



Figge Collection

Welcome to the Figge Art Museum's Teacher Resource Guide

These cards describe selected works from the permanent collection of the Figge Art Museum. Use them to engage with the artwork, find facts about the artists, and facilitate learning. Resources are provided on each card for additional research.

About the Collection

The Figge Art Museum's permanent holdings include many nationally and internationally known objects and bear witness to decades of philanthropy and civic pride. The collections, organized in seven areas, offer a distinctive look at regional, national and international art from the 15th century to the present. A gift of 334 paintings from Charles August Ficke to the City of Davenport formed the nucleus of the Davenport Municipal Art Gallery's permanent collection when it was established in 1925.

Featured Artists

Louis Comfort Tiffany
Sol LeWitt
Baltasar de Echave y Rioja
Grant Wood
Adriaen van Utrecht
Thomas Hart Benton
Deborah Butterfield
Eduard Duval Carrié
Frederick Remington
William Merritt Chase
Rosa Bonheur
Sir Edwin Henry Landseer
Olaf Wieghorst
Alexander Harrison



Louis Comfort Tiffany
River of Life, 1905
Favrile glass, copper foil, lead
Loan courtesy of the Denkmann Family

River of Life



Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) This master of Art Nouveau traveled extensively from a young age and developed a strong curiosity about how beautiful things were made. With a penchant for ancient Roman and Persian glasswork, as well as the jewel tones of the Orient, Tiffany wished to capture in his art the connection between color and sound. He added depth through the melting and shaping process—effectively painting with glass. Tiffany began experimenting in a Brooklyn glasshouse in 1875 and opened a glassmaking firm in 1885. Today his works are recognized worldwide for their technique and beauty.

A product of its time

Tiffany created this memorial window in the early 20th century, when the United States was in the middle of the Progressive Era. It was a time of political, moral, social and economic reform, and the new subject matter of this memorial—*River of Life*—is a reflection of that change. Memorial windows are forms of remembrance and during this period it was common to include biblical figures in these largely Christian artworks. Tiffany replaced the traditional biblical figures with landscape vignettes, reflecting ideas introduced by other 19th century American artists, such as the Hudson River School painters.

Take a closer look

To achieve more naturalistic colors, Tiffany blended several colors together while the glass was in the molten state, thereby achieving subtle effects of shading for greater realism, such as opalescent glass with streaks of color (marbleized glass) and flecks of color (confetti-type glass). By layering two or more pieces of glass, Tiffany created richer colors and the illusion of three dimensions. He made subtle textures by rolling the glass with corrugated rollers during the molten state and used lead rods to emphasize specific parts of the composition. At the same time, he layered glass over lead rods in other sections in order to make them recede.

Did you know?

The window was damaged when art thieves removed it from the Denkmann Mausoleum in Chippiannock Cemetery (Rock Island, IL) on April, 5 1976. After 20 years of searching, the groundskeeper responsible for the cemetery located the piece in Florida and the FBI returned it to the Quad Cities. The piece has been on display at the Davenport Museum of Art (now the Figge Art Museum) since then. During its “missing” period, the glass was damaged. Although Tiffany art conservators repaired and stabilized the window, a long crack in the glass is still visible.

On your own

“Tiffany Window had ‘panestaking’ journey to Figge”: http://qctimes.com/news/local/tiffany-window-had-panestaking-journey-to-figge/article_9adb3534-b1b2-5a57-beb1-b84ad9400331.html

Morse Museum of American Art: <http://www.morsemuseum.org/louis-comfort-tiffany>

New York Historical Society: <http://www.nyhistory.org/explore/louis-comfort-tiffany>



Sol LeWitt
Wall Drawing #405, 1983-84
India ink on plaster, 1991.4

Wall Drawing #405



Sol LeWitt (1928–2007) As part of an emerging group of Minimalist artists in the 1960s and 70s, LeWitt's works consist of basic colors and simplified shapes often based on mathematical equations, but unpredictable in form. He was a pioneer of the Conceptual art movement, which held that the idea itself is a work of art and focused less on the material concerns. LeWitt, along with artist Lucy Lippard, co-founded the company Printed Matter, Inc., a not-for-profit which circulates art instruction books to the public, and was instrumental in creating a support network for contemporary artists.

