Memorial Art Gallery
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Visual and Verbal

Stories and Pictures

Words and Artworks

Rochester City Schools
Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination
Welcome to the

Memorial Art Gallery
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

Learning how to look at a work of art is a lot like learning to read.

Art can open up connections to science, history, social studies and stories from around the world.

Specially-trained tour guides called docents (DOE-sents) will show you around the Gallery and help you learn to look at art.

Please help us keep these treasures safe – enjoy the art with your eyes only.

See you soon!
Learning to Look —

— Looking to Learn

- **Observation:** Looking for Details
- **Description:** Turning Images into Words
- **Interpretation:** Making Meaning
- **Reflection:** Look Again — What else?
Storytelling in Art

Artists “tell” their stories using:

Colors

Lines

Shapes

Textures

Patterns

Composition

You can read these visual details in the same way you read words. It just takes thoughtful looking and analyzing.

Sometimes the title can give you a clue, but nothing is better than your eyes!
- What do you see?
- How can you sort your ideas? (objects, habitat, activities, etc).
What do you think the artist REALLY wanted you to see?
What clues does he give you?
Can you figure out the characters, setting and plot from these visual details?
Just a few examples of myths, fables and stories at MAG

- The Fox and the Heron (72.75)
- Vertumnus and Pomona (83.10)
- Head of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (36.4)
- Shaw Memorial Soldiers’ Heads (2006.9-10)
- Allegory of Hearing (98.21)
- Detail: The God Anubis Tending a Mummy (2000.1.18)
- Roman Cupid (28.75)
- Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln Discussing Emancipation (2002.20)
- Hercules and Antaeus (59.20)
- Antelope Crestpieces (Chi Wara) (69.187, 93.14)
Picturing the Story
mag.rochester.edu/PicturingTheStory/

The Fox and the Heron
Aesop’s fables

Chilkat Robe
Tlingit culture, Alaska

Chi Wara
Bamana people, Mali

The Ramayana
Hindu culture, India
People and Portraits

Artists create characters and “tell their stories” using

 ✓ facial expressions  
   ![Facial Expressions](image)

 ✓ gestures  
   ![Gestures](image)

 ✓ poses  
   ![Poses](image)

 ✓ settings  
   ![Settings](image)
What do you see?

How can you sort your ideas? (gestures, pose, expression, setting, objects, activities, etc).
What do you think the artist REALLY wanted you to see?
What visual clues does he give you?
What have you figured out about this boy?
What would you name this painting? Why?
Why do you think portrait artists pay special attention to the face and hands?

We don’t know why the painter didn’t finish this painting. Perhaps Mr. Hurd didn’t like being shown in his work clothes!

How would you have filled the rest of the canvas?

This is a finished painting of Nathaniel Hurd by the same artist, John Singleton Copley. (Cleveland Museum of Art)
If you were going to pose for a painting, how would you pose?

Would you want a close-up of your face...

... or a full-body portrait?

** Why?

Would you choose to include any special objects?

What would you choose, and why?

Would you choose a special setting or a neutral background?

Why?
Just a few examples of portraits at MAG

- Makonde Crest Mask (Lipiko) (2006.71)
- Portrait of Sophia Josephine Dixon (42.45)
- Portrait of a Boy from the Bracciforte Family of Piacenza, 1550 (76.13)
- Life Mask and Hands of Abraham Lincoln (98.37.1-.2)
- Swing Low (Harriet Tubman) (2008.15)
- Portrait of Tom Cofferty, 1924 (26.1)
- Roman Togatus (73.1.46)
- Portrait of Charles Gaspard Guillaume de Vintimille du Luc, Archbishop of Paris, 1731 (68.1)
Pictures of people and daily life = Genre paintings
Settings have stories too

Settings help artists’ “characters” and “their stories” come to life:

- How would you describe this place? What adjectives would you use?
- Is this a real or imaginary setting? What makes you think so?
- “When” is this setting? Is it in the past, or the future, or today? How can you tell?
- What kinds of changes would happen over time?
Settings might be Cityscapes …
or Landscapes (with or without people)...

- View of Mt. Marseilleveyre and the Isle of Marie (L’Estaque), ca. 1878-1882
- Sunset Scene, after 1915 (93.28)
- Autumn Brook, October 1922 (2001.27)
- The Visit 1779 (77.102)
Even Rochester and Upstate New York has been a setting.
When you come to MAG...

- Make a list of questions to ask your docent.
- Share your own ideas.
- Listen to others’ ideas too.

Choose at least one artwork you want to see.

- Does it look the way you imagined after seeing?
- Is it the size you expected?
- Do you see anything in the REAL artwork that you didn’t see in this slideshow?
- How does it look surrounded by other works of art?
We’ll be looking for you!