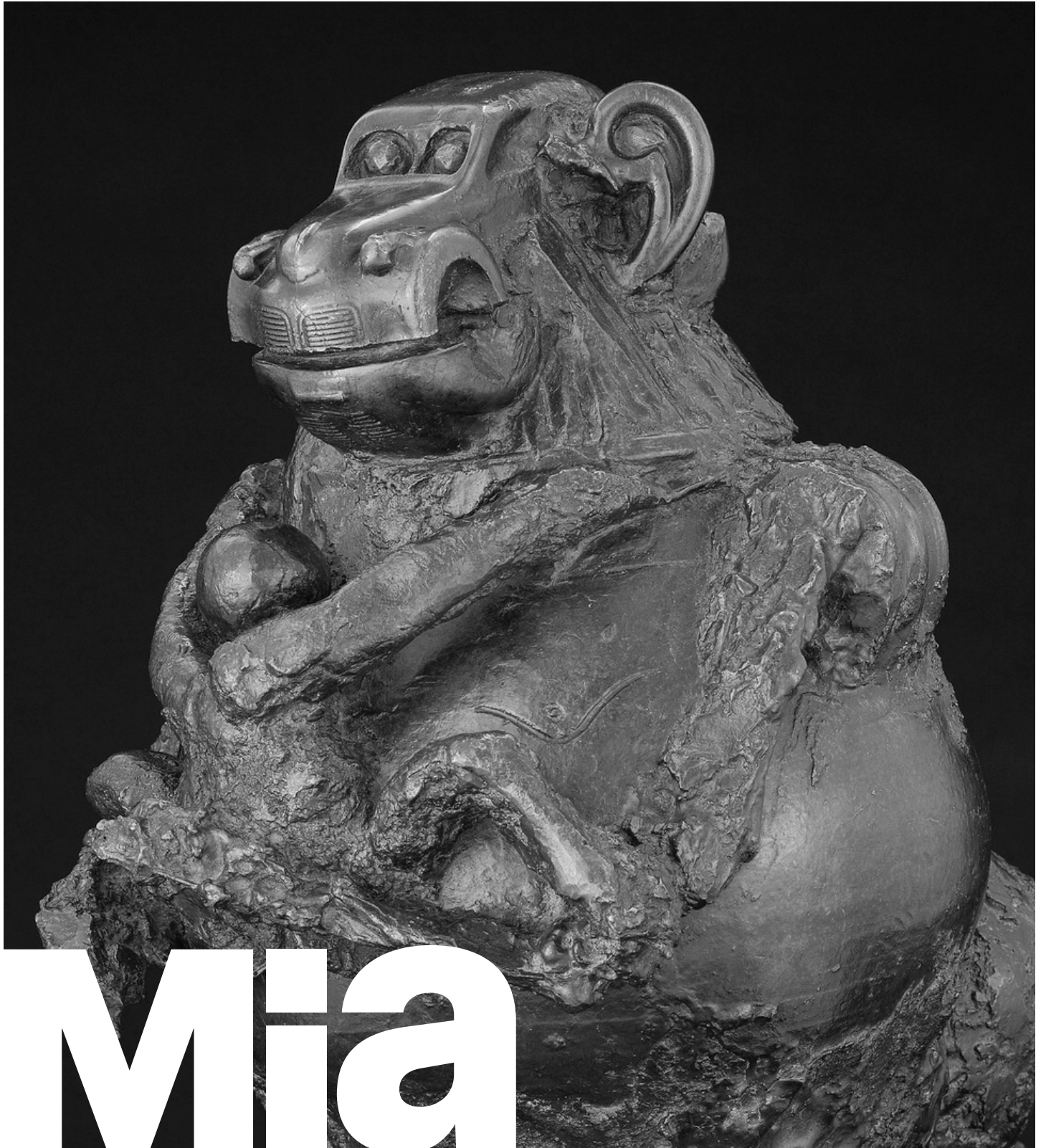


Minneapolis Institute of Art

Art Adventure

Artists' Inspirations



Become a member of the museum today!

Thank you for participating in the Minneapolis Institute of Art's popular Art Adventure Program! By volunteering as a Picture Person, you build an important link between the museum and our region's schoolchildren. Membership at the Minneapolis Institute of Art now has a Pay What You Can option. Make a contribution or join for free, and become part of the member community! You'll enjoy access to special exhibitions, discounts, incentives, and insider news and information. If you choose to contribute, you'll be supporting the museum's free general admission every day. Donations also provide valuable resources that go to the museum's exhibitions, lectures, events, and classes offered for young and old alike.

For more information or to join, please call the Members' Hotline at (612) 870-6323 (toll-free (888) 642-2787), or visit our website at www.artsmia.org.

What are you doing next Family Day?

Family Days at the Minneapolis Institute of Art are free monthly events that highlight the museum's collection and special exhibitions for art lovers of all ages. The second Sunday each month, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the museum is filled with hands-on art activities, live music, dance performances, artist demonstrations, family tours, and more. All activities are free and appropriate for children of all ages. Visit our website, www.artsmia.org, for specific Family Day dates, themes, and descriptions.

The Art Adventure Program

What's the Art Adventure Program?

Art Adventure is a program that engages students with artworks from the Minneapolis Institute of Art's collection. Through the support of thousands of trained volunteers, Art Adventure brings visual arts into K-6 classrooms across Minnesota and beyond. The program encourages creativity, critical thinking and global awareness through in-depth explorations of art across various cultures and time periods. Art Adventure is an opportunity for students to experience art up close and personal through reproductions, technology, and touch-and-feel props.

What's a Picture Person?

Picture People are the volunteers from the community who facilitate discussions of artworks using reproductions in the classrooms. They are the vital link between the original work of art in the museum and children in the schools. Before they visit any classrooms, Picture People come to the museum for a training session on the theme and artworks their school will be using that year. At training they receive printed background material, learn engagement techniques, and—most importantly—experience interacting with the original objects they will soon be introducing to students.

What does the Art Adventure Program do for students?