A product of its time

LeWitt didn't think it was a problem to have others execute his ideas. He pointed out that architects don't construct their own buildings and composers don't perform in a symphony. LeWitt gave his assistants considerable latitude in interpreting his concepts. "Different people do wall drawings differently. I only ask that the words and ideas be respected." He added, "Like music, they can be done better or worse by the interpreter."

Take a closer look

LeWitt liked the extreme two-dimensional aspect of wall drawings. He felt they became integrated with the wall, rather than resting on top of it. When LeWitt began making wall drawings, he used basic lines, shapes and colors. He enjoyed the challenge of exploring the unlimited potential of these elements of art.

Did you know?

Wall Drawing #405 was originally installed at the Davenport River Center in 1984. David Chipperfield, the architect who designed the Figge building, became aware of the work and requested that the museum seek permission to re-install the work at the Figge. LeWitt sent one of his trusted assistants to re-install *Wall Drawing #405* at the Figge. Two local artists helped LeWitt's assistant with the installation. This wall drawing was installed in July 2005, just weeks before the Figge Art Museum opened to the public. The sculpture that graces the Figge plaza is another work by Sol LeWitt.

On your own

New York Times Obituary: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/09/arts/design/09lewitt.html?sq=sol%20lewitt%20obituary&st=nyt&adxnnl=1&scp=1&adxnnlx=1316012780-ywRV+eq+axtd6CQ+oNjfxg&_r=0

"Art in Plain Sight: Sol LeWitt Works": <http://www.rcreader.com/art/art-in-plain-sight-lewitt/>

MASS MoCA: <http://www.massmoca.org/lewitt/>



Baltasar de Echave y Rioja
Adoration of the Magi, 1659
Oil on canvas, 1925.84

Adoration of the Magi



Baltasar de Echave y Rioja (1632-1682) The present-day region of Mexico and Central America was a Spanish province from 1535 to 1818. During that time, many Spanish artists traveled to New Spain, bringing with them an artistic tradition that would blend with styles utilized by the indigenous community. The artist's grandfather was one such painter, moving from the Basque region of Spain to Mexico. Baltasar de Echave y Rioja and his father would continue building on the family's artistic legacy, though Rioja was primarily under the tutelage of another prominent artist, José Juárez. This painting is largely based on Juárez's version of the *Adoration of the Magi*, 1655.

A product of its time

This artwork is a classical representation of colonial Spanish art, with stylistic similarities to European Baroque paintings, thus demonstrating a blending of styles that was pervasive in Viceregal New Spain. The artist created this artwork in 1659, a time when the Catholic Church permeated the culture of New Spain. The title *Adoration of the Magi* references worship of the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child by the Magi, or three wise men.

Take a closer look

It was common to have prints made of significant paintings and every year thousands of these prints made their way to Viceregal New Spain. Baltasar de Echave y Rioja would have seen many of these and his art shows the impact of works by artists such as Francisco de Zurbarán. Notice the Spanish "skirts" and the blond widow's peak.

Did you know?

