Minneapolis Institute of Art

Art Adventure
American Stories

Mia

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Art Adventure Program
A program of the Minneapolis Institute of Art—Revised 2019

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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.

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.

Who are Picture People?

You like being around and talking to children. You're happy to hear their ideas and are curious to know more about them. You think you might like art—or you know you love art! You might be a parent, a grandparent, or a community member with an enthusiasm for kids and the arts.

You're good at and enjoy

- Recognizing the value in others' unique perspectives.
- Learning about people and places new to you.
- Collaborating with other adults.
- Listening to students.
- Sharing information.

Things you don't have to be good at (but might worry are important)

You do not need to:

- Have classroom experience.
- Know about art, art history, or museums.
- Teach students about art historical periods and terminology.
- Know how to make art.

In this role, you will

- Introduce classroom students to a variety of preselected artworks from various cultures, places, and eras.
- Facilitate discussions using open-ended questions and reaffirm what you hear students say.
- Ask follow-up questions to enliven the conversation.
- Communicate with your school's coordinator.

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.

Introduce a key idea, then begin with a question. Each artwork has specific examples. 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

Each artwork comes with key ideas and supporting questions. We encourage you to use them. If you want to develop your own, consider these non-specific questions, which encourage students to look closely and find their own meaning. This process helps develop the five Critical Thinking Skills (page 1). Please keep in mind that not every question will work for every artwork. Remember, if you ask a question, first share a key idea.

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 might it smell like?

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 damaged props and reproductions.

American Stories

What is American art? This question has endless answers. Diversity is certainly a defining element of this story. Throughout the land we now call the United States, Native people lived for millennia before the arrival of Europeans. Over the last three centuries, immigrants have come from many nations. Traditions of enslaved men and women, such as people brought from Africa, greatly shaped the United States. All of these people have contributed their own unique artistic heritages to our understanding of American art.

The art objects chosen for this Art Adventure set tell nearly 200 years of tales about the United States. They also incorporate many voices: from a portrait of the first president and to a photograph of children playing in St. Paul. By studying this sampling of art made in America, we can learn something about the history, traditions, and experiences of our diverse nation.

Prop Kit Contents

Work of Art	Prop	Replacement Cost
Thomas Sully, *Portrait of George Washington*	Reproduction of Gilbert Stuart's portraits of George Washington	$10
	Sample of painted canvas	$30
Attributed to William Howard, Writing desk	Photographs of:	
	Desk open	$10
	Desk underside	$10
	Wadsworth desk	$10
Alexis Jean Fournier, *Mill Pond at Minneapolis*	Photograph of Mill Pond	$10
	Photograph of Fournier	$10
Lakota, Winter Count	No prop	___
Grace Hartigan, *Billboard*	Sample of painted canvas	$30
Wing Young Huie, *Kids Playing, Frogtown*	Photograph of the artist	$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 or damaged items. Thank you!

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Thomas Sully, United States, 1783–1872
***Portrait of George Washington*, 1820, oil on canvas**
The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 32.12
94 x 60 in. (238.76 x 152.4 cm) (canvas)
101 x 67 in. (256.54 x 170.18 cm) (outer frame)

This heroic image of George Washington shows the first president as a statesman and a military leader. It reflects a period when America was seeking national heroes and identity.

Background

Following the American Revolution (1775–83), America's radical ideas of federalism and individual statehood marked a startling separation from 1700s European political practices. Because no models of democracy existed in Europe at this time, the new nation was eager to associate itself with the virtues and values of ancient Greece and Rome.

This revival of ancient classical cultures, called neoclassicism, was expressed in 1800s painting, sculpture, and architecture. It was particularly evident in the new government buildings that were rising in cities across the country. These public buildings not only satisfied the practical need for government offices, but they also served as symbols recalling the classical past. By imitating classical cultures, the new nation hoped to associate itself with those great civilizations.

By imitating classical cultures, the new nation hoped to associate itself with the great civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome.

In the years following the Revolution, America was in need of American heroes. George Washington, the most revered of revolutionary leaders and the first U.S. president, was an ideal role model. After his death in 1799, he became the symbol of the new republic. Washington's image proliferated across America, meeting the great demand for presidential portraits to decorate the many new government buildings. The painter Gilbert Stuart painted numerous portraits of Washington, three of which became models for countless reproductions, copies, and imitations. While uniqueness and originality are highly valued in artwork today, during the 1800s, the subject's identity and importance gave meaning and value to the work. The many artists who painted images of George Washington after his death were happy to copy works by artists like Stuart, who had painted the president from life.

Portrait of George Washington

This painting by Thomas Sully is a copy of one of Gilbert Stuart's best-known portraits of George Washington, the one often referred to as the *Munro-Lenox Portrait*. Finished in 1800, the *Munro-Lenox Portrait*, named for its two original owners, was the first of four identical full-length paintings by Stuart. The *Munro-Lenox Portrait* hung in the New York Public Library for many years. To meet the overwhelming demand for pictures of the first American president, Sully made numerous copies of Stuart's portraits for various government buildings and historical societies.

A formal full-length portrait, it is a heroic image of George Washington, presented with symbols and theatrical effects.

Sully's picture is painted in the European tradition of aristocratic portraiture. A formal full-length portrait, it is a heroic image of George Washington, presented with symbols and theatrical effects. A noble figure, Washington appears stately and proud in his stiff three-quarter pose, which displays his fine clothing and accessories. He is depicted from a low point of view, enhancing his air of importance. He wears a dark vest and jacket set off by a white ruffled jabot (lace or cloth attached to the front of a neckband) and cuffs, black knee-length pants, and black shoes with silver buckles–footwear commonly associated with Washington. The president stands in a dramatic pose, as if he were about to give a speech. His face reveals little of his true personality.
Washington's status is enhanced by the grand setting and the symbolic objects that surround him. His right hand rests on a copy of the Constitution, emphasizing his role as a statesman. He holds a sword in his left hand, a reference to his military

achievements. Behind him, a windblown curtain lets in the light of dawn and reveals a rainbow. The rainbow is a common symbol of hope or beginning, and the dawn may symbolize a new era under Washington's leadership. The inkwell and quill on the table refer to lawmaking, and the many books suggest Washington's authority based on the written law. The gilded (decorated with gold) furniture, rich red upholstery, and decorative red table covering reinforce the president's importance. The paperweight shaped like a dog may refer to his love of the outdoors.

