instead, the artists were fond of depicting happy, leisurely moments—scenes of couples strolling in the Bois de Boulogne or of sunbathers lounging at the seashore.

### **A Paris Street in the Rain**

Pissarro's cityscape was painted late in his career, in the winter of 1898. In January of that year, Pissarro had gone to Paris and taken a room at the Hotel du Louvre on the rue de Rivoli, a location that offered him a splendid bird's-eye view of both the Avenue de l'Opera and the Théâtre Français. He stayed there until April, painting thirty-two views of the neighborhood at different times of the day and in various weather, always depicting the scene from a fresh angle.

By its very title, this work betrays Pissarro's Impressionist interest in transient effects of light and atmosphere. It gives us an image of Paris caught in the rain. People with umbrellas scurry across busy intersections and huddle at street corners, while horse-drawn carriages click and splash their way along the water-soaked avenue. Only the tan stuccoed buildings with their tin roofs and brick chimneys are still, as the stone fountain gurgles in the square below and the bare trees quiver in the dampness. Despite the gray weather, the mood of the scene is not gloomy but rather conveys the pleasant excitement of a busy thoroughfare. The city is alive and bustling with activity and energy. "It is very beautiful to paint!" wrote Pissarro. "Perhaps it is not really aesthetic, but I am delighted to be able to do these Parisian streets which people usually call ugly, but which are so silvery, so luminous, and so vital."

### **The Impressionist Style**

*Place du Théâtre Français, Paris: Rain*, is painted with luminous soft colors, in short, brisk brushstrokes derived from the famous "broken" Impressionist style. Unlike other Impressionist works, which were often hastily composed, it is carefully constructed so that the rectangular solidity of the architecture becomes a foil for the bustling figures and traffic, and the swaying trees. Pissarro has emphasized this contrast by creating a more detailed "portrait" of the buildings, while rendering the moving vehicles and pedestrians in a sketchier flurry of brushstrokes.

### **New Influences**

With its unconventional view and asymmetrical framing, *Place du Théâtre Français, Paris: Rain* also reflects the influence of photography and Japanese prints on late 19th-century art. Both of these art forms were avidly studied by the Impressionists, who were inspired to incorporate the compositional effects they saw into their own paintings. The result was a flattening of pictorial space, emphasizing the two-dimensional nature of the canvas rather than the illusion of three-dimensional distance. In this painting depth is

indicated as much by the placement background objects at the top of the picture as by the conventional use of perspective.

A second result of the study of photography and Japanese prints is the "unstudied," casual air of the composition itself. It appears to be a spontaneous sketch, a snapshot taken at random. This is true to Pissarro's desire to paint an "impression" of the scene in front of him, a picture that is true to what he experiences, not to what he knows to be there.

### **Becoming a Painter**

Camille Pissarro was born in the Virgin Islands in 1830. The son of a prosperous merchant, Pissarro initially studied business, but later convinced his father to allow him to enter the School of Fine Arts in Paris. There, he received an academic art education which he supplemented with classes at the Academie Suisse. At the Academie he met Claude Monet, the "father" of French Impressionism. He also took lessons from the renowned landscape painter Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, an artist who greatly affected his mature style and subject matter.

At the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Pissarro fled to London with Monet where both artists were attracted to the atmospheric effects of the English landscapists John Constable and J.M.W. Turner. By the time he returned to Paris in 1874, Pissarro had developed his own Impressionistic manner and, along with such artists as Degas, Monet, Renoir, and Sisley, showed in the first and subsequent Impressionist exhibitions held between 1874 and 1886.

Although Pissarro is considered to be the most steadfast of all of the Impressionists—the only artist to participate in all eight of their exhibitions—his style changed at various points in his career, reflecting the various stages of the movement itself. He eventually returned to the freer, more spontaneous manner of his early period, continuing to paint Impressionist landscapes and cityscapes until his death in 1903.

**Extend the Discussion:**

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas

**Look**

Impressionists often enjoyed painting the same scene at different times of day, in all kinds of weather. Pissarro painted this scene 32 times. What kind of day was it when he painted this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? How does he tell us about the season? The time of day?

