

THIRD GRADE CURRICULUM MATERIALS

LACMA's Permanent Collection

THese curriculum materials highlight six objects from the permanent collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). The goal of the materials is to have students observe and describe various artworks, then compare works with similar themes that were created at different time periods.

Four portraits are presented here – an eighteenth-century Korean scroll, two twentieth-century paintings, and a photographic self-portrait of a photographer with her granddaughters. Students will also study and compare two still-life paintings: one highly detailed seventeenth-century Dutch painting and one twentieth-century still life by Diego Rivera. Throughout history, portraits have provided an opportunity for students to learn much about the person represented as well as the artist who created the portrait. In comparing one portrait to another, students have the opportunity to build on observation and description skills.

Each of these six objects is accompanied by background information. Suggested activities for looking, thinking, and writing are included to assist students as they explore the artworks. These materials were developed in alignment with Grade Three California State Content Standards for Visual Arts and English Language Arts. Designed for classroom use, they are intended to stimulate critical thinking, support creative expression, and encourage meaningful experiences with works of art.

This curriculum was written by Lisa Vihos, edited by the LACMA Education Department, and designed by Jenifer Shell and Eunice Lee for *Art Programs with the Community: LACMA On-Site*.

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Portrait of Scholar Official Yun Pong'gu in His Seventieth Year

1750, MIDDLE CHOSŎN PERIOD, KOREA, PYŎN SANGBYŎK

THIS PORTRAIT WAS MADE ABOUT TWO hundred and fifty years ago in Korea, and depicts a scholar and government official named Yun Pong'gu at the age of 70. The portrait is painted on a hanging scroll. During this period in Korean art, some scrolls like this were made to hang in a public space to honor the sitter. Other scrolls were rolled up and safely tucked away, brought out on special days to honor the person and his or her accomplishments. This scroll was made by Pyŏn Sangbyŏk, a talented, well-known artist of the Royal Painting Bureau. He could be thought of as the equivalent of a modern-day staff photographer for the government; however, instead of using a camera he made his portraits with ink on silk.

Sangbyŏk drew the scholar's face in great detail, showing the wrinkles in his brow and the whiskers of his moustache. His arched eyebrows and pursed lips punctuate the intense look on his face, and his eyes are painted in such a way that they reflect a range of emotions. He is looking off to the side, not directly at the viewer, perhaps about to speak to someone who might have entered the room.

- *What type of person do you think Yun Pong'gu is? Serious, funny, wise, talkative? What questions would you ask him if you met him? What do you think he would say?*

Yun is seated on the floor on a woven mat and is wearing what is considered to be an informal scholar's robe and hat. Still, there is a formality to the pose that is dignified and serious. The shape of Yun's hat catches the eye because it creates a large, expansive dark area right above his face. Yun is not holding anything that might tell the viewer about his work or what he likes to do. In fact, his hands are hidden inside the large, billowing sleeves of his robe.

The artist accents Yun's stable, triangular seated form through the use of the black bands of fabric that decorate the scholar-official's robe. A beautiful flowing pattern is created by the band, which forms a ring encircling Yun's neck, and runs down the front of the garment, edging the sleeves and also accentuating the curve of the sitter's knees. The rhythmic folds of the robe's sleeves add to Yun's steady, stable presence. Not only does he appear to be stable but he also looks wise, like someone who has experienced many things throughout his life.

The setting is very bare. There is no other furniture or decoration in the background to tell us about this place; therefore, the viewer does not know for sure if this is the sitter's home or, perhaps, his place of work.

Inscriptions and seals are common on many scroll paintings. The inscription across the top of this scroll provides the name and age of the sitter, while the inscription along the side gives details about Yun Pong'gu. The Chinese characters at the bottom right convey the name of the artist who painted the portrait. Korean court painters often included Chinese as well as Korean characters.



PYON SANGBYOK

(KOREA, ACTIVE C. 1750–1785)

PORTRAIT OF SCHOLAR-OFFICIAL YUN PONG'GU (1681–1767) IN HIS SEVENTIETH YEAR

DATED 1750, MIDDLE CHOSŎN PERIOD

HANGING SCROLL, INK AND COLOR ON SILK, 47 X 35½ IN.

