

Cincinnati Art Museum

MyCAM

Curator's Choice
Adult Art Hunt





Nathaniel Stein,
Associate Curator of Photography,
has selected pieces that you just need to
see. On this hunt you will discover some of
his favorite objects from across the
collection.

Grab some paper, a pencil and your imagination and have fun!



A Personal Connection

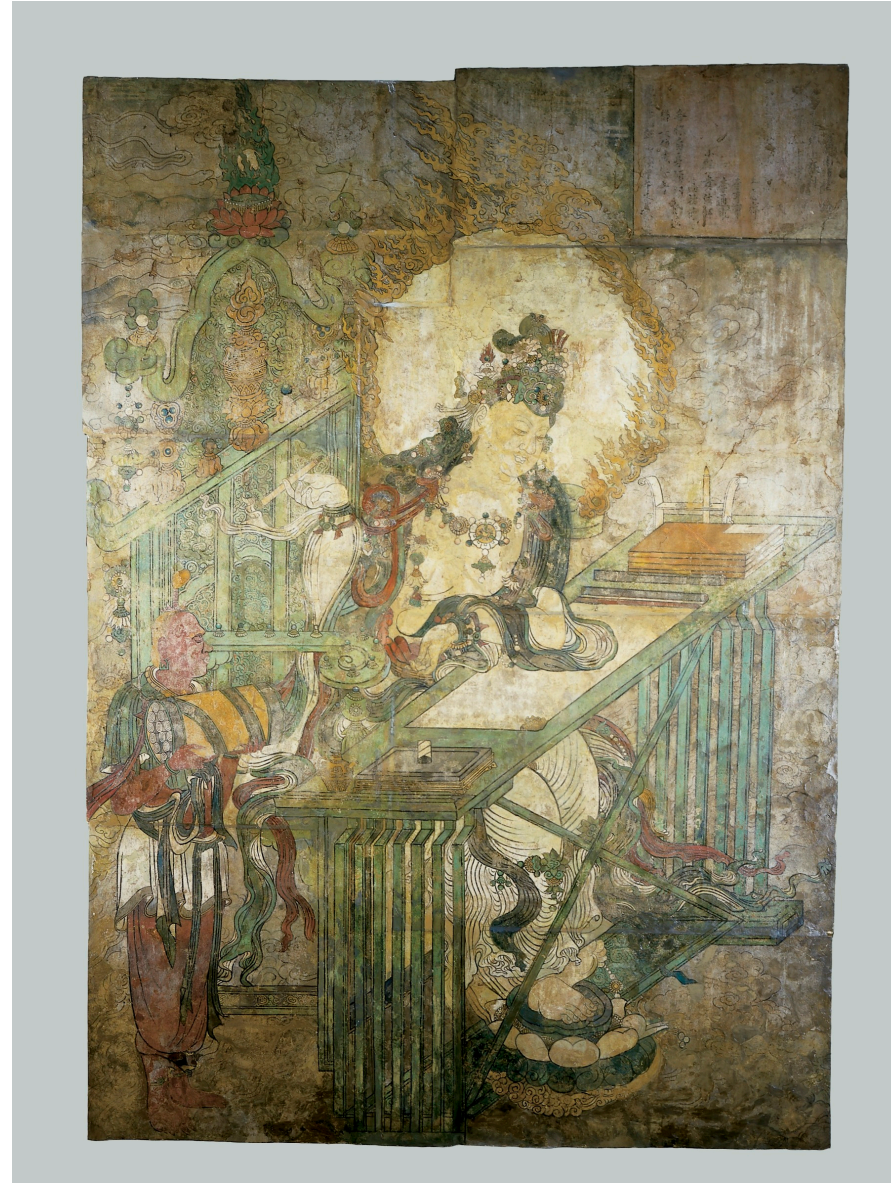
Nathaniel has a personal connection to each of these works in the collection.
How will you connect?

"It's amazing to see there are commonalities over so much time and geographical distance!"

ACTIVITY:

This painting depicts Wenshu, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom.

Find 3 symbols that the artist used to represent wisdom.



China, Wenshu, *Bodhisattva of Wisdom at a Writing Table*, 1354, glue tempera on mud and straw wall, Gift of C.T. Loo, 1950.154

LOOK AGAIN:

Nathaniel wrote his dissertation about a photographer who worked in Ajanta, India.

The paintings there are similar to Wenshu, even though they were created several hundred years earlier.

"...it's just the sheer force of the painting – all sweeping energy, yet soft, impressionistic, and filled with big, blowing light."

ACTIVITY:

This painting of Long Island makes Nathaniel emotional because he grew up there.

How do you feel about your childhood home?

Write 3 words that come to mind.



Thomas Moran (1837-1926), United States, *Landscape in the Hamptons, Long Island*, 1890, oil on canvas, Gift of Minor M. and Daniel W. LeBlond in memory of Richard K. LeBlond, 2015.398

LOOK AGAIN:

Notice the wildflowers in the foreground. Pretend you are standing in that spot. "Your face is sun-kissed and salty. You'll sleep well tonight."

