

AMERICAN ARTISTS AMERICAN STORIES

FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA
ACADEMY OF THE FINE
ARTS, 1776-1976

SEPTEMBER 25-
DECEMBER 29, 2024



Teacher
Resource
Guide

 Philbrook

About The Exhibition

Drawn entirely from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), *American Artists, American Stories* presents some of the most acclaimed and recognizable examples of American art—work that has shaped conversations about the nation's history and identity. Alongside these artworks, the exhibition highlights paintings and sculptures that may be less familiar but are no less central to the story of America. Through groundbreaking works by artists traditionally excluded from the historical narrative, a deeper understanding of the story of American art emerges.

The exhibition offers a glimpse into the lives of nearly 100 artists, the stories they chose to tell, and the times in which they lived. Each section of the exhibition contains art from different time periods, grouped by subject, creating striking visual counterpoints that encourage new dialogues and ask important questions about what it meant—or means—to be an American artist and how art has shaped this country.

The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

As the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Philadelphia has long been a political and cultural hub of the United States, even serving as the nation's capital from 1790 to 1800. In 1805, a group of the city's leading citizens, including artists Charles Willson Peale and William Rush, established PAFA. Their aim for this first art museum and school in the nation was to encourage and promote the young country's burgeoning artistic identity.

For more than two centuries since then, PAFA has trained American artists and helped define the nation's artistic character, which continues to evolve today as the story of American art broadens. While PAFA shaped the careers of all the artists represented here, whether as students, as faculty, or in exhibitions, the stories of many Americans are

still absent, particularly those of Native and Latinx artists. However, beginning early in its history PAFA exhibited the work of women and Black artists, which resulted in a more diverse network of artists than was typical at the time and the deep legacy that includes the artwork on view in this exhibition.

American Artists, American Stories from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1776–1976 is co-organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Lead support was provided to PAFA by the William Penn Foundation, with additional support from the Richard C. von Hess Foundation and donors to PAFA's Special Exhibitions Fund. In-kind support is provided by Christie's and Gill & Lagodich Fine Period Frames, New York. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Exhibition Organization

American Artists, American Stories is organized into five thematic sections: portraits, history painting, scenes of everyday life, landscape, and still life. Definitions of each term are listed below.

Portraits

A portrait is a representation of a particular person. A self-portrait is a portrait of the artist by the artist.

History Painting

The term *history painting* was introduced in the seventeenth century to describe paintings with subjects drawn from classical history, mythology, and the Bible.

Scenes of Everyday Life

Also known as genre scenes, scenes of everyday life include representations of everyday ordinary activities such as people eating a meal or visiting friends.

Landscape

The term landscape refers to scenes drawn from nature and the environment.

Still Life

A still life is a depiction of objects such as personal belongings, flowers, or food.

Key Questions

The exhibition raises key questions about how American art and history are interconnected. Gallery visitors will encounter these questions during the exhibition:

1. How do portraits in the exhibition reflect a growing American identity?
2. How can artworks challenge or support power?
3. How does subject matter reflect an artist's goals and the limits put upon them?
4. What do scenes of everyday life suggest was important to Americans?
5. How have artists' representations of land impacted visions of America?

About This Packet

Explore key works from *American Artists*, *American Stories* by looking at examples from each of the five thematic sections. Selected works include a brief overview to provide context for the work, questions for discussion in the classroom, and key observations that students might share. Links are provided to online images of the artworks for classroom viewing.

This packet can be used as a preview or follow-up to visiting the exhibition together in person or online.

Schedule a Tour

Philbrook Museum of Art offers guided and self-guided opportunities for pre-K–12 groups to tour our museum and gardens. All tours must be scheduled at least two weeks in advance and require one adult chaperone for every ten students.

Museum admission and guided special exhibition tours for school/educational groups are complimentary for all students and one adult chaperone per every 10 students.

Tour Capacity

Pre-K + Kindergarten groups: 50 people (including chaperones)

1st through 12th grade: 75 people (including chaperones)

Touring Hours

Wednesday–Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Learn more and book online:

philbrook.org/visit/tours/

Bus Reimbursement

Philbrook will reimburse up to \$150 per bus after your visit. Learn more at:

philbrook.org/bus-reimbursement-form/

Formal art education was generally inaccessible to students of color during the civil rights era. Barkley Hendricks was one of three Black students at PAFA when he painted this portrait of fellow classmate James Sherman Brantley (whose own self-portrait, *Brother James*, is included in the exhibition). Hendricks responded to this lack of representation in mainstream art with powerful portraits that centered Black culture and subjects. His focus on each sitter’s individuality and style created a foundational shift in American portraiture. Hendricks became a mentor to PAFA students as a teacher and visiting critic.

A Closer Look

What’s the first thing you notice about this portrait? Hendricks pointed out that artists have only a few seconds to capture the viewer’s attention. What decisions did he make about the color palette, the framing of the subject, or the background when creating this work? If you ask your students to compare this work to *The Lansdowne Portrait*, what other differences stand out to them?