A recent evaluation of Art Adventure showed that, besides encouraging an interest in art, the program fosters five major critical thinking skills: describe what they see, notice details, understand how the parts form a whole idea or artwork, support interpretations with sufficient reasons, and support opinions or preferences with sound reasons. The skills and experiences students gain through Art Adventure will impact them for the rest of their lives.

Once You're in the Classroom

Relax!

The information provided in this booklet is intended as background material to help you feel confident when sharing the images with children. You are not expected to cover everything. Choose two or three key ideas you think will be compelling for the age group to which you are presenting. Kids love stories—what might you “spin” into a tale? What parallels can you draw with their lives?

Be sure everyone can see you and the reproduction.

Talk with the classroom teacher to find out what routines the class follows when gathering for a visitor. Aim for a setup that will get the students as close to the reproduction as possible. Keep the students' eyes on you, too, by making regular eye contact with everyone in the group.

Set up the students for successful exploration.

Have the children wear nametags so you can call them by name.
Set your own preferences aside to allow students to form their own opinions.
Encourage the students to take turns speaking.
Paraphrase what the students have said to let them know that you have been listening and help clarify each student's statement.

Begin each discussion with a moment of silent looking.

Begin by introducing the lesson, yourself, and the reproductions. Review with the class what a museum is and what you'll be doing with them. Start by having the students observe the artwork in total silence. You might build the suspense by keeping each image hidden while you explain that you do not want them even to raise their hands until you ask them. Model your expectations by spending the time quietly looking too.

Give students time to talk about what they have observed.

Start with questions like “What’s going on here?” and “What do you see that makes you say that?” Be sure to use your finger to point to the part of the picture the child is talking about. Paraphrase his or her words to clarify the observation for others. You’ll be surprised how quickly students learn to justify their comments with evidence they can see in the picture! “What else can you find?” or introducing and linking historical content can help generate further comments.

Connect your key ideas to the students’ observations.

When the students’ observations begin to slow down, use what you have learned about their interests to steer the discussion towards key ideas which you have chosen to focus. Try to ask questions that will draw connections between what they have said and what you would like them to consider. If they pose questions you can’t answer, admit it! Brainstorm ways you might find out together.

Keep the age of your class in mind.

Don’t expect young children to be able to focus for more than twenty minutes. Plan your presentations accordingly. Consider your class’s ability to understand time—will students understand a date or phrase such as “colonial times” (fifth graders might) or should you stick with “a long time ago” or “about 100 years ago”? Keep in mind that younger children are more likely to accept the abstract than older students, who may want concrete content.

Talk to other Picture People.

Experienced Picture People have great ideas about how to capture the imagination of a class. Don’t hesitate to borrow and adapt their suggestions, but remember to bring your own creativity along too!

Talking about Art

These questions encourage close-looking and meaning-making to help students find their own relevance in works of art. Through this process they learn to value art as having something to do with their own lives.

What do you see in this artwork? What else can you find?

This is the best line of questioning to begin conversations with K-2 students. For students that seem ready to dive deeper, ask "What do you see that makes you say that?"

What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

You'll notice this question is different than, "What do you see?" "What's going on?" invites a consideration of relationships and interactions and taps into children's natural interest to find stories. "What do you see that makes you say that?" focuses comments on the evidence at hand and helps kids explain their assumptions.

How would you feel if you were "in" this work of art?

What would you hear? How would something feel to touch? What path would you take through the picture? What do you see that makes you say that?

What does this artwork remind you of?

What would you use this for? What do you see that makes you say that?

What person or object in this picture do you think was most important to the artist?

What are people in the picture looking at? Where are there bright colors? What is biggest?

How would the artwork seem different if you could make a change?

What would happen if you changed a color? Moved an object or person? Left something out?

How is this work of art like or different from another one you've seen in this set?

"Compare and contrast" encourages close looking and reinforces the theme. Get together with your fellow volunteers to coordinate some provocative pairs.

How does this work of art relate to the theme of the set?

Let the students pull it all together! What connections do they see between the theme and what they've noticed and learned about the work of art?

**What do you like most about this artwork? Why?
What do you like least about this artwork?**

If you could keep one artwork from this set, what artwork would you pick? Why?

Using Touch-and-Feel Props

Why props?

Students normally first encounter the Art Adventure artworks in their classrooms as reproductions. The works of art appear to be two-dimensional and similar in size. Props accompany many of the reproductions to help overcome this limitation. Touching a material similar to the work of art, seeing the technique used to create it, or looking at a photograph in which the object is being used adds another dimension to the experience. The use of props also helps engage learners who prefer hands-on learning styles, and reinforces the understanding of all learners.

How should you use props?

Without careful planning, props will do little but distract your group. Use these helpful tips to lead successful exploration:

- Present the prop alongside information about a work of art or to help answer a question about the work of art.
- There are a number of ways to use the prop:
 1. Pass the prop around to each student. Give the students a question to consider while they are waiting for the prop and one to consider after they have held the prop.
 2. Ask a single student to come forward and describe how it feels to the whole group.
 3. Hold the prop yourself and walk it around the group for the students to touch or look at closely.
 4. Hold the prop yourself to illustrate relevant parts of the discussion.
 5. Then give everyone a chance to examine it more closely at the end of your presentation.
- Clear communication of your expectations is essential to getting the students to stay focused on the activity. Let the students know that they will need to take turns, what they should do if it's not their turn, and how they should treat the props.
- After the students have explored the prop, refer to the experience as you continue the discussion.
- Don't forget to plan how you'll get the props back! Schools are charged significant fees for missing or badly damaged props and reproductions.