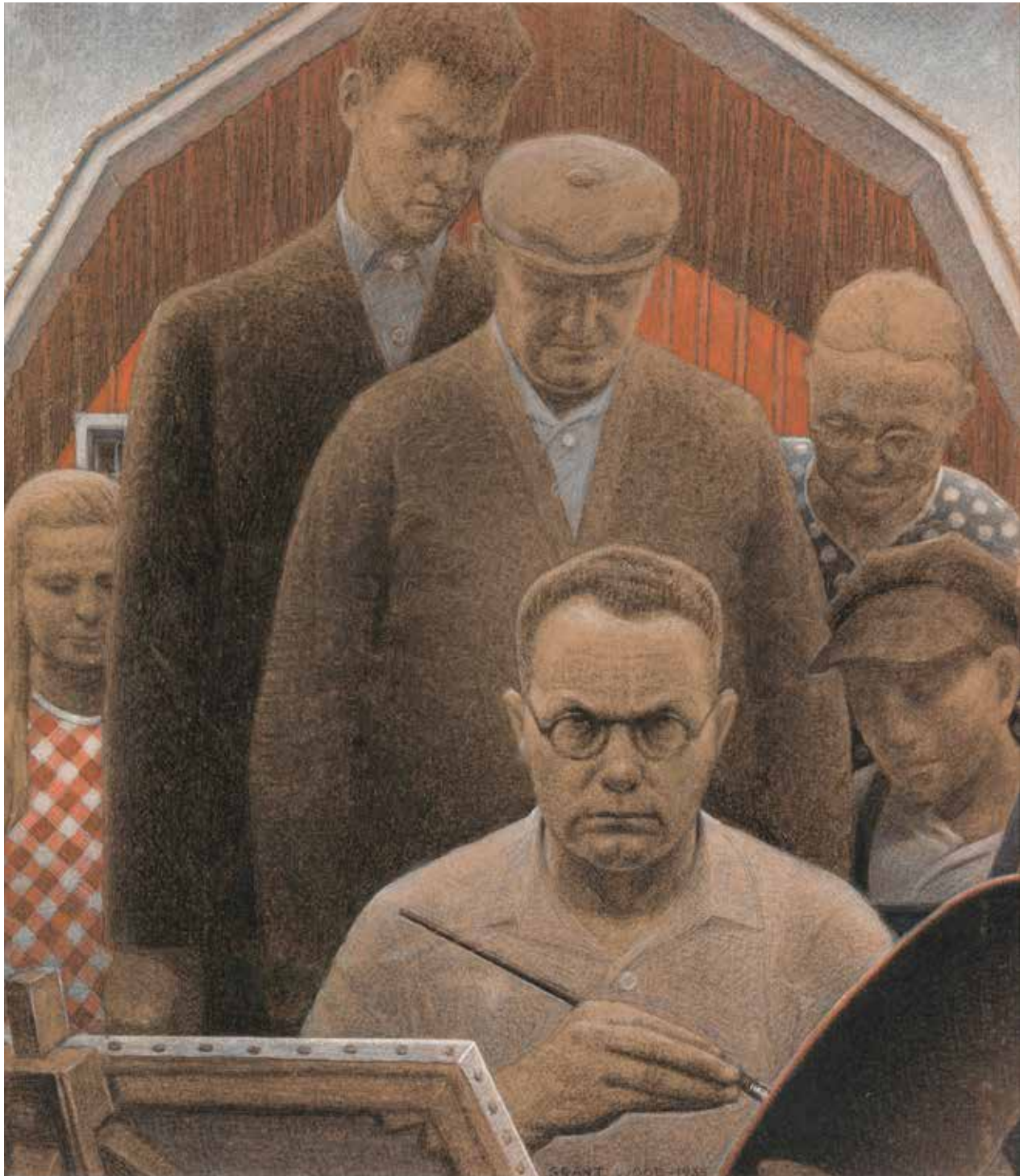
The artist never traveled to Spain, but his painting did. *Adoration of the Magi* traveled to Madrid, Spain in October of 2010 in order to be on display in the Palacio Real de Madrid during the exhibition *Painting of the Kingdoms—Shared Identities*. The exhibition focused on paintings from the 16th-18th centuries that demonstrate both European and local influences within the Spanish territories. When the painting traveled to Madrid for the exhibition, the trip took 54 hours and cost the exhibition organizers \$18,450.

On your own

Adoration of the Magi in Art: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hi/hi_fbinam.htm

Figge Art Museum Mexican Colonial Collection: <http://figgeartmuseum.org/Collections/Mexican-Colonial.aspx>

Art of the Spanish Americas: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/spam/hd_spam.htm



Grant Wood
Return from Bohemia, 1935
Pastel on paper, 1996.1

Return from Bohemia



Grant Wood (1891–1942) Wood was born near Anamosa, Iowa in 1891. Wood's father died when he was 10, and Grant worked hard to provide for his mother and sister. He trained as a silversmith at the Art Institute of Chicago and studied art in Paris and Munich in the 1920s. It was during this time that he was introduced to the Realism and Northern Renaissance styles of painting, which he incorporated into his own work upon returning to Iowa.

A product of its time

Wood painted *Return from Bohemia* while spending time in Paris, France. As a strong opponent of European influence in art, Wood frequently cited his travels in France as inspiration for his renewed appreciation of Midwestern traditions and culture. In 1935, he made arrangements with a publisher to pen a biography that would chronicle his childhood on a farm, his foray into Impressionism and his subsequent return to his Midwestern roots. In his drawing for the book jacket, Wood portrayed himself working at an easel in a barnyard to illustrate his return from a bohemian lifestyle.