How would you describe the colors in this picture? What color did Pissarro use the most here? How would the colors he used change if it were a sunny day? A summer day? Sunrise?

Artists use a variety of tricks to show distance. What is near us in this picture? What is far away? How can we tell?

**Think**

The Impressionists painted in a new and different way. At first, people didn't like their paintings because they thought they did not look finished. Do you think this picture looks finished? Why or why not? What makes something look finished?

With the invention of photography in the 19th century, artists felt it was less important to record exactly how something looked. How is this picture different than a photograph? Point out details as you mention them. What can a painter do that a photographer cannot?

What do you think Pissarro was trying to show us about Paris with this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? Can you think of a place near where you live that captures some of the same feeling? (Remember that horses and carriages were used instead of cars in the 19th century. These buildings were fairly new at the time, too!)



**Your Notes:**



England, Suffolk, Hingham Manor

**Tudor room**, 16<sup>th</sup> century

Oak, stone, glass, iron

Gift of Mrs. Elisabeth H. Washburn, Mrs. Margaret Washburn Hunt, Mrs. Elisabeth Washburn King, and Mrs. Sidney Washburn Young, 23.67

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### **Key Ideas**

The houses we build for ourselves reflect many aspects of the local environment. Do we seek shelter from our environment or embrace it? Which materials are practical for widespread use? Which are symbols of wealth and luxury because of their scarcity? How do the social and cultural systems of a place influence the look of the built environment? These questions can all be explored through this room from a 17th century English manor house.

### **A Rising Middle Class**

During the reigns of Henry VIII's daughter Elizabeth I and her Stuart successor James I, more houses were built than at any other time in the history of England. Agricultural prices were high and thus the income of the landed aristocracy (the largest single class group aside from the peasantry) was also high, enabling families to spend on building. New fortunes were also being amassed in industry and trade by members of the rising middle class. Both classes saw building as a highly visible means of exhibiting wealth and social standing, and competed among themselves to construct the biggest or most elaborate houses.

### **New Technology**

Up until this time, country houses had been constructed of heavy oak timbers joined with mortar, referred to as half-timber construction. Castles, of course, had been built of rubble and stone. Local materials were still primary but, by 1570, many houses were being built of brick. Bricks could be colored and molded into ornate shapes, suiting the new tastes for decoration, or placed in elaborate patterns. Brick construction made the new buildings lighter and easier to put up, and allowed load-bearing walls to be opened with large expanses of glass windows.

### **Before there were Architects...**

As a profession, architecture did not exist in England until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Many members of the upper classes were amateur architects, however, and they often designed their own houses with the help of a master mason or carpenter. In a typical floor plan the ground level contained the parlors or sitting rooms, hall, kitchen, larder, pantry, a long gallery for games or exercise and, perhaps, a dancing room. The second floor contained the bedrooms while the attic held rooms for servants and laborers, and storage.

## **New Standards of Comfort**

Taken from Hingham Manor in Suffolk, this room reflects both the heritage of medieval building and the new incorporation of Renaissance decorative motifs. Most likely a family dining room or sitting room, it also reflects the new standards of comfort and wealth of the time. In earlier homes and palaces, the timbers and plain mortar walls had been left exposed. Here, thin oak panels a single board wide serve to keep out the drafts and to lend an air of warmth and richness. The paneling is made of oak, a popular wood for the purpose, being tough, easily available, and inexpensive. The small, simple panels with carved frames recall earlier medieval woodwork. The fluted PILASTER strips with their classically-derived CAPITALS reflect the later Renaissance influence of Italy. The many-paned windows show us that walls were no longer conceived primarily as defense.

