



## **MAINS AUX FLEURS**

Pablo Picasso

(1881-1973)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Pablo Ruiz Picasso was born in Malaga, Spain. The son of a Basque art teacher, Picasso showed a very early talent for drawing. He was fourteen when his family moved to Barcelona where his father was a professor at the School of Art. Two years later Picasso had his first exhibition of rather somber, quite classical paintings. Between 1900 and 1904 he made three trips to Paris, where he studied the works of the Impressionists and of Cézanne. In 1904, he settled in France, where he remained all his life. From 1901 onwards, Picasso's work may be divided into periods, each showing different influences and personal interests. From 1901 to 1904, the Blue Period, his paintings were melancholy in mood and subject matter, flat of form and strong contour, nearly monochromatic, and of intense blue. In some of these works, the Mannerist influence of El Greco is easily visible. The Rose Period (1905-1906) offers the same flat forms but with a softer contour, a more romantic mood, and a delicate ink tonality that is often used with the blue of the earlier works. In 1906, Picasso met Matisse, with whom he shared an interest in the works of Gauguin and Cézanne. At the time, he also was influenced by primitive African carvings. His translucent, blocky planes led to the Analytical Cubism practiced by Picasso from 1909 to 1911, in which familiar objects such as glasses and pitchers were broken down into geometric planes. From about 1912 to 1915, the collage or paste-up method of Synthetic Cubism, in which bits of cloth or paper were used to build up an image, was developed. From 1915 until 1936, Picasso painted in various Cubist manners, experimented with Surrealism, and entered his classical (sometimes called white) period in the early 1920's, producing works that are sculptural and yet tender in mood. In the 1930's he was working in a Cubist style that is metamorphic in its visual approach. In 1948 Picasso returned to themes of women, children, animals, and birds, painting in various manners and synthesizing all of his previous styles. He has also produced lithographs and etchings on classical and literary subjects, sculpture, murals, jewelry, and ceramic works. Picasso's enormous talent, imagination, and vitality add up to an artistic temperament that can be called genius. Picasso's influence upon modern art has been immeasurable.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

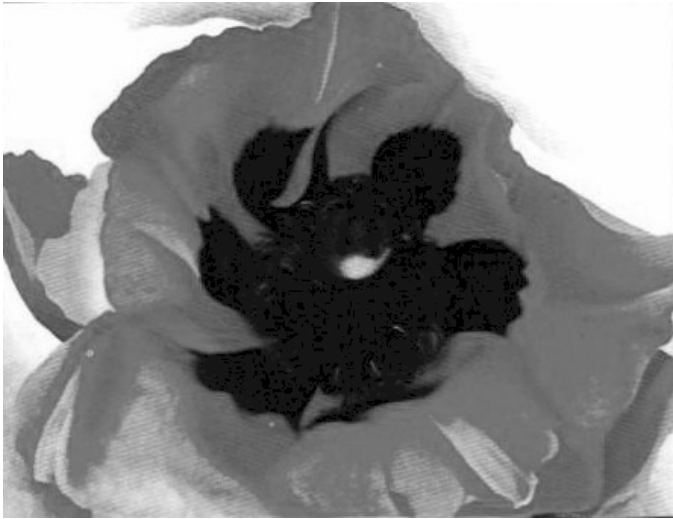
Picasso painted images of amazing complexity and distortion; yet at times he would cease his tireless analysis of form and produce a disarmingly simple image, such as this one of two hands grasping a small bouquet of flowers. With great economy of line, Picasso shows us the hand of a man handing the flowers to the hand of a woman, who grasps the bouquet above. He has caught the moment before the man releases his hand, so that both share this quiet gesture of affection. The sinuous contour line of the lower half of the image serves as a counterpoint to the splashes of color that create the flowers of the upper half in a composition whose simplicity belies its skill.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe what you see in this painting.** (Hands and flowers.)
2. **What colors do you see?** (Red, yellow, orange, violet, green, blue.)
3. **Where do you see lines?** (The hands, the stems.)
4. **Describe the shapes you see?** (Flower centers - oval shapes - and petal shapes.)
5. **Do you think this painting has a message?** (Yes) **What is it?** (It is about giving and receiving.)
6. **Why do you think the artist kept this painting so simple?** (So that viewers would get the message.)
7. **Do you like this painting? Why or why not?**

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Think of a message you would like to convey in a picture. Make a list of some ideas ("Save the trees!"; "Don't pollute!"; "I am happy!"; "Be kind to your dog!"; "I love you!"; etc.). Make a picture to convey your message. Keep it simple and fill up the whole paper. Use simple lines and simple shapes. Use both color and line.



**RED POPPY**  
Georgia O'Keeffe  
(1887-1986)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Georgia O'Keeffe was born on a dairy farm in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. Her first artistic interest was music, but by the time she was ten, she had decided to become a painter. Her formal training began at a Madison convent school in 1901. In 1905 she moved to Chicago to study anatomical drawing with John Vanderpoel at the Art Institute of Chicago. She made her first trip to New York in 1907 and attended classes at the Art Students League. She then returned to Chicago and supported herself by working as a commercial artist. In the summer of 1912, she studied abstract design with Alon Bement, a follower of the art educator Arthur Wesley Dow. The oriental mysticism of Dow's theories of composition had a deep influence on O'Keeffe. She developed a distinctive form of landscape abstraction over the next 4 years while teaching in western Texas. Her work came to the attention of the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and he featured it at his New York Gallery 291 in 1916. O'Keeffe, who had not been consulted about this, came to New York intending to close down the exhibition, but instead she found in Stieglitz a sympathetic friend and supporter. He gave her a solo exhibition in 1917, and in the following year granted her financial assistance to permit her to paint full time. They were married in 1924. Although O'Keeffe lived and worked in New York, her true source of inspiration lay in the landscape of the American West. She began regular visits to Taos, New Mexico in 1929 and settled near there after Stieglitz's death in 1949. She has become one of America's most respected artists, and was among the first to exploit the full possibilities of abstraction allied to nature.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

One of the subjects for which O'Keeffe is well-known is her giant flowers. One can certainly recognize them as flowers, but their giant scale is far from realistic. O'Keeffe's flower studies, enlarged to fill the entire canvas, undergo a transformation as a result of their magnification. The simple beauty of nature's forms becomes exalted, a thing of mystery. The simplified forms undergo a purification; they exist only in and of themselves, totally unrelated to their surroundings. This painting of the poppy is one enormous flower covering the whole canvas. In the rounded, sometimes velvety petals and dark shadows of the flowers, O'Keeffe seems to repeat some of the forms she was always painting in earlier works, as if she had an instinct for what was deep in nature. The lovely red petals create a sharp contrast to the velvety black interior of the flower. The central mass is surrounded by soft petals of bright shimmering color with rippled edges. O'Keeffe painted several studies of Poppies. She used color not in the established ways, but in bold ways as she felt it. She used flowing lines, bold curves of color, and lots of spaces. Space was as important to her as the lines that defined it.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe the painting. Have you ever looked at a flower this closely?**
2. **How does O’Keeffe show you where one petal ends and another begins?** (With color. She varies the red poppy petals by adding yellows and oranges. She tints and shades them with white and black.)
3. **Describe the texture of the petals? How do you think they feel?** (Velvety. She does it with the variations of the color. The black part of the petals looks especially velvety. The contours of the black shapes where they blend into the red give this effect.)
4. **How does O’Keeffe use space to create emphasis?** (The entire space is filled with the poppy. She makes the flower the only thing important in the painting.)
5. **Why is the white important in this painting?** (It creates contrast, defining the shape of the flower, and adding focus and emphasis on the flower.)
6. **How do you think O’Keeffe felt about flowers?** (Open. She must have loved flowers to paint one so big and so beautiful.)
7. **Why do you think O’Keeffe created this painting?** (She wanted other people to pay attention to flowers and to appreciate them.)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Make a list of words that describe the poppy in the painting. Write a poem or a paragraph about it.
2. Find an object that you think is important and that other people should pay attention to. It could be a flower, a leaf, a toy, a book, a person, or you. Blow it up big on a piece of paper. Draw it so big that it goes off the edges of the paper and it is the only thing in your artwork. Paint with watercolors or tempera or color it with oil crayons. Use a big piece of paper.



