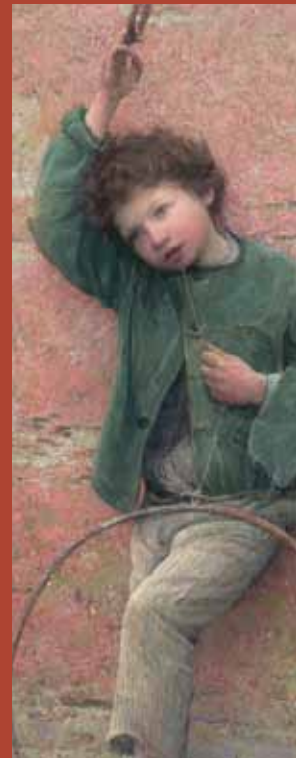


ART APPRECIATION FOR FAMILIES

Ideas for Talking about Art with Children



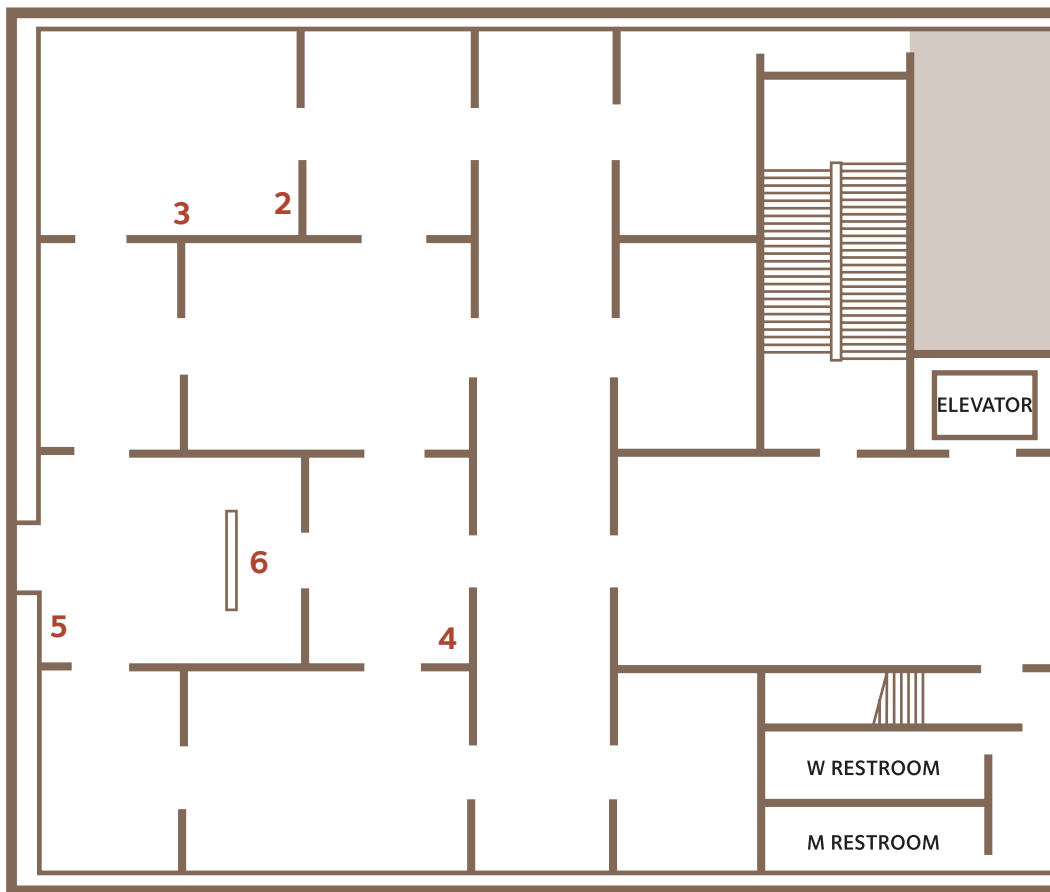
Education Department

FIGGE
ART MUSEUM

Welcome to the Figge Art Museum!

Use this booklet to help you talk with your child about works of art displayed in the Permanent Collection Galleries. For each work of art, read the introductory paragraph aloud with your child and then use the suggested questions to guide your conversation. The questions are designed for children ages 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12.

Map of Level 2



- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1 Half-Moon (<i>located in Figge lobby</i>) | 4 The Pets |
| 2 Self Portrait | 5 Fisher Boy |
| 3 Spring Storm | 6 River of Life |

Sample Label

ARTIST'S NAME	Alexander Harrison	
ARTIST'S COUNTRY	U.S., 1853-1930	ARTIST'S DATES
TITLE	Fisher Boy, 1883	DATE OF WORK
MEDIUM	Oil on canvas	
DONOR	Gift of C.A. Ficke, 1925.129	ACQUISITION NUMBER
		(year work was acquired by the Ficke and the acquisition number given to the artwork)

CIRCA ("about" or "approximately") IS USED WITH DATES AND ABBREVIATED TO "CA." (e.g., ca. 1650) WHEN AN EXACT DATE IS NOT KNOWN.