## **Warmth and Light in a Tudor Home**

Because the fireplace supplied vital heat and light for a house like Hingham Manor, most rooms had one. In earlier periods the hearth had been in the center of a room, exposing occupants to continual smoke and dangerous sparks. The use of a chimney with projecting smoke stack was a Tudor innovation. Notice, however, that the hearth is still very open and fairly shallow, to direct as much heat into the room as possible. The stone surround of the fireplace opening takes the form of a simple Tudor arch (one with a relatively low point). The overmantle, however, is elaborately carved, with each of three panels surrounded by cartouche borders separated by caryatids. These appear to be royal warriors, male and female, with lions-head shields. The designs for such motifs, while originally inspired by Italian decoration, usually came from Flemish or German pattern books.

## **Furnishing a Room**

The pieces of furniture in this room are not from Hingham Manor, but are contemporary and typical of such a setting. The forms are simple and essentially utilitarian, but a few touches show the trend toward greater personal comfort. The wood used is usually oak, and pieces are solidly made, making them often robust and heavy. An actual room would have probably been much more bare than this museum setting. Even in wealthy homes the principal sitting rooms only contained a large table, perhaps a single chair for the head of the household (hence the term, "chairman"), and a bench or stools for other members of the household.

1. The table is oak and dates from the last years of Elizabeth I's reign. Its heavy, bulbous legs were very popular during the Elizabethan period and demonstrate the woodworking skill at post-turning which was the major means of decoration. The stretcher rails serve to stabilize the table and also act as footrests. Tables were not always this permanent—many were simply boards on trestles, put up and taken down as needed.
2. The armchair is an early seating development, an adaptation of a chest to which arms and a back were added. The backs at this period were usually straight and solid, a type easier to make and better for keeping off cold drafts. They were often uncomfortable, however, and their size

- and weight made them difficult to move. Such armchairs are called wainscot chairs because the techniques used to make them are the same as those employed for the paneling on the walls of the room. Plainer chairs were also seen throughout the century in less well-to-do houses. Seating of all types was made more comfortable with cushions, those in the wealthiest houses often made of rich velvets and trimmed with bright-colored and gilt fringe.
3. Benches and stools were more common forms of seating in most households. Not until the 17th century did chairs begin to replace stools for use at dining tables. The fashions of the time—huge skirts for women and puffed breeches for men—made stools more convenient. The seats were often padded.
  4. Chests were also used for sitting, as well as reclining and for storage of clothing and other accessories. Such pieces were important for a household in the days before built-in cupboards and closets were standard features.

**Extend the Discussion:**

See "Tips for Talking about Art" in the introductory pages for more ideas.

**Look**

Imagine you have woken up to suddenly find yourself in this room. What do you recognize? What clues do you see to tell you that you are not in a modern home? What might this room have been used for? What do you see that makes you say that?

This room was built in 1600, before railroads and highways made it easy to transport building material. Buildings usually had to be made of materials found nearby. What materials do you see in this room? Where do those materials come from? (wood from trees, stone from the ground, etc.)

Many different types of craftspeople were needed to make the things in this room—woodcarvers, furniture makers, metal workers, potters. What do you think took the most time and energy to produce? What looks difficult to do? What looks easier? What do you see that makes you say that?

