

# The Art of Portraiture

SCHOOL TOUR PACKET – GRADES K AND 1

**CUMMER**  
**MUSEUM**  
ART | GARDENS | EDUCATION



Egyptian, (11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), *Stele of Iku and Mer-imat*, c. 2100 B.C., polychrome on limestone, 23 ¼ x 20 5/8 x 5 in., Purchased with funds from the Morton R. Hirschberg Bequest, AP.1989.1.1.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens is excited for your group to participate in the Art of Portraiture Tour! This tour and resource packet is aligned with NGSSS: Visual Arts Standards to introduce students to the art of portraiture where they will identify and discuss facial features, expressions, emotions, and clues about the people portrayed in the artwork. This tour is also aligned with selected math, language arts, and science standards.

A selection of artwork is included in each of our school tour packets, but not every artwork will be included on the school tour. Works that are included in the packet and not highlighted on the tour are similar examples of what students will see and expose them to multiple works of art in our Permanent Collection.

Please email [schooltours@cummuseum.org](mailto:schooltours@cummuseum.org) with any questions.

## TOUR SUMMARY

### Objective

Students will make meaningful connections to the art and gardens through observation and dialogue while building critical thinking skills and exploring the a variety of portraits.

### Theme

The Art of Portraiture

### Big Ideas

- + Portrait paintings of people show their facial features and the expressions on their face.
- + In art, objects included in a portrait can tell us about the person's background, interests, or life.
- + Portraits tell stories and the art materials of the portrait can give clues as to what the story is.
- + Explore sculptural portraits through multisensory exploration of the gardens.

## STANDARDS

### VISUAL ART

#### Kindergarten

- + VA.K.C.1.1 - Create and share personal works of art with others.
- + VA.K.S.1.1 - Explore art processes and media to produce artworks.
- + VA.K.S.3.1 - Develop artistic skills through the repeated use of tools, processes, and media.
- + VA.K.H.1.1 - Describe art from selected cultures and places.
- + VA.K.H.1.2 - Follow directions for suitable behavior in an art audience.
- + VA.K.H.2.1 - Compare selected artwork from various cultures to find differences and similarities.
- + VA.K.O.2.1 - Generate ideas and images for artworks based on memory, imagination, and experiences.
- + VA.K.O.3.1 - Create works of art to document experiences of self and community.

#### Grade 1

- + VA.1.C.1.1 - Create and discuss works of art that convey personal interests.
- + VA.1.C.2.1 - Describe visual imagery used to complete artwork.
- + VA.1.C.3.1 - Identify vocabulary that is used in both visual art and other contexts.
- + VA.1.O.1.1 - Identify and use the structural elements of art and organizational principles of design to support artistic development.

## ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Kindergarten

- + LA.K.1.6.1 - Use new vocabulary that is introduced and taught directly.
- + LA.K.1.6.2 - Listen to and discuss both familiar and conceptually challenging text.
- + LA.K.1.7.1 - Make predictions about text content using pictures, background knowledge, and text features (e.g., title, sub-heading, captions, and illustrations).
- + LA.K.2.1.5 - Participate in a group response to various literary selections (e.g., nursery rhymes, fairy tales, picture books), identifying the character(s), setting, and sequence of events and connecting text to self (personal connection), and text to world (social connection).
- + LA.K.5.2.1 - Listen carefully and understand directions for performing tasks (e.g., three or four-step oral directions).
- + LA.K.5.2.2 - Listen attentively to fiction and non-fiction read-alouds and demonstrate understanding.
- + LA.K.5.2.6 - Use complete sentences when speaking.

#### Grade 1

- + VA.1.C.1.1 - Create and discuss works of art that convey personal interests.
- + VA.1.C.2.1 - Describe visual imagery used to complete artwork.
- + VA.1.C.3.1 - Identify vocabulary that is used in both visual art and other contexts.
- + VA.1.O.1.1 - Identify and use the structural elements of art and organizational principles of design to support artistic development.

## **SCIENCE**

### **Kindergarten**

- + SC.K.N.1.2 - Make observations of the natural world and know that they are descriptors collected using the five senses.
- + SC.K.P.9.1 - Recognize that the shape of materials such as paper and clay can be changed by cutting, tearing, crumpling, smashing, or rolling.
- + SC.K.L.14.1 - Recognize the five senses and related body parts.
- + SC.K.L.14.2 - Recognize that some books and other media portray animals and plants with characteristics and behaviors they do not have in real life.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **First Grade**

- + SS.1.A.2.1 - Understand history tells the story of people and events of other times and places.
- + SS.1.A.2.2 - Compare life now with life in the past.