## **BALLET SCHOOL**

Edgar Degas  
(1834-1917)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Edgar Degas, an Impressionist more interested in movement than in color, was born in Paris, the son of a banker who wished him to go into business. Degas, therefore, did not begin to study art until he was twenty-one. A year later he went to Italy and studied the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, having previously studied that of Clouet and Poussin at the Louvre. His greatest early admiration was for Ingres and, until he met Manet and the Impressionists, Degas painted quite classical historical works. After he joined the Impressionists, Degas changed his subject matter, painting racetrack scenes sketched from life and finished in his studio, theatrical and ballet scenes, and many pictures of women in different poses. He worked in many different mediums and concentrated upon the portrayal of movement that hints always at the action immediately preceding and immediately following that of the moment, captured by his rapid pencil or brush. Degas discarded classical rules of composition and frequently used oblique angle, with light coming from below to create a new type of theatrically focused space. In his oils, he applied his color in translucent crosshatching. And for his pastels he used a technique in which color was applied in many successive layers, each layer except the last fixed to give a powdery, soft effect that was particularly effective in his ballet scenes. His hundreds of dancers - in oils, pastels, tempera, gouache, charcoal, pencil, and bronze - are revelations of human movement; his horses seem alive, and his studies of women during quiet moments have a sense of reality that is both emotional and intellectual.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

The compositional direction in this painting moves diagonally from upper left to lower right, and then back toward the center background in a shorter diagonal, forming what may be described as a left-handed check mark. This is accented by the spiral staircase, which is presented at such an angle that a section protrudes into the room and at first glance appears to be suspended in space. The angle is deliberate; it enabled Degas to offer a pair of disembodied legs on the floor, and the split-second motion of another pair of legs descending the stairs. The bright, warm, golden sunshine streams through the large window to create a pool of light on the floor and adds a gossamer texture to the filmy tutus of the dancers.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe the colors in the painting.** (Warm) **How do they make you feel?**
2. **What time of day do you think it is?** (Early morning.) **Why do you think the artist chose these colors?** (Because they are warm. And to invite us into the room to feel the beauty of the dance while, at the same time, showing us the discipline of the Ballet School.)
3. **Where does your eye go first?** (To the full figure at center left.) **Describe the path (or line) your eyes travel from that figure.** (The eyes move diagonally from upper left to lower right and then back toward the center background in a shorter diagonal.)
4. **What shapes do you see repeated?**
5. **How has the artist used black to create contrast and focal points? Look at just the black shapes. Imagine the painting without the black. Why does the artist need the black? Describe the painting without the black.**
6. **How has the artist created space?** (Figures get smaller in the background. Figures are overlapping and move up the picture plane.) **Notice the large piece of empty space or negative space.** (The floor.) **What effect has this created?** (It feels like a large room. It helps create the focal point. Your eye goes through the empty space to the dancer's legs.)
7. **How has the artist created movement?** (Arms in the air; curved figures going down the steps in motion; bending figures.)
8. **Notice the artist has not painted the faces in detail. Why are the faces unimportant in this painting?** (The painting is not about the individual dancers.)
9. **This painting was painted about 100 years ago. Do you think this could be a painting of a ballet school today? (Yes) Why? What is the same?** (The costumes and ballet slippers are the same, and the rooms could be a dance school today.)
10. **Why do you think the artist painted this painting? Do you think the artist achieved his goals? Do you like this painting? Why? Is it realistic?**

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

Ballet is an art about movement. But it is much more. It is an art that combines music, visual arts, and dramatization.

1. Discuss how dance performance is a visual art.
2. With what art elements is the dance concerned? If you have ballet students, ask them to demonstrate to the class some of the movements. Have them freeze a movement. Talk about how dance is about line and shape, color and contrast, movement and balance.
3. Ask the students, "If you were to stage a ballet, what would be some of your concerns?" (For example: lighting, scenery, costumes.) All of these would be concerned with color, lights and darks, contrast, etc.
4. Discuss how ballets tell stories. Read or tell the story of *The Nutcracker*, *Swan Lake* or *Giselle* - or others.
5. Direct students to write a story that could be made into a ballet. The students should describe the different scenes, the settings, the costumes, and the dancers. Have them describe the type of music for the ballet. Do they have any music in mind? Bring it to school.
6. Note when a ballet will be appearing on PBS. This is an opportunity to ask the class to look for the elements of art in a live performance.



## **SUNFLOWERS**

Vincent van Gogh  
(1853-1890)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Vincent van Gogh, for whom color was the chief symbol of expression, was born in Groot-Zundest, Holland. The son of a pastor, brought up in a religious and cultured atmosphere, Vincent was highly emotional and lacked self-confidence. Between 1860 and 1880, when he finally decided to become an artist, van Gogh had two unsuitable and unhappy romances and had worked unsuccessfully as a clerk in a bookstore, an art salesman, and a preacher in a dreary mining district in Belgium, where he was dismissed for overzealousness. He remained in Belgium to study art, determined to give happiness by creating beauty. The works of his early Dutch period are somber-toned, sharply lit genre paintings. In 1886 he went to Paris to join his brother Theo, the manager of Goupil's gallery. In Paris van Gogh studied with Cormon, inevitably met Pissarro, Monet, and Gauguin, and began to lighten his very dark palette and to paint in the short brushstrokes of the Impressionists. His nervous temperament made him a difficult companion and night-long discussions, combined with painting all day, undermined his health. He decided to go south to Arles, where he hoped his friends would join him and help found a school of art. Gauguin did join him, but with disastrous results. In a fit of epilepsy, van Gogh pursued his friend with an open razor, was stopped by Gauguin and ended by cutting off his own ear. Van Gogh then began to alternate between fits of madness and lucidity, and was sent to the asylum in Saint-Remy for treatment. In May of 1890 he seemed much better and went to live in Auvers-sur-Oise. Two months later he was dead, having shot himself "for the good of all." During his brief career he had sold only one painting. Van Gogh's finest works were produced in less than three years in a technique that grew more and more impassioned in brushstroke, in symbolic and intense color, in surface tension, and in the movement and vibration of form and line. Van Gogh's inimitable fusion of form and content is powerful, dramatic, lyrically rhythmic, imaginative, and emotional, for the artist was completely absorbed in the effort to explain his struggle against madness and his comprehension of the spiritual essence of man and nature.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

