Meet the Masters

November Program

Winslow Homer "Snap the Whip"
Henri Rousseau "Father Juniet's Cart"

Winslow Homer (1838-1019), was an American artist. He became famous for paintings of the sea that are remarkable for their intensity of feeling and stirring grandeur. He never painted fishermen and sea captains as individuals, but as symbols of the rugged quality of all people who follow the sea. The same way, Homer's vision of the sea was not local, but universal. Homer took American art out of the romanticism of the mid- 1800's and carried it to the most powerful heights of realism.

Homer was born in Boston. He was apprenticed to a lithographer in 1854 and became a free-lance illustrator in 1857. By 1859, he was living in New York City. There he worked for "Harper's Weekly ", which employed him during the Civil War to illustrate battlefield scenes. Homer did many war illustrations. At the same time, he painted his first oils, which are scenes of farm and country life. He began painting watercolors of these subjects in 1873.

Homer spent 10 months in Paris in 1867. He was not deeply influenced by his Paris stay, but the heroic peasants painted by the French artist Jean Francis Millet affected his figure style. A trip to the coastal town of Tynemouth, England, in 1881 and 1882 centered Homer's interest in the sea.

Returning to America, Homer settled permanently at Prout's Neck on the coast of Maine. Most of his sea paintings were done at Prout's Neck. Homer often traveled to the Adirondack Mountains and to Florida, Bermuda and Nassau. He developed his water color technique on these trips. He skillfully applied transparent washes (liquids) to instill a dramatic quality and fine feeling for light.

"Snap the Whip" is a happy scene of boys playing on an autumn day. The colors used by the artist are mostly warm (reds, oranges and browns), with only a small patch of cool blue sky appearing behind mountains. The children are moving together in the foreground, and motionless in the background. This intensifies the happiness that you might feel when you look at this picture.

Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) was a French painter whose imagination engaged much of his art. Rousseau was a "primitive" without leaving Paris - an untrained amateur painter who held a past as a customs collector. Rousseau produced a world of dream and fantasy that had it's own sophistication and made its own departure from the artistic style of his time. A natural talent for design compensated his apparent visual, conceptual, and technical naivete.

Rousseau was born in Laval, France. He worked as a minor customs official in Paris until 1885, when he retired to devote his life to painting. "Father Juniet's Cart" was painted in 1906, only four years before his death. This painting is a departure from Rousseau's earlier subjects, which represented the world of fantasy and exotic imaginative jungles. Notice the motionless stance of the animals and people.

Topics for Discussion:

1. "Snap the Whip" is a happy scene of boys playing together on an autumn day. What colors in the picture tell you that it is autumn?
2. Do the seasons change where you live? What is the weather like?
3. Are there mountains in the picture?
4. These boys are playing a game called Snap the Whip. Have you ever played that game or one like it? Can you remember the excited you felt when you were whipped around?
5. Do you like to run barefoot like these boys do? How does it feel? Do these boys look still or as if they are moving? The artist used repetition in the legs and torsos to show movement
6. How would you show people moving in a painting or drawing?
7. Do the people in Rousseau's "Father Juniet's Cart" look different from the people in "Snap the Whip"? In what way?
8. Do the people in "Father Juniet's Cart" look happy?
9. Do the people and animals look as if they are going to go somewhere? Where do you think they are going?
10. Can you find differences or similarities between these two paintings?
11. Can you tell a story about the people in each of these paintings?

Hands on Art Activity Paint a Story

Materials:

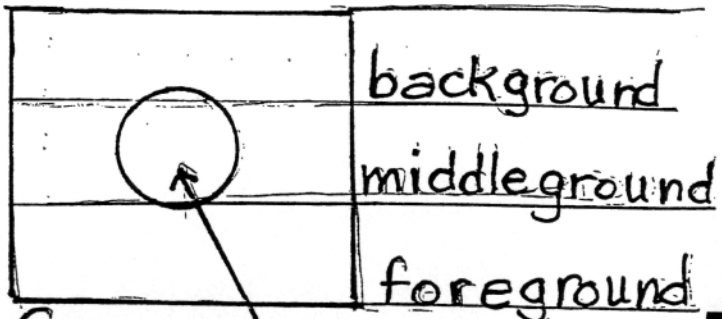
Heavy white paper or watercolor paper (11 X 14)
Crayons
Watercolor paints
Brushes, small to medium sizes