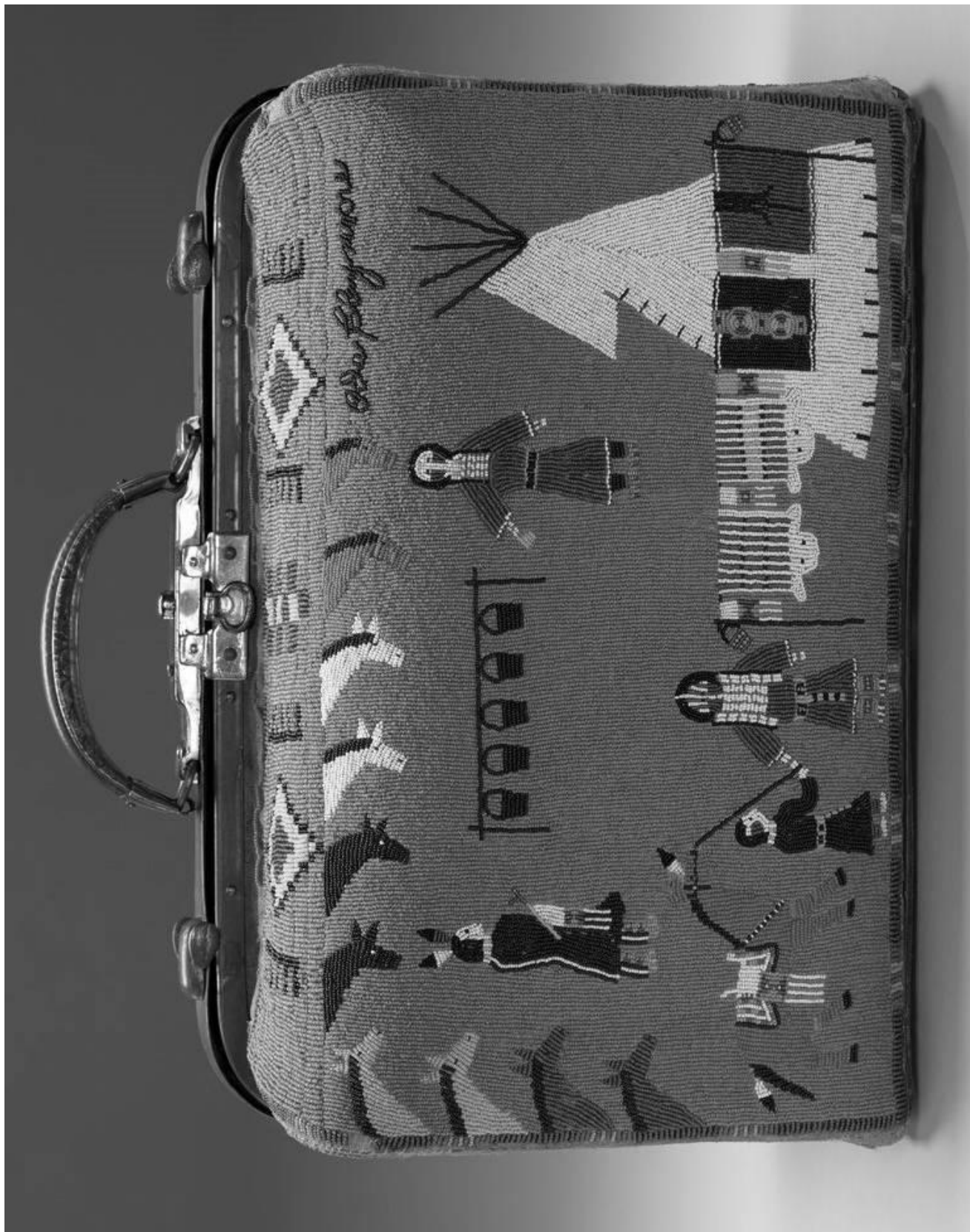
**Think**

What do you see in this room that looks useful? What do you see that looks just decorative? What might have been both useful and decorative? Would you guess that this house belonged to a wealthy, average, or poor family? What do you see that makes you say that?

The climate of England is often cold and damp. People did not have electricity or central heating. How would this room be different if the walls were uncovered stone like the window frames? How would it be different if there were more windows? Can you think of reasons why the builders might have done it the way they did?

What would you like about living here if this were your house? What would you dislike? What changes would you make and why?

**Your Notes:**





Ida (?) Claymore, probably Minneconjou Lakota, North America, Great Plains region

**Suitcase**, 20th century

Beads, hide, metal, oilcloth, thread

The Robert J. Ulrich Works of Art Purchase Fund, 2010.19

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### **Key Ideas**

This beaded suitcase holds many stories. The first story is about the artist, Edith or “Ida” Claymore, a Minneconjou (Min-na-CON-ju) Lakota artist. Claymore lived on the Standing Rock Reservation, located on the North and South Dakota border, where she made this beaded bag. Claymore applied traditional native beadwork to a non-traditional object, in this case a western-style satchel. The bag’s beaded décor tells another story, of a traditional Lakota courting scene. A young man brings a gift of many horses to his potential mate. She accepts the gift and, in doing so, accepts his proposal. In this way, this bag represents the many worlds and identities of Native people living within two cultures—native and non-native, traditional and contemporary.

