

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Art Adventure

Sources of Strength



Mia

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Thank you for participating in Mia's popular Art Adventure Program. By volunteering as a Picture Person, you build an important link between the museum and our region's schoolchildren. To deepen that connection, we also invite you to sign up for the My Mia experience. Pay what you can (or sign up free) to receive exclusive access to special exhibitions, discounts, incentives, and personalized news and information. Contributions at every level support Mia's free general admission every day, as well as exhibitions, talks, events, and classes offered for all ages.

For details or to sign up, please contact the My Mia Hotline: 612.870.6323 (toll-free 888.642.2787); artsmia.org

Contact Art Adventure

Student and Teacher Learning Coordinator
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This booklet belongs to: _____

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Welcome to Art Adventure

What is Art Adventure?

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.

Who are Picture People?

Picture People bring Art Adventure into classrooms around Minnesota. They are volunteers from the school's community who facilitate discussions about selected artworks, forming a vital link between the museum and children in the schools. Before visiting a classroom, Picture People come to the museum for a training session on the theme and artworks their school will be experiencing that year. They also receive printed background material, learn engagement techniques, and—most importantly—gain knowledge of the original objects they'll soon be introducing to students using reproductions.

What does the Art Adventure Program do for students?

An evaluation of Art Adventure showed that, in addition to fostering an interest in art, the program fosters five major critical thinking skills. The skills and experiences students gain through Art Adventure will benefit them the rest of their lives.

5 Critical Thinking Skills

1. Describe what you see.
2. Notice details.
3. Understand how the parts form a whole idea or artwork.
4. Support interpretations with sufficient reasons.
5. Support opinions or preferences with sound reasons.

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Art Adventure Program
A program of the Minneapolis
Institute of Art—Revised 2018

Once You're in the Classroom

Relax!

The information provided in this booklet is intended as background material to help you feel confident when you share artworks with children. Don't feel you have to cover everything. Rather, choose two or three key ideas you think will be compelling. Kids love stories—what stories might you tell? What parallels can you draw to their lives?

Be sure everyone can see you and the reproduction.

Talk with the teacher to understand 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 for the class.

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. You might build suspense by keeping each image hidden. Start by having the students observe the artwork in total silence. Model your expectations by spending 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! Asking "What else can you find?" or connecting 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've learned about their interests to steer the discussion toward your key ideas. 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 longer than 20 minutes. Plan your presentations accordingly. Consider your grade level'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 students to look closely and find their own meaning and relevance in works of art. This process fosters the development of the five Critical Thinking Skills listed on page 1. Please keep in mind that not every question will work for every artwork.

**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 who 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 in the artwork and helps kids explain their assumptions.

**How would you feel if you were “in”
this work of art?**

What would you hear? How might this feel if you could touch it? 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 object for? What about this scene is familiar or unfamiliar to you? 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 be 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 similar to 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?**

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 artwork, 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 reinforces the understanding of all learners through hands-on experiences.

How should you use props?

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

- Present the prop alongside information about an artwork or to help answer a question about the artwork.
- 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. Give everyone a chance to examine it more closely at the end of your presentation.
- Clear communication of your expectations is essential to keep the students 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 from the students! Schools are charged significant fees for missing or badly damaged props and reproductions.

Sources of Strength

Life presents many challenging moments. Bad dreams. Fear of the unknown. Hard economic times. Or even physical injury, to name just a few.

How does one find the strength to navigate life's challenges, big or small? For some challenges, people gain strength from their faith, or belief in the power of gods and super-human beings. Other problems are better solved with friends and fellow humans. Sometimes we get strength from the natural world.

The artists from around the globe who made the six works of art in this Art Adventure set all found unique and creative ways to represent sources of strength, some personal, some cultural. Despite their differences, the works of art reveal a constant throughout human experience—that art can play an important role in helping us meet life's challenges.

Prop Kit Contents

Work of Art	Prop	Replacement Cost
China, Tiger pillow	Ceramic sample	\$20
	Image of African wooden pillow	\$10
	Image of modern pillow	\$10
Dorothea Lange, <i>Migrant Mother</i>	Photographs of <i>Migrant Mother</i> series	\$10
	Photograph of Dorothea Lange and of family 40 years later	\$10
A'aninin, Shirt	Fabric sample	\$15
	Container of beads	\$15
	Photo of man wearing an honor shirt	\$10
Japan, Vajra warriors	Photograph of temple gate	\$10
	Photograph of guardian figure	\$10
André Derain, <i>London: St. Paul's Cathedral seen from the Thames</i>	Portraits of Sir Christopher Wren and André Derain	\$10
	Photograph of St. Paul's Cathedral	\$10
Dale Chihuly, <i>Sunburst</i>	Chandeliers DVD	\$20
	Photographs of installation at museum (2)	\$10
Artwork Reproductions (7)		\$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 or damaged items. Thank you!

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China, Asia

Tiger pillow, 12th century, Tz'u-chou ware stoneware with black and tan glaze over a white slip under a clear glaze

Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton, 2000.89.1

4 7/8 x 14 1/8 x 7 in. (12.38 x 37.78 x 17.78 cm)



Key Ideas

Artists made ceramic pillows like this at a time when pillows were thought to impart special qualities to a person during sleep. The tiger has been a powerful symbol in China since ancient times. Imagine how powerful one might feel sleeping on a tiger, gaining its energy and strength.

A Place To Rest Your Head

A lot of people today are accustomed to sleeping on soft, even fluffy, pillows. But hard pillows and headrests, commonly made of wood, have been used by a wide variety of cultures throughout the world, such as in ancient Egypt, many other parts of Africa, India, and the Pacific Islands. Ancient Chinese texts refer to pillows made of wood or bamboo, and similar ones were used in China into the 1900s.

Ceramic pillows began to appear in parts of China in the Tang dynasty (618–906 CE), and a great many were produced in the Song dynasty (960–1279 CE). They have survived in far greater numbers than other types of pillows from the same period because of the durability of the fired clay. Modern scholars initially believed that ceramic pillows were made only for use in tombs, as part of the tradition of providing the dead with ceramic models of household objects for use in the afterlife. But written records and other evidence demonstrate that the ceramic pillows were indeed used for practical purposes as well, though it is hard to tell everyday and tomb pillows apart.