The classical columns in the background and some of the motifs on the furniture suggest grandeur and the ideals of the ancient Roman republic, with which the new U.S. government hoped to associate itself. On top of the table leg are two eagles, raptors that were victory symbols in ancient Rome. Eagles were associated with the god Jupiter, represented the standards of the Roman legions, and stood for power and victory. The wrapped bundle of rods that form the leg itself once signified the authority of Roman leaders and the ideals of justice. The medallion design on the arm and crest of the chair symbolically refers to a Roman crown of victory.

Sully uses dramatic contrast in the painting to enhance Washington's heroism. The president's striking figure in black and white stands out against the surroundings of red and yellow tones. Various tones of red, seen on the tablecloth, curtain, chair, ribbon around the sword, sky, and even on Washington's cheeks, dominate and enliven the painting. The composition reinforces a sense of solidity and stability by incorporating vertical and horizontal lines and geometric shapes in the architecture and furnishings. For example, the oval back of the chair is repeated in the circles of the floor design. The stable vertical columns are echoed by the erect figure of Washington standing before them. Against these structural elements, the irregular shapes of the billowing drapery and tablecloth give drama and richness to the composition.

Sully closely copied Stuart's original, but his own style is evident.

Sully closely copied Stuart's original, but his own style is evident. The color is brighter, surfaces are more opaque (solid) and glossy, forms are cast in sharper shadows, and the head is more clearly formed and heroic than in the original portrait.

Technique

When he painted a subject from life, Sully began by sketching a series of drawings on paper and canvas before arriving at his completed portrait. In his book, *Hints to Young Painters* (1851), he explained his technique, stating that he expected his subjects to have six sittings of two hours each. Though he used Stuart's painting as the basis for this portrait rather than painting from life, Sully most likely made some preliminary drawings as part of his working process.

Sully is known for his fluid brushwork, which achieves a rich, lustrous effect. The use of oil paint offered the artist great versatility in painting brilliant colors and convincing textures, since the medium of oil lends itself both to minute detail and to the subtle blending of tones. By applying layers of transparent paint over opaque ones, Sully created the illusion of actual skin and fabric and achieved a subtle play of light off the rich reds, yellows, and blacks.

About the Artist

Thomas Sully was born in England to parents who were actors. The family immigrated to the United States when Thomas was 9, and settled in Charleston, South Carolina. Sully began his career as a painter of miniatures but turned to easel painting in 1805, when he lived in New York City. Some of his earliest patrons were people in the theater. After serving as an apprentice to John Wesley Jarvis, he met Gilbert Stuart in Boston and studied briefly with him. The professional encouragement he received from the elder portrait painter confirmed Sully's ambition to become a leading American portraitist. He eventually settled in Philadelphia.

In his 70-year professional career, he painted over 2,000 portraits.

In 1809, Sully traveled to England, where he, like many other American artists, went to see Benjamin West, who sent him to Thomas Lawrence, the leading English portraitist of the time. Sully returned to America, where he became one of the nation's outstanding portrait painters during the 1830s and 1840s. In his 70-year professional career, he painted over 2,000 portraits. Sully was also a teacher, guiding the careers of many students, including members of his own family. All six of his surviving children became professional or amateur painters.

Key Ideas

1. This is a portrait of George Washington as a leader of the new democracy of the United States of America.
2. This painting refers to the classical past of Ancient Greece and Rome.
3. As an accepted practice, Sully's portrait is a copy of a painting by Gilbert Stuart.

Suggested Questions

1. This portrait is of George Washington as a leader of the people of the United States of America. How has the artist shown he is important? What objects tell you that he was a military leader? A smart/educated man? What objects show that he was successful and powerful? What other objects do you see in this painting? Pair share: Turn to a neighbor and share what objects you would include in your portrait to tell your story.
2. Stand like George Washington. How does it make you feel to stand in this position?
3. This painting uses objects and color to tell the story of George Washington. Looking all around this painting, what colors do you see? How does the color ________ make you feel? What do you think that color might mean/represent in this painting? Do you think Thomas Sully, the artist, chose the right colors to represent George Washington as a hero? (thumbs up/down)

Notes

Attributed to William Howard, United States, 1805, active until c. 1870
Writing desk, 1870, yellow pine, tobacco box and cotton crate wood
The Driscoll Art Accessions Endowment Fund, the John and Ruth Huss Fund for Decorative Arts, the Fred R. Salisbury II Fund, and the Deborah Davenport and Stewart Stender Endowment for American Folk Art, 2012.11
60 ¾ x 29 ⅞ x 23 11/16 in. (154.31 x 75.88 x 60.17 cm)

This writing desk expresses the ingenuity and technical skill of the artist, believed to be William Howard, and also helps illustrate the life of enslaved people in the United States. Born in Africa, Howard lived and worked at Kirkwood Plantation in Madison County, Mississippi, first as an enslaved man and then, after the Civil War, as a free man. Howard's desk is a unique combination of high-market and folk art styles crafted from rough, reclaimed materials, such as tobacco boxes and cotton shipping crates.

Life on Kirkwood Plantation

Established by William McWillie and his wife, Catherine, around 1845, Kirkwood Plantation was one of the largest cotton plantations in Mississippi, with nearly 200 enslaved Black Americans. McWillie served in the Mississippi Confederate Infantry, was later elected to Congress, then became governor of Mississippi (1857–59).

Surrounded by thousands of acres of pine forest, Kirkwood Plantation included homes for enslaved people, four mansions, and a church and rectory. The estate was completely self-sufficient, with workshops for blacksmithing and carpentry, a smokehouse, a washhouse, weaving and sewing houses, a winery, and an icehouse; enslaved people supplied the labor. Today, only a small cemetery remains; the buildings are gone, and a lumber company owns the property. After the Civil War ended in 1865, many once-enslaved people remained on the plantation. Plantation owners offered them a deal to work a portion of the land in return for a share of the crop, hence the label "sharecropper." Unsurprisingly, this life was not much better for the former enslaved laborers.