Van Gogh painted a number of flower studies while experimenting with complimentary colors in Paris. In 1888, during his year in Arles before entering the asylum at Saint Remy, van Gogh painted a series of "Sunflowers", which are among his most popular paintings. Yellow became his favorite color. The sunflower paintings were intentionally decorative and a deliberate experiment in precise form and the use of variations of one color. Although impossible to see in reproductions, in each of the "Sunflower" paintings the large central sections of the flowers, containing the stamens, were painted in a heavy impasto to add a three-dimensional depth, the paint often as thick as 1/4 inch and roughly textured. The individual petals are also painted in relief, the edge of each one standing out from those behind. The paintings are large and the blossoms are full size. In this *Sunflowers*, the juxtaposition of various yellows with green as the only contrast, the nonspecific light source, and the total absence of perspective create a monochromatic study that vibrates with drama, light and space.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What kind of flowers is in this painting? Have you ever seen sunflowers or had them in your home?**
2. **What colors do you see?** (Yellows, orange and green.) **This is a monochromatic color scheme. Discuss what a monochromatic color scheme is.** (Use of one color in its many values. Value is the darkness or lightness of a color. This color scheme creates a feeling of unity.)
3. **What adjectives would you use to describe the colors in this painting?** (Intense, sunny, cheery, happy.)
4. **What shape do you see repeated in this painting?** (Circle)
5. **Describe the lines in the painting.** (They are wiry and curvy. They give a feeling of unruliness - dark thickly applied lines. The curvy lines on the sunflower stems make them seem like they might jump out of the vase, like they have a life of their own.)
6. **Where do you see texture?** (The petals of the flowers; the paint is so thickly applied that it sometimes stands out 1/4" from the canvas.)
7. **How has the artist created contrast?** (The yellow in the background has a lot of white in it and creates a solid contrast to the unruly flowers. Notice how, on the vase, van Gogh draws a line through the middle and then reverses the colors to create contrast with the table.)
8. **This painting was created over 100 years ago. Many paintings from the past show us something about the period or tell us something that shows they were painted a long time ago. Why could this painting have been painted today?** (Because sunflowers are the same today as they were 100 years ago.)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. It is a fun and valuable exercise to copy this painting. Use a large piece of paper (18" x 24") or a paper in this proportion. Draw with yellow chalk.
  - a. Draw the line of the table and the vase shape. All of this is in the bottom third of the painting.
  - b. Instruct students to look at all of the circle shapes and draw them. Next, draw the petals and the stems.
  - c. Now color with dry colored chalk, chalk dipped in liquid starch, oil pastels or tempera paint. Crayons can be used if working on a small paper.
2. Bring a vase (simple shape) filled with flowers of the same color. Use sunflowers if you have them. Discuss the problems of creating contrast with monochromatic color. What will the students need to do? (Paint in different values of the color using tints and shades.) Use large 18" x 24" paper. Draw with yellow chalk, paint with tempera or color with colored chalk or oil crayons.





## THE WHITE DOT

Wassily Kandinsky  
(1866-1944)

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Wassily Kandinsky, the first artist to abandon the representation of objects in painting and thus the first abstract painter, was born in Moscow. A lawyer and political economist, he became interested in art during an ethnographical trip to northern Russia and gave up his law career to study in Munich in 1896. By 1904, he was a contributor to the Paris Autumn Salon and had opened his own art school. He founded the New Artists' Federation in 1909, and in 1910 he painted his first abstract work and wrote *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, one of this century's most important and influential works on art. With Klee, Macke, and Marc, he helped found the *Blaue Reiter*, where he exhibited and collaborated with his friends on the publication of their almanac. During this period, Kandinsky's abstracts were characterized by brilliant color, swirling movement, and the forcefulness of the Expressionism from which they sprang. Following a stay in Switzerland and Sweden during World War I, Kandinsky returned to Russia after the 1917 Revolution and reorganized or set up 227 museums. Influenced by Russian Constructivists, his style became more precise and more geometric, using more quiet color. Kandinsky returned to Germany in 1921 and became a professor at the Bauhaus in Weimar. When the Nazis closed the school, Kandinsky's paintings were considered so "degenerate" that they were confiscated, and the artist fled to Paris, where he remained until his death in 1944.

### ABOUT THE ARTWORK

In 1900, Kandinsky discovered nonobjective art largely by accident. At the age of 44, the artist returned to his studio after a walk and noticed a painting he had never seen before. He was so fascinated with the painting that he did not realize it was one of his own watercolors hung upside down by mistake. Excited by this discovery, Kandinsky spent months working furiously, removing all objects from his paintings and giving color and form an increasing importance, while pushing aside all other content. He then set about justifying his new approach in an essay. By the time of this painting, Kandinsky had moved gradually from General Abstraction and Expressionism towards Geometric Abstraction. In *The White Dot*, we see that Kandinsky is primarily concerned with geometric shapes; the color is flat and the composition simplified. Some of the shapes are identifiable, but the painting has no subject other than of an emotional state of mind in which psychic fluctuations are expressed directly through color and line and transformed into a lively visual music. Kandinsky accompanied his shift to Geometric Abstraction with a book, *Point and Line to Plane*. This book includes Kandinsky's personal definitions of the point (the original element of art, the circle in its innermost concise form), the line (the track made by the moving point, horizontally, vertically, diagonally), and shape (triangle, square, circle). The book attempts to create a kind of compositional syntax that organizes shapes according to rhythmical patterns of repeating and alternating lines.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What is this painting about? Does it have a subject or tell a story?** (No. It is about color, lines and shapes.)
2. **What kinds of lines does Kandinsky use?** (Bold black lines - curvy, straight, jagged lines. Some are thin; others are short, cross-hatched, parallel lines.)
3. **Describe the colors.** (Flat, bold, yellow and red, tinted blue and violet.) **What colors come forward or stand out?** (Yellow and red. Warm colors come forward.)
4. **Do you see any familiar shapes in the painting?**
5. **Where does your eye go first? Why is that?** (It is surrounded by black [high contrast]; also, it is off by itself. There is nothing else "going on" in the upper right hand corner.)
6. **Some parts of this painting are busy. Where are the busiest parts? How has the artist created this feeling?** (It is very busy in the center, where there is almost an explosive feeling. Dots of contrasting colors are placed on top of each other; lines radiate from it; triangles point into it.)
7. **Is this a balanced painting? Does your eye keep moving around the painting? How has the artist kept your eye moving?** (Yes) (Your eye moves along the lines, but also jumps around on the short black lines and black shapes.)
8. **What color has he used to tie his painting together?** (Black)
9. **How does this painting make you feel? What do you think creates that feeling? What is the mood?** (Happy)
10. **If this painting described a piece of music, what do you think the music would be like?** (Loud, lively, rhythmic.)
11. **Do you think the artist was successful in arranging colors, lines, and shapes into a pleasing arrangement?** (Open)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Experiment with color. Take several pieces of colored paper. Cut out different shapes: some large, some medium, some small. Experiment with these shapes on a white background, moving them around until you like the design. Then cut some large shapes of contrasting colors and place them behind your arranged shapes. Do the colors seem to change in any way? Do some of them look lighter, brighter, darker or duller? (Students will learn that colors will appear to change according to their relationships to other colors.) Play with your arrangement of shapes and colors until they feel "just right" and make you feel happy and satisfied. Glue them down. Now, add some black lines with a wide tip felt pen or paint black lines with a brush.
2. Kandinsky created a mood or feeling using only colors, shapes and lines, arranging them in a certain way. First, select a mood you wish to convey in your composition. Then use either:
  - (a) Colored construction paper: Select the colors you will use to convey the mood. What background color will you use? Cut out shapes of different sizes in these colors. Arrange them on your paper and glue. Add lines with paint or black marking pen.
  - (b) Tempera or watercolor and crayon: First, draw some large shapes for the background with crayon or black marking pen. Think about what colors you will paint them. Then draw smaller shapes on top of and overlapping the large background shapes. Paint the shapes with the colors you have chosen to convey your mood. Add more shapes if you desire. Add black lines with crayon on top of the watercolor or paint black lines into the tempera painting.
3. Kandinsky created visual music with rhythmical patterns. Select a piece of music you like. Can you create this music visually? What kinds of lines will you need? Do you have to repeat shapes and colors to create a rhythm? What colors will you use? Close your eyes when you listen to the music. What do you see? Use method 2a or 2b to create your "Visual Music".