PURCHASED WITH MUSEUM FUNDS M.2000.15.17

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Weeping Woman with Handkerchief

1937, PABLO PICASSO

WEEPING WOMAN WITH HANDKERCHIEF was painted by the Spanish artist Pablo Picasso about seventy years ago. Picasso's weeping woman made her first appearance in Guernica, his huge antiwar masterpiece of 1937 named after the Basque city Guernica, which was bombed by the Germans during the Spanish Civil War. The artist painted Guernica in protest over the war's violence and destruction, and the weeping woman became a frequent, almost obsessive, subject for Picasso for many months to follow.

- Describe the expression on the woman's face. How has the artist shown that the woman is crying? How has he represented her handkerchief?

The woman's face conveys agony and despair. She holds one hand up to her heart as tears pour down her face. On her head, she wears a traditional Spanish head covering called a *mantilla*. The line down the center of her face is a convention Picasso developed to depict a profile and a frontal view simultaneously.

In the early twentieth century, Picasso was a pioneer – along with the French artist Georges Braque – of the style of art known as cubism. Through cubism, Picasso and Braque “analyzed” the underlying geometry of things in the world, and experimented with the notion of seeing the same object from a number of different perspectives at the same time.

As Picasso's painting style continued to evolve, the artist moved away from the strict, analytical cubism that he had first developed between 1909 and 1912 with Braque, opting for a wide variety of expressive interpretations of the world around him.

- Describe the lines and colors Picasso used in this painting. What shapes did Picasso include? What shapes repeat? In what ways is this a realistic portrait, and in what ways did Picasso include abstract geometric and organic shapes?

Picasso's depictions of people, like this one of the weeping woman, often distorted physical reality by exaggerating shapes or putting things in the “wrong” place. Picasso was not so interested in making a realistic rendering of the world (although he was a skilled and expert draftsman), but in expressing through his art the deeper emotions of the human experience. Still, Picasso did have at least one real world model in mind for this woman; this was his partner at the time, artist-photographer Dora Maar.

- Would you consider this picture to be a portrait? Do you think Dora Maar really looked like this? What is more important in this painting: the fact that it refers to a specific woman or the fact that it represents all women who are victims of war? What could be some of the reasons Picasso titled it *Weeping Woman with Handkerchief* rather than *Portrait of Dora Maar*?



PABLO PICASSO
(SPAIN, 1881–1973)

WEeping WOMAN WITH HANDKERCHIEF, 1937

OIL ON CANVAS, 21 X 17½ IN.

GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. THOMAS MITCHELL 55.90

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PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

With Grandchildren at the Fun House

1955, IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM

WHEN AN ARTIST MAKES AN IMAGE OF HIM- or herself, that image is called a self-portrait. American photographer Imogen Cunningham created this photographic self-portrait about fifty years ago. It is a light-hearted depiction of the photographer standing between her two granddaughters.

- *Can you guess why the three figures look elongated and somewhat distorted? How did Cunningham take this picture of herself? Where is her camera?*

The kinds of questions previously discussed about portraits are also appropriate to ask here.

- *What are the expressions on each person's face? What are they wearing? How can the viewer tell the subjects are at a carnival? Does the fact that Cunningham took a picture of herself with her granddaughters in a fun house mirror tell you anything about her?*

Imogen Cunningham began her career working as an assistant to the American photographer Edward S. Curtis. She studied in Germany for a brief period, and then opened her own studio in Seattle, Washington, in 1910. Her studio work at this time consisted of sitters in their own homes, in Cunningham's living room, or out in nature. She won much acclaim for her portraiture and was highly sought after by Seattle's elite.

In 1915 she married artist Roi Partridge with whom she eventually had three children. The family moved to the San Francisco Bay area in 1920, where Cunningham refined her style and began to take a greater interest in pattern and detail. During the 1920s she developed her interest in botanical images, the images for which she is most famous.

Cunningham was a driving force in San Francisco's innovative photographic community in the 1920s and 30s, which included Ansel Adams, Edward Weston, and others. She was one of the co-founders of the group *f/64*, a group that sought to break away from the romantic and "painterly" type of photography popular at the end of the nineteenth century, focusing instead on unsentimental and straightforward image making; "pure photography," as they called it. The term *f/64* refers to the smallest possible aperture on a large format camera. The smaller the aperture, or opening, of the camera's lens, the greater the depth of field, which means that elements at different distances in front of the camera will all be in sharp focus, resulting in highly detailed, precise images. Although *f/64* only had one exhibition as a group in 1935, its work—including the work of Imogen Cunningham—had a major impact on subsequent generations of twentieth-century photographers.