The label may also provide additional information about:

the artist

*

the time period in which the artist worked

*

the subject of the artwork

*

the style of the artwork



Deborah Butterfield
U.S., b. 1949
Half-Moon, 2007.38
Cast bronze, polychrome patina
Museum Purchase with funds provided by an
anonymous donor, 2007

What material did the artist use to create this sculpture? Although the sculpture looks like weathered wood, the material is actually cast bronze. Believe it or not, the sculpture weighs 2,400 pounds!

AGES 4-6

- * Where do you normally see horses? How is this horse different from horses that you have seen?
- * What material do you think the artist used to make this sculpture? Where do you think she found pieces of wood?
- * The artist named this sculpture *Half-Moon*. Do you see any line or shape that reminds you of a half-moon shape?

AGES 7-9

- * When Butterfield is not creating art, she trains and rides horses on her ranches in Montana and Hawaii. Because the artist knows horses so well, she is able to capture their spirit in her work. If *Half-Moon* were real, what type of personality do you think she might have?
- * The artist assembled various branches and sticks to form the horse's unique **anatomy**. Notice how the artist arranged the pieces to suggest **mass**—the physical bulk of a solid body of material—and **volume** (the enclosed space).

AGES 10-12

- * There are different sculpture categories. **Additive sculpture** is built up or shaped using malleable materials such as clay, wax, or plaster. **Reductive sculpture** is carved from wood, marble, or other materials. In the early 20th century, some artists began to construct works using found objects. These works are referred to as **assemblages**.
- * To create *Half-Moon* (and her other cast bronze sculptures), Butterfield assembles the sculpture using pieces of found wood. Her assistants photograph the work from every angle, and then disassemble it. The wood pieces are shipped to a **foundry**, where the pieces are cast in bronze using molds. The cast bronze pieces are shipped back to Butterfield's studio, where her assistants re-create the sculpture using the photographs for reference. In the final step, Butterfield applies a special mixture to the bronze that will create a **patina** resembling weathered wood.

Say this word:

patina - puh tee nuh



Grant Wood
U.S., 1891–1942
Self Portrait, 1932
Oil on panel
Museum purchase: Friends of Art Acquisition Fund, 1965.1

Who is this man, and why is he important? Meet Grant Wood, Iowa’s most well-known artist! Grant Wood painted this self portrait, a picture of himself, two years after he painted *American Gothic*, one of the most famous paintings in the world. This painting is special because it is the only self portrait that Grant Wood painted.

AGES 4-6

- * Why is Grant Wood’s face so big?
- * Is he on a farm or in a city? What animals would you find on a farm?

AGES 7-9

- * What would you wear if you painted a **self portrait**? Would you look serious like Grant Wood or would you smile?
- * Some people say the fields behind Grant Wood look like a giant patchwork quilt. What do you think?

AGES 10-12

- * Look closely at Grant Wood’s face. Notice the tiny dabs of paint the artist applied. Where else do you see finely painted details?
- * Grant Wood is considered a **Midwest Regionalist**. These artists painted farms and small town life in the 1930s and 1940s. Why do you think Grant Wood included a windmill in his self portrait? What other **symbols** of the Midwest can you think of?
- * Grant Wood felt **nostalgia** for his family’s farm that he knew as a young boy. Do you know someone who lives on a farm or who once lived on a farm? What do they say about it?



Thomas Hart Benton
U.S., 1889-1975
Spring Storm, 1958
Tempera on board
Museum purchase: Friends of Art Acquisition
Fund, 1988.12

Why is this horse scared? A storm has developed suddenly and the horse doesn't have any shelter in sight! Like Grant Wood, Thomas Hart Benton was a Midwest Regionalist who painted the people and places of the Midwest.

AGES 4-6

- * What do you see in this picture?
- * What **colors** do you see?
- * How can you tell the horse is scared by the storm?

AGES 7-9

- * Imagine you are in the pasture. What would you hear? What would you feel?
- * **Spring storms** often develop quickly. The artist juxtaposed the blue sky with the dark storm clouds. What colors are the clouds?
- * **Contrast** is a design principle that can be used to make certain parts of a picture stand out. Why does the **lightning bolt** stand out?

AGES 10-12

- * **Tempera** is a painting medium made by blending egg or egg yolk with water, dry paint pigments, and a touch of glue. Tempera dries quickly, so it must be applied in a precise manner. In contrast, oil paint dries slowly which means an artist can make changes more easily. Another difference is that tempera is opaque and oil paint is translucent, which lets the light pass through.
- * **Repetition** is a design principle that helps an artist unify different parts of the composition. What type of line is repeated?
- * The artist is known for his dynamic compositions. How did the artist show **movement**?