## **GYPSY WITH BABY**

Amedeo Modigliani

(1884-1920)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Amedeo Modigliani was born in Italy in the Livorno ghetto. His father, a ruined banker, died young and his mother, a descendent of the Dutch philosopher Spinoza, encouraged her delicate son in his aptitude for art, sending him to study in Florence and Venice and to visit museums throughout Italy. When Modigliani arrived in Paris in 1907, he had a small inheritance from a rich uncle, but he was already seriously ill with tuberculosis. Handsome, talented, sensitive, and extremely proud of his Jewish heritage, Modigliani became one of the most notorious characters in Montmatre and was soon penniless and often homeless. He frequently slept and worked in the studios of artist friends who liked him and recognized his great talent as both a painter and a sculptor. He moved to Montparnasse in 1913 and kept body and soul together by selling drawings in cafes for infinitesimal sums. Finally, in 1917, he married Jeanne Hebuterne, and the couple set up housekeeping in a miserable garret. It was too late for this more normal life to conquer the ravages of consumption. Modigliani died in a Paris hospital on a January day in 1920. His desperate widow threw herself from the roof of her parents' apartment house on the day of his funeral. Considered the leader of the School of Paris, Modigliani's art is considered subjective and expressive. His earliest paintings were slightly influenced by Toulouse-Lautrec, but the bulk of his surviving works dating from 1915 to 1920 indicate his interest in African sculpture, in Cézanne, in the Cubist works of Braque and Picasso, and in the simplification of form that he learned from the sculptor Brancusi. The influences of his Italian heritage also appear in his paintings: the work of Botticelli, fourteenth-century Sieneese painting, and Italian Mannerism. These combined in his elegant, linear style to produce easily recognized portraits and nudes with long shoulders, and extremely subtle coloration that is less important than line and composition.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

It is not certain why the woman is called a "gypsy". It is possibly the loose braid of hair or the style of her costume. Modigliani has painted her with quiet dignity with an opalescent skirt and scarf that are repeated in the wall behind her. Soft rosy tones, dappled with reds and oranges, flicker throughout the composition. Our eyes dance around on the warm tones - from the woman's very flushed cheeks to the red collar, the soft orange of the baby's cap to the hands and floor covering. Flecks of blue around the nose and mouth and along the fingers add dimensionality, as they emphasize the effect of the gypsy's blue eyes with their reflective gaze. The modest white blouse could easily blend into the wall behind if it were not for the broken outline and uncharacteristic use of shadow. Even though the figure is strongly characteristic of Modigliani's work (with the extreme frontal pose, the elongation of the figure and the detached look of the sitter), space, which is typically shallow, is created with gray shadow between the baby and mother and the woman and the wall rather than with Modigliani's usual receding lines of a chair. The only dark masses - her hair and the baby's blanket - are small and balance one another perfectly. (From the Great Artists - A Library of Their Lives, Times and Paints Book 12- Modigliani)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe the painting. What do you see?**
2. **The name of this painting is *Gypsy with Baby*. What is a gypsy?** (A gypsy was a person who lived and traveled in a caravan of wagons.) **Is there anything in the painting that would indicate that this is a gypsy?** (No. Students may suggest the clothing or braids. These would be good clues.) **We are uncertain why the painting is named the *Gypsy*.**
3. **Would you say that the figure is realistic?** (It is elongated, stretched out; the neck is very long. The nose is very long, also. Point out that this is typical of Modigliani's figures. You can identify his work by this characteristic.)
4. **Describe the colors. Are the colors flat and solid?** (No) **How are the colors applied?** (Short, dabbed-on brush strokes.) **Can you see colors through colors?** (Yes)
5. **Describe the colors you see in the skirt. Where do you see these same colors repeated in the painting?** (The scarf on the background wall.)
6. **Focus on the skin or flesh tones. Describe them.** (Very warm - rosy orange cheeks. She is glowing.)
7. **How do her skin tones contrast with the background?** (They are warm and the background is very cool.)
8. **Where else do you see warm tones?** (In the baby's cap; dappled in blouse and skirt.)
9. **Where do we see blue?** (Fingers, eyes, around the nose and mouth, in the blanket and skirt.)
10. **Where are the only dark areas?** (Hair and blanket.) **Would you say they are balanced?** (Yes)
11. **Modigliani said, "To do any work, I must have a living person. I must be able to see him opposite me." From this quote, we realize that it was important to Modigliani to paint people. What does he tell us about *The Gypsy*? How do you think she feels? What mood has he conveyed to you?** (She has a reserved dignity in her straight posture. She looks quiet and peaceful, like she might be in deep thought. Her baby is probably sleeping.)
12. **Overall, what would you say is the mood of this painting?** (Calm and peaceful.)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. **Modigliani Collage:** Select a Modigliani print. Do a contour drawing of the figure. Place it in the space the way Modigliani did. To do this, be sure the negative space is the same in your drawing as it is in Modigliani's. Cut out your figure and pieces of negative space. Use some of the cut-out pieces for patterns to place on wrapping paper, fabric or wallpaper prints. Paint or draw on the figure, substituting some areas for patterns. Put your Modigliani picture back together, substituting some of the areas with the patterns on paper or fabric that you have cut out. Try to make a balanced composition. Glue the pieces to another piece of paper the same size as the one with which you started.
2. **Work with a partner.** Pose for your partner sitting in a chair, while your partner draws you on a large paper. Then trade places. When you draw from your posed partner, elongate his/her figure. Use the pose but make the neck longer, the figure stretched out, the nose long, almond shaped eyes. Fill up the paper - go off the edges if necessary. Draw the chair. Paint or color your drawing with colored chalk, pastels or oil crayons.