The Power of Pillows

Pillows with magical powers appear throughout Chinese folk tales and superstitions.

Pillows with magical powers appear throughout Chinese folk tales and superstitions. One tale relates the adventures of a man who would climb inside his pillow to be magically transported to other places. A legendary immortal is said to have used a pile of

three books of Taoist (see explanation on next page) teachings as his pillow to inspire “pure and elegant” dreams. And a medicinal folk recipe called for filling a wooden pillow with herbs and other materials; after a year of use, the recipe promised, “white hair will turn black, new teeth replace those fallen out, and hearing and sight will grow clear.” Some herbalists today still suggest stuffing pillows with particular plants to treat discomforts such as indigestion or high cholesterol.

In *Eight Discourses on the Art of Living* from 1591, writer Gao Lian recommended porcelain pillows for their ability to “brighten the eyes and benefit the pupils.” When night comes, he claimed, “one can read finely printed books” using such a pillow. He scorned softer pillows made of the stalks of plants, leaves, or flowers because “those thus made cause a loss of vitality.” He also acknowledged other practical considerations—porcelain pillows offered a soothing coolness during hot weather. Though this pillow is made of stoneware, a coarser grade of clay than the fine porcelain recommended by Gao Lian, it must have shared that cooling quality.

Even when the user did not expect magical results, a pillow’s decorations often carried symbolic meaning. Narrative illustrations and floral designs might be associated with Taoist beliefs, or popular sayings, stories, and ballads. Sometimes symbolic meaning came from a homophone, a word that sounds the same as the name of the object depicted. Often, artfully calligraphed (calligraphy is an art form of hand writing) poems served as decoration. Whatever the image, its symbolism often carried wishes for good fortune to come to the sleeper through dreams.

Tiger, King of the Animals

The butterfly and floral designs atop this pillow may have had symbolic meaning, or they may simply have suggested the sweet dreams of peaceful sleep. The tiger, however, considered in China to be the mightiest animal on earth, has a clear history of symbolism.

One function of a tiger pillow was to scare off evil influences.

One function of a tiger pillow was to scare off evil influences. Children's pillows, often made of cotton or silk stuffed with grain husks rather than ceramic, frequently took a tiger form to protect the child from demons that cause nightmares. (Such pillows are still made in rural regions, and appear as trinkets in tourist markets.) It was not just children who believed that demons caused bad dreams; Taoist priests in the Tang dynasty recommended that beds be at least three-and-a-half feet high, to prevent damp air and nighttime attacks by demons.

Tiger, Taoist Symbol of a Universal Force

The tiger was an important symbol in the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism [DOW-ism]. Taoism explains the world in terms of two complementary forces—yin (from the ancient Chinese word for “shady”) and yang (from the word for “bright”). Yin elements include darkness, water, wind, and the earth. Yang elements include light, fire, rain, and the heavens. Yin qualities are passive, while yang qualities are active. According to this philosophy, everything in the universe results from the interaction of yin and yang. The tiger, king of the animals on earth, stands for yin. The dragon, a mythical animal thought to reign over the heavens, stands for yang.

An animal was also associated with each of the four directions of the compass. The tiger ruled the west, the dragon the east, the tortoise the north, and the phoenix the south. Each animal's domain extended to the corresponding quadrants of the sky.

Such associations made images of tigers and dragons popular subjects of paintings at the time this pillow was made. It is tempting to imagine that the tiger's association with the yin elements of darkness and inactivity, as well as the western horizon of the setting sun, made it a particularly appropriate theme for a sleeping pillow.

In Taoist philosophy, the complementary forces of yin and yang balance the universe.

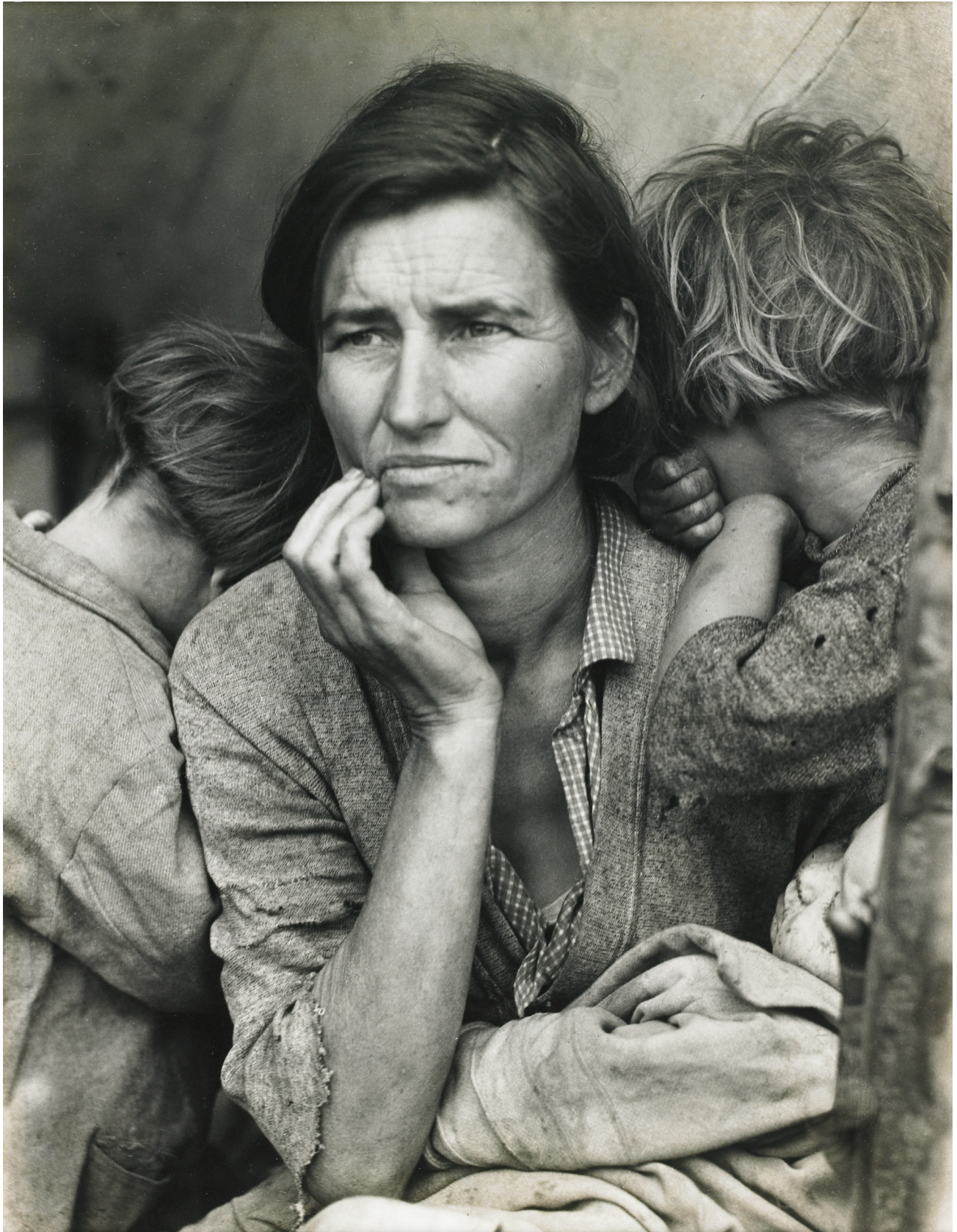
Dorothea Lange, United States, 1895–1965