Artists' Inspirations

Art Adventure Program
A program from the
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Revised 2015

GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR ART ADVENTURE PROVIDED BY:

UNITED HEALTH FOUNDATION*

THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS

Artists' Inspirations Prop Kit Contents

Work of Art	Prop	Replacement Cost
China, <i>Jade Mountain</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sample of carved jade ● Portrait of Chinese ruler, and (flip side) scene of Chinese landscape 	\$40 \$10
Georgia O'Keeffe, <i>Pedernal—From the Ranch #1</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Samples of painted canvas ● Photograph of Pedernal Mountain, and (flip side) portrait of O'Keeffe 	\$30 \$10
Papua new Guinea, <i>Frieze Decoration from a Malagan Ceremony</i>	No prop	
Junius Brutus Stearns, <i>A Fishing Party Off Long Island</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Photograph of shark fisherman, and (flip side) 1816 map of United States 	\$10
Pablo Picasso, <i>Baboon and Young</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Photograph of baboon model, and (flip side) portrait of Picasso and his son 	\$10
Yves Tanguy, <i>Through Birds, Through Fire, but Not Through Glass</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Photograph of Tanguy 	\$10
Artwork Reproductions (6)		\$50

Please make sure that you have enclosed all of the items on this list when you return the prop kit. You will be responsible for the cost of replacing any missing items. Thank you!

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Introduction

What inspires an artist to create a work of art? Artists' Inspirations explores the sources of inspiration of six different artists and examines how their original ideas were then shaped and transformed in the creative process. The six works included in this set provide a glimpse into the ways in which artists from a variety of cultures have channeled their creative spirit. Whether their source of inspiration was the natural world, ancient myths and traditions, or just ordinary objects of everyday life, each artist has shaped those ideas into a unique and original work of art.



China (Asia, Ch'ing Dynasty, Ch'ien Lung reign, 1736-95)

Jade Mountain Illustrating the Gathering of Poets at the Lan T'ing Pavilion,
1784

Light green jade

H. 22½ x W. 38¾ x D. 19 inches

The John R. Van Derlip Fund and Gift of the Thomas Barlow Walker Foundation,
92.103.13

Theme

Nature has been the primary source of inspiration for Chinese artists for centuries. Equally important has been the admiration of the past. The artist who created the *Jade Mountain* followed both of these traditions. The particular event that inspired this artist was a gathering of poets that occurred nearly 1400 years earlier in 353 CE.

Background

This work symbolizes the long-standing Chinese cultural values associated with landscape and nature. The landscape theme is rooted in a philosophy of nature that can be traced to Confucian and Taoist beliefs as early as the 500 CE. The ideal of this philosophy was to be in harmony with the core laws of the universe. Taoist philosophers taught that the way to spiritual understanding and peace was through contemplation of the beauties and mysteries of nature. The followers of Confucius drew their wisdom from the "natural order of things." From these philosophies the belief emerged that there is harmony in the universe, and human beings should try to live their lives in accordance with it.

Chinese poets and painters have sought to express this philosophy in their work. The Chinese were the first to make landscape a dominant theme in painting. Artists sought to show the greatness of nature and its power over humans. This philosophy was expressed in a respect for environment that valued landscape as a place to seek spiritual tranquility.

Jade mountains like this one were carved to represent the magnificent mountain landscapes that were so valued by Chinese philosophers, writers, and artists for over twenty centuries. They are the translation of the Chinese painting tradition into sculpture.

The Chinese consider jade to be the most sacred and treasured of all precious stones. Their word for jade is *yu*, meaning pure, precious, noble, and "right." Its physical characteristics were believed to express the greatest virtues of mankind: soft, smooth and glossy, like benevolence; fine, compact, and strong, like intelligence; angular—though not sharp or cutting—like righteousness; internally radiant like faith; pure of sound when struck, like wisdom; and able to be broken, but not bent, like courage.

Jade is not native to China. To get the precious stones, groups often traveled as far as 2,000 miles across difficult lands in Afghanistan, Siberia, Tibet, and Burma. This piece of jade is from a place called Sinkiang province. Once the jade was found, it was an exhausting task to remove it from the mountains. The largest slabs, for objects like the *Jade Mountain*, were laboriously chiseled away from the surrounding rocks.

The Minneapolis Institute of Art's *Jade Mountain* was created during the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912), which was the last period of imperial rule in China. The Ch'ing Dynasty ruled through traditional Chinese institutions of government, philosophy, and religion. Its rulers also had great respect for Chinese cultural tradition and sought to preserve the great achievements of the past and to encourage the arts of the present. One of the first patrons of scholarship and art was the emperor Ch'ien Lung [chee-en long], who ruled from 1736 to 1795. His reign is remembered as the last truly creative period in the history of Chinese art. Ch'ien Lung, who commissioned this piece, was himself an important painter, calligrapher, and poet and his collection of Chinese paintings of all periods was one of the greatest ever made.

Jade Mountain

Jade Mountain was carved from one of four unusually large blocks split from a boulder found in central Asia. Weighing 640 pounds, it is the smallest piece from that series but is considered to be the largest piece of carved jade in the western hemisphere.

Jade Mountain illustrates a poetry gathering held at Lan T'ing [the Orchid Pavilion] near K'uai Chi [gwi jee] Mountain in Chekiang province, where on March 3, 353 CE, the poet Wang Hsi-Chih [Wong She Jurr] invited 41 of his scholarly friends. Relaxing along the orchid-filled banks of a winding stream, the group consumed wine from cups that floated downstream, contemplated nature, and wrote poems for the occasion. These were later assembled by Wang, who remembered the historic party for future generations in a long poem entitled *Prelude to the Orchid Pavilion*. Composed of 324 characters in 28 lines, the poem reflects on the meaning and enjoyment of life, death, the past and the present. Because the Chinese consider calligraphy to be the highest of all art forms, and because Wang was regarded as the greatest of all calligraphers, many copies of his poem were soon in circulation. It has received great attention and respect from artists, poets, and calligraphers in China and Japan ever since.

Jade is very difficult to carve. The skill of the artist is evident in the details of the crisply defined ridges of the hills, the leaves on each tree, the delicate cups floating down the brook, and each tiny figure walking the mountain paths. Equally remarkable is the delicately inscribed calligraphy on two sides of the mountain. The long poem seen on the front is Wang Hsi-Chih's famous preface. Its inclusion here is a reminder of the importance of the past and tradition in Chinese art. On the back is a poem by the emperor Ch'ien Lung. (Translations of both are found at the end of this entry.)

