

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!



Thomas Hart Benton (American, 1889–1975), *The Hailstorm*, 1940, tempera on canvas mounted on panel, 33 x 40 inches, 83.82 x 101.6 cm, Gift of the James A. Douglas Memorial Foundation (1971), 1952.11, Art © T.H. Benton and R.P. Benton Testamentary Trusts/UMB Bank Trustee/Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY

SPRINGTIME

Look:

Allow your eyes to move through this painting—notice the sky, the blowing tree, and the leaning figures. Think about how the artist uses line to create movement.

What do you think is happening?

Does nature seem to be in harmony or discord?

What do you see that makes you think so?

Describe the mood of this painting in one word.

Discuss:

Can you remember being caught in a springtime storm?

How did it make you feel?

About the Artist: An outspoken populist, Missouri native Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975) used his art to extol what he saw as ordinary American virtues. His subjects ranged from colorful, rough-hewn Midwestern characters to broad epics of American life and history tinged with irony and social commentary. In the depths of the Depression, Benton's vigorous images seemed to many Americans to express the enduring spirit of the nation.

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Raymond Jonson (American, 1891–1982), *Composition Five — The Wind*, 1925, oil on canvas, 33 ½ x 44 in.; 85.09 x 111.76 cm, Museum purchase, 1994.20

SPRINGTIME

Look:

Point to the colors, lines, and shapes used by the artist to create air currents, cool breezes, and the direction of the wind.

Do you see anything familiar or recognizable in this painting?

What would the painting feel like if the artist had used warm colors, such as red, orange, and yellow?

Discuss:

Think about how you might draw a picture of something as invisible as the wind.

About the Artist: Iowa born painter Raymond Jonson spent many years studying and teaching in Chicago. After a visit to Santa Fe, he made the permanent move in 1924 to devote himself to painting. Establishing his personal style, he worked in abstraction, transforming the physical environment of the Southwest into geometric, rhythmic designs. An advocate for modern art, he co-founded the Transcendental Painting Group of non-objective artists, which aimed to explore spirituality through art.

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SPRINGTIME

Look:

A vase bursting with blooms of all shapes and sizes! What flowers do you notice first?

Why do they grab your attention?

Look close—what other objects can you find hiding in this still life?

How long do you think it took the artist to create this painting?

What makes you think so?

Discuss:

Talk about your favorite flowers.

Will they be popping up soon in your neighborhood?

Maria van Oosterwyck (Dutch, 1630–1693), *Still Life of Flowers in a Glass Vase*, ca. 1685, oil on canvas, 31 ¾ x 26 ¼ in., Museum purchase with funds from the Ethel S. Abbott Art Endowment Fund and the General Art Endowment Fund, 2019.4, Courtesy of Ben Elwes Fine Art, London. Photo Credit: Matthew Hollow

About the Artist: Dutch Golden Age artist Maria van Oosterwyck (1630–1693) was an acclaimed painter of still lifes. Active from the early 1660s until about 1690, she moved to Amsterdam in 1666. There, she was influenced by prominent still-life painter Willem van Aelst (1627–1683). Painting with great precision, her work is marked by fine brushwork, careful lighting, and thoughtful attention to detail. She enjoyed enormous success during her lifetime, and her paintings were in the royal collections across Europe.

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Nishiyama Hôen (Japanese; Shijo School, Edo Period (1615–1868), 1804–1867), *Two Peacocks and Flowers*, 19th century, ink and colors on silk on two-fold screen, 66 x 74 1/2 in.; 167.64 x 189.23 cm, Museum purchase, 1998.50

SPRINGTIME

Look:

Pretty as a _____! Look closely at this proud bird showing off his magnificent plumes.

What shapes, colors, and patterns are repeated?

Can you guess how many shimmering feathers are on display?

Discuss:

Describe what's happening in this garden full of sweet smelling peonies, magnolias, and cherry blossoms.

Can you guess what time of year it is? What makes you think so?

Talk about the last time you encountered a beautiful bird.

Did it look like these birds?

About the Artist: Nishiyama Hôen was the most prominent Shijo painter in Osaka, and one of the best painters of his time. Some say he was the last great Shijo artist. He is noted for his masterly drawing and gentle, refined style. A master at melding tones of color, he specialized in birds and flowers, as well as figures. Painters of the Shijo school, founded in Kyoto in the eighteenth century, are noted for the naturalism of their work using traditional Japanese techniques rather than western devices of perspective and modeling to achieve greater accuracy of depiction and a sense of the everyday.

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Jennifer Steinkamp (American, born 1958), *Judy Crook, 2*, 2012, single-channel digital video projection, Museum purchase, bequest of Rose Marie Baumgarten, 2013.10

SPRINGTIME

Look:

Imagine you are a squirrel scampering in and out of the branches of this tree!

Do you see the pink blossoms peeking through the green leaves?

Can you spot the tiny yellow buds?

Discuss:

What will you nibble on first?

Where will you hide from your squirrely friends?

[Click here to see this tree change with the seasons until the branches are bare.](#)

Then where will you hide, little squirrel?

About the Artist: Jennifer Steinkamp is one of the most highly regarded digital video artists working today. By projecting images directly onto walls and other architectural features, Steinkamp alters how we experience physical space. *Judy Crook, 2* is part of an ongoing series that honors teachers who fostered the artist's career. Steinkamp studied with Judy Crook at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, and was influenced by her professor's command of color theory. In this animation, a tree sways elegantly as its leaves gradually shift from the vibrant greens of springtime to the warm hues of autumn before finally being shed, leaving its branches barren. The cycle begins again as the tree buds new leaves.