Depicted: Florence Owens Thompson

Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California, 1936, gelatin silver print

The Alfred and Ingrid Lenz Harrison Fund, 92.136

13 ⁵/₁₆ x 10 ⁵/₁₆ in. (33.81 x 26.19 cm) (image); 13 ⁷/₈ x 11 in. (35.24 x 27.94 cm) (mount)



Key Ideas

Dorothea Lange [pronounced Lang] used photography to document the challenging lives of rural workers during the Great Depression. In this photograph of a destitute mother surrounded by her children, Lange captures the dignity and strength of an ordinary woman amid a time of hardship.

Documenting the Great Depression

The Great Depression of the 1930s had a dire effect on the American people. Beyond the physical realities of mass unemployment and hunger, the basic principles of American life were brought into question. The so-called American dream, which had promised the good things of life to those willing to work for them, had faded. Many writers and artists felt a social obligation to bring the brutal realities of life to their audiences. Their efforts gave birth to a new art form—social documentary. Photography was one of the most effective tools to report and expose the conditions of the 1930s.

The mother’s facial expression, the focal point, is the key to the power of this image.

Among the many new agencies established by President Franklin Roosevelt, the Resettlement Administration, later renamed the Farm Security Administration (FSA), was created in 1935. This organization brought financial aid to the thousands of rural workers who were forced to leave their farms because of drought in the central states.

The U.S. government recognized the power of photography as a tool for social change. Dorothea Lange was one of 11 photographers hired by the FSA’s Historic Section to document the condition of rural workers in America. These artists made over 270,000 photographs, providing a pictorial record of America in the 1930s that helped to enlist Congressional and public support for relief projects. *Migrant Mother* is one of the best-known images of the period.

Meeting the *Migrant Mother*

Dorothea Lange took this photograph in 1936 at the end of a hard, month-long journey through California, where she was photographing migratory farm workers and their way of life. Having completed her work, she was driving home on a rainy, cold March afternoon when a sign near Nipomo, “Pea-Pickers Camp,” caught her eye. Eager to get home to her family, she continued on, but could not stop thinking about the sign. After driving 20 more miles, she turned around and drove back to the camp.

Lange was drawn to this 32-year-old mother sitting in a dilapidated tent with her children. The woman told Lange that the pea crop had frozen and there was no work. The family was living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields and wild birds the children caught. She had just sold the tires from their car to buy food. Spending less than 10 minutes with the woman, Lange took a series of photographs of her and her children, each time moving in closer to her subject. The last of the series was this close-up picture, titled *Migrant Mother*. Now an icon of the Depression, it has been reproduced in countless newspapers, books, magazines, and films, and shown in exhibitions worldwide.

Migrant Mother Up Close

Though the camera is a valuable tool for recording the objective world and providing evidence or authenticity, it is the photographer's selection of what to include within the frame of its lens at a given moment that determines an image's effectiveness. In this instance, Lange made certain choices regarding framing and composition to create this exceptional photograph. She chose to concentrate on the mother and her children, taking a close-up, direct view of the figures, who fill most of the space within the frame. The setting is secondary and rather nonspecific, with only a hint of the tent in the background and the post to the right. The diffused light of the overcast day contributes to the quiet mood.

The arrangement of the figures is balanced and nearly symmetrical. The mother, with her infant close to her body, is at center, flanked by her older children. Though the mother's gaze seems to distance her from the children, a sense of intimacy and strong family bonds are suggested by the huddled figures. Lange's composition draws the viewer's attention to the mother through her central placement and dominant size, and the children's positions and turned faces. The mother's facial expression, the focal point, is the key to the power of this image.

As a reflection of a specific time, the Depression, this photograph conveys the suffering and strength of many women with children who were forced to find migratory work picking peas or cutting lettuce to survive. It also represents the countless poor and homeless whom society had failed to help. As a timeless work of art, it symbolizes motherhood, representing the fundamental role of every mother to nurture, comfort, and protect her children. Moreover, it is a potent symbol of human suffering and privation—and the valiant struggle of the human spirit.

The Art of Documentary Photos

To photograph the *Migrant Mother* series of pictures, Lange used a Graflex camera that produced a large-format 4 x 5-inch negative, which she favored for its clarity of detail. This camera was larger and more cumbersome than the then-newly-introduced 35 mm cameras. Although Lange developed some of her own negatives in her darkroom—indeed, she preferred to exercise control over her negatives—most of the film for the FSA was developed in the FSA darkroom in Washington, D.C.

Lange's unique ability to establish a sense of trust and rapport with her subjects was vital to her photographs' success.

Like many documentary photographers, Lange considered herself a social observer committed to an honest, direct, and unmanipulated recording of contemporary events. She wanted to capture her subjects exactly as she saw them, and she produced photographs that are natural and unposed. Lange's unique ability to establish a sense of trust and rapport with her subjects was vital to the success of her photographs. Her subjects felt comfortable enough to be themselves and appear unaffected by the camera's presence. Describing her encounter with this woman, Lange wrote, "There she sat in that lean-to tent with her children huddled around her, and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me. There was a sort of equality about it." Lange's son, Daniel Dixon, has written of his mother's work,

Her approach was instinctive, but also—by necessity—strategic. She never attempted to sneak up on the truth. She waited for the people before her camera to resolve their own minds. She knew that every human face has its own story to tell, in its own time and in its own way. . . .