Barkley L. Hendricks (American, 1945–2017).
J. S. B. III, 1968. Oil on canvas, 48 × 34 3/8". Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Richardson Dilworth, 1969.17. © Barkley L. Hendricks. Courtesy of the Estate of Barkley L. Hendricks and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York. Photograph by Adrian Cubillas.



Portrait of the Artist
Barkley L. Hendricks, n.d.
 Courtesy Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University

Students might notice

1. Hendricks chose a vibrant red that emphasizes Brantley’s silhouette. The color red commands attention and is associated with power. Other than this powerful background color, there’s nothing in the background to distract our attention from the figure.
2. Brantley’s keen sense of fashion is reflective of styles popular in the late 1960s, including his deep V-neck sweater and dark sunglasses.
3. Brantley’s relaxed pose and confident gaze provide hints about his personality—or at least how Hendricks saw him. Brantley is described by friends and colleagues as deeply thoughtful and committed to his community. He has often served as a mentor and guide for emerging artists.

What are the first images that come to mind when you picture George Washington? Where have you seen representations of him before (at museums, in textbooks, or on quarters or dollar bills)? While several artists have captured Washington's likeness, Gilbert Stuart is perhaps best known for establishing America's conception of the first president. At a time before television or photography existed, Stuart created over one hundred portraits of the man, including this larger-than-life painting that measures eight feet tall. In this version, Washington was sixty-four years old and in the last year of his presidency.

A Closer Look

Ask your students to think about how Stuart chose to represent Washington. How would they describe his pose, clothing, accessories, and environment? What objects and symbols did the artist include?



Portrait of the Artist

Sarah Goodridge (American, 1788–1853). *Gilbert Stuart*, c. 1825. Watercolor on ivory, 3 2/32 x 2 3/4". Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Moses Lazarus Collection. Gift of Josephine and Sarah Lazarus, in memory of their father, 1888–95, 95.14.123.



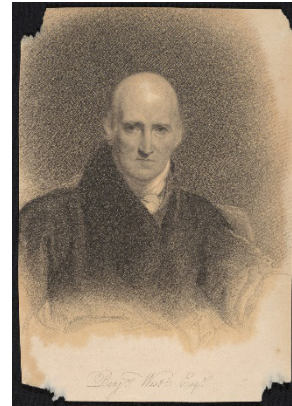
Gilbert Stuart (American, 1755–1828). *George Washington (The Lansdowne Portrait)*, 1796. Oil on canvas, 96 x 60". Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Bequest of William Bingham, 1811.2. Photograph by Barabara Katus.

Students might notice

1. Washington wears a black velvet suit—the same that he would have posed in while Stuart painted his portrait. His matching hat is on the table.
2. Washington holds a ceremonial sword that references his military career and leadership of the country.
3. National symbols, including eagles on the table leg and a stars and stripes medallion on the chair, both appear on the Great Seal of the United States.
4. The various books and quill in the inkwell allude to Washington's governmental work and contributions.
5. The rainbow (at top right) is a symbol of hope and unity for the new nation.



Benjamin West (American, 1738–1820). *Penn's Treaty with the Indians, 1771–72.* Oil on canvas, 75 ½ × 107 ¾". Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of Mrs. Sarah Harrison (The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection), 1878.I.10.



Portrait of the Artist
Photographer unknown.
Benjamin West, c. 1800. Engraving, 7 x 5". Benjamin West Collection, c. 1771–1879, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Benjamin West departed from traditional history painting by portraying more recent subjects and events, though *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* is more fiction than fact. The work is a romanticized rendition of how William Penn colonized Lenni Lenape (Delaware) land. In this imagined version, an equitable negotiation leads to the settlement of Pennsylvania, a story that contradicts the perspectives and experiences of those who first lived there.

West's work was admired by King George III, who appointed him as England's official history painter. He was the first American artist to earn widespread acclaim in Europe.

A Closer Look

Of all the figures in this painting, who do you think the artist has prioritized? How might each individual or group contribute to the narrative? West set the scene like a stage play with the backdrop of Shackamaxon (an area now within the city of Philadelphia) behind the characters. What do you notice about the buildings in the background?

Students might notice

1. One of the central characters is William Penn, who stands amid the gathered crowd dressed in a brown suit and a black hat. His outstretched right arm gestures toward a piece of parchment that represents a written treaty (though no evidence of it exists today) and goods offered from the merchants.
2. Lenni Lenape leaders are gathered around a white bolt of fabric that indicates they might be in the middle of a negotiation. Other tribal members are draped in colorful fabric from the ongoing exchange. The merchants are near the ground holding the fabric in an offering pose.
3. Observers watch from the sides as witnesses to the event.
4. European architecture looms large in the background, while more subtle Indigenous structures are under the oak tree.

Anna Klumpke began her artistic studies at the Académie Julian, an alternative to the famous Parisian Academy, in 1880. She was among the first female students allowed to attend, although classes were restricted by gender and women were regularly passed up for awards. She also navigated challenges living and working as a queer woman during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Klumpke persevered, however, and earned the outstanding student award before going on to exhibit her work.