Take a closer look

The figures in this piece can be considered as both Wood's audience and subject matter. Their faces are immobile and their eyes are cast downward; the onlookers register little emotion and appear to be looking less at the canvas and more at the ground beneath them. This raises questions on the nature of Wood's homecoming and his relationship with the public.

Did you know?

The Figge Art Museum acquired a number of Grant Wood's personal belongings as a part of the Grant Wood Archive in 1965. In addition to his glasses, which are recognizable from *Self Portrait*, the objects include a Persephone cameo brooch that belonged to his mother. This brooch was featured in two of his paintings, *A Woman with Plants* (a portrait of his mother), and in his most famous painting, *American Gothic* (Art Institute of Chicago). Wood used his sister, Nan, and family dentist, Dr. Byron McKeeby, as the models for the father and daughter depicted in *American Gothic*.

On your own

Grant Wood Archive: <http://figgeartmuseum.org/Grant-Wood.aspx>

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art: <http://www.crma.org/Content/Grant-Wood.aspx>

American Gothic House: <http://www.americangothichouse.net>

University of Virginia: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/haven/wood/intro.html>



Grant Wood
Self Portrait, 1932-1941
Oil on masonite, 1961.1

Self Portrait



Grant Wood (1891-1942) Grant Wood's style was initially influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and then Impressionism; as he matured, his style shifted and became notable for its level of clarity and detail. This is attributed to his interest in the fifteenth-century Northern European paintings he saw during his multiple trips to Europe, such as works by Albrecht Dürer and Hans Memling.

A product of its time

Grant Wood was one of the foremost Regionalist artists. His artworks are identified in the Regionalist tradition, alongside prominent artists John Steuart Curry and Thomas Hart Benton. Regionalism became popular in America during and after the Great Depression, as much of the content focused on reassuring images from the Midwest, including the beauty of the land and the goodness of the people.

Take a closer look

Grant Wood employed a technique called Pointillism in *Self Portrait*. Pointillism is a late 19th-century technique that was introduced by George Seurat and involves painting small dots of pure colors that exist next to each other without physically mixing them in order to create an image. The viewer will see the complete image because of the eye's natural process of optical mixing, which blends the colors together optically to create even brighter colors.

Did you know?

Grant Wood is known for having frequently worn overalls and originally painted himself wearing them in *Self Portrait*, only later deciding to cover his white shirt and overalls with the heavy blue pigment that now represents a shirt.

On your own

Grant Wood Archive: <http://figgeartmuseum.org/Grant-Wood.aspx>

Cedar Rapids Museum of Art: <http://www.crma.org/Content/Grant-Wood.aspx>

American Gothic House: <http://www.americangothichouse.net>

University of Virginia: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/haven/wood/intro.html>



Adriaen van Utrecht
Still Life of a Swan and Other Birds, ca. 1630
Oil on canvas, 1925.255

Still Life of a Swan and Other Birds



Adriaen van Utrecht (1599–1652) This Flemish Baroque artist is known for painting lush still lifes depicting vegetables, fruits and the trophies of hunting and falconry. At age 15, van Utrecht was apprenticed to a painter and as a young man traveled extensively throughout Europe perfecting his craft. He frequently collaborated with other artists. His paintings utilize dark colors, demonstrating the influence of fellow artist Frans Snyders. In addition to teaching from his own studio for 20 years, van Utrecht received patronage from Philip IV of Spain and the Austrian and German courts.

A product of its time

This painting demonstrates the popularity of hunting and falconry among the Dutch and Flemish aristocracy. The 16th and 17th centuries were an economic Golden Age in the Netherlands, and different types of birds, like those depicted in *Still Life*, were a status indicator.

Take a closer look

The painting contains seven different birds: a swan, a pigeon, two barnyard fowl, a young peacock, a smew, a kingfisher and possibly a Eurasian teal.

Did you know?

The variety of poultry consumed during the 16th and 17th centuries was greater than what is typically consumed today. The presentation of birds during meals was elaborate, as the food served was representative of the family's status—the rarer the bird, the higher the status. Chefs would skin and cook the birds, then reattach their plumage before serving the meal, creating the illusion of live birds.