A'aninin (Gros Ventre), United States, North America

Shirt, 1890, wool, beads, animal hide, ribbon

The William Hood Dunwoody Fund and purchase through Art Quest 2001, 2001.197

28 ¼ x 62 in. (71.8 x 157.5 cm)



Key Ideas

For the people of the Plains Indian tribe who made and wore this honor shirt, everything about it—how it was made, the materials it was made of, and how it was used—had importance beyond visual beauty. Such shirts, made to honor men, offered a connection to the powerful traditions of one’s people.

Honoring an Individual, Involving the Community

On the Great Plains in the 1800s, a man had to earn the right to wear a shirt like this one. He might prove himself to be brave in battle or cunning at raiding horses, a signal of extreme skill. But he also had to be thoughtful and wise. His actions helped his community survive.

A woman of the community stitched the bead-work and sewed the shirt. Elders of the community presented the shirt to the honored man in a sacred ceremony. Sometimes they attached long locks of their own hair (or their enemy’s hair) to the shirt, in place of an animal-skin fringe. The wearer of the shirt literally carried a piece of his community with him when he wore it. If he acted dishonorably in the future, he might lose the right to wear the shirt.

The wearer of the shirt literally carried a piece of his community with him when he wore it.

The honored man would wear the shirt on special occasions, with leggings, moccasins, and a head-dress. The decorations on the shirt might invite a retelling of the stories of his actions, which were closely connected to the history of the tribe and his community. Just as importantly, the designs and all that they represent offered a model of honorable behavior for the next generation.

Shapes and Patterns Rooted in Tradition

Though no two Plains Indian men’s honor shirts are exactly alike, many have features in common. Decorated bands cross the shoulders and run down the arms of most such shirts. Fringe hangs across the back and the arms, and many shirts have a decorated “bib” at the neck, like this one does.

These features recall the traditions of an earlier time. Plains Indian men did not typically wear shirts of any kind before the 1800s. Instead, they wrapped themselves in robes of animal hide, wearing the fur against their skin. Women made the earliest shirts by sewing two animal skins together. The front legs became the shirt’s sleeves. The skin of the rear legs dangled from the bottom of the shirt.

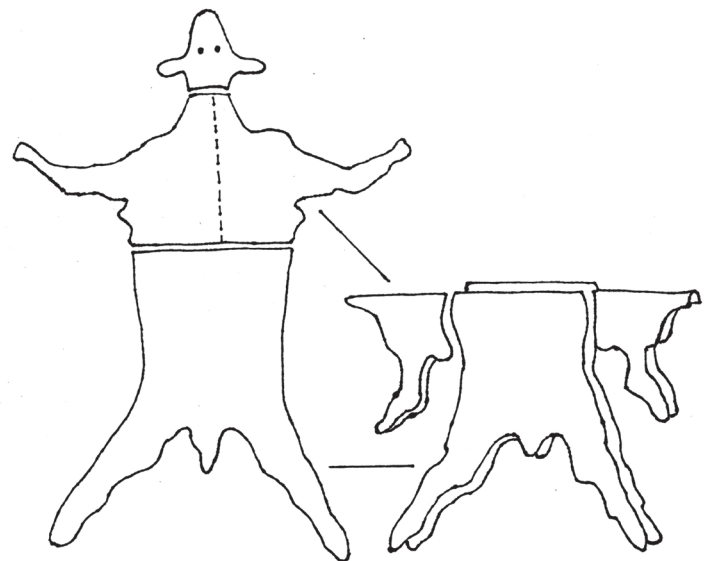


Illustration adapted from Hoa, Kóla! by Barbara A. Hail, The Plains Indian Collection of the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University, 1980.

Some people believe the decorated bands originally covered seams on robes where two pieces of hide were joined together. This decoration was also used on later shirts, even those without a seam. Skin from the animal's head formed the "bib" at the neck of the shirt. These decorations continued to appear on Plains Indians shirts even when the shirt body was made of other materials, such as the wool of this shirt. Sometimes the decoration from a worn-out shirt was cut off and stitched onto a new shirt—which might be the case with this one.

What do the patterns on the decorated bands represent? No one knows for certain.

What do the patterns on the decorated bands represent? No one knows for certain. The blue-and-white diamonds may stand for eagle feathers, which in nature are white with black tips. Eagle feathers were an important part of a warrior's dress; the eagle was the most sacred animal for Plains Indians. The crossed bars on a white shield may be another symbol of strength. Or these patterns may simply have pleased the artist as she worked, inspired by the shapes she saw around her.

A Changing Way of Life

The traditions of a people change as their way of life changes. The arrival of Europeans to Native lands caused many changes and disruptions to life on the Great Plains in the decades before this shirt was made. Even the way clothing was made and decorated changed.

Europeans introduced the glass beads applied to add color and pattern to this shirt. Traditionally women had crafted these designs using porcupine quills colored with natural dyes. Glass beads from Italy and Bohemia, exchanged with European traders for pelts and hides, offered more colors and were easier to work with. By the late 1800s when this shirt was made, quillwork had almost disappeared from Plains Indian shirts. But artists continued to form the traditional patterns using the new material.

The bright red wool of the body of the shirt is evidence of another lifestyle change. As European settlers moved westward throughout the 1800s, they forcefully moved Plains Indians off their traditional lands. Europeans also destroyed bison herds, which changed hunting as a way of life, resulting in a scarcity of animal hides for shirts and other purposes. Wool cloth became a popular trade item. Lightweight and warm, the wool made a comfortable shirt. Like shirts made of animal hide, this shirt is not sewn together at the sides. Notice how the white edge of the cloth, where it was held in the factory during the dyeing process, has been incorporated into the design on the bottom edge of the shirt.