## **THE OLD KING**

Georges Rouault  
(1871-1958)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Georges Rouault was born in Paris, the son of a cabinetmaker. He was sent to an austere Protestant school, from which he escaped to the warmer atmosphere of the studio of a restorer of medieval stained-glass windows. Rouault was apprenticed to the restorer in 1885, and went to the School of Decorative Arts at night until 1891, when he became a pupil of Gustave Moreau. Moreau's use of decorative color and the ironwork of the windows were to influence Rouault's style throughout his career, whether he worked in pastels, watercolors, oils, or graphic mediums. He expressed a compassion for mankind and a desire for spiritual renewal through religious faith. Rouault embraced Catholicism in 1895. His subjects, often painted in series, were both religious and temporal: biblical subjects, acrobats, clowns, judges and landscapes. His sympathies were for the poor and downtrodden. Rouault began his career as an engraver, illustrating many books until 1947. In 1947, he regained a great many of his earlier paintings from the heirs of his dealer. Rouault destroyed 315 of them that he considered imperfect, and devoted the last ten years of his life to working on others in an effort to achieve the standard of perfection he had set for himself. Rouault remained constantly aloof from the great art movements of his lifetime - Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism - and painted works organized by line, endowed with rich texture, and ceramic or glass-like in effect.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

Georges Rouault's use of thick black lines and contours to outline areas of bright unmodeled color derives from the techniques learned in an apprenticeship, when he was a young man, to a man who repaired stained-glass windows. Rouault's somber mood and religious themes isolated him from the main currents of the art of his time. He once declared, "I do not feel as though I belong to this modern life...my real life is back in the age of the Cathedrals." And it is from the Gothic cathedral that he has adapted the effect of translucent, glowing color and heavy contour lines that strongly resemble the leaded stained glass he so admired. Rouault thought a painting was never finished, only abandoned. The "Old King" was begun in 1916, put aside during Rouault's lengthy printmaking period, and "abandoned" in 1938. The painting shows a comprehension of the Old Testament kings who fought bitterly for their religion and their people. The almost overwhelming quality of the stiff and angular lines suggest the subject's avarice and meanness of spirit - a pride and tightness that is required of those who are forced to be cruel. The colors glow with faith and an expression of piety. For Rouault, meaning was not read from "proper" objects, but expressed and experienced directly through line and color.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Which art element is dominant in this painting - line or color?** (Line) **What kind of line do you see?** (Thick, heavy, stiff, angular line.)
2. **What does the artist's use of line tell us about the old king?** (It makes him look stiff with pride. He looks mean, rigid.)
3. **Describe the colors in the painting.** (Warm, jewel-like. The colors glow.)
4. **Rouault helped repair stained glass windows (windows made with colored glass separated by strips of black lead) when he was young. How do you think he was influenced by this experience?** (The painting looks like a stained-glass window.)
5. **How has he made the colors look like light is shining through them, as they do in a stained glass window?** (There are streaks of light color contained within the darker colors.)
6. **Describe the use of shape in this painting.** (The large shapes of color contrast with the heavy lines. They are the "pieces of glass" in the painting.)
7. **Do you think Rouault was successful in creating a painting that looked like a stained-glass window? Do you think he conveyed something about his subject? Do you like the painting?**

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Find out more about stained glass windows. How far back in history do they date? How were they made? In what kinds of buildings were they used?
2. Make a picture that looks like a stained-glass window. Choose a subject such as a king or a queen. Lower Grades: Use face cards from card decks to help with the drawing. Upper Grades: Look at photos of real stained-glass windows. Choose a picture from a section of a stained-glass window to reproduce in your artwork or else create your own.

Materials: 12" x 18" black construction paper, pencils, white transparent drying glue, colored chalk or soft pastels.

- a. Draw your design with pencil on your black paper. Keep the drawing simple. Imagine the lines dividing glass. (All lines must connect to another line. Do not have any suspended lines or lines that dead-end in space.)
- b. Draw over your pencil lines with white glue. Make your lines as thick as you want. This glue drawing will need to dry for 24 hours before you can work on it further.
- c. The glue lines have created ridges. Fill in the spaces with brilliant color. Draw color in with your chalk, and then rub color to the line ridges with your finger. Blend lighter colors into darker colors to create the look of light shining through.



## **MEDITERRANEAN SCENE**

Raoul Dufy  
(1877- 1953)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Raoul Dufy was born in Le Havre, where he began to study art at night while working as an errand boy during the day. When he obtained a small scholarship in 1900, he went to Paris to study with Bonnat; and about five years later he met Matisse and the other Fauve painters, whose color delighted him. Dufy experimented with Fauvism, made some attempts in Cubism, and in the years between 1905 and 1920 earned his living by working on a museum staff, designing fabrics and doing some book illustration. Painting at Honfleur toward the end of World War I, Dufy observed that line moves more rapidly than color does and that the human eye receives the sensation of color more easily than that of movement, thus holding this mental image longer. The painter's perception led to his development of that lightning-fast, calligraphic, short, curved line with which his pen or pencil was forever to move across paper. It also led to his application of color in "diffusions" that were not strictly confined to outlines, but sometimes swept across a work in broad bands, coloring objects perhaps half-green and half-blue and thus making them part of a lively, moving world held together in tight compositions in which both color and line dance and sparkle. By 1925, his reputation solidly established, he was commissioned to paint murals for many French public buildings. He began to suffer from multiple arthritis in 1937, and moved to southwestern France for his health. When the disease progressed to the point that he could no longer paint, he came to the United States in 1947 for cortizone treatments. After the treatments, he returned to France to continue painting until his death in 1953.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

This painting illustrates Dufy's personal style of expression in the light strokes of outline and vibrant colors which capture the charm of one of the world's greatest playgrounds, the Mediterranean. Dufy thinned his oil paints so that he could use them almost as you would use watercolors. Painting quite rapidly, but with a control developed over years of practice, he swiftly laid down broad areas of gray colors, instead of painting areas solidly. He mixed a slightly different tone of blue each time he loaded his brush. In the foreground of this painting, we see people, automobiles, and palm trees, all painted with quick brushstrokes of color. The details of dress and structure are painted with a quick calligraphic black line that does not always coincide with the edge of the color. The texture of the bay is shown by a variety of strokes of various blues, which are a stylized indication of waves. The houses along the coastline, with their white oblongs and squares of red roof tiles all clustered together, clearly give the feeling of a Mediterranean village. The contrasting tonalities in the painting are distinctly Mediterranean, with the white houses contrasted against their red roofs and the dark blues and greens of the foliage contrasted against the bright blue of the water.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Where are you in this picture?** (Looking down at the sea from a hilltop.)
2. **Where do you think the place in this painting might be? What clues show us?** (We see water, so we know it is on the ocean or a large lake. The palm trees tell us it is a warm place. The white houses give us a hint - the Mediterranean.)
3. **What do you think people do in a place like this?** (Sail, swim, lie on the beach, play; this is a warm vacation spot for Europeans.)
4. **Look at the trees and people. How has the artist applied color? (With quick strokes.) What medium did he use?** (Watercolor. The colors are transparent.)
5. **Describe how the artist has used line and how he has applied it.** (The lines are quickly applied and do not necessarily conform to the shapes.)
6. **Is there movement in this painting? (Yes) How does the artist show it?** (There is a great deal of movement out in the water with the choppy waves expressed using quick lines. You can almost see the palm trees sway. The clouds look like they are moving rapidly across the sky.)
7. **Where do you see texture?** (In the treetops, the trunks of the trees, the houses, and the waves.)
8. **Describe the colors.** (Bright, clean colors - blues, greens and dots or splashes of warm pinks and reds.)
9. **What shapes are repeated?** (The palm trees, houses, and cars.)
10. **How does Dufy paint figures?** (With quick brush strokes that suggest the figure - not very detailed or realistic - just an impression or suggestion.)
11. **How does this picture make you feel? (Like going on a holiday and having fun.) How would you describe this painting with one word?** (Exciting, pleasant, beautiful, peaceful, festive?)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Find out more about the Mediterranean and the French Riviera. What cities are on it? Where do people come from to vacation there? What's the climate like? What do people do there? Has it changed much since the late 1920's, when this scene was painted? What countries other than France are on the Mediterranean?
2. Paint a scene in the style of Dufy. Use your imagination or work from a picture of a landscape.
  - a. First, wet your paper by stroking a brush loaded with water across the paper. If you create puddles, blot them up with a sponge.
  - b. Apply color with quick brush strokes. Define shapes with splashes of color. No details at this stage.
  - c. Allow your painting to dry completely.
  - d. Now, define all the shapes with quick, descriptive lines, using black or a dark color. Lines do not necessarily have to conform to shapes. Create interesting details and texture with line.