Records indicate that William Howard continued to live and work at Kirkwood Plantation after the war. It is believed that Howard made his writing desk around this time.

A Singular Style

William Howard's handmade writing desk is unlike commercially produced furniture of the time. Having drawn from his personal experiences of life on a plantation, Howard made the desk to reflect the American Federal furniture style while adding his own singular vision. Think about it: Howard, a master craftsman, was both perceptive and discerning in his choice to incorporate a popular furniture style for his desk—a style that he would likely never have enjoyed otherwise in his living quarters.

Federal furniture is neoclassical, or "new classical," in form, inspired by ancient Greek and Roman art. Neoclassicism reflected the patriotism of the early 1800s, when a young American democracy modeled itself on ideals of government from ancient Greece. The style is embodied in the structure of Howard's desk through balance, symmetry, and straight lines. Also characteristic of Federal style are the tapered legs and "dentils," the rectangular decorative teeth-like molding set around the top, or cornice, of the desk. The writing desk, sometimes called a secretary, was both fashionable and useful. It combines a desk with a storage unit for books and writing materials. Here, the front folds down to create a writing surface. Howard likely became familiar with Federal furniture from his work in and around the plantation houses.

The most common wood for Federal furnishings was mahogany imported from the West Indies and Central and South America. Locally grown woods, such as maple, birch, or satinwood, might also be used. As a laborer working under poor economic conditions, Howard used materials at hand—yellow pine, tobacco boxes, and cotton shipping crates.

Stamped on the desk's underside is "COTTON PIECE GOODS/FROM/THE GLENWOOD WO[RKS]/ MEDFORD. MASS" from a crate from the Glenwood Works textile company.

Howard ornamented the desk with carved symbols of objects seen and used in daily activity on the plantation, making it a deeply personal and individual expression of his life.

The desk's most striking and innovative feature is the more than 70 hand-carved and applied weapons, tools, eating utensils, vessels, and trade symbols that adorn its surface. Howard ornamented the desk with carved symbols of objects seen and used in daily activity on the plantation, making it a deeply personal and individual expression of his life. There are symbols for cooking and eating, working the land and forests, fishing and boating, and building with wood. Today, many objects represented on the desk are difficult to identify, and not everything carved was a tool. The two hands with pointed fingers may be trade symbols, signs that would have been displayed outside a glovemaker's store in the 1800s.

About the Artist

This desk was handed down through a Black American family, along with the story of William Howard as its maker. The U.S. Census of 1870 lists the artist a few entries above Catherine McWillie and her remaining household. The census indicates that Howard was a 65-year-old farm laborer born in Africa, and his household included 60-year-old Sally Howard, presumably his wife, and 16-year-old Henry Howard, presumably their son, a farm laborer born in Mississippi. Because landowners were the primary keepers of records for enslaved people, little else is known of William Howard's life.

This desk was handed down through a Black American family, along with the story of William Howard as its maker.

Despite his circumstances, Howard created a masterful work of art that represents his life on a southern plantation in the 1800s. He crafted a writing desk based on his observations of furnishings from a comfortable lifestyle he was not permitted to lead. To make this desk uniquely his own, he embellished it with highly personalized decorations and a clever use of reclaimed materials. Only one other furniture piece attributed to William Howard is known to exist; it is currently in the collection of the Wadsworth Athenaeum, and is similar in form and decoration to this desk.

Key Ideas

1. This writing desk expresses the ingenuity and skill of the artist, believed to be William Howard.
2. Howard lived and worked at Kirkwood plantation as an enslaved man. After the Civil War, he was freed. Like many enslaved people who were later freed, he remained on the plantation because very few opportunities were available to him.
3. This desk is made from repurposed materials—tobacco boxes, cotton crates—and wood found from a nearby pine forest. This desk is an example of how clever and resourceful Howard was.

Suggested Questions

1. A man named William Howard made this desk. This desk has over 70 hand-carved objects applied to the front and sides. What objects to do you see/recognize? What objects do you wonder about? Why do you think Howard chose to put these objects on his desk? Why might a _______ be important to have? How is this desk the same, and different, from the desk you have at school?
2. Based on how he decorated this desk, what do you imagine Howard's life was like on the plantation? What skills or types of work are represented on this desk? What do you imagine was kept in the desk? Imagine this desk without any of the carved decorations. How would you feel about it then? Would it be as interesting? (Thumbs up/down)
3. This desk tells a personal story about its maker's life. What objects would you put on your desk to tell your story?
4. If you were to make a desk from materials found on the block you live on, what would your desk be made of? Pair share: Turn to your neighbor and share what you would keep in your desk.

Notes

Alexis Jean Fournier, United States, 1865–1948
***Mill Pond at Minneapolis*, 1888, oil on canvas**
The John R. Van Derlip Fund, 46.8
17 x 26 in. (43.18 x 66.04 cm) (outer frame)

In this painting, Alexis Fournier (FORN-yay) depicts the city of Minneapolis in the late 1800s, showing how industrial development dominates the urban landscape. The painting also reflects the era's belief in "progress" and humankind's ability to control nature.

Background

St. Anthony Falls and the Mississippi River played an essential role in the exploration and settlement of the Minnesota Territory and the development of Minneapolis and St. Paul. The falls and surrounding area, including both sides of the river, were part of a large expanse of land taken over by the U.S. government from the Dakota at the beginning of the 1800s. The Dakota people had called the falls "Minirara," meaning "curling water." In 1680, Father Louis Hennepin, the first white person to see the falls, named them for his patron saint.

The federal government, recognizing the falls' potential to supply power, constructed Fort Snelling in the 1820s. Later, enterprising settlers harnessed the water's power to run sawmills, flourmills, foundries, factories, and a host of other industries. Minnesota secured statehood in 1858, and by 1888 (the time of this painting) it was one of several young states experiencing the first flush of economic growth and industrial expansion. The city of Minneapolis, already known as the world's leading lumber market, was now becoming the foremost flour-milling center in America.