Japan, Asia

Vajra warriors, mid-14th century

Polychromed japanese cypress (hinoki) with lacquer

Gift of funds from the Regis Corporation, 83.76.1

76 x 39 x 28 in. (193.04 x 99.06 x 71.12 cm)



Key Ideas

This pair of Japanese guardian figures—vajra (vaj-rah) warriors—once flanked the entrance gate to a Buddhist temple compound late in the 1300s. Carved with fierce facial expressions and dynamic gestures to ward against evil, the temple guardians display both strength and energy, qualities admired by the samurai warrior rulers who controlled Japan at the time.

Protectors of the Buddhist Faith

This powerful pair, called Misshaku Kongo [mee-shah-ku kohn-go]* and Naeren Kongo [ni-ren kohn-go], originally stood on either side of the main gate of a Buddhist temple to guard the compound against dangerous spirits. Their expressive facial features—bulging eyes, furrowed brows, large noses, tense scowls—would certainly have scared away any evil demons wishing to enter the sacred temple precincts. When paired, these figures are called Ni-o [nee-oh] guardians, which literally means “two kings.” Together these divine figures serve as powerful but benevolent protectors, with compassionate concern for all who are faithful to the Buddha’s teaching or law.

The two figures stand for different kinds of strength.

The two figures stand for different kinds of strength. Misshaku Kongo, representing overt (visible) power, bares his teeth and raises his fist in action. He is depicted uttering the sound “a.” Naeren Kongo, representing latent (potential) power, holds his mouth tightly closed and waits with both arms lowered. He expresses the sound “un.” The sounds “a” and “un” are the first and last letters of the Sanskrit (a language of India and Hinduism) alphabet, respectively. Together, these two sounds symbolize the beginning and end of all things and remind those of Buddhist faith of the brevity of life.

Misshaku Kongo represents overt (visible) power and is openly aggressive. Naeren Kongo represents latent (potential) might and holds his potential power in check.

A Time of Warrior Rule

The vajra warriors were created during an era characterized by constant civic warfare. During the late Kamakura [kahm-ah-ku-rah] period (1185–1333) and the subsequent Nambokucho [nahm-bow-ku-cho] period (1333–92), samurai warriors established a military government that unseated the emperor’s claim to power. The samurai, known for their skill in martial arts, established their political power according to a code called “The Way of the Warrior,” based on bravery and honor. In general, whoever led the ruling clan received the title of shogun, or supreme military commander. The new shogun rulers, who lacked the book learning and refinement of the former courtiers, popularized religion, literature, and art, making them more accessible to the masses. The mighty Ni-o warrior figures became especially popular subjects during this turbulent period.

A Dynamic Style for a Dynamic Time

Though made during the early Nambokucho period (1333–92), these guardian figures exemplify the late Kamakura style (1185–1333). It was an energetic and realistic style developed in response to the popularization of Buddhism under the samurai.

* Syllables are evenly stressed in Japanese.

The vajra warriors have tremendous physical presence, and the details of their bodies, hands, feet, and faces are quite realistic, if not anatomically correct. Nonetheless, their exaggerated muscles, bulging veins, and somewhat comical expressions make them almost caricatures of strong men. The topknots on their heads give them added height, and their highly patterned rib cages contribute to the effect of power rippling through their broad chests. The flowers over their nipples and the elaborate patterns of circles and lines used to describe their upper bodies are decorative details favored by the samurai. Also decorative are the guardians' robes, which flutter around their thick calves, imbuing each with forceful energy.

The figures were likely carved by craftsmen in an independent workshop that created sculpture exclusively for Buddhist temples. The workshop operated under the leadership of a master sculptor, who was born into a guild of professional sculptors called busshi [boo-she], or "Buddhist masters." In this way, large statues could be produced with great efficiency to meet popular demand.

Multiple-block Construction

Each warrior is constructed from several blocks of fine-grained Japanese cypress, or hinoki [hee-noh-kee], joined together. This inventive technique of multiple-block construction, called yosegi [yo-see-gee], freed the sculptor from the constraints imposed by the dimensions of a single block of wood and enabled him to create dynamic poses on a monumental scale.

Parts of the wood, once covered by lacquer, are now exposed, making evident the exceptionally fine quality of the carving.

Apprentices and assistants supported the master sculptor by roughly shaping the blocks of wood, helping to carve details, and hollowing out the wood blocks to lighten the structure and reduce the potential for cracking. The wood blocks were joined and the surface of the assembled structure was finished with a curved-edge chisel. Parts of the wood, once covered by lacquer, are now exposed, making evident the exceptionally fine quality of the carving.

Originally, both guardians sported brightly colored paint over a layer of black lacquer. The lacquer, now worn away, was not applied directly to the wood's surface, but rather over a ground of plaster-like glue called gesso. Traces of the whitish gesso are still visible on the sculptures' surface. The bare wood we now see would not have been visible.

André Derain, France, 1880–1954

London: St. Paul's Cathedral seen from the Thames, 1906, oil on canvas

Bequest of Putnam Dana McMillan, 61.36.9

©Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris

39 ¼ x 32 ¼ in. (99.7 x 81.92 cm) (canvas)

48 ¾ x 41 ⅜ x 2 ¼ in. (123.83 x 105.09 x 5.72 cm) (outer frame)



Key Ideas

People find strength in all different ways. For André Derain, it was in painting. A native of France, Derain went to London to paint 50 cityscapes. His favorite spot was along the Thames. This painting depicts the famous St. Paul's Cathedral, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. With its unnatural color scheme and patchy brushstrokes, this painting style is an example of Fauvism. Derain's stylistic decisions give St. Paul's Cathedral great strength over the city of London and prominence in the cityscape.

About the Artist

André Derain was born in Chatou, France, in 1880. A western suburb of Paris, Chatou is nestled along the Seine River and home to upper-middle class families. Derain initially wanted to be an engineer, but in 1898 he decided to focus instead on painting, getting formal training at art academies in Paris. Derain also worked in sculpture; his first medium was wood, later stone and clay. Derain was resourceful: while serving in the military during World War I, he created masks out of shells and shrapnel on the battlegrounds, and he often used clay from his own garden for his sculptures. Later in life, Derain worked closely with other artists, serving as an illustrator for their books and stage designer for their plays.

Derain was friends with artists such as Henri Matisse, Paul Cézanne, and Pablo Picasso. His work is most often associated with Fauvism, but he produced artworks in other artistic styles as well. This painting is the last he made as a Fauvist, before moving on to paint more geometric and structured works. He died in 1954, not far from his birthplace, in Garches, France.