On your own

The J. Paul Getty Museum Bio: <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artMakerDetails?maker=581>

Still Life Painting: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nstl/hd_nstl.htm

Food & Drink in European Painting: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/food/hd_food.htm



Thomas Hart Benton
Spring Storm, 1958
Tempera on board, 1988.12

Spring Storm



Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975) Born into a family of entrenched politicians from Missouri, Benton rebelled against his father’s plans for him and enrolled at the Art Institute of Chicago, later continuing his studies in Paris. During World War I he served in the U.S. Navy. While stationed in Norfolk, Virginia he was directed to make accurate drawings of shipyard work and life. As a realist painter and muralist, Benton found popular acclaim in the 1930s following the Great Depression. He was at the forefront of the American Scene or Regionalist movement, which also included Grant Wood and John Stuart Curry.

A product of its time

Post World War II, Regionalism was falling out of favor with the rise of Abstract Expressionism. Benton kept with the belief that artistic content should be realistic. He used landscapes to achieve that realism in his later works.

Take a closer look

There is an energy of line that is inherent in Benton’s artwork. *TIME* magazine once labeled it as energy with a “nervous electric quality which is peculiarly Benton’s and which his pupils often try but fail to imitate.”

Did you know?

Some of Benton’s best known artworks are his public murals. The first mural Benton ever made was when he was six or seven years old. Using charcoal, he drew a long freight-train on the brand new cream-colored wall paper that had been installed in his family’s staircase. The train went up the stairs, around the landing and ended on the second floor. They had to use bread crumbs to remove the drawing.

On your own

Ken Burns’ American Stories on PBS, special on THB: <http://www.pbs.org/kenburns/benton>
University of Virginia Artist Page: http://xroads.virginia.edu/~am482_04/am_scene/bentonbio.html



Deborah Butterfield

Half Moon, 2007

Cast bronze with patina, 2007.38

Half Moon



Deborah Butterfield (b. 1949) Born in San Diego on the 75th running of the Kentucky Derby, this renowned American sculptor received her MFA from the University of California, Davis in 1973. She holds honorary doctorates from Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana and Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. Known for her intricate process of sculpting horses from materials such as wood and metal, Butterfield beautifully captures the spirit and mystique of the horse. Her works reflect our relationships with the organic world, other life forms and ourselves.

A product of its time

Butterfield trained as a ceramicist, but found limitations with the medium in creating large sculptural works. She began experimenting with steel armatures, or frameworks, onto which she applied plaster, mud and sticks to create animals—first reindeer and then horses. Like clay, this method also had drawbacks; deterioration became an issue, especially for artworks that were installed outdoors and therefore subject to inclement weather. Butterfield needed to find a material that was durable yet malleable. Her solution was found metal and, eventually, cast bronze.

Take a closer look

Half-Moon's patina, or surface treatment, looks so realistic that many people believe the sculpture is made of wood rather than bronze. In order to achieve this patina, Butterfield applied white pigment and chemicals to the artwork while it was heated to 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Butterfield repeated this process until she was satisfied with the color and then sealed the entire sculpture in wax.

Did you know?

Deborah Butterfield's husband, John Buck, is also an artist. While their artistic careers have grown side-by-side, they've only worked together on one project, *John Buck/Deborah Butterfield: A Collaboration* (1986). The installation features two figures. A man carved from wood (Buck) and a steel horse (Butterfield), share space with a large ball and a small shelf, all viewed against a green and rust-colored panel. Some have called this a wedding portrait because it is the only time an inanimate human form is known to have shared a space with one of Butterfield's horses.

On your own

Gallery Profile: http://www.lalouver.com/html/butterfield_bio.html

Biography: <http://www.mmoca.org/mmocacollects/artists/deborah-butterfield>

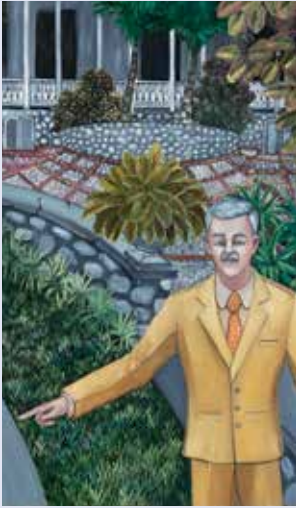
Gordon, Robert, et al. *Horses: Deborah Butterfield*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2003.

