

Cunningham Creek Elementary
Meet the Artist

Gainsborough, Thomas - Blue Boy & Wyeth, Andrew - Christina's World



ARTIST: GAINSBOROUGH, THOMAS (GANZ-bor-uh) (1727-1788)

PRINT: BLUE BOY British School
HUNTINGTON LIBRARY Date: circa 1770
CALIFORNIA Size: 70" x 48"
Medium: Oil on canvas

ARTIST - Thomas Gainsborough was born in Sudbury, England. He spent most of his life living in England. He is considered mainly a landscape and portrait artist. He was able to capture a likeness of the subjects in his portraits that made him a much sought after portrait artist. He was also very skilled in his handling of paint. Gainsborough painted all of his paintings himself - he never hired anyone to help him. It appears he used very long brushes and diluted his oil paints with turpentine to make them thinner and more like watercolors. Gainsborough was the most famous portrait painter of his time in England. He had 2 daughters and died from a disease of the throat.

PRINT - In *Blue Boy*, Gainsborough shows his skill as a portrait artist. Dressed in satin and feathers, this young gentleman poses haughtily in front of a country landscape. The pride of birth and destiny is obvious in every detail. Full-length, life-sized canvases like this decorated the grand stairways of the country houses of wealthy people in England. Gainsborough liked to match the unspoiled beauty of the landscape with the natural beauty of his subjects. Not only was

he able to capture the likeness of his subjects, but he was also skilled at capturing textures. The shiny, smooth satin, the fluffy feather, and the soft landscape show his skill.

ARTIST: WYETH, ANDREW (1917 -)

PRINT: *CHRISTINA'S WORLD* 20th Century American

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART Date: 1948

NEW YORK CITY Size: 32 1/4" x 47 3/4"

Medium: Tempera on gesso panel

ARTIST - Andrew Wyeth was born in Chadd's Ford, Pennsylvania. His father was a famous illustrator and mural painter who trained Andrew. Wyeth usually paints objects and landscapes from his own life. The people portrayed in his paintings are usually his wife, his two sons or his neighbors. When he starts a new piece of art, he makes a very careful pencil drawing of his subject. Then he decides whether he is going to use watercolor or tempera for his paint. Wyeth puts great amount of feeling into his paintings. He tries to paint his subjects the way he sees and feels about them. He also pays close attention to texture and detail. In 1963 Andrew Wyeth was awarded the 'Medal of Freedom' by President Kennedy. This is the highest honor a civilian in our nation can receive.

PRINT - *Christina's World* is perhaps one of Wyeth's most famous paintings. It shows a girl, crippled by polio, crawling through a field picking berries. The simple composition with its sweep of grass, lonely houses, and Christina shows a refusal to meet defeat, the struggle for existence, and courage. In *Christina's World*, Wyeth was trying to portray the environment in which Christina spent her whole life. He did this by showing us the world as she saw it bordered by the house and the sea. Details are important to Wyeth. The ladder, the broken window and the abandoned roof add the finishing touches to this painting. Historical Reference: In 1948, the date this was painted, the long playing record album (LP) was invented.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. In what period of history do you think these pictures take place? Why?
2. In what part of the world do you think these pictures take place? Why?
3. What do you think each character is thinking? What are they feeling?
4. How has each artist made the main character become important in his picture?
5. How has each artist used colors differently?
6. What is the background for each portrait?

RELATED ACTIVITIES

1. A portrait artist often draws or paints a figure based on looking at a model. Choose one friend in class who will sit as a model. Draw a picture of this person. Try to capture his or her expression and position. You may then add bright colors, textures and a background to the picture.
2. Draw a picture of a person in some type of situation. See if you can tell me what this person is thinking about, or where he is, by his expression. Is he happy or sad about his life or where he is? Try to make us understand something about the person's feelings.
3. Draw a picture that tells a story. Make the background show texture. Make the work as realistic as you can.