

Joslyn Art Museum Art Chats

Check out the artwork and the prompts, and start an artful discussion with the people you love. Great for all ages!



Severin Roesen (American, born Germany, ca.1815–ca.1872), *Fruit Still Life with Compote of Strawberries*, n.d., oil on canvas, 16 x 20 in.; 40.64 x 50.8 cm; Museum purchase with funds from the Gilbert M. and Martha H. Hitchcock Foundation, 2002.10

HUNGRY FOR MORE

Look:

Carefully investigate this arrangement of fruit and identify all the bunches of berries and botanicals you see. Food for thought: still life artists frequently depict rotting fruit and decaying leaves to remind us that good things in life are often short-lived.

Look closely. What evidence do you see that suggests these fading fruits are past their “shelf-life?” Time for a smoothie!

Discuss:

Artists have enjoyed creating still life paintings for hundreds of years. Talk about why you think this subject—an arrangement of objects that do not move—would be so appealing to artists.

At home, try creating your own still life painting by first organizing a variety of ordinary objects on your tabletop. Make it interesting by playing with the colors, light, shapes, and textures!

About the Artist: Upon his arrival in New York around 1848, German born Severin Roesen (ca.1815–ca.1872) quickly adopted characteristically “American” style elements: classical balance, intense realism, and simplicity of form and composition. These he fused into brilliantly colored and brightly illuminated still lifes in which the painted objects appear almost aggressively physical and present. Roesen often reused objects and compositional devices, especially a marble table top on which most of his fruit and flower arrangements are presented.

Joslyn Art Museum Art Chats

Check out the artwork and the prompts, and start an artful discussion with the people you love. Great for all ages!



Jacob van Es (Flemish, 1590–1666), *Still Life*, 1630, oil on wood panel, 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 42 in.; 75.57 x 106.7 cm
Museum purchase through income from the Art Acquisition Endowment Fund 1970–75 and Major Arts Purchase, 1974.56

HUNGRY FOR MORE

Look:

Van Es was admired for his paintings called "breakfast pieces"—carefully studied still lifes showing light meals with eating and drinking utensils.

Allow your eyes to roam around this breakfast table and pay close attention to the shapes. How many ovals can you spot?

Now think about the color. Where has the artist used light, soft, buttery yellows? Did you know by repeating certain shapes and colors, artists like van Es help move our eyes through a painting? Chew on that!

Discuss:

Does this look like your breakfast table? What do these objects—the silver and glass goblets, the imported fresh fruits, and expensive meats and cheeses—say about the seventeenth-century Dutch person who just stepped away from the table? What do you think called them away from the table so suddenly?

About the Artist: Jacob Fopsen van Es (c. 1596–1666), was born in Antwerp, a center for the arts in Flanders (now northern Belgium). Although little is known about his life and training, van Es specialized in a particular genre of painting like many Netherlandish artists of the time. He primarily painted still lifes of meals, particularly "breakfast pieces." His meticulously rendered works are representative of Flemish still lifes of the early seventeenth century, achieving him great renown during his lifetime.

Joslyn Art Museum Art Chats

Check out the artwork and the prompts, and start an artful discussion with the people you love. Great for all ages!



Jules Breton (French, 1827–1906), *The Vintage at Château Lagrange*, 1864, oil on canvas, 37 1/2 x 67 in. (92.7 x 170.2 cm), Gift of the Friends of Art, 1932.3

HUNGRY FOR MORE

Look:

What's going on in this picture? What details do you see that make you think that?

Based on what you see, where is this activity taking place? What are these people doing—the folks farther away in the field and those closest to us? What are they carrying?

Do they appear to enjoy their work? What makes you say so?

Discuss:

Talk about some of the words in the title of this painting you may not be familiar with. “Vintage” is a season’s crop of grapes, or a grape harvesting festival, and “château” (pronounced sha-TOE) is the French term for large country house or mansion. Did you spot the wine-making estate in the distant background?

Now that you know the meaning of these words, do you have a different understanding of the painting?

About the Artist: Jules Breton (1827–1906) never lost his ties to the peasantry and land of his childhood, drawing lasting inspiration from rural customs and traditions throughout his long career. His formal art training began in Belgium and was completed in Paris. Breton’s smooth academic style of painting, coupled with his vision of contented workers, appealed greatly to the establishment of the Empire and the Second Republic, and he received a succession of awards and honors.

Joslyn Art Museum Art Chats

Check out the artwork and the prompts, and start an artful discussion with the people you love. Great for all ages!



William Sidney Mount (American, 1807–1868), *The Blackberry Girls*, 1840, oil on panel, 15 7/8 x 13 7/8 in. (40.32 x 35.24 cm), Museum Purchase with Funds Provided by Susan Storz Butler, 2001.1

HUNGRY FOR MORE

Look:

A picture-perfect picnic in the country! Study the small details in the painting and think about the things that give the painting its title.

What do you see that shows the artist was a close observer of nature? Did you focus on the bright blue sky, the rocks and plants, the blackberry bowl?

Look close—how do you suppose that bowl was made?

Discuss:

Imagine jumping into this painting! Do you think these girls look as though they would invite you in to share their sweet treat?

What does it feel like sitting on this rocky, hillside perch? Can you describe the time of day, the temperature outside, the taste of the fresh berries?

When your picnic is finished, which one of you will win the race down the hill to the little country house?

About the Artist: William Sidney Mount (1807–1868) studied briefly with portraitist Henry Inman (1801–1846) and was one of the first students admitted to New York's National Academy of Design in 1826. While his earliest works imitated European history painting, in 1830, Mount exhibited his first scene of Long Island country life. So enthusiastically was this received that rural themes occupied the artist for the remainder of his career and earned him international fame.

Joslyn Art Museum Art Chats

Check out the artwork and the prompts, and start an artful discussion with the people you love. Great for all ages!



Grant Wood (American, 1891–1942), *Stone City, Iowa*, 1930, oil on wood panel, 30 1/4 x 40 in. (76.84 x 101.6 cm), Gift of the Art Institute of Omaha, 1930.35, Art © Estate of Grant Wood/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York, NY

HUNGRY FOR MORE

Look:

Over the river and through the hills to Stone City, Iowa! Grant Wood is giving us a bird's-eye view of a very curious landscape. What catches your attention first? Is it the clear, sharp edges and the geometric shapes? Is it the rhythm of the landscape—up and down, in and out?

Surrounding the various buildings and bridges, hard-to-spot people, and tiny barnyard animals, did you notice the trees and land transform into what looks like watermelon, peas, slices of bread, and even Brussel sprouts? Yum!

Discuss:

This painting was created during the Great Depression. Talk about why you think the artist, who grew up in a small town in Iowa, decided to paint this bright scene of rural life with abundant references to food. With others in your house, see who can spot the most veggies!

About the Artist: American Regionalist Grant Wood (1891–1942) was an ardent promoter of humble, hometown values. Wood was born on a small farm near Anamosa, Iowa. This upbringing would be the basis of his iconic images of small-town, plain folk and verdant Midwestern vistas. His stylized, hard-edged realism perfectly blended with his observant and sometimes wry characterizations of rural life. His paintings showed reassuring American subjects tied to enduring myths about the perfection of agrarian life.