Tucker, Marcia. *The Art of Deborah Butterfield*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1992.



Eduard Duval Carrié
Portrait of Dr. Neiswanger in the Garden of Villa Boedicia, 1997
Oil on canvas, 1998.24

Portrait of Dr. Neiswanger in the Garden of Villa Boedicia



Eduard Duval Carrié (b. 1954) This Haitian-born painter began taking art classes at an early age in Port-au-Prince. When he was 9, his family fled the political oppression of the Duvalier dictatorship and moved to Puerto Rico, where he learned to speak Spanish. He attended high school in New York before joining an older brother in Montreal, where he studied at the University of Loyola. “The way I dealt with what was happening at home was to include the insanity in my paintings,” he stated. After studying briefly in Paris, he then moved to Miami with his wife to raise a family and be closer to Haiti. His body of work has broadened to reflect the social and political realities of the Caribbean region and southern United States, which he notes are linked by a similar historical experience of plantation economy, slavery, revolution and dictatorship. In addition to making art, he continues to curate exhibitions.

A product of its time

Duval-Carrié painted his close friend, Dr. Neiswanger, as the subject of the artwork. Dr. Neiswanger lived in the Quad Cities and began traveling to Haiti in the 1960s, where he fell in love with Haitian art. He donated works from his personal collection to the Davenport Museum of Art (now the Figge Art Museum) which established the museum’s Haitian Collection—now one of the largest and most respected collections in the world.

Take a closer look

Villa Boedicia is an example of Haiti’s Gingerbread architecture, which was inspired by Victorian architecture. Design elements include steeply pitched roofs, fretted wood, and intricate latticework. The tall doors and windows allowed for more air circulation. Verandas also offered some relief in a tropical climate. Villa Boedicia, a 13-acre estate, was purchased by Lawrence Peabody in the 1960s. Peabody (1924-2002) was an architect, interior designer, and furniture designer. He was also friends with Dr. Neiswanger. Notice that the fish seem to be blowing kisses to the doctor—this is said to be because Neiswanger was so beloved by the Haitian people.

Did you know?

Dr. Neiswanger purchased the first painting Edouard Duval-Carrié ever sold: *Azaka, King of Agriculture*. The painting is also part of the Figge Art Museum’s collection.

On your own

Artist Page: <http://www.edouard-duval-carrie.com>

Biographical Statement: http://latinamericancaribbean.duke.edu/uploads/media_items/duval-carrie-bio.original.pdf

Annotated Bibliography: <http://www2.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti/art/biblio.htm>



Frederick Remington
Bronco Buster, Modeled 1895/cast before 1918
Bronze, 1963.1071

Bronco Buster



Frederic Remington (1861–1909) Son of a Union Army cavalry captain in the Civil War, Frederic Remington was born in Canton, New York and became one of Yale University's first art students. Classical studies, however, could not hold his interest. Following his father's death, the young man took his inheritance, left Yale and headed for the western frontier. There he quickly became acquainted with the cowhands, Native American tribes and cavalymen of the Great Plains. Knowing the railroad system would soon reach the Old West, Remington set out to record a vanishing way of life.

A product of its time

Artists in the 19th century portrayed a romanticized image of Western Expansionism, ignoring the atrocities that happened on the frontier. Cowboys became popular content as heroes of the west. By the late 19th century, when this piece was created, artists were attempting to capture these images as the frontier was quickly disappearing, replaced with a landscape of roads and rising cityscapes. Remington's realistic and accurate sketches were featured in publications like *Harper's Weekly*. During the course of his life he created more than 3,000 signed drawings and paintings.

Take a closer look

Remington initially created each of his 22 sculptures in clay. He would then send the sculpture to a foundry and have the pieces cast into bronze. Notice the fine details capturing the explosive movement of the bucking horse and clinging rider.

Did you know?

An original cast of *Bronco Buster*, created around 1903, is displayed at the White House in the Oval Office.