In the Wash-House was inspired by an actual laundry house. Klumpke saw a group of peasant women she described as “picturesque” and “homely” upon returning to France from a sketching tour. She became the first woman to receive PAFA’s prestigious Temple Gold Medal for this painting.



Portrait of the Artist
Anna Klumpke in Her Studio at By, n.d., in Anna Elizabeth Klumpke, *Memoirs of an Artist* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Company, 1940).

A Closer Look

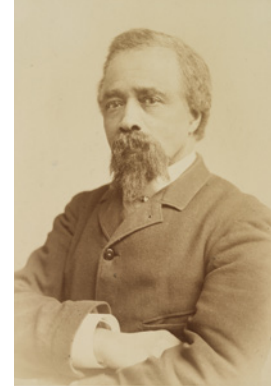
Ask your students to describe the activity taking place in Klumpke’s painting. What task or tasks are the women employed with? Do they appear to be enjoying their work? Ask your students if they can guess each person’s mood based on their expression. What other details can they see?



Anna Klumpke (American, 1856–1942). *In the Wash-House*, 1888. Oil on canvas, mounted on wood, 79 × 67". Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Gift of the artist, 1890.I.

Students might notice

1. This small group of French women are working together at a communal laundry. A washboard sticks out of the tub on the right side and a bar of soap rests in a dish in the center. Steam rises from the tub and appears as waves in front of the large window.
2. The women are absorbed with their washing as they work together. The young lady on the left, her attention drawn to something beyond the picture frame, looks cheerful, as if she may be telling a joke.
3. The women wear clothes suited to their task. Their hair is bundled in scarves, their sleeves are rolled up, and their aprons protect them from the heat and dampness of the tub.



Portrait of the Artist
Gustine L. Hurd (American, 1833–1910). *Edward Mitchell Bannister*, c. 1880. Albumen silver print, 5 1/16 × 4 1/16". National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Gift of Sandra and Jacob Terner, NPG.76.66.

Edward Bannister (American, 1828–1901). *Newport, Rhode Island, 1890.* Oil on canvas, 16 1/8 × 26". Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Museum Purchase, 2014.7.

Edward Bannister overcame multiple barriers, including prevailing prejudices of the time, to earn rare recognition as a Black artist in the nineteenth century. He became the first Black artist to win a national award in 1876, though the award was nearly rescinded when the judges found out his race. Born in Canada, Bannister spent the rest of his life in New England and settled in Providence in 1870. This Newport landscape depicts an inland view of the coastal town.

A Closer Look

Ask your students to imagine that they are part of this scene. What might they hear, smell, or see? How would they describe the weather? The season? The time of day? Encourage them to find evidence in the details Bannister painted to back up their answers.

Students might notice

1. The viewpoint of this scene is from outside the town. Bannister included a few buildings that emerge from the tree line. These structures might include homes, churches, or businesses.
2. A couple can be spotted on the rocky hill. A horse-drawn carriage is occupied by at least one passenger down on the road.
3. The bright greenery of the trees, grass, and plants indicates that Bannister painted a warm season. The day is cloudy yet bright enough for two of the figures to carry umbrellas, so it might be late in the morning or afternoon.

Georgia O’Keeffe is best-known for her paintings of flowers and southwestern subjects including landscapes and cow skulls. She first showed her work at PAFA in a 1924 exhibition of modern painting. Her signature style emphasizes the basic shapes and textures of everyday things that might be easily overlooked. O’Keeffe often enlarged, cropped, and simplified her subjects like this canna lily. Her innovative, abstract approach to still life painting solidified her as one of the most celebrated artists in America.

A Closer Look

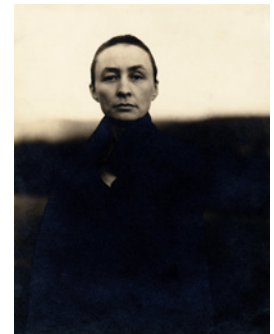
Without revealing the subject matter, ask your students to imagine what this painting is meant to depict. Do they think it’s something organic or manmade? Does it look like something they’ve seen before? Which of their other senses (smell, taste, touch) could they use to identify it?



Georgia O’Keeffe (American, 1887–1986). *Red Canna*, 1923. Oil on canvas, 12 × 9 7/8". Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. The Vivian O. and Meyer P. Potamkin Collection, Bequest of Vivian O. Potamkin, 2003.1.8 © 2024 Georgia O’Keeffe Museum / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Barbara Katus.

Students might notice

1. There are no straight lines in this image. O’Keeffe uses natural, flowing lines both inside the composition and around the edges (or contours) of the form.
2. The colors are bright and saturated. O’Keeffe employs complementary shades of red and green as well as yellow and purple. Complementary colors are opposite from one another on the color wheel and create a vibrant contrast when paired together.
3. The image is cropped like a photograph you might take on your phone. O’Keeffe would have made sketches of this flower in real life but enjoyed finding interesting ways to frame her subjects on the canvas.



Portrait of the Artist

Alfred Stieglitz (American, 1864–1946). *Georgia O’Keeffe*, c. 1920. Gelatin silver print, 9 9/20 × 7 9/100". Miscellaneous Photographs Collection, c. 1845–1980, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.