Fauvism (FO-vism), a term coined by an art critic, refers to *les fauves*, which translates to “wild beasts.”

Fauvism

Fauvism (FO-vism), a term coined by an art critic, refers to *les fauves*, which translates to “wild beasts.” Fauvism was popular from 1898 to 1908, until the stirrings of World War I. The movement was small and consisted of artists with similar interests and aesthetic beliefs, like Derain and Matisse. Fauvist paintings show quick brushstrokes, abstract patterning, and bright, irrational colors; oftentimes the paint was applied to the canvas straight from the tube. Despite the textured brushstrokes and patchwork-like patterns, most Fauvist paintings appear flat, lacking depth in perspective. The majority of Fauvist paintings are still-lives, portraits, and landscapes, like this painting.

London

André Derain was only 25 when he was commissioned to paint 50 cityscapes of London. His first two trips to London were in March and April, a dreary season without much sunshine. He returned again the following January. His favorite spot to paint from was on the banks of the River Thames, between Charing Cross and London Bridge. For inspiration, Derain visited cultural institutions like the National Gallery, the British Museum, and the zoo. Access to Hindu sculptures and Egyptian and Roman embroideries ultimately motivated him to depict the Thames in a bold new way.

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St. Paul's Cathedral

On the highest point of London sits St. Paul's Cathedral, designed by the architect Sir Christopher Wren. Wren was a famous scientist, mathematician, and architect. His was not the original Anglican church to stand on this land; previous buildings had been destroyed by war or fire. Wren was commissioned to rebuild St. Paul's in 1668, following the Great Fire of London. It took almost 10 years for Wren, church leaders, and the city to agree on plans. The first church service was held there nearly 30 years later, in 1697. A famous landmark and tourist destination, the church still holds regular services and hourly prayers.

Strength from St. Paul's

Artists often use color and position to highlight an object. The way in which Derain painted St. Paul's Cathedral gives the building power and strength over its surroundings. Centered in the top half of the painting, the dome shoots toward the sky like a triangle. A second triangular shape, made up of sky, surrounds the cathedral. Derain, who did not paint using realistic or natural colors, made the sky orange, emphasizing the importance of St. Paul's. Its physical position above everything else, its unique coloring relative to the other buildings, and its religious and historical significance give strength to the building as well as to those who turn to it for support.

The way in which Derain painted St. Paul's Cathedral gives the building power and strength over its surroundings.

Technique

Derain went to paint London landmarks as he saw them, but his use of color and approach to brushstrokes were unrealistic and experimental—traits typical of Fauvism. For instance, he painted a sky red or a rowboat purple, likely not their actual colors. To create a sense of depth, he used blue to show that buildings were far away, demonstrating a technique called atmospheric perspective. However, Derain added a modern twist. As the buildings shift into the background, the vibrant colors of the sky pull forward, flattening the scene. Most of his Thames paintings have a similar framework: the riverbank in a stretched curve, sharp warehouse and building roofs popping up along the horizon, and different types of buildings all painted in the same color scheme and style. Some even include figures waving at the painter or walking along the riverbank.

Derain carried a sketchbook with him, making drawings—or “preparatory studies”—in crayon or colored pencil. While in London, he sketched things like boats and horse-drawn carriages from which to paint later on. Both of his sketchbooks contained drawings of famous works of art from the National Gallery and the British Museum, as well as tourist destinations like St. Paul's Cathedral and the House of Parliament. It is likely that Derain painted most of his cityscapes once he returned to Paris, using his sketchbooks as a guide. In fact, a preparatory drawing of *London: St. Paul's Cathedral* seen from the Thames exists today.

London: St. Paul's Cathedral seen from the Thames

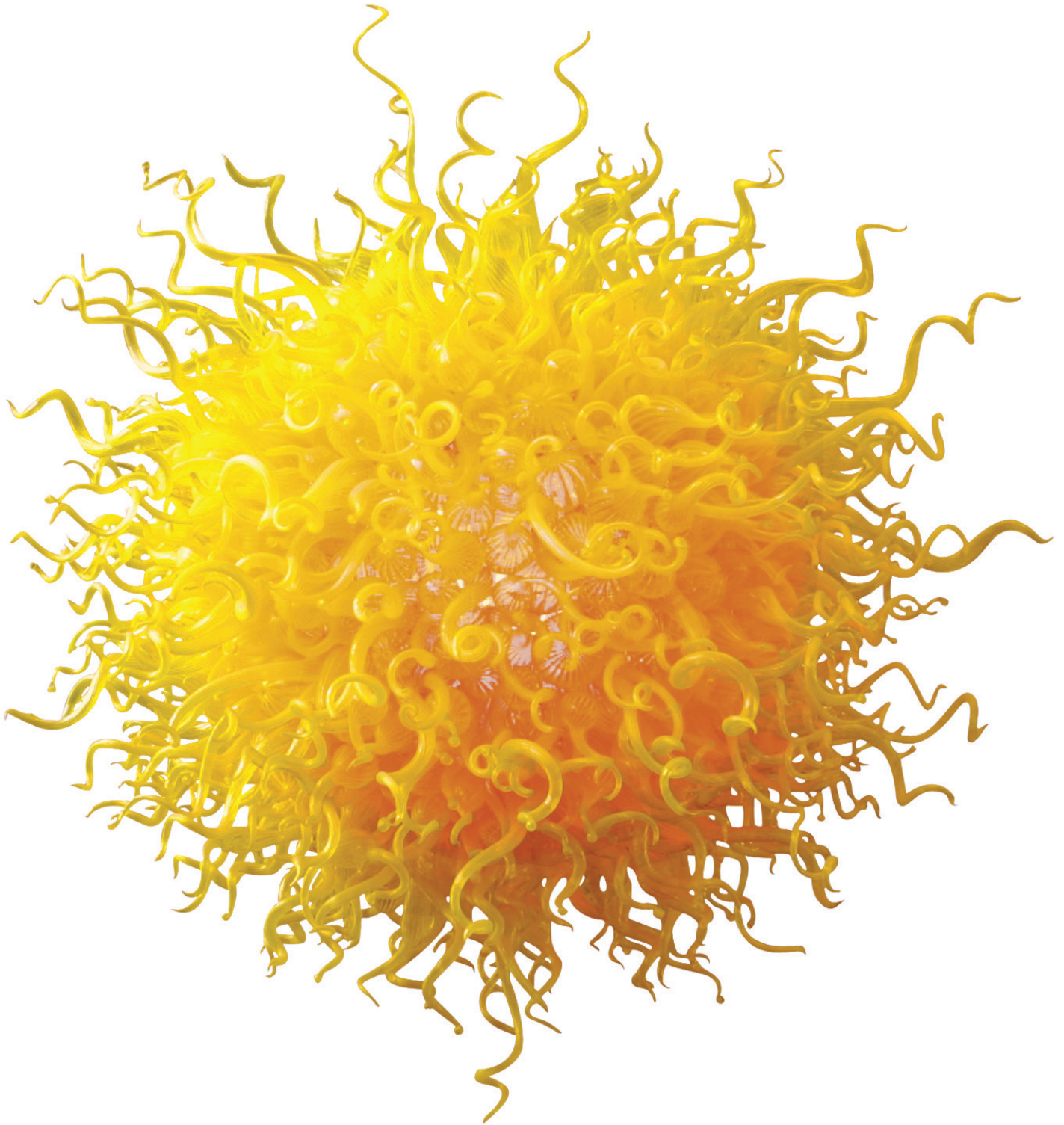
Derain used two pages, turned horizontally, to create the sketch for this painting; it is the only cityscape he painted with a vertical orientation. The sketch provided Derain with a template from which he could work freely. The painting consists of four sections: riverbank, water, buildings, and sky. Its perspective is distorted, putting the viewer at eye level with the elevated dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. As in much of his work, Derain avoided natural colors and used patchy brushstrokes. This painting depicts a slice of London along the south bank of the Thames, between Blackfriars and Southwark bridges. The curve of the bank hugs a cluster of boats, and two figures stand on the middle two boats. The tips of all six boats point toward St. Paul's Cathedral. Additional boats are docked across the river, and above them are buildings of various shapes and sizes. The front line is orange, dotted with blue windows and doors, beyond which are patches of blue in all shades, meant to resemble additional rows of buildings. The steeple of St. Paul's Cathedral rises above, surrounded by a warm, bright orange sky.

