

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!



STORYTIME

Look:

Notice how the artist draws us into this quiet, personal moment by providing a glimpse over the shoulder of a woman reading.

Discuss:

Where and what might the woman be reading?

Where do you like to read and what are your favorite kinds of things to read?

Share a captivating story about a book you could not put down.

About the Artist: Mary Cassatt was one of the leading artists associated with the Impressionist movement. An American painter and printmaker, she spent much of her adult life in France and gained artistic recognition by showing her paintings at the Paris Salon. In 1877, she was invited by Edgar Degas to join a group of artists called the Impressionists. Her subject matter depicted the rich interior lives of women in the domestic setting, with an emphasis on the intimate bonds between mothers and children.

Mary Cassatt, (American, active in France, 1844–1926), *Woman Reading*, 1878–79, oil on canvas, 38 3/4 x 31 in. (98.4 x 78.7 cm), Museum purchase, 1943.38

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John George Brown (American, 1831-1913), *The Card Trick*, ca. 1880s, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 in.; 76.2 x 102.24 cm, Gift of the estate of Mrs. Sarah Joslyn, 1944.14

STORYTIME

Look:

Take a close look at these characters. Study their posture and facial expressions.

Discuss:

What do their threadbare clothes, spare belongings, and shoeshine box say about these boys?

Where are they?

What's their story?

About the Artist: John George Brown was a British citizen and American painter who specialized in genre scenes. Brown settled in New York City in 1853 and at the height of his career was one of the most successful artists in America. Famous for his idealized depictions of street urchins in New York, he presented them with cleaned up faces, idealized forms, and a polished surface. This romanticized depiction of child poverty appealed greatly to American middle-class audiences.

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Thomas Moran (American, born England, 1837–1926), *The Grand Canyon of the Colorado*, 1913, oil on canvas, 25 x 30 in. (63.5 x 76.2 cm), Gift of Mrs. C.N.Dietz, 1934.10

STORYTIME

Look:

You are standing at the precipice of the Grand Canyon!

Allow your eye to travel over the rocky foreground, through the trees and beyond. Notice the vivid colors, the craggy boulders, the finely brushed fir trees. Now imagine the trees are theater curtains, opening up to reveal the dramatic spectacle of space, light, and color!

Instead of using a camera, the artist, Thomas Moran, used his pencils and paintbrushes to capture the breathtaking places he visited. He filled his diary with sketches of wild spaces and natural wonders few people had ever seen.

Discuss:

Where have you traveled, and what stories did you capture with your camera along the way?

About the Artist: Thomas Moran is best known for his expansive paintings of the American West. Born in England, he immigrated to America as a child and apprenticed to an engraver in Philadelphia. In 1871 he accompanied a government surveying expedition to Yellowstone and was greatly inspired by the landscape. Capturing the public's imagination, his work helped inspire the creation of Yellowstone National Park and he was the first painter to depict the magnificence of the Grand Canyon.

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Edgar Degas (French, 1834–1917), *Little Dancer, Aged Fourteen*, 1881, cast ca. 1920–21, plaster, height: 39 in., 99.06 cm, Gift of M. Knoedler & Co., Inc., New York, 1971.271.a-b

STORYTIME

Look:

Study the pose that fourteen-year-old Marie is holding. Try to recreate it.

Then imagine this “little dancer” posing for hours for the great artist Edgar Degas.

Look closely. Examine the expression on Marie’s face, her clothing, her posture.

Discuss:

What is she thinking? How does she feel?

Do you think she has any idea she will live forever in museums around the world?

Create a story about the life of this little ballet dancer and her friends at the Paris Opera Ballet.

About the Artist: Considered one of the founders of Impressionism, Edgar Degas began his career as a historical painter. Once in Paris, he began incorporating scenes of modern French urban life. Radical at the time, he chose subjects with morally suspect backgrounds such as ballet dancers, horse races, and opera houses. Capturing them in spontaneous moments with radical technique, his pastel drawings and oil paintings of ballet dancers brought Degas substantial fame and renown during his lifetime.

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Childe Hassam (American, 1859–1935), *April Showers*, Champs Elysees, Paris, 1888, oil on canvas, 12½ x 16¾, 31.75 x 42.55 cm, Museum purchase, 1946.30

STORYTIME

Look:

If you could jump inside this painting, think about what you would hear.

What would you smell?

What would you feel?

What do you see that appeals to your senses in this way?

Discuss:

Imagine now you are the woman in the painting. Using those sounds, smells and feelings to tell a descriptive story using this scene as your location.

About the Artist: Childe Hassam, a pioneer of American Impressionism, worked in a limited palette depicting urban scenes on grey, rainy days. After spending time in Paris, he was influenced by French Impressionism, refining his sense of color and light. Unusual among the American Impressionists for his depictions of burgeoning cities, he was equally skilled at capturing the charms of the countryside. Riding the wave of excitement for American Impressionism, his oils, watercolors and pastels brought him great success.