

Ready. Set. Learn!

Creating a *Tableau Vivant* (Living Painting) of *The Fox Chase*

Grades: 9-12

Time: over the course of a week

Grouping: whole class, small groups, individual

Materials: access to Museum's website, writing paper, craft supplies, video/digital recorder

Description

The Lyme Art Colony was a group of artists who were drawn to Old Lyme, Connecticut, as early as 1900. They stayed at the Griswold boardinghouse that was owned and operated by Florence Griswold. One of the most famous paintings created by a member of the Lyme Art Colony was *The Fox Chase*, a nearly nine-foot long panel that depicted the artists staging a mock fox hunt down Lyme Street.

This lesson introduces students to the art and history of the Lyme Art Colony by having them research one of the characters depicted in *The Fox Chase* in preparation for a *tableau vivant*, (a living painting) that talks. Students use the Museum's on-line resources to gather information (both in words and pictures) about their specific character as well as the Lyme Art Colony to write their character script (150 words) that incorporates the material. The talking *tableau vivant* can be performed for fellow classmates as well as other students in the schools.

Objectives

- To learn about the painters of the Lyme Art Colony
- To use the Museum's website as a source of information
- To work as a group to develop a *tableau vivant*
- To view historic photographs and paintings of people
- To work alone to research, write, and perform a character script that teaches about a historic artist
- To work as a group to perform a *tableau vivant* of *The Fox Chase* in front of the class

Curriculum Connections

Social Studies educational experiences in Grades 9-12 will ensure that students:

- Formulate historical questions and hypotheses from multiple perspectives, using multiple sources
- Gather, analyze and reconcile historical information, including contradictory data, from primary and secondary sources to support or reject hypotheses
- Use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives
- Initiate questions and hypotheses about historic events they are studying
- Be active learners at cultural institutions such as museums and historical exhibitions
- Describe relationships between historical subject matter and other subjects they study, current issues, and personal concerns
- Explain why places and regions are important to human and cultural identity and stand as symbols for unifying society

Visual Art educational experiences in Grades 9-12 will ensure that students:

- Analyze and interpret art works in terms of form, cultural and historical context, and purpose
- Analyze and compare characteristics of the visual arts within a particular historical period or style with ideas, issues or themes of that period
- Compare the creative processes used in the visual arts with the creative processes used in the other arts and non-arts disciplines
- Create and solve interdisciplinary problems using multimedia
- Apply visual arts skills and understanding to solve problems relevant to a variety of careers
- Use subject matter, symbols, ideas and themes that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, and cultural and aesthetic values to communicate intended meaning
- Research and analyze historic meaning and purpose in varied works of art
- Reflect critically on various interpretations to better understand specific works of art
- Defend personal interpretations using reasoned argument

Language Arts educational experiences in Grades 9-12 will ensure that students:

- Will apply collaborative skills to elaborate on concepts being addressed and to describe processes used in achieving results
- Will select from the complete variety of text structures (essay, short story, poetry, academic essay, report, research paper, response to literature, documentary, etc.) the appropriate organizational pattern for addressing audience, purpose, and point of view
- Will identify and use effectively the salient features of all appropriate oral, visual, and written discourse

- Will determine which primary and secondary sources are appropriate to the task (research paper, fiction, school newspaper, video) and will integrate and elaborate upon information effectively in the final product
- Will identify and use the most effective process for them to create and present a written, oral, or visual piece
- Will use the spoken and written syntax made standard by television announcers and newspaper editorialists and will use the diction of skilled writers and orators
- Will evaluate the language they use in written and oral tasks for its suitability for the audience being addressed

The above goals align with this lesson and were selected from *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards* (adopted in March 1998, published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, Division of Teaching and Learning). Go to: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/site/default.asp> to download a copy of the entire publication *The Connecticut Framework: K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards*.

Inclusion Activity (Engaging Prior Knowledge)

Begin the lesson with a Student Grouping Activity that places students into unique pairs or trios to discuss a question designed to stimulate their prior knowledge on a subject or idea related to the lesson. Several activities that will help organize students into unexpected groups are listed below. Of course, other methods of pairing up students may be substituted for these activities.

Student Grouping Activities

Musical Pairs

Use a portable CD player or simple instrument to play music/sound. Explain to the students that when the music/sound starts they are to walk around the room silently in a safe but random pattern (nodding friendly hellos to their fellow students). When the music stops, the students should pair up with the nearest person to discuss the question read aloud. After each question is discussed, start the music again. Repeat until all three questions have been discussed.

A Circle of Friends

Ask your students to get into a circle facing the center. Ask every other student to step into the circle facing out. Have the inner circle rotate to the right until they are face to face with a partner. Ask the first question. After the question is discussed, have the outer circle move three or four people to the right to line up with a new partner. After the question is discussed, have both the inner circle and outer circle move three to four people to the right to line up with a final partner.

Enjoying a Little Tete-A-Tete

The term “tete-a-tete” refers to a private conversation between two people (as well as a short sofa intended to accommodate two persons). Ask your students to put their chairs into pairs (side by side, but facing in opposite directions) and take a seat. After each question is discussed, have students move to another seat and partner up with a new person.