Including these poems into the sculpture shows how important calligraphy and poetry are in Chinese artwork. As early as the 1000s, scholar, painter, poet, and calligrapher were often the same person. Rulers considered themselves to be the scholarly elite, so it is not surprising that Ch'ien Lung, living in the 1700s, would commission such a work as the *Jade Mountain* and compose his own poem for the back. It was not just to remember the historic event of a poets' gathering, or simply a decorative triumph of the jade-carver's art, or yet another copy of the famous poem. Instead, it was a combination of all of these things, uniting in one work the best of the past and the present and embodying for the emperor and other viewers the important

virtues of scholarly activity, love of the arts, and unity with nature.

Technique

Ch'ien Lung organized palace workshops in several cities to produce jade objects for palace use. The process involved in making large jade mountains like this was time-consuming and expensive. It included eight or nine stages, required several workmen, and took years to complete. Jade, which is an extremely hard material, is worked slowly by drilling with a stone harder than jade, such as quartz dust. Until recently and despite jade's hardness, the power for drilling and carving came only from the artist's hands or from a foot treadle that turned a grinding element. The artist's tools were thought to have been wood or bamboo, while the surface was worn down by causing friction between quartz and jade. This type of sculpture, made by carving away or removing stone from a larger piece, is called subtractive sculpture.

Artist

Although his name is unknown, the artist who designed and carved the *Jade Mountain* must have been an honored and respected member of Chinese society. The creation of any jade object required great skill, patience, and discipline; in addition to this, the mountain would have called for great scholarship, aesthetic sensitivity, and feeling for life. These qualities make *Jade Mountain* a piece of poetic contemplation, not just technical skill.

Calligraphic Transcription

"Prelude to the Orchid Pavilion," Wang Hsi-Chih

In the late spring of the ninth year of the Yung Ho reign (353 CE) a gathering was held at Lan T'ing, the Orchid Pavilion, north of K'uai Chi Mountain. The meeting was held to clean and repair the honored graves and all the luminaries came. Young and old alike were gathered together. At this site were steep magnificent mountains of lush forests and elegant bamboo. Here, too, was a clear, rapid running stream, traversing the slope which could be used to float the wine cups. We sat about the banks of this stream. Although lacking the joy of flute and string, a single cup and single poem were sufficient to draw out the deepest emotions. On that day the sky was bright, the air pure and the gentle wind a thing of tranquility. Gazing upward the vastness of the universe could be comprehended; downward one saw the varied abundance of things. All that the mind and eye conceived was best appreciated through the senses. It was a delightful experience! In this generation one is influenced by experiences within his own tiny environment, but one's emotion comes from outside his material existence. Although there are ten thousand moods of fondness and dislike, and a difference between action and non-action, when a man feels joy he is content to know that that feeling may be confined to him alone.

With this acceptance one will never notice the approach of old age. When one is fatigued through thought the feeling is joy, and that emotion will suddenly become a thing of the past. Still, these are the things which excite one's emotions and all achievements and failures are thus transformed and finally come to an end. The ancients stated that birth and death are great events. Such pain! In tracing the course of the emotion involved in building a grave I always feel grieved although I know that birth and death are illusions and that the (legendary) birth of Chi and the demise of Pong are untrue. Our concept of posterity is presently formulated and can be likened to our present view of the past. A sad situation! Therefore, I record and collate all the writings of my contemporaries. Although the occasion may change from this one and although

the next generation may be different from this one, what touches one's heart remains the same. Posterity will be inspired by these verses.

Early in the late spring month of the Chia Ch'en cycle (1784, copied by the emperor).
(Placed above the copy of Wang Hsi-Chih's poem is the seal of Ch'ien Lung.)

On the reverse side of the mountain is another inscription, a poem written by the emperor himself:

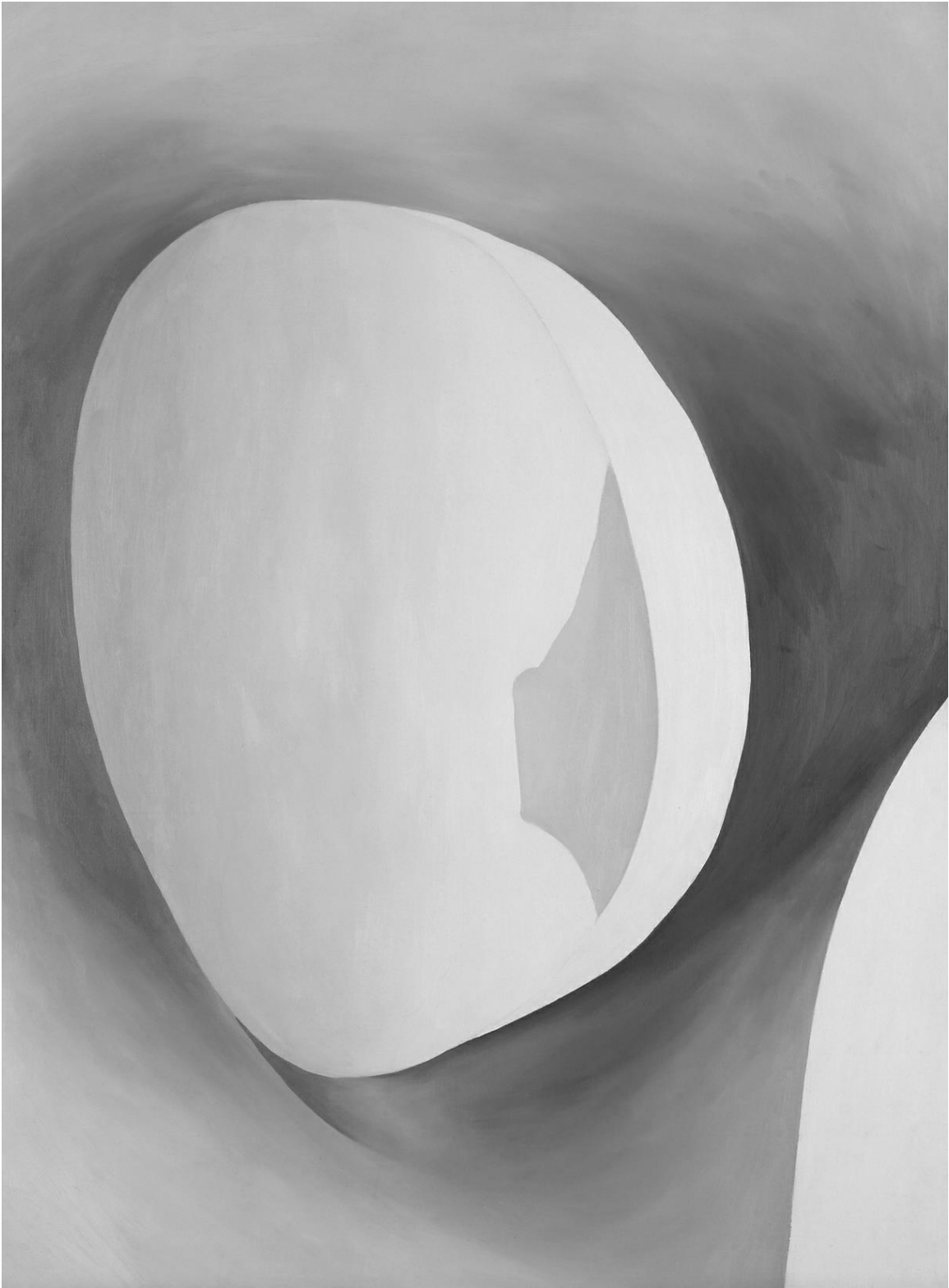
The mountain of jade of Huo T'ien was large.
It was carved to represent a literary gathering.