## THE PURPLE ROBE

Henri Matisse  
(1869-1954)

### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Henri Matisse was born in Le Cateau in the north of France. His plans to enter the law profession were interrupted by an attack of appendicitis. During a long convalescence, Matisse's attempts at painting encouraged him to study art. He was twenty-two when he arrived in Paris to study with Bougereau at the Beaux-Arts and to work also with Gustave Moreau. Matisse's early paintings were dark, naturalistic works, but by 1896 he had become a Neo-Impressionist, working in light color and short strokes. By 1905, he was the leader of the Fauve movement, and by 1908 he had embarked on the course that was to influence all contemporary painting since that date: an exploration of the possibilities of painting as a decorative and sensuous art. Cézanne, who expressed depth through color, was Matisse's primary influence. Gauguin and van Gogh influenced his use of color to express emotion, his simplified or distorted drawing, and his sacrifice of realistic illusions of depth to an emphatic surface pattern. Retaining volume within the limits of color and design, Matisse juxtaposes intense colors, varied patterns, and a rhythmic line. The results are dynamic paintings that are sometimes emotional, sometimes serene, constantly changing, and always more than merely decorative. By 1918, he had a worldwide reputation, and besides his paintings and line drawings, he was commissioned to do book illustrations, ballet sets, and murals. His last great public work was the complete decoration - stained glass, furniture, murals, and chasubles - for the Dominican Chapel in Vence, a work accomplished in tones of ochre, black, and white. The subdued coloring used in the chapel offers a sharp contrast to the brilliant combinations of color he used in the cut-paper paintings he created in the final years of his life, when he could no longer handle a brush. Matisse died in Vence, in the south of France, in 1954.

### ABOUT THE ARTWORK

In this painting, Matisse has used bold, flat color. All of the colors (purple, turquoise, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red) are pulled together by a pattern of repeated curves that flow from the top to the bottom of the canvas and are held down by diagonal straight lines on the floor and rug. Matisse uses a variety of lines to create his image. After first laying down large areas of color, Matisse uses heavy black line to suggest the contours of the hair, necklace, robe, tables and the bulging, swirling curves of the vase. If you look carefully, you can see where Matisse has scratched through the paint to reveal the white canvas underneath. Using different tools, some thin, some thick, he scratches the diamonds on the floor. The modeling and texture of cloth flowers and fruit are created by vivid use of color. Matisse was very interested in pattern. *The Purple Robe* is a design of contrasting patterns - the broad red-on-yellow stripes of the left wall, the wavy lines on the right wall, the spots on the chair, the figured cloth of the dress, the black curvilinear design on the green table, the incised diamonds of the floor and the curving stems of the flowers. This richly patterned surface was inspired by the varied patterns in the decorative art of the East.

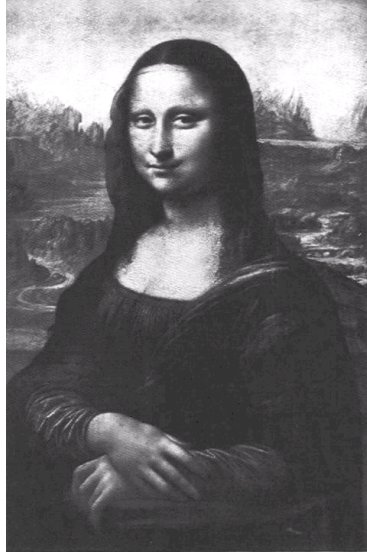
## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe the painting.**
2. **What kinds of lines do you see?** (Thick, thin, wavy, bold lines.)
3. **Some of the lines in this painting are "unpainted". Where do you see them? How do you think the artist created them?** (He scraped the lines through the wet paint with the handle of his brush.)
4. **Does the use of line subordinate elements such as color, modeling, shape, shadow, etc?** (Yes)
5. **Using line as a primary means of expression, what does Matisse show us?** (He creates patterns, outlines the shapes, shows texture, and creates variety.)
6. **How does the artist use color?** (The colors are bold, flat, vivid, bright and create contrasts.)
7. **Describe the patterns in the painting. Where else do we see pattern everyday?** (On clothes, furniture, floors, walls, drapes, buildings, and in nature.)
8. **Describe how the artist has used space. Is the space deep or flat?** (It is flat.)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Instruct students to go on a pattern hunt at home. Have them make a list of everywhere they find pattern in the home, plus a brief description of the pattern. (Clothing, book covers, wallpaper, drapes, etc., plus checks, plaids, polka dots, floral prints, geometric figures, etc.)
2. Set up in the classroom a still life of flowers in a large vase and some fruit on a table. Instruct the students to do a simple drawing of the still life. Use a large paper and draw with pen or chalk. Next, paint the still life with tempera paint. Use the techniques that Matisse used to add patterns. Scrape paint away in some areas and let the paint dry in other areas. Paint the pattern on top of the dry area with pointed brushes. Instruct students to make their still life big, filling up the paper.

This lesson would also be successful as a crayon-resist painting in which the drawing, including the patterns, is completely done with crayons. Bright, flat watercolors are then painted over or into certain areas.



**MONA LISA**  
Leonardo da Vinci  
(1452-1519)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Leonardo da Vinci, the epitome of the Renaissance man, was born in Vinci, a village near Florence, and was raised by his grandfather. In 1467 Leonardo entered Verrochio's studio, and became a member of the Painter's Guild. He worked for Verrochio for several years, collaborating with him and also working on commissions of his own. In 1478 he became an independent artist under the protection of Lorenzo the Magnificent. In 1482 he left Florence for Milan, where he was to stay for nearly twenty years. He was attached to the court of Lodovico Sforza and applied his talent to music, decorating, pageantry, portrait painting, and engineering projects. From 1500 Florence was his home, but he traveled widely. During this period, he painted the *Mona Lisa*, and he also worked on the dissection of corpses at the hospital and on theoretical mathematical problems. Leonardo returned to Milan in 1506, and in 1513 he entered the service of Giuliano de'Medici, brother of Pope Leo X. Leonardo applied his talents to architectural and engineering projects and continued his notes for his famous *Treatise on Painting*. Francois I of France invited him to Amboise in 1517, and Leonardo lived in the small chateau of Cloux, enjoying the esteem of the king and the court. He died there in 1519. Leonardo's knowledge extended to such widely separated fields as philosophy, natural history, anatomy, biology, medicine, optics, acoustics, astronomy, botany, geology, flight, science, mathematics and the arts. His heavily illustrated notebooks are among the most fascinating documents in the world, not only for his experimental ideas and inventions, but also for his accurate anticipation of a world that would exist long after his death. For Leonardo, painting was but one of many media for communicating ideas, but it was the supreme one for expressing spiritual values. His color was warm and the landscapes behind his portraits or religious scenes are enveloped in a fine mist. The highest aim of painting, Leonardo wrote, is to depict "the intention of the soul."