- *How does this photograph compare to photographs of yourself or members of your family? In what ways are they similar or different? What might someone who does not know you learn by looking at portraits of yourself or your family?*



IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM
(UNITED STATES, 1883–1976)

WITH GRANDCHILDREN AT THE FUN HOUSE, 1955

GELATIN-SILVER PRINT, 8 1/8 x 6 7/16 IN.

THE AUDREY AND SYDNEY IRMAS COLLECTION AC1992.197.36

© 2010 THE IMOGEN CUNNINGHAM TRUST

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Bouquet of Flowers on a Ledge

1619–1620, AMBROSIUS BOSSCHAERT

DUTCH ARTIST AMBROSIUS BOSSCHAERT painted this still life nearly four hundred years ago in Holland. The subject is a bouquet of flowers that bursts forth from a small glass vase in a profusion of color and texture. The vase sits on a ledge—perhaps of a balcony or window—overlooking a landscape view of a meandering river, a small island, and a distant city. The immense, cloud-streaked sky that looms over the land forms the backdrop for the monumental flower bouquet. Alongside the vase on the ledge are two seashells, a flower out of water, and a small insect.

- *What details do you notice in this painting? How many different flowers, insects, and shells did the artist include? What mood is conveyed through his choice of colors?*

A rising merchant class in seventeenth-century Holland created a market for a wide variety of picture types, especially paintings that displayed one's possessions. Still lifes, landscapes, portraits, flower pictures, animal pictures, and genre scenes were all in great demand and artists would often specialize in one particular type of painting. Still life paintings such as this one provided excellent opportunities for artists to showcase their aptitude in painting textures and surfaces in great detail and with realistic effects.

Bosschaert was a leader in Dutch flower paintings and many scholars consider this painting to be his masterpiece.

In these types of still life paintings, individual items, such as flowers, insects, and shells, are painted as profoundly meaningful objects. Bosschaert also chose to place the vase and flowers in such a way that the sky becomes the backdrop behind them. What might be the connection between the distant landscape and the vase of flowers?

Bosschaert's flower paintings typically show bouquets that could not have existed in real life, because the flowers he chose to depict did not all bloom during the same season. In this bouquet, he includes tulips, irises, roses, carnations, daffodils, and several others. His inclusion of various bugs nibbling on the plants is a reminder that all things of this world decay and fade away. Ironically, Bosschaert's painting provides the viewer with a record of the flowers' beauty, although the blooms themselves are long gone.

- *In what ways do you think Bosschaert wanted to remind the viewer that material possessions do not last? Why are flowers especially good for making this point?*



AMBROSIUS BOSSCHAERT
(HOLLAND, 1573–1621)

BOUQUET OF FLOWERS ON A LEDGE, 1619–1620

OIL ON COPPER, 15½ x 14 x 2 IN.

GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. EDWARD W. CARTER M.2003.108.7

PHOTO © 2010 MUSEUM ASSOCIATES/LACMA

Still Life with Bread and Fruit

1917, DIEGO RIVERA

THIS STILL LIFE WAS PAINTED ABOUT NINETY years ago by Mexican artist Diego Rivera. The painting features a table laid with fruit, bread, a cutting knife, and various drinking and serving utensils. Rivera paints all of the objects and the table itself in a way that reduces each thing to its elemental, geometric shape. The colors that Rivera used are earthy brown and red tones, with some accents of orange, yellow, and bright green. The table fills the canvas and the artist does not give us much information about where this table might be located; in fact, it is impossible to tell for sure where it is. Is it in the corner of someone's kitchen? Is it in a restaurant?

- *What shapes do you see? What objects do you recognize? What kind of mood do the colors lend to this picture? Would you like to be in the room where this table is located? Why or why not?*

Rather than painting the table as though it recedes into space, Rivera flattens the space and tips everything toward the viewer; the things that are the farthest away from the viewer on the table appear higher in the composition. If one didn't know better, one might say that everything is soon going to slide right off this table. In fact, by flattening the space, Rivera gives a clear view of each individual object. Nothing is blocked by anything else in front of it, and each object in the painting is clearly viewable.