## **ARTFUL THINKING AND CLOSE LOOKING**

The purpose of Artful Thinking and Close Looking is to engage students in meaningful, thoughtful conversation while closely observing artwork. By observing and looking closely at a work of art, students can activate their critical thinking skills through making observations, explaining their reasoning, listening to others, and discussing – all while making personal connections and interpretations.

The process of looking closely can be broken down into different stages (observation, analysis, and interpretation) and is appropriate for and successful with ages PreK through adult. It's helpful to note that this process works not only for observing artwork but can also be applied when making observations in nature or while reading (e.g. observe and notice images/illustrations in a book). Use these looking strategies while viewing the artwork in the packet with your class.

Before launching into Artful Thinking, preview the focus of each of the three phases, to get a sense of the skills that are isolated within each phase and how they build off of each other.

### **Observation**

To begin the Artful Thinking method, encourage students to look closely at the work of art and describe what they notice and see. Questions using the elements of art (line, shape, color, form, value, texture, and space) are particularly helpful in driving the conversation to what students actually see, rather than what they think is

happening (interpretation). Ask students to observe a work of art for 30 to 60 seconds before beginning conversation about the work. After the designated time has ended, ask the following questions:

- + What do you notice/see?  
(Encourage students be specific)
  - What colors do you see?
  - What types of lines do you see?
  - What types of shapes and forms do you see?
- + What else do you notice/see?  
(Encourage answers from other viewpoints)
- + Can you describe them in more detail?
  - How would you describe the colors?
  - How would you describe the lines?
  - How would you describe the shapes and forms?

### **Analysis**

During this stage, students are analyzing the arrangement of objects and the general composition of the work of art and how the objects work together. The conversation can move to the following line of questioning:

- + How is it all arranged?
  - Where do you see those colors?
  - Where do you see those lines?
  - Where do you see those shapes and forms?
  - How are they grouped?
- + How do these elements of art work together?

## Interpretation

Students now use the visual evidence they (and their classmates) have been gathering to support their answers during the interpretation phase. Their responses will depend on what they have identified during the observation and analysis phase. Offer relevant contextual information within the conversation as it flows.

- + What do you think is happening?
- + What makes you say that?
- + What do you think the artist's message is? What is this artwork about?
- + Why do you think that?

## Notes about the process of Artful Thinking and Close Looking

- + The stages in this process can happen simultaneously rather than in discrete phases as outlined above. For example, your line of questioning could go from observation to analysis and back to observation. Here is a sample conversation with Kindergarten or First Grade students.
  - You: What do you notice and see?
  - Student 1: A house. (Note: most often, students will initially and naturally jump immediately to interpretation – it's what we're used to doing – to make meaning immediately. Slow them down by asking follow-up questions. Ask for evidence.)
  - You: What makes you say that it's a house? What do you notice? What lines do you see?
  - Student 1: It looks like my grandma's house. I see tall lines

and the color brown. I notice people inside the windows.

- Student 2: The lines make a triangle. It looks like a roof.
  - Student 1: I see a street, and a house lives on a street.
  - You: What do you notice that makes you say that? What lines do you see? Student 1: The lines are flat and long, right next to each other. And the lines that make a square (the house) are next to the lines that make the street.
  - Your role becomes to question and prompt so that the students give the detail and evidence that supports their observations. The direction of questioning depends on how the class responds, so be adaptive, responsive, and flexible to the flow of the conversation.
- + Artful thinking requires a level of active listening:
    - Be open to asking questions unique to the responses to help facilitate the conversation.
    - Be open to a multitude of interpretations, because students are forming their own connections and meanings.
  - + Artful thinking encourages not only close observation but also helps students practice slowing down their looking and seeing.

## VOCABULARY

**DRAWING** – a picture or image made with a pencil, pen, or crayon rather than paint

**EXPRESSION** – a look on someone's face that conveys a particular emotion

**FACIAL FEATURES** – a part of a face, such as eye, nose, lips

**GARDEN** – a plot of land specifically decorated with plants, trees, and shrubs for people to enjoy; also a plot of ground used to cultivate flowers, vegetables, fruits, and herbs

**GROUP PORTRAIT** – a portrait of a group of people in a painting, drawing, or photograph that primarily is of the face and upper body torso

**LIMESTONE** – a rock that is formed by organic remains of sea animals and is used as building stone

**MOOD** – feeling, emotion, or state of mind

**PAINTING** – a picture or image that is created using paint

## WORKS OF ART & ACTIVITIES

**PHOTOGRAPH** – a picture or image made using a camera

**PORTRAIT** – a painting, photograph, or drawing of a person that primarily is of the face and upper body torso

**PROFILE** – the figure or head represented from a side view

**SCULPTURE** – a three-dimensional work of art that is carved from wood, stone, or other solid materials, or cast in metal, plaster, or plastic