On your own

Frederick Remington Art Museum: <http://www.fredericremington.org>

National Gallery of Art exhibition: <http://www.nga.gov/feature/remington/index.htm>

Sterling and Francine Clark Institute of Art exhibition: <http://www.clarkart.edu/exhibitions/remington/content/exhibition.cfm>



William Merritt Chase
Mrs. Chase in Pink, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 1929.415

Mrs. Chase in Pink



William Merritt Chase (1849–1916) This realist painter, father of eight and champion of American art, was born in Indiana and studied art in New York, St. Louis and Munich. He was offered a teaching position in Munich but instead returned to New York and established his Tenth Street Studio, a haven for the avant-garde in the 1870s. “I was young; American art was young; I had faith in it,” he stated. Noted throughout his life for his technical skill, he was a kind and enthusiastic instructor whose extensive teaching career spanned 38 years and included positions in Pennsylvania, New York, Chicago and California as well as summer classes taught in Europe. “Be in an absorbent frame of mind,” he taught his students. “Take the best from everything.”

A product of its time

The early 20th Century still had a great deal of class separation and the upper class was fond of showing off their wealth. Portraits during this time are examples of this. *Mrs. Chase in Pink* portrays the woman with an air of royal grandeur.

Take a closer look

From a distance, this painting looks detailed, but closer inspection reveals that details are far less defined than they first appeared. This style was inspired by French Impressionism, a style for which the artist was well known.

Did you know?

In 1891, Chase built a new home and studio school on Long Island at Shinnecock. He was in demand as a teacher and among his famous students were Georgia O’Keeffe, Charles Demuth and Edward Hopper. His was the first important school of plein-air painting, or painting out-of-doors, in America.

On your own

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/chas/hd_chas.htm

Sullivan Goss Gallery http://www.sullivangoss.com/william_merritt_chase/

Smithsonian Magazine: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/william-merritt-chase-71963962/?no-ist=>



Rosa Bonheur
Study of a Cow, n.d.
Oil on canvas mounted on wood, 1925.28

Study of a Cow



Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899) Bonheur was the oldest of four artistic children born to the French landscape painter Raymond Bonheur. Rosa began sketching and sculpting animals at an early age and used her interest in animals to help her learn to read and write. She would sketch an animal for each letter of the alphabet and perfected her form by visiting butcher shops and cattle markets in Paris to achieve anatomically correct likenesses. Her 1853 masterpiece, *The Horse Fair*, brought her worldwide recognition, and she was the first female artist to be awarded the cross of the Legion of Honor in France. She retired at the edge of the Fontainebleau Forest with a menagerie that included gazelles, lions and other exotic animals.

A product of its time

Bonheur became the most celebrated female artist of the 19th Century. Her family encouraged her to seek equality with her male counterparts, which was an uncommon practice at that time. She was even given permission to wear men's clothing in public!

Take a closer look

This naturalistic painting is the equivalent of a sketch. Studies of this type are preparatory work done before a painting is started in order to give the painter familiarity with the subject.

Did you know?

Bonheur was commercially successful during her lifetime. Her 16-foot oil painting *The Horse Fair* was the sensation of the Paris Salon in 1853. The painting sold for the very high sum of 40,000 francs in 1855 (around \$160,000 today). It was eventually purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

On your own

Rehs Gallery: http://www.rehs.com/rosa_bonheur_couching_lion.html

"Women Artists in Nineteenth-Century France": http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/19wa/hd_19wa.htm

The Art History Archive: <http://www.arthistoryarchive.com/arthistory/realism/Rosa-Bonheur.html>



Sir Edwin Henry Landseer
The Pets, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 1925.169

The Pets



Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802–1873) The youngest son of an English engraver, Landseer began painting at an early age under the instruction of Benjamin Robert Haydon, who encouraged him to study animal anatomy. Landseer went on to train at the Royal Academy and was knighted by Victoria and Albert in 1850. Despite ill health, he continued his painting career throughout the majority of his life.

A product of its time

During the 19th Century there was a great deal of social divide amongst the classes. However, Landseer managed to cross those boundaries with the subject of his work and quickly gained recognition among both the Victorian era aristocracy and the emerging middle class.

Take a closer look

This painting of young Lady Rachel Russell and her pets was a commission from a royal family member. Both the animals and the little girl are painted realistically and are given a romantic quality with the contrast of the dark colors and the soft handling of subject matter.

Did you know?