Suggested Questions

1. Atmospheric perspective is a painting technique artists use to show that things are far away. Look closely at this painting. What buildings do you believe are farthest away? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. André Derain was inspired by the work of others. His trips to the National Gallery and the British Museum exposed him to the art and history of cultures other than his own. What inspires you? Is there a person or place that gives you strength? What about that person or place makes you feel that way?
3. Imagine you stepped into this painting and stood where Derain did. What sounds might you hear? What scents might you smell? What do you see that makes you say that?

Notes

Dale Chihuly, United States, 1941
***Sunburst*, 1999, blown glass, neon, metal armature**
Gift of funds from Donna and Cargill MacMillan Jr., 99.132
©1999, Chihuly Studio
120 in. (304.8 cm)



Key Ideas

Sunburst is a huge, swirling mass of bright yellow glass and neon light. Though its meaning is purposely wide open to interpretation, the sculpture's title alludes to the sun, a universal source of strength. The artist Dale Chihuly [chi-HOO-lee] directed a team of glassmakers to produce this expressive chandelier.

An Early Interest

In Chihuly's opinion, no other substance transmits light, color, and form as beautifully as glass. He traces his fascination with glass back to his childhood in Tacoma, Washington. "I remember taking walks on the beach as a child and picking up pieces of glass in the sand," Chihuly said. "And I remember being fascinated by stained glass in church."

Chihuly blew his first glass bubble in 1965 and was hooked right away. After finishing a degree in architecture and interior design at the University of Washington that same year, he entered graduate school at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, which then had the only glassblowing program in the country.

The Art of Glassblowing

Glass is made when a combination of sand, sodium carbonate, and calcium carbonate is melted at a high temperature and then cooled. To make colored glass, other metals are added to the mixture, such as cobalt to make blue glass, or uranium to make yellow glass. Glass was first made more than 5,000 years ago in the Middle East, around Syria. The earliest glassmaking involved using molds. Many years passed before the invention of glassblowing, around 100 BCE.

Glass was first made more than 5,000 years ago in the Middle East, around Syria.

To blow glass, a glassblower dips the end of a hollow blowpipe into a furnace of molten glass and, while rotating the pipe, gathers a portion of the hot glass onto the end of it. Next, the glassblower rests the pipe on a wooden beam and begins rolling the pipe back and forth to keep the molten glass from falling

off the rod. By blowing through the pipe, as if blowing a bubble, the glassblower creates a rounded form. The artist uses other metal instruments and a wooden paddle to shape the form, and can also put portions of the molten glass into a mold and then blow the bubble to fill it. After the glass is the desired shape, it is cut from the pipe and cooled.

Strength in Numbers

After completing his degree at the University of Wisconsin, Chihuly went to Venice, Italy, to study glassblowing. Since the Middle Ages, Venice has been considered the glassmaking center of the world. He studied and worked at the prestigious Venini Fabbrica on the island of Murano, near Venice. The factory, a renowned glassblowing site, emphasizes the importance of collaborative work, rather than development of individual styles.

The importance of teamwork was a valuable lesson for Chihuly to learn. An automobile accident in 1976 left him blind in one eye and with permanent injuries to his right ankle and wrist. A few years later, in 1979, he dislocated his shoulder in a surfing accident. The injuries left Chihuly unable to blow glass. To adapt, Chihuly has taken up a different role in his studio—director. As the director of a team of artists, he encourages, questions, analyzes, and coaxes the team's actions as the artwork takes form. Meanwhile, he draws and paints to help illustrate his ideas. Equating his role to that of a film director, Chihuly actually feels that he has more control over the finished product now that he can step back and direct.

Chandelier Series

In 1992, Chihuly and his team made a chandelier for an exhibition at the Seattle Art Museum. That artwork sparked his chandelier series. Chihuly, who had always been interested in space, loves how these massive chandeliers look hanging in a room:

What makes the chandeliers work for me is the massing of color. If you take up to thousands of blown pieces of color, put them together, and then shoot light through them, now that's going to be something to look at. Now you hang it in space and it becomes mysterious, defying gravity or seemingly out of place—like something you have never seen before.