Find Two Like You

Ask your students to find two other students who match a certain criterion like: *Find two other students with your hair color*; or *Find two other students with birthdays close to yours*; or *Find two other students who have same kinds of pets*; or *Find two other students who like your favorite ice cream flavor*. Students usually begin to call out their answers and cluster with those whose answers match. Once they have three people, their group is complete. Teachers may have to make a cluster of non-matching students.

Once the students are in their pairs or trios, have them discuss one of the following questions read aloud by the teacher. After a minute of discussion passes, remix the groups and continue with next question. Repeat until all questions have been discussed.

Discussion Questions

- If you could magically step into any work of art, which one would you choose and why?
- If she could suddenly speak (in English), what do you think the *Mona Lisa* would say?
- Describe a time when you felt especially proud of being part of a team or club or other small group.

Instructions

1. Divide the class into working groups of three and have them read *The Story of Miss Florence and the Lyme Art Colony* to introduce students to the Lyme Art Colony. A printable copy of the text is available from on the [Educators' Toolbox Background](#) page. Have them formulate a series of questions they have about the Lyme Art Colony after reading the background information (i.e. what more do they want to know?).
2. Introduce the assignment of the class creating a *tableau vivant* (living painting) based on *The Fox Chase*, a painting related to the Lyme Art Colony. Remind students that they will be able to research about the panel as well as one of the particular artists (or things) via their computer by going to the Museum's on-line learning sites.
3. Ask the groups to select a moment from *The Story of Miss Florence and the Lyme Art Colony* and prepare a frozen tableau of the scene using their whole group. The students should decide the scene and determine which shape they will hold in silence in front of the class while the others try to guess the scene. After five minutes of preparation, ask for volunteers to perform the first tableau. Once the students are frozen in place, the teacher should ask for guesses for what scene they are presenting for the class. Be sure to have the students qualify their guesses (i.e. What do you see that makes you say that?). If no one guesses the scene, the teacher may opt to do "thought readings" by taping one of the frozen figures and asking them to say what their character is thinking about. This often gives clues to the final answer (and can be a lot of fun!).

4. Teachers may want to decide how the various characters in *The Fox Chase* are going to be assigned. There are 24 different artists and 10 different animals and things presented in *The Fox Chase*. These roles can be assigned at random (students drawing the artist names out of a basket) or determined by the students after some initial surfing of the site

Willard Metcalf	Allen Butler Talcott
Edward Rook	Clark Voorhees
Henry Ward Ranger	Lewis Cohen
Carleton Wiggins	Henry C. White
William Henry Howe	Will Howe Foote
Louis Paul Dessar	Harry Hoffman
Alphonse Jongers	Walter Griffin
George Bogert	William Robinson
Jules Turcas	Arthur Heming
Henry Rankin Poore	Frank Bicknell
Frank Vincent DuMond	Matilda Browne
Cullen Yates	Childe Hassam

Note: Each artist has a **Fast Facts** section on their page in *The Fox Chase* that might be useful in helping the students select their artists.

The list of animals and things in *The Fox Chase* includes:

Griswold House	The Dog/Rock
School of Lyme	The Lyme Landscape
The Cat	Pack of Dogs
Painting Tools	The Village of Old Lyme
The Cow	The Fox

5. Students should prepare a 150-word script that tells the viewer who or what they are and why they are an important element in *The Fox Chase*. In preparation for the students to write their character script, have them use a computer to learn about the Lyme Art Colony as well as to “meet” their artist or thing by interacting with *The Fox Chase* and *In Situ: The Painted Panels* sections of the website.
6. During the character scripts draft stage, have students get together to compare ideas and approaches. Encourage students to make suggestions to enhance each other’s writing.
7. Encourage the students to determine the most effective speaking order of the *tableau vivant* – not necessarily in order from right to left or left to right. A sense of drama can be achieved by orchestrating the readings in an interesting way.
8. Encourage your students to be creative in their presentation of the *tableau vivant*. Will there be music? Sound effects (e.g. hunt horn)? Students should also determine their costume or props for the final presentation. Teachers may want to divide *The Fox Chase* into sections and have students work in groups preparing their frozen pose.

9. For the final presentations encourage the students to prepare a professional final draft of their character script as well as participate in the group performance with the class. If feasible, plan to record the final presentation.

A Time for Reflection

Have students reflect on the following questions in their own journals.

Content/Thinking:

- What role did your character/animal/thing play in the overall panel?
- How did you decide which facts to include in your character script?

Social:

- How did your group decide who would do what in frozen tableau about *The Story of Miss Florence and the Lyme Art Colony*?
- How did the class make decisions about characters and speaking order? Would you have done this differently?

Personal:

- Were you happy with the role you played in the *tableau vivant*?
- What work of art would you want to do as a solo *tableau vivant* and why?

Appreciations

Before concluding the lesson, be sure to invite appreciations from the group (e.g. thank group partners for good brainstorming or suggestions for better writing). To help students begin making statements of appreciation, use such sentence starters as these:

- I liked it when ... (describe the situation)
- I was amazed when ...

Follow-Up Activity

Consider planning a field trip to the Museum in Old Lyme with your students. Information about a visit can be found on the [Planning A Visit](#) page.

Feedback

Please share your suggestions for making the lesson better. Let the Museum know how this lesson worked for you and your students by sending your comments and suggestions to david@flogris.org. Educators are encouraged to submit copies of final products and/or digital images to be shared on our website.