**THREE-DIMENSIONAL** – refers to works of art that have height, width, and depth

**TWO-DIMENSIONAL** - refers to works of art that have height and width, but lack depth; typical examples are paintings and prints

*Holy Family with the Infant St. John the Baptist*





Giorgio Vasari (Italian, 1511-1574), *Holy Family with the Infant, St. John the Baptist*, c. 1540, oil on panel, 42<sup>3/4</sup> x 32<sup>1/8</sup> in., Museum purchase with Council Funds, AP 1989.3.1

## About the Artist



Giorgio Vasari

Vasari was born in the Tuscan town of Arezzo, where his father was a ceramist. In fact, "vasari" means "maker of vases" in Italian. As an artist, architect, and writer, Giorgio

Vasari was closely associated with the court of the Medici family in Florence, where he was sent as a young boy of thirteen to receive training in art, geometry, and Latin. The reputation and fame of Vasari is based in large part on his authorship of the *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects* (Florence, 1550), an indispensable history of Italian artists. This highly readable book, full of astute observations and amusing anecdotes, laid the foundation for a humanist-inspired study of the history of art. The original edition contained 120 biographies of painters dating from the thirteenth century to Vasari's contemporaries. A revised edition, published in 1568, contained further biographies and illustrations. Despite the exaggerated editorialism for which Vasari has become known, the work is indispensable to modern historians.

## About the Painting

This fine work demonstrates Giorgio Vasari's close affiliation with the Mannerist style of painting with the intense, bright colors, an asymmetrical composition, and exaggerations in scale create a dynamic image. The Virgin Mary and St. Joseph are shown as caring parents of the Christ Child, who holds a goldfinch in his left hand. The tiny bird, fond of eating thistles and thorny plants is commonly interpreted as a reference to Christ's crown of thorns and therefore serves as foreshadowing of his Crucifixion. The inscription on the banderole, *Agnus Dei*, or Lamb of God, also suggests his future sacrifice. St. John the Baptist (older cousin of Christ) is also shown as a young child. He is represented already clad in the animal furs that foretell his preaching in the inhospitable wilderness. Although Vasari denoted Mannerism *la*

*maniera moderna* (Italian: “the modern style”) and his painting exhibits many Mannerist tendencies, this painting most clearly evokes the muscular perfection of the figures found on Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel ceiling. These biblical and mythological characters were intentionally distorted so that viewers many feet below could discern the narratives Michelangelo was asked to depict.

## ACTIVITY

### 1. Portraits

Have students look carefully at several types of portraits including their own school portrait. Locate basic shapes, name colors, and examine details that give specific information about the person depicted.

Ask students to identify facial expressions and individual characteristics in the portraits. Ask questions that will encourage children to look carefully and answer with specific vocabulary.

Identify facial expressions that communicate feelings. Discuss the difference between an individual portrait and a group portrait.

### 2. Drawing: Biographies

Discuss the similarities between biographies and portraits. Read an age appropriate biography to the children, and then ask them to draw the subject based off of the clues and information from the reading.

### 3. After your Visit

Recall the tour with students. Ask them what they remember about the portraits that were viewed. What did they all have in common? Make sure the discussion includes feelings and facial features.

Next, have students create self-portrait. This can be created using a variety of medium that students have access to (crayons, colored pencils, markers, paint, etc.). Students should think about what type of mood they want to portray in their portrait. Students can also create a background for their portrait. Have them think

about what they can include in the picture that would give clues to their personality or things that they enjoy. Additionally, remind students to include their facial features.

When the artwork is complete, discuss the similarities and differences in their work. Have students point out any details that express feelings or mood or information about the themselves.

## ***Stele of Iku and Mer-imat***



Egyptian, (11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty), *Stele of Iku and Mer-imat*, c. 2100 B.C., polychrome on limestone, 23  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 20  $\frac{5}{8}$  x 5 in., Purchased with funds from the Morton R. Hirschberg Bequest, AP.1989.1.1.

### **About the Egyptians**

Funerary customs were important to the Egyptians. Many communities believed in unique gods and goddesses. The Egyptian ruler, or pharaoh, was thought of as a god, specifically the son of the sun god Ra and the earthly incarnation of Horus, the falcon-headed god. The Egyptians had a strict canon of proportions, or method for presenting figures in relief and paint. In the Old Kingdom, a vertical axis was drawn and the body parts were evenly distributed left and right. In the Middle Kingdom, during which this image was painted, the Egyptians developed an 18 square grid system based on Old Kingdom ratios.

The Egyptian time period is divided up into sub-sections called dynasties. The Middle Kingdom runs from

approximately 2133 B.C. to 1786 B.C. and is comprised of the 11th and 12th Dynasties.