Elders and youth alike comprised the meeting.
The calligraphy was originally fashioned late in the Yung Ho reign;
And the writing has been authenticated on numerous occasions since then.
It pleases me that this colophon is genuine.
One should ask in this picture,
Who should be considered to be the man of jade?

By imperial decree, the Chia Ch'en cycle of the Ch'ien Lung reign.

Suggested Questions

1. The artist that created this sculpture was inspired by a place and an event. What places inspire you? What events inspire you? How would you turn those inspirations into an artwork?
2. Pretend you are taking a walk across this sculpture. Describe what you see. Where did you start? Where did you end? What was the weather like? What did you do?



Georgia O'Keeffe, American, 1887-1986
Pedernal—From the Ranch #1, 1956
Oil on canvas
H. 30 x W. 40 inches
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Cowles, 64.43.2

Theme

Like the sculptor of the *Jade Mountain*, Georgia O'Keeffe looked to nature for inspiration in her paintings. However, unlike the Chinese artist, she broke with tradition to evolve a highly individual style that conveys a personal expression of her feeling for the environment.

Background

Georgia O'Keeffe was born in the Midwest and lived many of her adult years in New York. However, it was the American Southwest that she loved and adopted as her home. In 1929, she made her first trip to New Mexico. In the years that followed, she spent several months a year in New Mexico, settling there permanently in 1946.

Living in the desert in an adobe house (a house made of natural materials), O'Keeffe was fascinated by the landscape and the animal bones and skulls that she collected on her walks. One day as she held up a pelvic bone, she caught a glimpse of sky through the hole that inspired her to paint that image. *Pedernal— From the Ranch #1* is a result of that moment.

Pedernal—From the Ranch #1

The Pedernal is a flat-topped mesa (an elevated piece of flat land) that lies southeast of O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch near Albuquerque, New Mexico. The artist has framed her view of the mesa with the curving shape of an animal's pelvic bone. The Pedernal was one of the artist's favorite subjects.

Like a film director, she focuses our vision through the shape of the bone to give drama to the Pedernal, contrasting the simple silhouette of the mesa with the curve of the bone. Consider how differently the mesa would appear without the framework of the bone. This telescopic view creates a sense of vast space and endless blue sky punctuated by the flat shape of the mesa.

O'Keeffe drew her inspiration from the mountain as she viewed it, but she has simplified and reduced the forms. She eliminates details and varied textures in order to give greater emphasis to form and color. Our attention is focused first on the mesa, then on the sky and the bone.

She does not hesitate to exaggerate the proportions of objects. Here the bone takes on monumental proportions because of its placement in the composition. Without some information about the painting, we might not recognize this as a bone. This process of reduction and simplification of form is called abstraction.

Color plays an equally important role in O'Keeffe's artworks. The rich primary colors of red and blue that she has chosen not only reflect the natural environment of the Southwest, but also convey to us a warmth and feeling that she felt for this land. Likewise the bones and landscape

serve as equivalents of life in the desert, symbolizing this new land she has chosen as her home. This painting may be viewed as the expression of O'Keeffe's love of nature and as a tribute to the vastness of her beloved Southwest.

Technique

O'Keeffe was a pioneer of early American modernism. During the years when realism was popular in America, O'Keeffe was experimenting with abstraction, reducing forms in nature to broad areas of color and simplified forms. By experimenting with scale, such as the enlarging of the bone, she forces the viewer to see images in new ways.

O'Keeffe is more interested in expressing her feeling for nature than simply describing it. It was her experience of drawing while listening to music that gave her the idea that line, color, and shape could be expressive of beauty. It is this private vision that is the real subject of her work.

Artist

When O'Keeffe died in 1986 at age 98, she was the most celebrated woman artist of the 1900s. Born in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, O'Keeffe was interested in art at an early age and knew by the eighth grade, that she would become an artist. Growing up in the Midwest shaped her artistic development.

O'Keeffe created more than 900 paintings and drawings in her lifetime and was honored with retrospectives (an exhibition that looks back on an artist's career) by major museums throughout the United States. She served as a role model for women artists at a time when men completely dominated the art world, and remains today a source of influence for many artists.

Suggested Questions

1. Use your hands to pretend you are looking through binoculars. What do you see through the holes? Take your hands down. What was missing before?
2. If the bone was not in the painting, what else do you think you would be able to see?
3. Close your eyes and picture a warm place. What colors come to mind? What colors do you see when you think of a cold place? Describe the colors you see here. What do you think it would feel like to be in this painting?
4. What place inspires you? Why?