### **Creativity from Confinement**

This beaded suitcase was produced around 1880 to 1909 in response to life on the reservation. By the 1870s, the U.S. government had begun to confine Native Americans by force to reservations, internment camps, and boarding schools. The reservation era between 1880 and 1960 was a time of profound cultural upheaval for Native people of the Great Plains. Paradoxically, while the reservation period suppressed male artistic traditions, which often centered on themes of war and hunting, women’s arts flourished. Confinement and government bans on many traditional activities created a period of “enforced leisure,” allowing women time to work on their art. The result was a tremendous blossoming of beadwork, traditionally done by females.

Prior to Native people’s confinement on the reservation, most beadwork was applied to objects created for tribal use. With the introduction of new materials introduced by European-Americans, Native women artists began to experiment, creating marvelous hybrid objects. They meticulously embellished non-traditional objects with tiny glass beads, like this western-made suitcase. Many Plains artists appropriated western motifs, such as the American flag and alphabetic inscriptions, fusing them with traditional Native motifs and designs in their beadwork.

Bags were a common medium for beadwork in the Plains tradition, especially during the highly nomadic period following the arrival of the Spanish to North America. Decorative items needed to be portable, and bags were essential for moving camp. This bag, a factory-produced hard-sided suitcase, updates the tradition for the reservation era. Beaded bags were made for the western markets, but they were also created as honor gifts to be given to family and friends to mark a special occasion, such as a wedding.

## Tradition and Innovation

These new beaded forms were among the many innovative ways Native artists adopted and adapted western goods to Native traditions. Native beadwork came to the Americas with European traders in the 19th century. A handful of early glass beads were so valued, they might be traded for a horse. By the middle of the 19th century, beads had become a “traditional” medium of Plains culture. Beadwork surpassed quillwork as a means to decorate traditional Native clothing and utilitarian and ceremonial objects. Quillwork requires weaving together flattened and dyed porcupine quills into bison, deer, or elk hide; glass beads, by contrast, are durable, come in a vivid range of colors, and are more easily sewn onto hide or cloth. Distinct regional or tribal difference in style and technique developed in beadwork. Lakota beadwork on the late 19th century is often known to have a fully beaded background of one color, often blue or white.

On this suitcase, Claymore applied beads to deer hide and then attached the hide to a commercially made leather and metal suitcase. To create the design, glass beads are attached to buffalo or deer hide several at a time by a technique called the lane stitch.

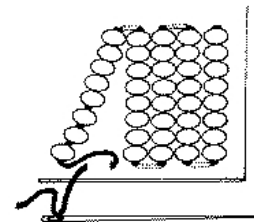


Illustration adapted from “Sioux Style Lazy Stitch Beadwork,” by Steve Nimerfro

Originally published in *Moccasin Tracks*, March 1982

To illustrate this story of courtship, Claymore used pictographic conventions usually found on traditional Native painted or drawn works. Pictographs are stories that are told through pictures. Beaded narratives created by Plains women during the reservation era were an extension of pictographs that had been drawn by men for many generations. On the Great Plains, men’s pictographs usually recorded stories of battle, visionary experiences, hunting, and courting. Women mostly beaded geometric designs, as found atop and on either end of the suitcase. When women did create the rare object with pictographs, they usually depicted domestic and courting scenes.

## A Story in Beads

This beaded suitcase tells the story of a courtship in two phases. The upper scene shows the suitor with an eagle feather in blue wearing a distinctive pipe bag. He is presenting a gift of many horses, represented by rows of horse heads, to his prospective wife. She stands in a fine red robe beside a row of cooking kettles. The second part of the story appears in the lower half, as a girl in blue leads a gift horse bearing the man’s pipe bag to the woman in her camp. Her acceptance of the gift, and the man as her husband, is illustrated by her taking the reins of the horse. She stands beside a rack laden with her handiwork—quilled hides, pipe bags, and beaded blankets. The camp scene, featuring a tipi, implies a traditional Lakota setting. It is the story of a union between an accomplished horseman and a woman highly skilled in domestic and fine arts.