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

The *Mona Lisa* is one of the most famous paintings in the world. The model was probably the young wife of a Florentine merchant named Francesco del Gioconda. Leonardo worked on the painting on and off for four years. The portrait set the standard for High Renaissance paintings in many important ways. Leonardo established the importance of geometry in painting by using perspective, with all lines converging on a single vanishing point behind Mona Lisa's head. The subject has a relaxed, three quarters pose, which was a change from the stiff, full profile portraits of that era. Da Vinci had an exact understanding of anatomy from studying skeletons and dissecting cadavers. Believing in idealization, he used another model for the hands and torso, thus making a composite painting. Leonardo used chiarocuro to model the features through light and shadow rather than to proceed from outlined figures. This "sfumato" technique started with dark undertones, building the illusion of three-dimensional features through layers and layers of thin, semi-transparent glazes. This method rendered the whole without lines or borders. The colors ranging from light to dark form a continuous gradation of subtle tones without sharp separating edges, creating forms that seem to emerge from the shadows. The sfumato technique allowed the artist to execute subtle, atmospheric shading that was impossible with the tempera used by other contemporary artists. The *Mona Lisa* is famous for her enigmatic smile, causing more speculation than any other work in the history of art. It has been written about by art critics, poets and authors, all of whom have been fascinated with the mysterious smile on the sphinx-like face of the lady gazing out from a blue-green landscape bathed in a glowing, otherworldly light.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What type of painting is this?** (It is a portrait.)
2. **This is one of the most famous paintings in the world. Look at the painting for a minute. Why do you think this is such a famous painting?** (Open)
3. **Do you think that Mona Lisa looks real? (Yes) Why?** (Her flesh tones are so soft and real that you want to touch them. She is very modeled.)
4. **Can you think of a reason why certain artists are famous and others are not, even though their art may look equally good to you?** (Hint: What did Monet, Matisse and Picasso do? They started painting or seeing in a new way. In this painting, Leonardo pioneered a new technique called sfumato or the layering of thin, translucent glazes "in the manner of smoke without lines or borders." This is why her face and hands are so beautifully modeled. Also, before the *Mona Lisa*, paintings were frescoes on walls, miniatures or panels on furniture. The *Mona Lisa* is a framed easel painting displayed on a stand or hung on a wall.)
5. **Where do your eyes go in this painting? Where must you look?** (At her face. She has great eye contact, which contrasts with her coy smile. Leonardo hired singers, musicians and jesters, who performed to keep Mona Lisa "full of merriment" while she posed.)
6. **Describe the background.** (Jagged peaks, winding roads, receding waters. Lines lead to a point behind Mona Lisa's head.)
7. **Would you say the background contrasts to the figure?** (Yes. It is very busy. Mona Lisa is not.)
8. **What is Mona Lisa's mood? Is she happy? Sad? Calm? Agitated?** (Open. There should be varying opinions on this.)
9. **Mona Lisa's smile has been called the mystery for the ages. Why is she so mysterious?** (Open)
10. **Do you agree that this is a great painting? Why or why not?**

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. The *Mona Lisa* is a perfect opportunity to discuss the connection of art with music and literature. Play the song *Mona Lisa* by Nat King Cole. Play over sections of it so that the class can clearly pick out the lyrics. Discuss how the lyrics describe the painting and may be similar to some of the comments you have made about the painting. Find other poems, music, and references to the *Mona Lisa*.
2. Paint a portrait. Instruct students to pose for each other (with a partner) or work from the *Mona Lisa*. Carefully draw a three-quarters pose, including the hands folded in front similar to the *Mona Lisa*. Using tempera or acrylic, start by modeling or shading the figure with a burnt Sienna (reddish-brown). Do all the shaded areas first. Let this dry. Paint a thin layer of lighter skin tone next. Continue working in this way building up layers of soft colors. Dress your figure in dark simple clothing. Keep your figure simple. Put a landscape in the background.



**BREEZING UP**  
Winslow Homer  
(1836-1910)

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Winslow Homer, the son of a Boston merchant, spent his childhood fishing rather than studying art. His only early training was an apprenticeship to a lithographer, for whom he drew pretty girls to adorn the covers of popular songs. By 1857, however, he was an illustrator for Harper's Weekly, drawing happy scenes of country life at first; and then, during the Civil War, pictures of the loneliness and the pastimes of soldiers far from home. He painted his first oil during this period, again with almost no instruction, for Homer believed that a man who wished to be an artist must not look at another artist's work; and he remained resolutely solitary, refusing to have anything to do with European art. After the war, he returned to New York where he continued as an illustrator and painted a series of genre pictures of children and country life. Like all artists who work alone, Homer matured slowly. As he matured, he lost interest in portrayals of the land and children. In 1883, he moved from New York to Maine, where he set up a studio close to the wild and rocky coast and began his series of watercolors of the sea and its people, finally losing interest in people and confining himself almost entirely to "the lonely sea and the sky." His watercolors are so powerful that it is difficult to believe that Homer himself was "a small, reserved gentleman, quiet and unostentatious." His view of nature was severe and, even in the scenes of tropical waters, brilliant in color, indicative of his belief that man himself is nothing in comparison to the vastness of the ocean. Homer's lofty point of view found fewer admirers than had his earlier, more easily fathomed works, but he was not without recognition even before his death in 1910; and is today ranked as one of the finest of the world's watercolorists. In the nineteenth century, Homer was determined to create the art of America separate from the art of Europe, and he stubbornly stuck to native themes and urged younger artists to do the same.

**ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

In many of his paintings, Homer vigorously portrays the pleasures and pastimes of nineteenth century children by presenting the things that make childhood memorable. Homer's children share a joy of freedom and adventure and a sense of openness with nature. From about 1873, Homer became preoccupied with the sea, and it became the dominant theme of his later years. In this work, Homer's customary vigorous, strongly lighted painting of joyful outdoor activities is touched by a new seriousness. Despite their relaxed poses, the boys seem aware of a change brewing in weather and sea. They stare thoughtfully ahead, while the skipper is intent on his maneuvers. Even though we see another boat in the distance, the group seems quite alone, as the waves surge up to the point where we can almost feel the balancing of the boat while the breeze comes up and makes sailing more difficult. The rope is taut, stretched horizontally from sail to stem rail, and paralleled by the line of the spar above and the setting of the strong diagonal thrust of the mast. The psychological mood is underscored by the tension between diagonal and horizontals. The boys' bodies are braced as the boat tilts in a restless ocean, and the sky grows dark. The light falling in a shaft provides bright, shining color. Although the figures are not detailed, but generalized, they seem convincingly alive in form and movement in the context of their setting.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Describe the painting.** (Three boys and an old fisherman are out sailing.)
2. **Is it a windy day?** (Yes) **How can you tell?** (We see wind in the sails in the distance, and wind is filling up the sails of the boys' boat, causing it to lean into the water.)
3. **Describe the sea.** (It is choppy. There are white-capped waves.)
4. **Do you think this is a pleasure cruise?** (Yes. They do not seem to be working and do not have any traveling gear with them.) **Do they look like they are having fun?** (Not really. The boys seem relaxed yet, while bracing their bodies against the boat's tilt, they seem very serious.)
5. **Why do you think the boys and the old fisherman are so serious?** **Hint: What is happening in the sky and in the sea?** (It looks like the weather is changing: dark clouds are starting to form, the wind is picking up, the sea is becoming choppy. They may sense a storm coming.)
6. **Have you ever been sailing? Did it feel like the scene in this painting?**
7. **How does the artist pull the viewer into the boys' adventure?** (He fills up the canvas with the boat, which is moving at a diagonal away from the viewer, pulling him [the viewer] in.)
8. **The artist has created tension - a pull between diagonal and horizontal lines. Where do you see these diagonal and horizontal lines?** (Diagonal: the mast pulling in one direction and the line of the back end of the boat pulling in the other direction. Horizontal: the pull of the rope and the horizon line.)
9. **How has the artist used light?** (The light falls on the figures, creating highlights and shadows and providing bright shiny color.)
10. **Describe the warm colors you see.** (The clothes are orange and warm browns.)
11. **How do you think you would go about painting the ocean? Would you use just one color?** (No. You would use blue and its complement - orange - to create the darkened areas. Orange and blue will make brown. You will need to use white to create the whitecaps.)
12. **Do you think this is a painting of boys today?** (No) **Why?** (The boy's clothing is from an earlier time period.) **Would you like to guess what period of time?** (The late 1800's.)
13. **Can you tell from where did the boat came?** ("New England, Gloucester" is on the stern.)
14. **Do you like this painting? Why or why not?**