Directions:

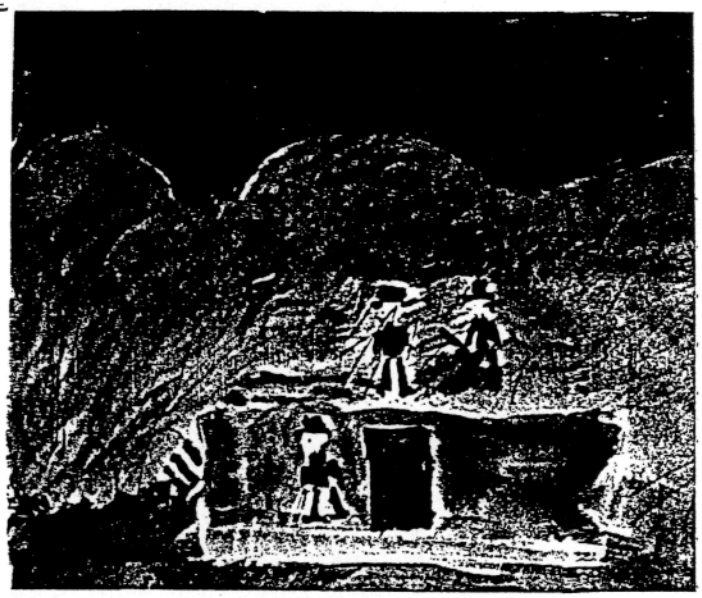
1. Before beginning discuss with the students how pictures can tell stories. Tell them to think about a story in their lives that can translate into a picture.
2. Draw your story in crayon. Carefully compose the action in the picture. Think about how you would show figures moving in the picture.
3. Paint the drawings very carefully so that colors are balanced throughout the composition. Try not to leave unpainted areas.
4. Discuss students about the foreground, middle ground and background in their composition. The background can be soft and fuzzy while the foreground will contain more detail.
5. Make sure student signs their names on front of the painting.

Clean up

Art Can Tell a Story

1. 

Compose
- center of interest



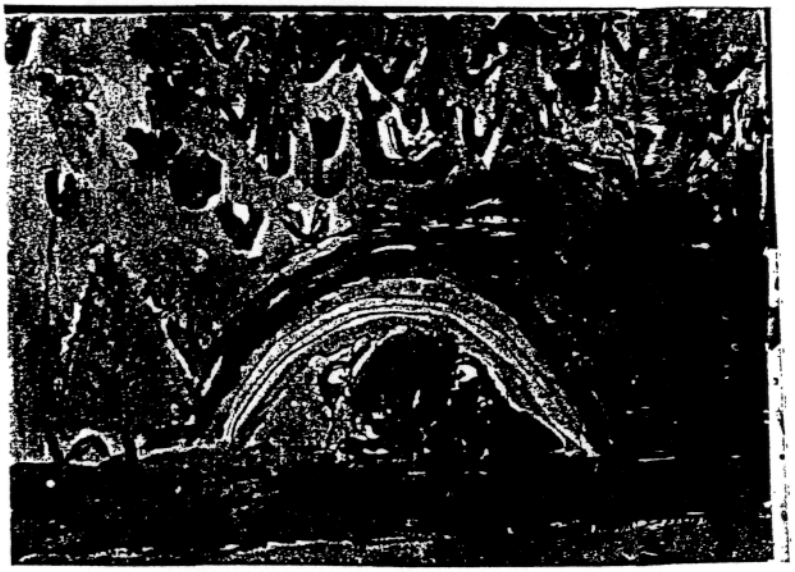
Student Second Grade

2.

Using pencil draw figures involved in action

3.

Paint the figures, foreground, middleground and background, fill in all of paper.



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