Oceania (New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, Melanesian region)

Malagan Frieze, 1800s

Wood, shell, and pigment

H.39 x W.16 x D.5 ¼ inches

Gift of Bruce B. Dayton, 85.94

Theme

The images of birds and foliage in this New Ireland sculpture provide evidence that the artist, like O'Keeffe, drew inspiration from nature. The objects of New Ireland are a result of the artist drawing upon the traditions, the expectations and the material support of a complex social system.

Background

New Ireland is the second largest island in Northwest Melanesia. Tropical rain forests cover much of the island, and a wide variety of birds, reptiles, and sea animals live there. In New Ireland these creatures are symbolic. Society is ordered by two major moieties (groups) [MOY-ah-tee], Hawks and Eagles, and further divided into clans, which are represented by snakes, birds, and fish. The animals selected correspond to the social structure, but at the same time represent the natural order of earth, air, and sea. In both the culture and art of New Ireland, social structure is viewed as parallel to the natural order.

Most societies have ceremonies which mark important transitions in life and that is true in New Ireland. The celebrations that are carried out at the time of death are central to the social and artistic life of the community. Funerary festivals can last for years.

On the northern coast of New Ireland, elaborate sculptures are made for the mortuary festivals. Snakes, birds, and fish often appear in ceremonial objects such as the New Ireland frieze (sculpture). They are called *malagan* sculptures and are made for the memorial services, also called *malagan*, which take place after a person's death.

Frieze Decoration from a Malagan Ceremony

The subject of this *malagan* sculpture is one of the favorite themes of sculpture in New Ireland art—a struggle between birds and snakes. The animals refer to the clans or social order of society as well as the natural order of air (birds) and earth (snakes). The struggle is a common feature of sculpture and dance, representing this opposition of air and earth.

Even knowing that the subject is birds and snakes, it is difficult to immediately identify the individual images within the design. Three birds and a snake are interwoven into the foliage without a clear distinction between them. The two white-faced chickens in the center may be identified by their snail-shell eyes and black beaks. The larger chicken hovers over the smaller one. Above the chickens, a slender black frigate bird (a tropical sea bird with long tail feathers) forms the upper edge of the frieze. The frigate bird is engaged in a struggle with a black snake whose tail is caught in its beak. The snake weaves through the foliage and curves through the beak of the largest chicken.

This design seems complex because the sculpture is intended to invite speculation. Chickens (particularly roosters) play an important role in the imagery of religious objects in New Ireland. The feathers of chickens are a prized decorative element. New Ireland artists use very few species for their images. The complexity of design is created in part by the patterns that are formed through color and repetition of lines. The patterns on the foliage are very similar to the patterns on the feathers of the birds. The foliage patterns layered on the beaks of the birds blur the distinction between the foliage and birds. In fact, the forms nearly blend together because of the patterning. One bird form flows into another. Likewise, there is a blurring of the positive space (the birds themselves) and the negative space (the areas in between forms). This further contributes to the ambiguous quality of the object.

This sculpture is carved from a single piece of wood. The piercing and hollowing out of the wood around the forms create the various shapes. The basic colors of black, white, and reddish-brown are applied in sharp contrast to one another, defining certain shapes (such as the faces and eyes of the birds) and obscuring others (such as the bodies of the birds and the foliage).

Horizontal friezes, such as this one, were often placed on poles for display during *malagan* ceremonies or carried in dance. We don't know the precise usage of this one, but we know that it was set on something, possibly a pole. It could also have been attached to the head of a standing figure.

The success of a *malagan* ceremony depends upon the carving as well as food and dance. At the end of a ceremony, the host's material resources are gone, but that person's status in society is enhanced. After the close of the ceremony, the sculptures are allowed to perish but the stature remains. The sculptures are not just objects but symbols of social cooperation and economic activity of the society in which they are produced.

Technique

Malagan sculpture is made during the first phase of a festival which can last for months or even years. *Malagan* designs are owned by older male members of a clan. When an individual wishes to host a ceremony to honor a deceased person, they must ask permission. The host then commissions a carver and supervises the process.

The traditional method of producing a *malagan* sculpture began with the cutting and drying of a tree. On the seventh day, carving commenced with a feast. Prior to 1850, the roughing out of the sculpture was done with an ax with a shell or stone blade, while finer carving was accomplished with pieces of shell. Since that time, nearly all carving, including that of the *malagan* frieze, has been done with metal tools introduced by Europeans. Likewise, metal drills have replaced those made with shark teeth for piercing. The sculpture was then dried for about two months over fire. Polishing, which is marked by another feast, was done with sharkskin.

At this point, a shelter was built for the *malagan*. Traditionally, *malagan* sculptures were painted with pigments made from lime powder, charcoal ash or vegetable material using a brush made from the stalk of a leaf. This *malagan* frieze was painted with traditional pigments, but today oil pigments are commonly used. The eyes, which are made of a sea snail, were placed into the sculpture last. It is this step that empowered the figure.

On the final day of the *malagan* ceremony, which took weeks or months, the shelter was torn

down and the sculpture was exhibited. Once a ceremony was completed, the *malagan* sculptures no longer possessed power and were allowed to break down. It is fortunate that this particular frieze has survived.

Artist

New Ireland artists seldom make their living solely by art. They engage in other activities (farming, fishing) but they are generally people who have both a deeper religious knowledge and specialized skills that are developed through an apprentice system. Some artists' reputations are known at long distance (which in New Ireland terms means 50-100 miles), and they are sometimes hired to work far from home. New Ireland artists are respected not only for their artistic skills but also as valued members of their society.

Suggested Questions

1. There are four animals on this wooden frieze sculpture. Can you find all four? How many eyes do you see? How many heads? How many birds are biting the snake?
2. Which animals in this frieze can fly? Besides air and earth (ground), where else can animals live? What animals live there? How do they get around?
3. These animals are ones that the artist sees in New Ireland. They inspire artists to make works of art. You live in Minnesota. If you could carve a frieze, what Minnesota animals would you use to represent earth, sky and water? Why?