Rivera is best known for his large public murals painted in Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s that celebrate the folk traditions of Mexican culture and the indigenous peoples of the region,

as well as the socialist ideals of postrevolutionary Mexico. In the beginning of his artistic career, starting in 1907, Rivera traveled to Europe and studied art first in Spain and then in France. Rivera was in Paris at the time when Picasso and Braque had just started experimenting with cubism. Rivera was clearly influenced by the second phase of cubism, known as "synthetic cubism." (The first type of cubism that Picasso and Braque developed was called "analytic cubism.") Synthetic cubism is generally brighter in color, and the forms are more readily recognizable; in addition, synthetic cubism is more related to collage and the idea of bringing things together in a startling manner.

- *What are some of the first things the viewer notices about Rivera's still life? Are there any aspects of the painting that you find surprising?*

Rivera's work fits into a long tradition of European still life painting. While his work may not have the symbolic meaning found in the still life by Ambrosius Bosschaert, he was certainly aware of the tradition of such paintings. He also seems to be paying homage to artists like Paul Cézanne, who painted many still lifes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and was a strong influence on Picasso and Braque, as well as many other artists at that time. Cézanne believed that all things in nature could be reduced to their simplest geometric forms: the square, the circle, and the cone. In *Still Life with Bread and Fruit*, Rivera clearly puts that notion onto his canvas.



DIEGO RIVERA
(MEXICO, 1886–1957)

STILL LIFE WITH BREAD AND FRUIT, 1917

OIL ON CANVAS, 45 13/16 x 35 IN.

GIFT OF MORTON D. MAY 53.25.1 © 2010 BANCO DE MÉXICO DIEGO RIVERA & FRIDA KAHLO MUSEUMS TRUST.

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Premiere

1957, STUART DAVIS

THIS PAINTING WAS CREATED OVER FORTY years ago by American artist Stuart Davis. The inspiration for this painting was a stack of common items from a grocery store. Davis made twenty-eight ink drawings to develop the composition, making the composition increasingly abstract with each one. The artist's combination of words and colors also capture the contemporary phenomenon of advertising and branding that was becoming an integral part of the American experience at the time.

- *List the colors and words in Premiere. Which words are specific to individual products? Which words are general terms found on many different types of packages? Davis was interested in how packaging related to the branding of products. If you were to create an artwork with products from a contemporary supermarket, what colors and words would you choose to include, and why?*

Seeking inspiration from everyday objects and images, Davis included word fragments and product labels into his compositions. He was also fascinated by the possibilities of the hardware store and the kitchen as sources of images. In 1927-28 he nailed an electric fan, a rubber glove, and an egg beater to a table and used it as his subject matter for a year.

For its September 1956 issue, *Fortune* magazine invited seven artists to each create an artwork that would convey the glamour of the advertising and packaging of the time.

Interested in how products were making their way into popular American culture, Davis embarked upon this project by first creating a series of preliminary studies in ballpoint pen; then completing a gouache, *Package Deal*, for *Fortune*; and culminating with the oil painting *Premiere*. Beginning with a stack of products, including table napkins and cans of lima beans and coffee that he purchased at his local supermarket, Davis began with sketches. Drawing was fundamental to Davis' working method.

- *The twenty-eight sketches Davis created for this painting can be viewed on Collections Online at www.lacma.org. Discuss the different choices Davis made throughout his process in creating the composition.*

Davis was also deeply influenced by modern art, in particular Cubism. After studying in Paris, he began to create more abstracted compositions, incorporating words in a significant fashion. He combined his interest in abstraction with his love of vibrant contemporary American life—particularly cities and jazz music—to create a unique style of painting.

- *View the paintings by Pablo Picasso and Diego Rivera included in these materials. How has each artist incorporated geometric shapes into their paintings? What are the differences among these three paintings?*



STUART DAVIS
(UNITED STATES, 1892–1964)

PREMIERE, 1957

OIL ON CANVAS, 58 X 50 IN.

MUSEUM PURCHASE, ART MUSEUM COUNCIL FUND (M.60.4)
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