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Much of this technological development took place along the river, the city's primary source of power and transportation. Such development brought drastic change to the environment, and, gradually, the natural beauty of St. Anthony Falls was diminished. Today we are more aware of the impact of industrialization on nature and its adverse effects on humanity. In the 1800s, however, many people considered the earth and its resources limitless and available for any enterprising person to use and exploit.

Mill Pond at Minneapolis

This painting is an accurate record of Minneapolis in 1888, showing many landmarks of the time. The urban landscape documents the rows of mills and industrial buildings that had developed along the banks of the Mississippi, some of which can be identified. Directly to the left of the arched bridge is Farnham's Mill, one of the last active sawmills at the falls. On the far left edge is the Pillsbury "A" mill, built by the artist's father; when completed in 1883, it was the largest flourmill in the world. Both mills derived their power from the millpond, a reservoir constructed to channel the flow of the river. The millpond is seen in the painting's middle distance, a band of water that appears calm next to the rushing water behind it from the falls. To the right of Farnham's Mill is the Stone Arch Bridge of the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad, completed in 1883. The bridge became a national symbol of the city's prosperity and progress; it was the first and only curved masonry bridge in the world and also the first masonry bridge to span the Mississippi. The Stone Arch Bridge provided railroad access to the heart of the city's business district for the first time, connecting Minneapolis to both the eastern and western parts of the nation.

Beyond the arched bridge is the steel truss that formerly carried Tenth Avenue traffic across the river. Above the bridge to the left, just breaking the horizon line, are the first buildings of the fledgling University of Minnesota. They are dominated by the tower of the university's landmark, Old Main. On the hill to the right are the polygonal storage tanks of the Minneapolis Gas Company. In the foreground railroad tracks and cars can be seen.

The artist included in his panoramic view signs of human progress that would have appealed to his business patrons. He presented such industrialization as surprisingly compatible with nature.

Fournier painted the scene from the west bank of the river, and it can be seen today from the Third Avenue bridge. The artist included in his panoramic view signs of human progress that would have appealed to his business patrons. He presented such industrialization as surprisingly compatible with nature. The rolling wooded hills rise in the background to meet a partly cloudy blue sky; in the foreground the railroad tracks juxtapose with the soft grasses and foliage of the land around them. To Fournier and his patrons, these elements were apparently not in conflict.

Fournier's use of line, shape, and color contributes to the harmonious effect.

Fournier's use of line, shape, and color contributes to the harmonious effect. The composition is organized into distinct areas of foreground, middle ground (or middle distance), and background. The horizontal lines of the horizon, band of clouds, riverbank, and water current gently sweep across the painting and contribute to a restful, tranquil mood. The use of soft, cool colors—blues, greens, and whites—reinforces the mood. At the same time, the diagonal lines of the bridges, rushing waters by the pond, and train create movement and give the scene a dynamic quality that suggests notions of progress and moving ahead.

Technique

Fournier worked directly from nature, painting outdoors and perhaps putting on the finishing touches in his studio. His use of oil paint enabled him to render his subject naturalistically, with attention to accurate details and local setting. While he shows the actual shapes and colors of objects, his technique is not meticulously detailed. Fournier has a looser, more spontaneous style that captures the effects of light and movement, as seen in the flowing water, floating clouds, and windblown hillside. His fluid brushstrokes are visible.

About the Artist

Alexis Jean Fournier, the son of a millwright, was born in St. Paul in 1865. He spent his early youth in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but returned to Minnesota in 1883, where he supported himself as a sign and scenery painter. While living in Minneapolis, he acquired patrons who sponsored his enrollment in the newly established Minneapolis School of Art (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design). In 1887 Fournier established his own studio above a tailor shop at 412 Nicollet Avenue. He specialized in landscape paintings, working in oil and watercolor, and attracted many local patrons.

In 1893 several patrons, including the St. Paul lumber baron James J. Hill, paid for the artist to study in France. He attended the Académie Julian in Paris and was greatly influenced by the landscapes of the Barbizon School of painters. This group of artists was interested in landscape painting and advocated painting directly from nature. Fournier returned to Minneapolis, where he continued to live for many years while traveling widely. In 1908 he went to the village of Barbizon, in France, where he completed a major project consisting of 20 canvases titled *Haunts and Homes of the Barbizon Masters*. These works were critically acclaimed when exhibited in New York, Boston, and Minneapolis in 1915–16. He spent his later years in East Aurora, New York, and continued to produce carefully executed, realistic landscapes until his death in 1948.

Key Ideas

1. This is a painting of what the city of Minneapolis looked like over 200 years ago.
2. *Mill Pond at Minneapolis* illustrates the importance of the Mississippi River to the development and growth of Minneapolis.
3. This image tells the story of the dual relationship between human ingenuity and the power and beauty of nature.

Suggested Questions

1. This is a painting of Minneapolis over 200 years ago. Notice the sky, the hills in the distance, and the river. What other objects to do you see in this scene? Imagine you are sitting on the banks of this river in the lower right-hand corner of the painting. What does it feel like to be here? What sounds do you hear? What is the weather like? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. This painting tells the story of Minneapolis as a growing, young city. What things do you see that are made by humans? What things come from the natural world? How do the human-made objects and nature work together? In what ways do you think the new stone arch bridge changed how people lived at this time?
3. What do you think the artist is paying most attention to in this scene—nature, industry, or both? What do you see that makes you say that? How is this scene of Minneapolis from 200 years ago different from the city today? Why?
4. Pretend you are in this painting and are writing a postcard to a friend. What would you write on your card?

Notes

Lakota, United States, North America
Winter count, 1900s, pigment on canvas
Gift of the Weiser Family Foundation, 2002.163
26 ¼ x 67 ⅛ in. (66.68 x 170.5 cm)

Like many other Plains Indians, the Lakota created winter counts to record significant events that happened during each year. These pictographic calendars (calendars that use images to represent an event) serve as important reminders to the Lakota of their history and their ancestors.

Background

When the first European explorers arrived on the shores of North America over 500 years ago, several million culturally diverse people, speaking hundreds of languages, already lived here. Many of these people lived in similar ways, depending on the geographical region where they were located.