Landseer was awarded a prize by the Society of Arts for the best drawing of animals at the age of 11. Before he was 12 years of age, he could paint in watercolors and oil. These early sketches are now preserved in the South Kensington Museum, London. At the age of 13, two of his oil paintings were hung in the Royal Academy Exhibition in London. He entered the Royal Academy when he was merely 15 years old.

On your own

Newfoundland Club of America: <http://www.ncanewfs.org/history/pages/landseer.html>

BBC – Your Paintings: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/edwin-henry-landseer>



Olaf Wieghorst
Bringing in the Strays, 1959
Oil on canvas, 1978.115

Bringing in the Strays



Olaf Wieghorst (1899–1988) While working on a stock farm at the age of 18, Wieghorst learned to ride horses and taught himself to paint. He had a particular fascination with the American West. Wieghorst joined the crew of a Dutch shipping vessel only to jump ship in New York City. He had very little money and didn't speak English, and quickly joined the U.S. Cavalry where he was stationed at the Mexican border as a horse-shoer. There he learned rodeo and trick riding, and continued to paint. Later he worked as a ranch hand in Arizona and finally as a member of the New York City mounted police force before his art began to sell in earnest. After retiring to California in 1944, Wieghorst produced the majority of his works. He is best known for his portraits of horses, painting Roy Rogers' Trigger and Gene Autry's Champion.

A product of its time

Throughout the 19th Century the landscape of the American western frontier changed drastically. Artists portrayed the stories of the people moving west as icons and heroes, and also tried to capture the beautiful landscape that was disappearing as more people settled and cities grew. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Wieghorst lived the scenes he painted, offering special insight. Cowboy, cavalryman, ranch hand and friend of the Indians, he roamed the West during its transition from open range to the modern world.

Take a closer look

The artist used atmospheric perspective, where colors grow muted the further they are from the viewer. Additionally, Wieghorst emphasized details, having once stated, "I try to paint the little natural things, the way a horse turns his tail to the wind on cold nights, the way he flattens his ears in the rain, seasonal changes in the coat of a horse, and psychology of his behavior. Horses have been my life."

Did you know?

President Ronald Reagan was an admirer of Wieghorst's work and said "From the opening of the American West until this present day, artists have sought to capture the rugged beauty, the drama and the romance of this unique part of our national heritage. None have been more successful than Olaf Wieghorst."

On your own

Taos and Santa Fe Painters: <http://www.olafwieghorstpaintings.com/>

National Museum of Wildlife Art: <http://www.wildlifeart.org/collection/artists/?artistid=483>

Wieghorst Western Heritage Center: <http://wieghorstmuseum.org/>



Alexander Harrison
The Fisher Boy, 1883
Oil on canvas, 1925.129

The Fisher Boy



Alexander Harrison (1853–1930) This plein-air realist painter studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts before joining the U.S. Coastal and Geodetic Survey, charting the East and West Coasts between the years of 1872 and 1878. After continuing his studies in San Francisco, then Paris, he settled permanently in France and earned recognition while exhibiting throughout Europe.

A product of its time

Along with James McNeill Whistler and Mary Cassatt, Alexander Harrison was an expatriate. Initially traveling to Paris to study with the well-known academic painter, Jean Léon Gérôme, Harrison ended up becoming an important member of the Pont-Avon art colony in Brittany, where Paul Gauguin would eventually work.

Take a closer look

The boy in the painting wears a bright green coat that contrasts with the soft red brick wall against which he leans. The genre painting reflects the poverty that was prevalent at the time and is a direct nod to the artist's love of seascapes. The hoop that the boy carries highlights his poverty by creating a frame around his worn and tattered clothes.

Did you know?

Harrison is known for his exquisite seascapes and human figures within this setting. In a description of the Atlantic Ocean as viewed from Harrison's cottage on the Brittany coast, the writer Marcel Proust penned, "We have seen the sea successively turn blood red, purple, nacreous with silver, gold, white, emerald green, and yesterday we were dazzled by an entirely pink sea specked with blue sails."

On your own

Landscape, Memory, Sensation: <http://davidadams.cleveland.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Cleveland-Alexander-Harrison-and-Proust-Antiques-Magazine-2.pdf>

The Athenaeum: <http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/list.php?m=a&s=du&aid=1043>

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