The other side of the suitcase features two cowboys lassoing cattle, both steers with identifiable brands. Claymore left no record to explain any possible connection between the two narratives. It is possible that she was showing the first scene to illustrate the traditional ways of Plains people, and the second to reflect the realities of contemporary life on the reservation.

## About the Artist

The beaded signature suggests the artist's name is Ida or Ede Claymore. The signature is difficult to read, but it is likely a nickname. Provenance records state that Edith Gilbert was born in 1858 and married to Joseph Claymore by Native custom around 1878. They had seven children together. A photograph in the collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota shows a couple, identified as Joseph and Mrs. Claymore of Standing Rock Reservation, standing behind a table full of beaded suitcases and satchels. The MIA's suitcase, with cattle roping scene, is seen in front of Joseph. This photograph was probably taken at a fair around 1914, at which the items on the table were available for purchase. Mary Anne Victoria Claymore owned this beaded suitcase prior to the museum purchasing it at auction. Mary Anne is the daughter of Joseph and his wife Katherine, whom he married after Edith's death in 1909.

Only a very few beaded suitcases exist. All known examples were produced by the Lakota, from either Cheyenne River or Standing Rock Reservation in the Dakotas. Claymore's suitcase is considered to be one of the finest. A perfect illustration of resiliency and creativity, her work beautifully blends tradition and innovation.

## Look

Where on this suitcase do you find pictographs—pictures that tell a story? Where do you find geometric designs?

Using the images on the suitcase, create a story. How does it begin, what happens next, and how will it end?

Ida Claymore stitched these scenes on hide and then attached it to a small suitcase. Why do you think she chose a suitcase? Can you think of another place this scene could have been adhered to? (Clothing, different types of bags, etc...) If you created this beaded scene, where would you put it?

How long do you think it took Ida Claymore to complete this suitcase? How many beads do you think it took to finish?

## Think

In what ways does this suitcase tell us about life on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota in the early 20th century? Consider the object, the materials, and the images.

Edith Claymore created objects that incorporated the traditional and contemporary. In what ways do people today also combine traditional designs with contemporary objects?

If you were to decorate a suitcase or backpack with images that told stories about your life and identity, what would you include?

Would this be a bag you'd like to own? What would you use it for? What would you put in it?

**Your Notes:**

# Glossary

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<b>Abstract</b>	Art in which the artist is more concerned with manipulation of the formal elements and principles of art than with naturalistic representation. Recognizable references to original appearances may be very slight.
<b>Asymmetrical</b>	Unable to be divided so that both pieces match exactly.
<b>Balance</b>	The equal distribution of visual weight in a composition. When this equilibrium (generally between the left and right halves) is not present, the viewer senses a certain vague uneasiness or dissatisfaction. The simplest type of balance is SYMMETRY, sometimes called "formal" balance, in which shapes are consciously repeated in the same positions on either side of a central axis. The second type of balance is ASYMMETRY or "informal" balance, in which balance is achieved with dissimilar objects that have equal visual weight or equal eye attraction.
<b>Capital</b>	The uppermost part of a column or pilaster.
<b>Cityscape</b>	A painting, drawing or other depiction of urban scenery. Although figures or other objects may be included in a cityscape, they are of secondary importance to the architectural setting.
<b>Color</b>	The pigments used to create a visual illusion or design. Color has hue, value, and intensity or saturation. HUE is the name for the actual color, whether it is red, azure, or citron. VALUE refers to the lightness or darkness of a color, achieved by the amount of white or black added to it. INTENSITY refers to the relative purity of a particular color, its BRIGHTNESS or DULLNESS.

Colors are divided into three categories:

- (1) PRIMARY colors—red, yellow, blue—from which all other colors are mixed;
- (2) SECONDARY colors—orange, violet, and green—each made by mixing two primaries; and
- (3) TERTIARY colors, which comprise the rest of the mixed color wheel. Hues are called COMPLEMENTARY when they appear opposite each other on the color wheel. Mixing complements together dulls them; placing complementary colors next to each other intensifies the brightness of each.