Plains Indians once freely occupied a large, central area of North America. Their territories reached from the Mississippi River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west and throughout Canada to the north and down into Texas in the south. The Lakota are one of many groups of Plains Indians who lived (and continue to live) in this vast region, mainly in what is known today as North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska.

At one time, the Lakota were closer to their Dakota relatives in present-day Minnesota, living a more settled lifestyle, which included fishing and cultivating wild rice. However, after 1640, conflicts with neighboring tribes, westward expansion of European settlers, and the interest in hunting of bison herds led the Lakota to relocate further west and to adopt a nomadic lifestyle. As the Lakota lifestyle changed, their artwork also evolved, becoming more portable. To show honor and respect for the everyday objects they relied upon, utilitarian items were richly decorated with pigments, quills, beads, and other ornamentation, making each object both useful and beautiful.

As the Lakota lifestyle changed, their artwork also evolved, becoming more portable.

The use and decoration of bison, elk, and deer hides has a long history with Plains Indians. The hides, a primary source for protection against the elements, were used as material for clothing, tipis, and moccasins. Decorating the hides was a way of honoring the animal for giving up its life. Men also displayed pictorial records of their personal achievements—their coups (acts of bravery), accounts of battle, and numbers of horses they owned—on their robes and tipis. The first Lakota winter counts were also painted on animal hides.

Winter counts served two important functions in Lakota society: to record the passage of time and to relate the tribe's history to its members.

Winter Counts

Winter counts, called *Waniyetu Wówapi* (wah-NEE-yeh-tu WOE-wah-pee) by the Lakota, are paintings on animal hide or muslin that record one event to represent each year in the tribe's history. *Waniyetu* is the Lakota word for winter, measured from the first snowfall of one year to the first snowfall of the next. *Wówapi* means anything marked on a flat surface that can be read or counted. One pictograph represented one year. Because winters were incredibly harsh on the plains, it was a triumph and blessing to make it through each winter. Winter counts served two important functions in Lakota society: to record the passage of time and to relate the tribe's history to its members. Using a winter count, individuals calculated their age by counting back to the year they were born, and the pictographic images were used as memory triggers for the winter count Keepers to tell the stories of the past to the tribe.

Extended kin groups, or *thiyóšpaye* (tee-YOSH-pá-yeh), are found within the social structure of the Lakota. Each *thiyóšpaye* had a winter count keeper appointed to record an event to be remembered.

The winter count allows us to think and talk about Lakota history through their own accounts, rather than through a history book. They provide a unique understanding of the Lakota perspective because they allow us to see and understand how and why the Lakota prioritized notable events. The keeper depicted images that would have affected the tribe, such as battles, trade events, and deaths. They also show significant "outside" events, such as disease epidemics, ceremonial events, and the conflicts over U.S. expansion into Lakota territory.

This winter count, like many Lakota winter counts, depicts the importance of cycles to the Lakota people. It starts with an image of a calumet (ornamented ceremonial pipe) decorated with feathers, which symbolizes a ceremony that blesses the elderly (the past), expectant mothers (the creators of the future), and children (the future). They exhibit finely drawn images depicting important themes in 1800s Plains Indian art, such as horse imagery and battle exploits. Winter counts also demonstrate continuities between earlier pictographic representation and the late-1800s boom of ledger art.

Winter Count Keepers

Traditionally, older, prominent men in a Lakota *thiyóšpaye* held the role of the winter count keeper. It was vital that these men be excellent artists and storytellers, as keepers were responsible for not only drawing the depictions, but also for relaying to the people the community's history as depicted on the winter count. The keeper, along with the community elders, would decide on the most memorable event of that year and an image representing that event would be added to the winter count.

During the dark days of winter, the winter count keeper would show the winter count to children and tell the stories of each pictograph, giving the children a sense of their people's history.

During the dark days of winter, the winter count keeper would show the winter count to children and tell the stories of each pictograph, giving the children a sense of their people's history. Usually, the role of winter count keeper was passed down from one family member to the next, as typical winter counts span over 100 years. Within Lakota society, the role of Winter Count Keeper was passed from father to son. Some daughters also kept winter counts, though this occurred rarely. Women's artwork traditionally focused on abstract geometric designs, while the men were responsible for representational images. When a new keeper would take over, a new copy of the winter count would be created.

Winter counts are often named for their keepers. By comparing this winter count to others in existence, it is believed that the creator was a man named Long Soldier. Long Soldier was a well-respected Lakota man who signed the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1868 and, along with many others, participated in the last bison hunt held at Standing Rock in 1882. The Long Soldier count comes from a Hunkpapa *thiyóšpaye*. The Hunkpapa were the western-most division of the Lakota, renowned for producing warriors like Sitting Bull and Gall. Later this band was forced to move to Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota.

Materials

Initially, winter count pictographs were painted on animal hides using natural pigments. When the hide became too worn and/or as new materials became available, the images were transferred to new surfaces, such as muslin or paper, using paint and colored pencils. Winter counts were also copied when a new keeper was appointed or if the keeper simply ran out of room. An outside market for winter counts eventually developed, after scholars and other interested parties began studying the Lakota people and requesting copies.

Because the Lakota's history was mostly passed on orally between generations, the earliest winter counts were strictly pictographic. With the advancement of white settlers, literacy and the use of written language grew throughout the Lakota community. As the use of pictographs waned and written language grew, some winter count keepers used both as a way to communicate a year's event. Eventually, the custom of pictographs declined altogether as a way to record Lakota history.

Enduring Traditions

With the introduction of written language in 1880, the Lakota moved away from pictorial winter counts in favor of written words to document the events of a year. Also around this time, the Lakota were forced to give up their land and move onto reservations. This process forced the Lakota to give up or change many of their ways of life. By recalling the stories shown on the winter counts, the Lakota keep their connection to the history of their people and their past through the eyes of their ancestors. Though the Lakota way of life was changed dramatically through colonization, they have survived and remain a vibrant and contemporary culture.