Junius Brutus Stearns, American, 1810–1885

***A Fishing Party Off Long Island*, 1860**

Oil on canvas

H.37 x W.54½ inches

Gift of the Regis Collection, 78.26

Theme

In the 1800s, a growing appreciation of the beauty of the American landscape led many artists—like Junius Brutus Stearns—to find inspiration in nature.

Background

Attitudes toward the American landscape changed significantly during the 1800s. Previously, the vast, untamed wilderness had been something to fear. Clearing the land for farming and building brought a sense of comfort and control, which made the unknown seem less threatening. People began to view America’s spectacular landscape with new eyes and sought to preserve, record, and experience its wonders.

While wilderness preservation efforts were getting started, authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau penned their accounts of the outdoors, and artists of the Hudson River school, including Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church, and Asher B. Durand, romanticized the countryside on canvas.

The general public, increasingly fascinated by the discovery and exploration of remote areas, craved a sense of engagement with nature. Fishing was one outdoor activity that could be both adventurous and peaceful.

As fishing became a popular sport, it also became a subject for artists. Junius Brutus Stearns combined his skill of painting portraits with his enthusiasm for fishing to create memorable genre (everyday) scenes.

The area shown in *A Fishing Party Off Long Island* was known for shark fishing. Three types of shark—blue, mako, and thresher—inhabit the waters off the Long Island coast, and shark fishing remains a popular sport on Long Island today. The season runs from June to October, with tournaments for the most avid fishermen.

A Fishing Party Off Long Island

The men pictured in it have not been positively identified. They may be fishing companions of a possible patron, a man named Mr. Hone (who may have commissioned the work). Or they may have been friends of the artist. In Stearns’s obituary, seven men were mentioned as his close friends, one of whom was president of the Oceanus Boat Club.

A Fishing Party Off Long Island presents a contrast to Stearns’s typical charming, quiet river-fishing scenes. The setting is the open water of Long Island Sound, with distant sailboats gliding past and seagulls soaring overhead. In the foreground, seven men occupying two boats

have caught what looks like a blue shark, a common catch in this area, and are working to pull it in.

With their fishing equipment at the ready, and bracing themselves in anticipation of the struggle ahead, the men appear excited yet very composed. The size of the fish would seem to bring more drama and excitement than is portrayed here. The reflection of red shirts in the water hints at blood and danger.

Technique

Stearns painted his fishing scenes in the recently developed style of Realism. Works in this style were true to the natural world and often incorporated commonplace people, places, and events. Genre scenes, depictions of everyday life, gained popularity among artists and the public. Fishing scenes were in high demand.

Stearns's unusual combination of genre painting and portraiture set him apart from fellow artists interested in fishing. In 1850 he began painting fishing pictures that included children, and by the time he produced *A Fishing Party Off Long Island* in 1860 his style was fully developed. The positioning of the men and the lack of expression on their faces were probably intended to allow viewers to recognize each person in this portrait. As an artist knowledgeable about fishing, Stearns rendered the fishing equipment and the fish in great detail.

Artist

Junius Brutus Stearns was born in 1810 in Arlington, Vermont. He enrolled as a student at the National Academy of Design, in New York, around 1838. After exhibiting at the school and studying in London and Paris, he settled in the New York area, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Stearns is best known for a series of history paintings chronicling the life of George Washington, but he was also among the foremost painters of fishing subjects in the 1800s. Although little is known about his life, he seems to have been a fishing enthusiast. His membership in the Oceanus Club of New York, his bequest of his fishing gear to his sons, and his numerous fishing scenes all point to his passion for the sport.

Suggested Questions

1. If you were that close to a shark, show me what you would look like. Would you be scared? Why or why not?
2. How do you think the fisherman feel? What do you see that makes you say that?
3. How many men are on the boats? How many fishing poles do you see? What about that seems realistic? What about that seems posed? What does the artist do to show you that?



Pablo Picasso, Spanish, 1881-1973

Baboon and Young, 1951

Bronze

H.21½ x W.13⅞ x D.24 inches

Gift of Funds of the John Cowles Foundation, 55.45

Theme

Picasso was inspired to create *Baboon and Young* by the toy cars belonging to his son. Picasso thought, with their undersides placed together, the toy cars looked like a baboon head. This sculpture demonstrates that with creativity and imagination, anything can be transformed into a work of art.

Background

Little separation existed between Picasso's life and art. In 1914, he was inspired to create a bull's head from a bicycle's handlebars and seat. Years later in 1951, when he created *Baboon and Young*, he was still envisioning works of art in everyday objects.

His relationships with friends and family also became a source of inspiration for his art. In 1951, when he created *Baboon and Young*, Picasso had reason to celebrate parenthood. Late in his life, he had become a father again with the birth of his son, Claude, in 1947 and daughter, Paloma, in 1949. He was inspired during the years that followed by his children and the idea of parenthood. He often expressed the theme of parenthood in his art with representations of both humans and animals with their young.

Baboon and Young

Baboon and Young is constructed of several different objects and materials including the toy cars that form the head of the baboon. The cars are clearly visible even though they are no longer present, because our sculpture is a bronze casting of the original creation. More difficult to detect are the other objects which were incorporated to form the rest of the body.

Without the original to look at, we can only guess what each object actually is. What looks like a large ceramic jug (or perhaps a ball), forms the torso of the baboon. It may be the handles of the jug that form the shoulders of the animal. The tail and backbone consist of either a metal slat from a shutter or a car spring. More importantly, though, is that we see this as an image of a baboon and young rather than a combination of "found objects." This fact testifies to the artist's ability to transform these ordinary objects into a work of art.

The combination of "found objects" and hand-built areas of plaster or clay produce a rich surface. The massive proportions of the parent's body and large feet are in sharp contrast to the tiny infant's body. In this way, Picasso has showed us how protective and tender the parent baboon is with their baby. The sculpture is a touching image of parenthood, celebrating the joy of being a parent, which Picasso felt at this time of his life.