There are two basic ways that color is used in painting: as LOCAL color, reproducing the colors seen in nature (green grass, blue sky, red apples); or as ARBITRARY or NONLOCAL color, which ignores natural color for aesthetic or emotional reasons.

Colors may have any number of visual properties. BRIGHT colors are more noticeable to the eye and tend to advance in a composition. DULL colors tend to recede. Similarly, WARM colors—red, yellows and oranges—normally advance while COOL colors—blue and related hues—recede. In addition, color may be used for emotional identification, to help establish a certain mood in a painting.

## **Composition**

The arrangement of forms in a work of art.

## **Contrast**

The use of opposing elements (colors, forms, lines, light and dark) in proximity to produce an intensified effect.

## **Foreground**

The part of a picture that is represented as nearest to the viewer. Pictorial space may also be designated as MIDDLE GROUND and BACKGROUND.

## **Gesture**

A movement that shows an idea or a feeling.

## **Idealized**

Art in which people or objects have been altered or modified to present "perfect" (ideal) types—not as they actually are but as they should be.

<b>Landscape</b>	A painting, drawing or other depiction of natural scenery. Although figures or man-made objects may be included in a landscape, they are of secondary importance.
<b>Line</b>	The most familiar of all the elements of art, line is capable of infinite variety and is able to convey all sorts of moods and feelings. A major characteristic of line is its DIRECTION: a HORIZONTAL line implies quiet and repose; a VERTICAL line, strength and solidity. Both are stabilizers and tend to reduce any feeling of movement. DIAGONAL and SPIRAL lines are used to suggest movement and change.
<b>Linear</b>	Painting characterized chiefly by forms and shapes that are precisely defined by line. (Contrast with PAINTERLY.)
<b>Motif</b>	A decorative design or pattern.
<b>Organic</b>	Made of materials coming from living things.
<b>Painterly</b>	Painting in which the definition and modeling of shapes and forms is done primarily through the juxtaposition of areas of color or light and shadow rather than by the use of line.
<b>Perspective</b>	A system of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface so that they look as if they were really being viewed from a given point. There are a number of different methods for indicating perspective, the two best known being LINEAR PERSPECTIVE and AERIAL PERSPECTIVE. Linear perspective renders depth through a scientifically arrived at series of actual or implied lines that intersect at a vanishing point on the horizon to determine the relative size of objects from background to foreground. AERIAL or ATMOSPHERIC perspective renders depth by changes of form, tone or color with the recession of objects into background.
<b>Pictograph</b>	A picture representing a word or idea.
<b>Pilaster</b>	A rectangular column with a capital and base that is attached or set into a wall as a decorative motif.

<b>Portrait</b>	A representation of a person. Portraits can exist in any medium and can be full length, three-quarter length, half length, or show only the head and shoulders of the sitter (BUST). With the aid of the imagination or a mirror, an artist may execute a SELF-PORTRAIT.
<b>Realism</b>	Art in which the subject is presented as closely as possible to the way it is seen by the human eye.
<b>Shape</b>	A visual form that can be classified as GEOMETRIC or regular (squares, circles, triangles, etc.), and ORGANIC or free-form (irregular, natural shapes).
<b>Space</b>	Several art forms are THREE-DIMENSIONAL (having height, width, and depth) and physically occupy space: ceramics, metalwork, weaving, and sculpture to name a few. All others begin with a TWO-DIMENSIONAL surface and may then create the illusion of space or depth. The degree of illusion may vary greatly from artist to artist and period to period. Generally speaking, until the mid-19th century most art aimed at creating a "window" into a simulated, three- dimensional world.
<b>Texture</b>	May refer either to ACTUAL texture, the tactile quality of the surface of the work of art, or to VISUAL or ILLUSIONARY texture, the tactile appearance of the objects depicted.
<b>Value</b>	The degree of lightness on a scale of grays running from black to white.