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Imagine you are one of the boys in the painting. Write a story about what happens to you. What do you see, smell, and hear? What are you thinking about? How do you feel? What has happened to lead up to this moment? What happens next? Include these ideas in your story.
2. Read *The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner* to your class. How does this rhyme make you feel? As an extra project, ask students to tell of an adventure in rhyme.
3. Make a collage of the sea. Collect magazine pages with different shades of blue. Gather other kinds of blue and aqua paper (tissue and construction paper). Use construction paper for the background - it could range from gray to sunset color. You will also need glue, scissors and paper scraps of other colors. From large pieces of blue and aqua, tear long strips into waves with careful small tears. Tear enough strips, several inches wide, to overlap. Paste your overlapping strips in place, remembering that waves up close to you appear larger than waves on the horizon. Next, look at pictures of boats. Create a boat or ship for your ocean by tearing or by cutting and pasting. Paste your boat in the waves. Add other details, such as birds. Think about your sky. Add light or dark clouds to create the feeling you want. Add whitecaps if your waves are big and your ocean is rough.



## **STILL LIFE WITH FRUIT BASKET**

Paul Cézanne  
(1839-1906)

### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Paul Cézanne, the greatest Post-Impressionist master, was born in Aix-en Provence where he received his formal education as a classmate of Emile Zola. Cézanne, whose banker father wished him to study law, did not arrive in Paris until 1861, although he had studied drawing in Aix and showed considerable ability. While studying at the Academie Suisse, Cézanne met Pissarro, who was to influence him greatly. When he failed the entrance examinations for the Beaux-Arts, however, he returned to Aix. After working for a year in his father's bank and painting in his spare time, he returned to Paris (1862-1864). Zola introduced him to Manet, Renoir, Bazille and Degas, and Cézanne worked fairly closely with these artists. Between 1864 and 1890 Cézanne lived variously in Paris, its environs and in the region around Aix until diabetes forced him to retire permanently to Aix. Early in his career Cézanne admired Caravaggio, Corbet, and Delacroix, and his paintings until 1868 were romantic or baroque in style, dark in color, and classical in subject. During the period 1868-1872, Manet's influence may be noted in added clarity and solidity of form. During his Impressionist period (1872-1879), his palette lightened and, following Pissarro's example, he approached nature with greater simplicity. In 1880, Cézanne began to develop his own theory of painting and his own style. It is a style characterized by unemotional, non-narrative, closed compositions that are based on the reduction of every object in nature to the cone, the cylinder, or the cube. He achieved a three-dimensional architectural effect by deliberately alternating warm and cool tones, by using a dark outline around objects and forms, and by an intensely dynamic balancing of shapes. All modern art stems, either directly or indirectly, from Cézanne: Symbolism, Fauvism, Cubism, Expressionism, and Abstract Expressionism. He immediately affected the work of Gauguin, van Gogh, Picasso, and Braque, who, in turn, have influenced countless others. Cézanne finally began to receive some public recognition in 1895, and for the remaining eleven years of his life he enjoyed both public and private attention. He continued to paint until six days before he died of pneumonia on October 22, 1906.

### **ABOUT THE ARTWORK**

Cézanne was very meticulous in setting up and painting his still lifes. Louis le Bail, his friend and a painter described how he arranged his compositions: "The cloth was draped a little over the table with instructive taste; then Cézanne arranged the fruit, contrasting the tones against one another, making the complementaries vibrate, the greens against the reds, the yellows against the blues, fitting, turning, balancing the fruit as he wanted it to be, using coins of one or two sous for the purpose. He took the greatest care over the task and many precautions; one guessed that it was a feast for the eye for him." In this painting Cézanne deliberately placed the fruit, sugar bowl, and teapot in the foreground on the same eye level as the basket filled with fruit in the middle ground. The table is crooked, the teapot stands at an angle, and no visible support exists for the large heavy basket. Cézanne deliberately distorts in order to increase the decorative aspect of his work. We see everything from two points of view, from above and head on. Striking color accents - warm rusty red, soft green, and golden yellow - add to the feeling of warmth, of hominess, of beauty in everyday objects. The resulting sensation is one of sunshine burnishing wood and highlighting the shadowy corners.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **What style of painting is this?** (Still life.)
2. **Describe what you see in this painting?**
3. **Do you think the objects in this painting were casually or quickly arranged?** (Open. Cézanne was meticulous about planning and arranging his compositions. He took great care over the task and many precautions.)
4. **In setting up the still life, what would be the first thing that Cézanne would lay down?** (The white drapes or tablecloths.) **After the white drapes were in place, do you think Cézanne rearranged them again? Why or why not?** (Probably he rearranged the drapes many times after he added the fruit and other objects because every time he added something, it would change the composition.) **Why are the white drapes so important?** (They tie the whole composition together, allowing Cézanne to tip objects in various directions or to bury parts of them in the folds which in themselves create lines, shapes and planes that are structurally important to the composition.)
5. **What elements of art do you think Cézanne thought about when he selected the fruit for the still life?** (Shape and color.)
6. **In arranging the still life composition, what do you think was Cézanne's main concern?** (Balance: which means that the objects are arranged in a pleasing way to make you feel calm when you look at them. Cézanne has planned the balance here by arranging the objects in the shape of a triangle so that your eyes can follow easily from one thing to another.)
7. **Cézanne adjusted shapes and other decorative aspects of his work to make the arrangement of his picture just the way he wanted it. Where do you see evidence of this in the picture?** (He distorted or adjusted shapes: the table is crooked, the teapot stands at an angle, and there is no visible support for the large heavy basket.)
8. **Describe how Cézanne shows you two points of view at the same time.** (You see things from the top and the side at the same time. Notice the large ceramic pot. You see it from the side and down inside it at the same time.)
9. **How does Cézanne create form?** (He works from the darker outer edges where the turning of the sphere creates its own outline, to the lighter, brighter tones toward the culminating central point closest to the viewer.)
10. **Describe the colors in the still life.** (Warm rusty red, soft green, and golden yellow.) **How do the colors make you feel?** (Open.)

## ACTIVITIES AND EXTENSIONS

1. Practice creating form on a two-dimensional surface. Place one or two oranges or pears in front of you. Using soft pastel, color your fruit, shading it exactly as you see it.
2. Set up a still life in the fashions of this painting. Start with a white tablecloth or drape. Arrange it on a table. Add fruit, and other objects. Create balance so that your eye moves around the arrangement and it is pleasing to look at. Next, draw or paint your still life.