Technique

Picasso has combined several materials as well as several different objects in this work of art. Plaster, which was molded in a bowl and textured with a knife, form the furry neck. The baboon's arms, buttocks, legs, and feet as well as the baby were modeled free-hand in clay or plaster. Finally the sculpture was cast in bronze using the lost-wax process.

This type of sculpture, constructed from several different materials, or "found objects," is called assemblage [AH-sem-blazh]. We also refer to it as "additive" sculpture, built by adding material rather than revealing by carving away. Picasso established this technique in 1914 and continued to experiment with it throughout his life. The technique had great influence on future generations of sculptors.

After Picasso assembled the objects and modeled the rest of the figure from plaster and clay, the sculpture was ready to be cast in bronze. This was accomplished by a process called lost wax. First, a plaster mold was made of the original sculpture. A coating of wax was applied to the inside of the mold. This created a wax replica of the original. The wax was then covered with a coat of plaster and silica. When heated in an oven, the wax melted, leaving a thin hollow space. Molten bronze was poured into the form while still hot, filling the space that the wax once occupied. When the bronze cooled, it hardened. The outer mold was removed, the inner core was shaken out and the bronze was dipped in acid for cleaning.

The Artist

Born in 1881, Picasso was a talented child who is said to have drawn before he walked. By the time he was 13, he was more skilled as an artist than his father, who taught at a local art school. At the age of 19, he left Spain to try his art in Paris, where he spent most of his life. His art was marked from the beginning by great creativity and constantly changing styles.

During the decade of his experimentation with Cubism, he developed the technique of collage. Scraps of paper, rope, labels, and other found materials were arranged and glued to canvas. It was not uncommon to find Picasso picking through rubbish looking for something to inspire him. It is apparent that he was still experimenting with "found objects" in 1951 when he created *Baboon and Young*.

During his long lifetime, Picasso explored unlimited possibilities of creativity, never committing himself to any one style, often returning to the themes and styles of his early years. His innovative genius has made him one of the most influential artists of the 1900s.

Suggested Questions

1. Pretend you are holding a baby. Show me.
2. What words would you use to describe the relationship between parent and baby?
3. How does Picasso express that in this sculpture?



Yves Tanguy, French, 1900–1955

***Through Birds, Through Fire, but Not Through Glass*, 1943**

Oil on canvas

H. 48 ¼ x W. 43 ½ inches (framed)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Winston in Tribute to Richard S. Davis, 75.72.2

Theme

The sources of inspiration so far have been from the artists' surroundings. This artwork was inspired by the artist's imagination. With this painting by Yves Tanguy (eave tahn-gea) we can see how painting has evolved into a way of expressing one's imagination rather than being a reflection of reality.

Background

Tanguy is known as a Surrealist. Surrealism was an international literary and artistic movement that originated in Paris and reached its height during the period between the two World Wars (approximately 1924 to 1940 in Europe). Artists and writers sought to revolutionize both art and society through the exploration of the world of imagination. They believed that the visions in dreams, hallucinations, and daydreams could be used in poetic and artistic creations.

Essentially, Surrealism was an art of fantasy and dreams. Surrealist painting sought to bring together aspects of outer and inner "reality" into a single composition, in much the same way that seemingly unrelated fragments of everyday life combine in the vivid world of dreams. The creation of visual images in accord with these new concepts required new techniques.

Through Birds, Through Fire, but Not Through Glass

This painting was made soon after the artist immigrated to America from France. Small changes in the colors used distinguish it from his earlier works, suggesting the influence of a different quality of light and sense seen in America. Tanguy's works at this time are characterized by bright color and large, complex biomorphic forms (abstract shapes that remind us of living organisms).

Through Birds, Through Fire, but Not Through Glass, with its neutral gray background and colorful forms, suggests that it may be read as a portrait of the central biomorphic creature. The biomorph dominates the foreground of the canvas while several smaller forms lie or float in the landscape, and serve to give a sense of distance in space. Painted precisely with three-dimensional modeling, the objects are bathed in light, throwing shadows upon the ground. The shadows help to define the shapes, yet have an existence of their own. What is the source of light? We assume sunlight, but it could be night. The location is indeterminate—neither somewhere nor nowhere. The "landscape" is meticulously rendered but we can't identify it. It is the contradiction between what appears to us a normal relationship between objects and space and the alien forms that we cannot identify that causes our disorientation. Throughout, there is a feeling of mystery and ambiguity about the work that is, ultimately, from the subconscious recesses of the artist's mind.

Technique

Tanguy was always reluctant to talk about his work, so we don't know a great deal about his process. From studying his drawings, it appears that he allowed line to flow without control of his conscious mind, a technique in Surrealism known as automatism. We can assume that he probably drew directly on canvas before and during painting, allowing the image to develop spontaneously. One form freely appeared then immediately lead to another.

The Artist

Yves Tanguy was born in Paris in 1900, the son of a retired naval officer. He spent the summers of his childhood in Brittany, in the northern corner of France, where he saw the dolmens (prehistoric stones) that would inspire some of the forms of his landscapes years later.

Tanguy became acquainted with Surrealism through a young poet he met in 1920 while in military service in Tunisia. The two returned to Paris, where Tanguy began to sketch, even though he had no formal training. In 1923, he was inspired to become a professional artist by when he walked by Giorgio Di Chericco's art in a gallery window.

Tanguy worked tirelessly in the style that he established by the late 1920s. In 1930, a visit to Africa exposed him to other unusual rock formations, which also contributed to his fantastic imaginary landscapes.

In 1939, Tanguy fled Nazi-occupied Europe and immigrated to the United States. There he settled in Woodbury, Connecticut, with his wife, the American painter Kay Sage, and he remained there until his early death in 1955. Throughout his artistic career Tanguy remained faithful to Surrealist beliefs, creating pictures about worlds that both exist and do not exist.

Suggested Questions

1. You just landed in this painting. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Feel?
2. This painting is made of biomorphs. What images come to mind when you hear the word "bio"? What do you think of when you hear the word "morph"? What do you see in this painting that represents a biomorph?