Chihuly went on to make 25 large chandeliers, but they didn't sell immediately. It took a few years for the concept to catch on. Chihuly feels that this often happens with his work—it takes time for people to understand and appreciate something new. Today, his massive installations are installed in private homes and public spaces around the world.

Installing *Sunburst*

Sunburst was created specifically for the Minneapolis Institute of Art. However, like most of Chihuly's installations, its creation began in his Seattle studio, where Chihuly sketched out his ideas in paintings and drawings. Then, members of the team blew each individual piece of yellow glass by hand under Chihuly's direction. *Sunburst* was probably first assembled in the Seattle studio so that Chihuly and his team could discuss how it would look at the museum, and then taken apart. Each piece of glass was individually packaged in cardboard boxes and carefully shipped to the museum.

The completed work contains more than 1,000 pieces of glass and 100 feet of neon tubing, and weighs more than 3,000 pounds.

The installation of *Sunburst* began on April 27, 1999, and took about a week to complete. The team from Chihuly's studio (but not the artist himself) came to Minneapolis to execute the installation in the museum's lobby. First, a metal armature in the shape of a half-sphere with spikes poking out was attached to the ceiling using wire cables. Next, 100 feet of neon tubing was connected inside the armature. Then, the other half of the sphere armature was attached. The last step was wiring the individual pieces of glass to the armature. The team brought plenty of extra pieces in case of breakage. None of the pieces were numbered, so despite having been preassembled in the studio, the final look of *Sunburst* evolved as it was put together on site. The completed work contains more than 1,000 pieces of glass and 100 feet of neon tubing, and weighs more than 3,000 pounds.

Art Adventure

Sources of Strength

Self-Guided Tour

1



Tiger pillow
China

Gallery _____

4



Migrant Mother
Dorothea Lange

Gallery _____

2



Shirt
A'aninin
(Gros Ventre)

Gallery _____

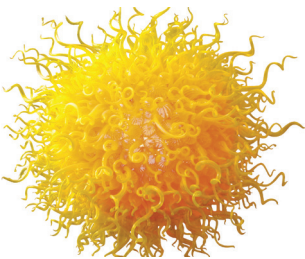
5



Vajra warriors
Japan

Gallery _____

3



Sunburst
Dale Chihuly

Gallery _____

6

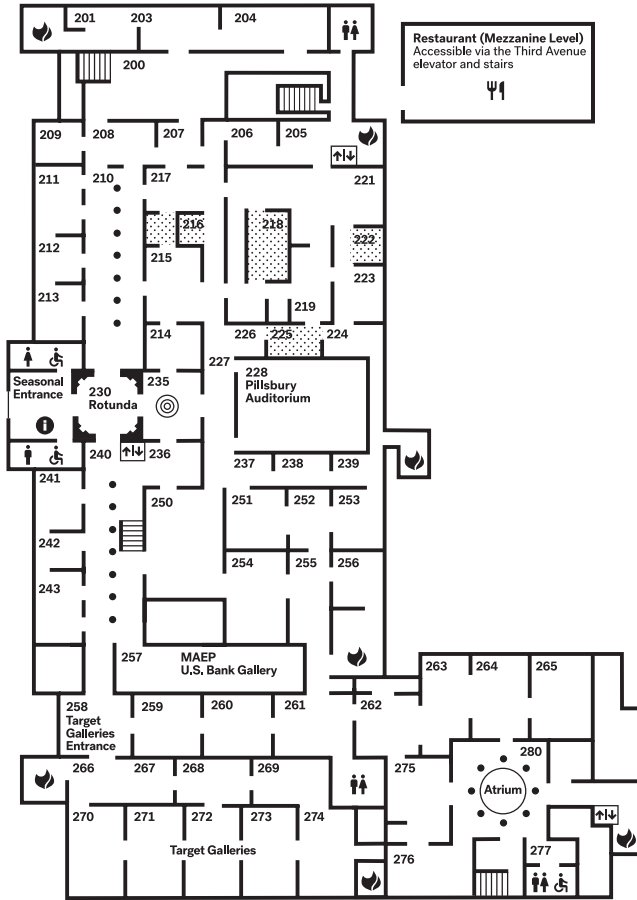


*London: Saint Paul's
Cathedral seen from
the Thames*
André Derain

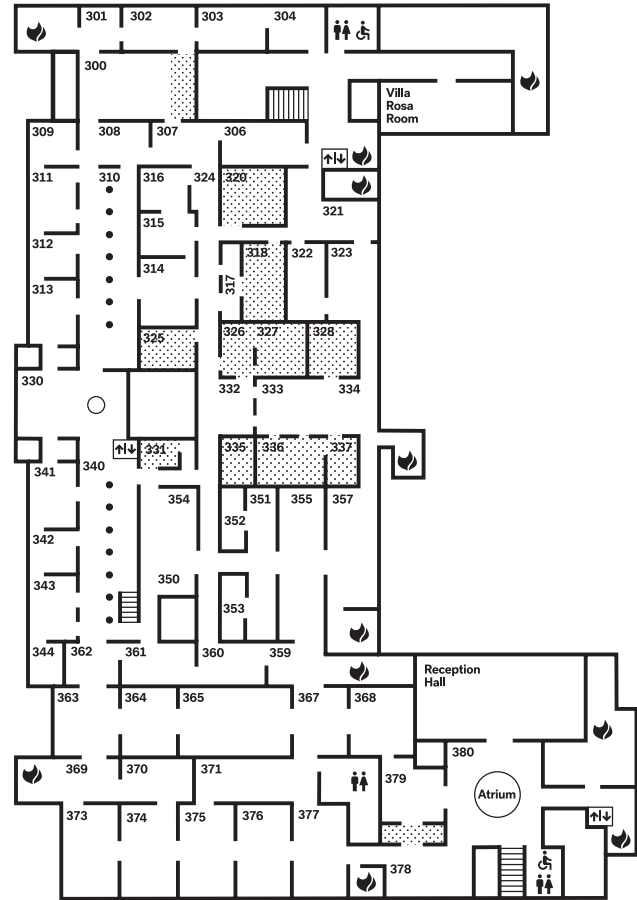
Gallery _____

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