Edwin Landseer
England, 1802-1873
The Pets, 1834
Oil on canvas
Gift of C.A. Ficke, 1925.169

Do any of your friends have a pet deer? Although deer are not common pets today, having a pet deer might not have been unusual when young Rachel Russell lived. Edwin Landseer was so talented at painting animals that Queen Victoria, who ruled from 1837-1901, commissioned him to paint several pictures of the royal family's pets.

AGES 4-6

- * What type of pets do you have? Do you have a photograph of your pet(s)?
- * How can you tell the deer is a pet? What other pet do you see?
- * Do you wear nice clothes when you play outside? Why not?

AGES 7-9

- * **Warm colors** (red, orange and yellow) appear to come forward, or stand out, when placed next to **cool colors** (blue, green and purple). Can you find two areas where this principle is demonstrated?
- * The artist included a small **still life** in the **foreground** of the painting. Do the stool and pot of geraniums seem out of place in a forest? Where else do you see flowers in the painting?
- * Why do you think the girl is playing with her pets instead of children her own age? Do you think her pets might be her favorite companions?

AGES 10-12

- * The artist placed the girl and the deer in center of the **composition** to make them the **focal point**, or where your eye goes first. The artist also painted the **background** of the picture without a lot of detail to focus attention on the figures.
- * Do you think the arched frame enhances the composition? Why or why not?
- * The artist specialized in animal pictures. What challenges would an artist have painting animals? The artist probably made several sketches of the deer and cat before painting them. Where could you go to observe or draw wildlife?
- * How is the girl's **affection** for her pets shown?
- * Why do you think animal paintings were popular in the 19th century?



Alexander Harrison
U.S., 1853-1930
Fisher Boy, 1883
Oil on canvas
Gift of C.A. Ficke, 1925.129

Why is the boy wearing wooden shoes? Wooden shoes were worn by peasants in Brittany, a region in northwestern France, when this picture was painted. Alexander Harrison, like the French painter Paul Gauguin, worked in this area. The term “genre scene” is used to describe a painting of ordinary people doing everyday activities.

AGES 4-6

- * How are this boy’s **shoes** different from your shoes?
- * How many fish do you see?

AGES 7-9

- * How are you like this boy? How are you different?
- * What do you know about **fishing**? Why do people fish?
- * This painting suggests a story. How did the boy earn the nickname “Fisher Boy?” What is his real name? Where does he live? What is he daydreaming about?

AGES 10-12

- * The artist was skilled at painting **texture**. How did he make the wall look like it would feel rough? What do you see that would feel smooth?
- * What clues tell you that fishing is an economic necessity for this boy, rather than a sport?
- * Some people think the boy uses the hoop to fish. Do you agree?

Say this word:

genre – zhahn ruh



Louis Comfort Tiffany
U.S., 1848–1933
River of Life, ca. 1905
Favrile glass, copper foil, lead
Long term loan from the Denkmann Family

What makes this scene look peaceful? This window was once installed in the Denkmann family mausoleum in Chippianock Cemetery in Rock Island. A **mausoleum** is a small burial place for several individuals, usually from the same family.

AGES 4-6

- * What do you see?
- * What colors do you see? Have you seen windows with colorful designs before? Where?
- * Do you see any glass that *looks* like it would feel bumpy? **(Please don't touch the window!)**

AGES 7-9

- * This window doesn't need real sunlight to look beautiful because the "sunlight" comes from full-spectrum light tubes inside the light box.
- * The artist is famous for making unique art glass. Which piece of glass has the most colors? Which piece do you find most interesting? Why?
- * This window was stolen from the Denkmann family mausoleum in 1976. The FBI recovered the window 21 years later when the thieves tried to sell it at an art auction. The window was damaged when it was stolen. The Figge asked an **art conservator** to repair the crack so the window could be displayed. Unfortunately, the long crack is still visible. Can you find it?

AGES 10-12

- * Louis Comfort Tiffany is famous for his unique art glass. **Favrile glass** is **opalescent**, which means that it has a milky, iridescent quality.
- * To create even more richness and depth in some sections of the window, the artist's assistants layered several sheets of glass. Can you find one of these sections?
- * Why do you think the River of Life was a popular motif for memorial windows?

Say these words:

mausoleum – *maw suh lee uhm* favrile – *fuh v reel* opalescent – *oh puh les uhnt*



Art Appreciation for Families was written by Figge Art Museum staff and docents.

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Art Appreciation for Families was inspired by *Looking at Art Together: A Parent Guide*, published by the Art Institute of Chicago.