Key Ideas

1. The winter count was made to record and remember the history of this Lakota community.
2. The Lakota Winter Count keeps track of time; it is a calendar made with pictures (pictographs), instead of numbers or words.
3. Since this winter count was started over 100 years ago, Lakota ways of life have changed; moreover, they remain a vibrant contemporary culture.

Suggested Questions

1. The many small drawings on the Lakota Winter Count tell the history of Lakota communities. Some of the pictures tell stories that are known to everyone; some are known only to individual community members. Look closely at the images. What things do you recognize? Which images do you think represent good years? Which images represent bad years? What do you think was important to this Lakota community based on what you see? What things do you wonder about?
2. The winter count uses pictures to tell important stories about Lakota history. Each small picture, or pictograph, represents an event for each year. Why do you think it is important to record and remember history? What important event has happened in your community this year? What symbol would you use to represent that event?
3. Today, symbols are used to communicate safety, directions, rules, etc. Pair share: Turn to your neighbor and share a symbol you saw in the last few days. What did it communicate?
4. How is history recorded and remembered today? What pictures tell your story?

Details of Winter Count Explained

1801–02: According to Long Soldier, this horse represents the first horse obtained by the Lakota. Marks on a horse like this indicate curly hair. These horses may have been captured during the winter season when their fur is longer. When the horses sweat, their longer coats appear curly.

1810–11: A figure like this, covered in spots, depicts a small pox outbreak. Small pox was an often-fatal disease spread to Native populations by European invaders. Lacking immunization to small pox, many Native people died from it, devastating entire tribes.

1833–34: This single red star represents the "year of falling stars," also known as the Leonid meteor shower. It appears in all of the Lakota winter counts, as well as those of other tribes. Its appearance is a clue for scholars seeking to date winter counts. People all over North America witnessed the Leonid meteor shower.

1836–37: A battle took place across a river. Lakota warriors fought from one side of the river, opposite the Sahnish (Arikara) warriors. The hoof marks represent the many horses, and therefore warriors, on both sides.

1850–51: This drawing marks the year of a man's death. Two important clues to note are the line drawn from his head and the turtle floating above him. These indicate a "name glyph," and it represents the man's name—in this case, Catches Turtle.

1855–56: This picture depicts the "Year white whiskers captured Indians and would not let them go." "White whiskers" refers to Colonel William S. Harney, who fought against the Sicangu Lakota. At the Battle of Ash Hollow, Col. Harney and his men killed 86 people and took 70 women and children captive.

1867–68: Long Soldier noted that in this year "10 feather hats were made and put on 10 chiefs." In traditional Lakota society, young men had to earn each feather by performing a brave or generous deed, then learn how to make their headdress from men in their community. In this case, the U.S. government made 10 headdresses and gave them to 10 men who had not gone through the proper steps, and therefore were not recognized as leaders by their community. The U.S. government used these men to pass their objectives, often against the wishes of the community.

Notes

Grace Hartigan, United States, 1922–2008
***Billboard*, 1957, oil on canvas**
The Julia B. Bigelow Fund, 57.35, © Estate of Grace Hartigan
78 ½ x 87 in. (199.4 x 221.0 cm)

Drawing on her experiences in New York during the 1950s, Grace Hartigan incorporated familiar elements of urban America into her work. In this celebration of personal expression, fragments of figures and abstract forms recall billboard images seen fleetingly from a highway.

Background

After World War II, America emerged as a great world leader. The arts flourished, and New York City replaced Paris as the art center of the Western world. Inspired by European artists who had immigrated to New York during the war, one group of New York artists captured the speed, energy, and power of American life with a new way of painting. Drawing on the power of European styles, these artists developed the revolutionary art style called Abstract Expressionism.

Abstract Expressionists placed a high value on personal expression, rejected realistic subject matter, and infused human emotion into abstract form. Their spontaneous gestural style, known as action painting, often revealed the physical act of painting. The artists relied heavily on improvisation and chance effects and placed great emphasis on the process of painting. Accidental shapes, dribbles, splashes, and strokes of paint revealed the creative process.

During the late 1940s and into the 1950s, Abstract Expressionism became an international phenomenon. Soon younger artists flocked to New York to become part of the group, known as the New York School. They adopted the energetic gestural style of the older Abstract Expressionists, but turned from purely abstract art to recognizable subjects—landscapes, still-lifes, and figures. Grace Hartigan belongs to this “second generation” of Abstract Expressionists.

From the late 1950s to the early 1960s, the Pop Art movement also flourished in New York City. It was inspired by the consumer culture and commercialism that had become an important part of American life following World War II. Several factors had led to a boom in product advertising and consumerism in the United States. After years of scarcity during the war, the American public was eager to buy new products, particularly cars. With increased production and ownership of automobiles, America soon became a car culture. Commerce spread out from the inner city to the highway, and billboard advertisements reached the newly mobilized audience.

Pop artists represented and often satirized images from American popular culture, drawing from sources such as television, comic strips, billboards, advertising, and the commerce of contemporary life. Some artists also used the techniques as well as the imagery of commercial art. Though Hartigan does not consider herself a Pop artist, her early paintings can be seen as a bridge between Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art.

Billboard

In *Billboard* Grace Hartigan uses images from everyday life, drawing upon her experiences in New York City during the 1950s. The fragments of figures and forms recall billboard images seen fleetingly from the highway. Combining abstract and representational forms, Hartigan considered her art “real” but not “realistic.”

Hartigan was fascinated by the accessible and boldly simplified style of American advertising. In this painting, she draws upon advertisements she saw in *Life* magazine. The artist shows us a variety of fragmentary images, such as a smiling face above a tube of Ipana toothpaste, the neck of a wine bottle over a glass, molded lime Jell-O surrounded by fruit, and the keys of a piano. These seemingly chaotic images are unified by Hartigan’s bold, expressive brushwork and balanced by her placement of colors on the canvas.

The bold, gestural brushstrokes in *Billboard* clearly demonstrate Hartigan's relationship to the Abstract Expressionist style. Through her large gestures and thickly applied paint, the spectator is invited to feel the "presence" of the artist and to experience the very process of painting. Hartigan has said that Billboard took her about one month to complete, but that she wanted it to look as if it had taken about an hour, because above all she wanted its spontaneity to shine through.

