

Meet the Masters

March Program

Henri Rousseau "Banks of the Oise"**Thomas Chambers "Summer: Fisherman Netting"****Artwork Overview:**

The painting "Banks of the Oise" truly expressed Rousseau's love of color and pattern. Notice the cool colors of the sky and grass. The trees in a neat row establish a gentle rhythm that brings your eye across the painting. The cows are restfully grazing in the foreground. To balance the composition and provide a focal point Rousseau has painted an orange tree in the center of the composition, behind the trees in the middle ground. This gives the painting a sense of depth and establishes a background for the landscape.

Thomas Chambers has painted a landscape different from Rousseau's. The colors are cool and soothing. The gentle rhythm of the clouds, mountains, trees and fisherman provide a gentle feeling of a summer evening. There is great distance in the background leading the eye to a town at the base of the mountains.

About the Artist:

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 post as a customs collector. Rousseau produced a world of dream and fantasy that had its own sophistication and made its own departure from the artistic style of his time. His apparent visual, conceptual, and technical naivete' was compensated by a natural talent for design. He was an unrecognized genius who was the first "outsider" to enter the annals of art, the first native painter to gain international fame. 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.

Topics for Discussion:

1. Did the artist Henri Rousseau use more cool colors (blues, greens, violets) or warm colors (yellows, reds, oranges) in this painting?
2. How do you feel when you look at this painting? Why?
3. What season of the year do you think Rousseau was representing? How can you tell?
4. If you were to paint a picture of a spring day, what elements would you use in the painting? Why?

Thomas Chambers

At the present time very little is known about Thomas Chambers. He was considered an American primitive artist. Facts about his life and art are few, although some sixty-five works have been attributed to him. He painted scenes of the sea and America's Northwest. Chambers however did not work from life, he instead used illustrations in books for his paintings. He was an excellent craftsman with a keen eye for composition.

Hands-on Art Activity: Tissue Collage Spring Landscape

Materials: White tagboard (9"x 12")
Colored tissue paper
Acrylic medium (clear gloss)
Soft paint brushes
Cups for dispensing acrylic medium

Directions:

Teacher preparation: Cut tissue into approximately 5" x 7" pieces before distributing to the class.

1. Discuss the way in which Rousseau placed the elements in the painting in layers, with the sky behind the trees, and the trees behind the cows. This is how the children should apply the tissue paper.
2. Plan out the composition, taking note of the different colors produced when the tissue overlaps.
3. Remove the tissue from the tagboard.
4. Paint the tagboard in small sections with the gloss and then place the tissue paper on top. Do not put gloss on tissue and try to stick down.
5. Use the paintbrush **gently** to dab gloss on top of tissue, if more is needed, for layering. (Dabbing will help prevent tearing the tissue or causing the colors to bleed and run).
6. Small squares of tissue can be crumbled to resemble leaves or flowers and then applied to the collage.