Dynasty XI (2133B.C.-1992 B.C.) This dynasty followed a period that lacked strong political leadership, resulting in much confusion in society. At the beginning of the Middle Kingdom, provincial kings from Thebes increased their influence. Under one such prince, Mentuhotep (2060 B.C.-2010 B.C.), there was a reunification of Egypt resulting in great political stability and increased production of art. During this period, provincial princes used hidden, rock-cut tombs rather than pyramids.

Dynasty XII (1991 B.C.-1786 B.C.) Civilization flourished under governmental stability. The royal court was moved to the Central Egyptian oasis, the Fayûm. Construction of royal pyramids increased. The earliest known obelisk (slender monument type) dates from this period, and was dedicated to Sesostris (1971 B.C.-1928 B.C.).

### **About the Artwork**

Although the original location of this stele is unknown, it is almost certainly from Naga ed-Der, a village in Upper Egypt, about seventy miles northwest of Thebes and Karnak, on the bank of the Nile river. This stele closely resembles nearly one hundred relief carvings found in the offering chambers of tombs in the vast cemetery at Naga ed-Der.

Despite its fragmentary condition, the expertly carved surface and the original polychrome are well preserved. The stele depicts a nobleman named Iku and his wife, Mer-imat. One of the principal

purposes of the stele is explained in the vertical inscription (hieroglyphs) located in front of the striding Iku. This written "appeal to the living" asks those who pause in front of it to read the offering text aloud, providing the deceased with "a thousand of bread and beer, a thousand of beef and fowl, and of everything good, for the high official, the honored Iku."

Mer-imat's name is identified by the incised hieroglyphs to the right of her profile. The text above her head describes her titles as "king's [ornament], priestess of Hathor, honored one, beautiful of ornament, overseer of oasis-dwellers." Scholars originally thought that Mer-imat's titles, significantly more elaborate than those of her husband, suggested that Iku may have owed his noble position to their marriage. More recent scholarship has suggested that these titles were often used on the stele of well-born women in the area, and that Iku was important in his own right.

The relationship between the figures, that of husband and wife, is underscored by the position of the figures, and Mer-imat's arm encircling her husband's shoulder is a device seen in many other stele in Naga ed-Der to indicate the marital relationship. In like fashion, Iku's staff and scepter, traditional symbols of authority, are commonly seen on male figures in the area to reinforce power and prominence.

The wealth and position of the couple is further highlighted by the intricately beaded wigs, jeweled collars, armlets, and anklets.

## ACTIVITY































### 1. Walk Like an Egyptian

Have your students stand like the Egyptians in the artwork with torso facing front, but both feet turned to one side. Is it hard to keep your balance? Why do you think people were depicted standing like this? The Egyptians had yet to be able to make free-standing statues so most people depicted in Egyptian art were depicted in profile.

### 2. Make Your Own Relief

Have students experiment with creating their own relief by carving into a piece of Styrofoam (or produce trays) with a dull pencil. They can practice making designs or hieroglyphic symbols by using the alphabet on the following page.

# Egyptian Hieroglyphs

 A	 B	 B	 C	 D	 E
 F	 G	 H	 H	 I	 J
 K	 L	 M	 N	 N	 O
 P	 Q	 R	 S	 T	 T
 U	 V	 W	 X	 Y	 Z

## RESOURCES

### Reading Resources

- + *When Sophie Gets Angry – Really, Really Angry . . .*, Molly Garrett Bang
- + *The Ugly Duckling*, Hans Christian Andersen
- + *The Rough Face Girl*, Rafe Martin
- + *Today I Feel Silly & Other Moods That Make My Day*, Jamie Lee Curtis
- + *Annie Oakley (First Biographies)*, Jan Gleiter
- + *Aunt Clara Brown: Official Biography*, Linda Lowery
- + *The Flying Horse: The Story of Pegasus*, Jane B. Mason
- + *King Midas: A Golden Tale*, Omar Rayyan

### Music Resources

- + *Peter and the Wolf*, Serge Prokofiev
- + *A Child's Celebration of Song: Music for Little People*
- + *Fantasia 2000, An Original Walt Disney Records Soundtrack*
- + *Carnival of the Animals*, Camille Saint-Saens
- + *A Baroque Festival (1600-1750)*, Camerata Academica

### Visual Resources

- + *Queen Maria Luisa of Spain*, Francisco Goya
- + *Mere Gregoire*, Gustave Courbet
- + *Young Lady in White – Miss Elsie Palmer*, John Singer Sargent
- + Various portraits of mothers and children, Mary Cassatt
- + Various portraits and self-portraits, Vincent Van Gogh or Rembrandt
- + *American Gothic*, Grant Wood

### Internet Resources

- + [National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian](#)
- + [Cultural Arts Resource for Teachers and Students](#)
- + [Egypt for Kids Video](#)
- + [100 Most Famous Portraits Video](#)

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