Color is the primary visual element in *Billboard*. In fact, Hartigan thought of the work as a formal exercise in color manipulation. Using vivid colors and bold, dynamic brushstrokes, she infused the forms with energy and life, arranging them by size and intensity of color to balance the composition. No part of this painting seems to hold the viewer's attention longer than another. Our eyes wander from one bright color and interesting shape to the next. Hartigan achieved this effect mainly through the careful use of complementary colors: red and green, blue and orange, yellow and purple. This balance of color demonstrates Hartigan's belief that "you should be able to enter a painting like a promenade—that you should be able to walk in anywhere and walk out anywhere."

Following as it did the total abstraction of many Abstract Expressionists, Hartigan's painting signaled a reintroduction of recognizable subjects into art. This work coincides with the beginning of the Pop movement in the late 1950s. The artist said, however, that she intended no social commentary with her painting. Instead, *Billboard* celebrates the exuberance of her bustling New York environment. She considered this a joyous painting filled with light and energy. She hoped the viewer would observe all her paintings with the innocence of a child, without being too analytical. Using bright, vivid colors and the slapdash brushstrokes of action painting, she presents a jazzy, dynamic image of American life.

Images in *Billboard*

1. Ipana toothpaste smile and tube of toothpaste
2. Wine bottle and glass (only the neck of the bottle is visible)
3. Dole pineapple
4. Peaches and whipped cream from a food ad
5. Area of violet color: Windsor violet was the color of the background on which Hartigan arranged her collage. It seemed to fit into the plan, so she kept it.
6. Piano keys
7. Apple with a bite taken out
8. Lime Jell-O and fruit
9. Oranges
10. Figure from a Campbell soup ad

Technique

During a 1983 lecture at the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Hartigan described the process by which *Billboard* was created. Inspired by American advertising, she began this work by selecting images from *Life* magazine that appealed to her because of their colors. She preferred to use objects she felt had "no energy or life of their own" so that she could infuse them with her own energy and joy of living. Next she cut the images out and pinned them up on a wall in the form of a collage on a background of purple paper. Using this collage as a model, she began to paint on the canvas, rearranging elements and adjusting the color as the work progressed. As Hartigan painted these images, she continued to invent, improvise, and expand upon her initial idea, not knowing what the final product would be.

About the Artist

Grace Hartigan was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1922. She attended night school at the Newark College of Engineering, where she studied mechanical drafting. During World War II, she worked in an airplane factory, painting watercolor still-lifes in her spare time. While her husband was in the army, she also raised a son and took painting classes at night.

In 1945 Hartigan moved to New York to be in the center of the art world. Greatly influenced by the Abstract Expressionists, she quickly absorbed their spontaneous, abstract style. But she also became interested in the works of old European masters, such as Raphael, Rubens, and Caravaggio. She became active in the New York School, and lived in New York's colorful Lower East Side, which provided subject matter for many of her paintings.

Hartigan's first break occurred in 1950 when her work was exhibited in a New Talent exhibition juried by the critic Clement Greenberg and the art historian Meyer Shapiro. In 1951 she had her first solo show. In 1959 the Museum of Modern Art in New York sent an exhibition called "The New American Painting" to eight European countries; Grace Hartigan was the only woman included.

Key Ideas

1. Grace Hartigan's sweeping, gestural style captures the speed, energy, and power of life in New York City in the 1950s.
2. Inspired by a growing consumer culture, Hartigan drew from images seen in magazine and billboard advertising.
3. Hartigan first made a collage from images cut from magazines, and then used the collage as a model for her painting.

Suggested Questions

1. Hartigan wanted us to see things/objects in her painting, but she didn't want to make it too easy so she used a messy, fast painting style. Look all around this painting. What images of things do you see? Keep looking: what more can you find?
2. In real life, this painting is very large (78½ X 87 inches, as large as a whiteboard). Take out your imaginary paintbrush and pretend to paint a part of this painting. What part did you pretend to paint? What does it feel like to paint this artwork? How did you move your arm? How big was your paintbrush?
3. Hartigan lived in busy New York City. Close your eyes if you want to, and imagine you are in New York City. What things might you see and hear on the streets? What colors might you see? What colors has Haritigan used in her painting? Choose a color you see in the painting. How does that color make you feel?
4. Imagine you are in this painting of life in New York City. What sounds do you hear? On the count of three, make your sound. What part of the painting inspired your sound? What colors, shapes, and/or figures are in that section of the painting? How did they inspire your sound?

Wing Young Huie, United States, b. 1955
***Kids Playing, Frogtown*, 1994, gelatin silver print**
Gift of funds from David L. Parker and Mary M. D. Parker, 98.22.5
13 x 8 11/16 in. (image), 14 1/16 x 11 in. (sheet)

For 30 years, Wing Young Huie has documented the changing cultural landscapes of his home state, Minnesota. His photographs depict everyday life in Minnesota communities, creating an intimate interaction between those pictured and their viewers.

Frogtown the Neighborhood

One of St. Paul's oldest and most diverse neighborhoods, Frogtown is roughly a mile from the state Capitol. It has long served as a haven for immigrants, thanks partly to its relatively inexpensive housing. From the 1800s to today, newcomers have included those of German, Irish, and Scandinavian descent. More recently, Frogtown has become home to Hmong, Latino, and Somali populations. It has one of the largest Hmong communities in Minnesota—and the nation.

Frogtown the Series

Frogtown was Wing Young Huie's first major photography series. In the early 1990s, he was working as a commercial photographer when he was inspired to photograph a local neighborhood. The artist found inspiration close to home; he had lived in St. Paul since 1982 and was a frequent diner at restaurants along University Avenue, at the southern border of Frogtown.

His family moved from China to Duluth in 1954. A year later, he was born, becoming the only nonimmigrant in his family.

Huie also chose Frogtown because of his interest in topics around immigration and diversity, and his own personal connection to them. His family moved from China to Duluth in 1954. A year later, he was born, becoming the only nonimmigrant in his family. His mother continued to speak only Chinese even after living 30 years in the United States. When Huie encountered new immigrant families in Frogtown, it reminded him of his family's arrival to Duluth years before.

Moreover, Huie wanted to explore how media reports had influenced the perception of a neighborhood, particularly one labeled for crime, as Frogtown was. Over two years, Huie took photographs and held interviews to document the community and its everyday life. His goal was to expose the difference between Frogtown's given reputation and the reality he saw.

Funded by local grants, Huie wandered the streets of Frogtown for two years. He did not have a system or framework for taking his photographs. He simply approached people as they mowed their lawn or sat on their porch. The relationships he built turned into friendships, leading to more introductions. By the spring of 1995, Huie had taken 173 images and taped more than 100 interviews. The project culminated in an exhibition, held in a vacant grass lot in Frogtown. "Frogtown: Portrait of a Neighborhood" was on display 24 hours a day for a month, and Huie visited daily.

Kids Playing

In this photograph, seven boys and girls of varying ages are seen playing on a wet stretch of asphalt. Three people, one a small child, observe them from a second-story window. We do not know who these people are, but from their smiles it is obvious that they were having fun playing with one another and interacting with Huie, who was working behind the camera.

The children are animated, joyful, and uninhibited as they play with old brooms and wooden sticks. On the far left is a small boy with his back to the camera. He wears light-colored shorts and a sports jersey with a "2" visible on his back, and he holds a small broom with straw bristles. Next to him is a slightly taller boy in dark pants and a sleeveless shirt. His eyes are locked on a boy holding a splintered stick, who himself has locked eyes with the camera. We are not able to tell if he is smiling because we cannot see his mouth, but his eyes hint at a smile. Behind him is an older boy, laughing and looking at Huie. His right hand is blurred by movement. A small child gazes at him, reaching out a hand in a possible attempt to engage in the fun.

This playful scene is observed from above. Peeking out behind a curtain, a small child is entranced by the older kids below. An adult in the middle holds the child and smiles while leaning on an elbow. A second adult catches a glimpse around the window frame. Are the adults looking at the children or at the artist? Huie intentionally leaves the narratives of his photographs open to interpretation, challenging the viewer to explore the many possible stories and histories behind each photo.

About the Artist

Wing Young Huie was born on May 3, 1955, in Duluth, Minnesota. He is the youngest of six siblings and the only one born in the United States. Huie often recalls his childhood as the only Asian student in class. He took his first photography course at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and later earned a B.A. in journalism from the University of Minnesota in 1978.

Describing himself as a self-taught artist, he learned photography through books, magazines, galleries, and museums, particularly the Minneapolis Institute of Art.

Describing himself as a self-taught artist, he learned photography through books, magazines, galleries, and museums, particularly the Minneapolis Institute of Art. A professional photographer since 1989, Huie is best known for his portraits of people in culturally diverse areas across the Twin Cities. He prefers to photograph people he doesn't know.

His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. His current gallery and studio, The Third Place Gallery, is located in south Minneapolis. Huie enjoys visiting with local Twin Cities students to help them understand how they too can build community through art. He continues to be a community builder through his photography and through the open use of his gallery for neighborhood gatherings, almost all of which end with a game of ping-pong.

Key Ideas

1. Wing Young Huie takes photographs of people doing everyday things in Minneapolis and St. Paul, where he lives and works.
2. As the son of parents who immigrated from China before he was born, Huie wants to tell the stories of new Americans.
3. In his photograph of children playing in Frogtown, Huie wants to expose the difference between the neighborhood's negative reputation and what he saw and experienced. He learned that people are people, with homes, families, and children who like to play.

Suggested Questions

1. Huie wants us to know about the people who live in this St. Paul neighborhood. Look closely: How many people do you see? How many children do you see? How many adults? What are the children doing? What are the adults doing? Do you think they know each other? Why?
2. Children everywhere like to play. What do you notice about where the children are playing? Imagination is a big part of play. What do you imagine these children might be playing? What do you see that makes you say that? How would you describe how the children are feeling? What do you see that makes you say that?
3. Imagine you are the photographer: where are you standing? Huie likes to get to know the people he photographs. Do you think he was talking to the people in this photograph? Why? What might they be saying to each other? Together, make up a story about what happened before this photo was taken. Extend the story to what will happen next.
4. Pair share: If you could take a photograph of you and your friends playing in your neighborhood, where would it be? What would you be doing?

Notes

Minneapolis Institute of Art

Art Adventure

American Stories

Self-Guided Tour

1

Portrait of George Washington
Thomas Sully

Gallery __________

4

Winter count
Lakota

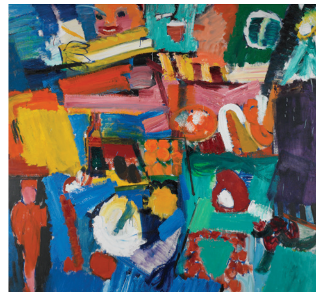
Gallery __________

2

Writing desk
Attributed to William Howard

Gallery __________

5



Billboard
Grace Hartigan

Gallery __________

3

Mill Pond at Minneapolis
Alexis Jean Fournier

Gallery __________

6

Kids Playing, Frogtown
Wing Young Huie

Gallery __________

Mia

Tear out

2 Second Floor

Asia
Galleries 200–227, 237–239, 243, 251–253

Modern & Contemporary
Galleries 262–265, 275–277

Africa
Galleries 236, 250, 254, 255

Ancient Art
Galleries 240–242

MAEP, U.S. Bank
Gallery 257

Americas
Galleries 259–261

Special Exhibition Galleries
Target Galleries 258 & 266–274

Restaurant (Mezzanine Level)
Accessible via the Third Avenue elevator and stairs

Pillsbury Auditorium

Non-Public Areas

3 Third Floor

Europe & America 1600–1900
Galleries 300–337, 350–357, 362

Europe 1200–1600
Galleries 340–343

Modern & Contemporary
Galleries 359–361, 367, 369–380

Photography
Galleries 363–365, 368

Prints & Drawings
Galleries 315, 316, 344, 353

Period Rooms
Galleries 318, 320, 325–328, 331, 335–337

Event Spaces
Reception Hall
Villa Rosa Room

Non-Public Areas

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