"They don't make things like they used to."

ACTIVITY:

These lamps represent the progress of science and rise of industry in the 1930s.

What techniques did the artist use to portray this?



Lamps (Pair), 1935, Pattyn Products Company, manufacturer; Walter von Nessen (1889-1943), designer, United States, aluminum, brass, plastic (probably Bakelite), reproduction frosted glass shades, Museum Purchase with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fleischmann III, 2010.32a-b

LOOK AGAIN:

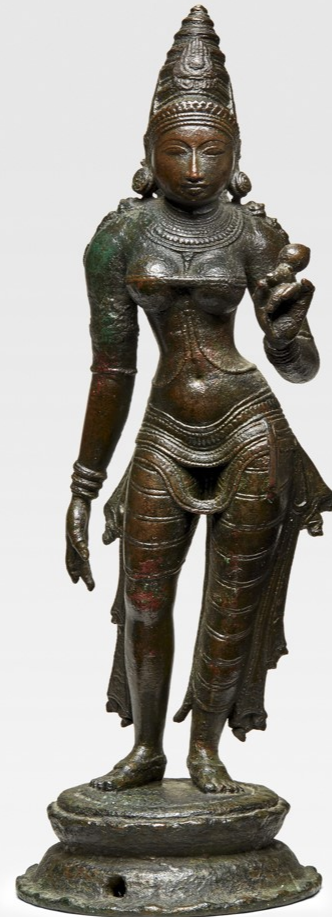
"These lamps remind me of the film *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1926 – one of the best movies ever made) and that is more than enough to make them a favorite!"

"The sinuous line, the union of sensuous grace and balanced power...when it's really good, you feel it."

ACTIVITY:

This sculpture of Sri Devi is a ritual object.

Can you imagine what it's like to make contact with the divine through such beauty?



India, *Processional Image of Sri Devi*, Late 10th Century-Early 11th Century, bronze, Alice Bimel Endowment for Asian Art, 2017.55

LOOK AGAIN:

"I feel a personal attachment to this object because I am married to the curator who added it to the CAM's collection!"

She has taught me how to appreciate South Asian Art."

"Brings to mind one of Philadelphia's best-kept secrets."

ACTIVITY:

This painting reminds Nathaniel of an artwork in Philadelphia called *The Dream Garden*, a mural by Maxfield Parrish and Louis Comfort Tiffany.

Does this work remind you of anything?



Maxfield Parrish (1870-1966), United States, *Portrait of a Tree*, 1924, oil on wood panel, Gift of Mrs. Alexander Thomson, 1972.405

LOOK AGAIN:

Look at the artist's choice of title – *Portrait of a Tree*.

How can a painting of a tree be a portrait?
Why do you think the artist chose this title?



Study of Contrasts

"You have to be aware of all the latent possibilities that give a work its special character – its atmosphere, its moods, its contrasts."

- Alfred Brendel

"Possibly my favorite sight-line in the Museum, and one I'm lucky enough to glimpse often."

ACTIVITY:

Look at this painting and then go find *Snow Scene* by John Henry Twachtman, (next page).

How does this compare or contrast to the Kline?



Franz Kline (1940-1962), United States, *Horizontal Rust*, 1960, oil on canvas, The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial, 1982.85

LOOK AGAIN:

"Though working in very different times, both artists understood something fundamental and visceral about moving paint around canvas."

Nathaniel likes to imagine that Kline and Twachtman would have recognized similarities in one another.

ACTIVITY:

Look at this painting and then go find *Horizontal Rust* by Franz Kline, (previous page).

How does this compare or contrast to the Twachtman?



John Henry Twachtman (1853-1902), United States, *Snow Scene*, 1882, oil on canvas, Bequest of Louise Drude, 1916.9

LOOK AGAIN:

"Though working in very different times, both artists understood something fundamental and visceral about moving paint around canvas."

"On one hand mysterious and cryptic, yet the scale makes it feel like Hodler is speaking through a bullhorn!"

ACTIVITY:

Here, two women are painted from the same model and dressed identically in dance costume. They seem like mirror images.

Look closely.
Can you spot the differences?



Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918), Switzerland, *The Sacred Hour* (*Die Heilige Stunde*), circa 1907-circa 1911, oil on canvas, The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial, Fanny Bryce Lehmer Endowment, Mr. and Mrs. Harry S. Leyman Endowment; and Museum Purchase: Gift of Mary Hanna, Mrs. J. Louis Ransohoff, and Mary E. Johnston, by exchange, 1990.1294

LOOK AGAIN:

"I'm also fascinated by how light the work feels even though the surface is massively loaded with paint."

What did the artist do to evoke lightness?

"A pinpoint balance between monumentality and comedy."

ACTIVITY:

Nathaniel sees in this work
"a pinpoint balance
between monumentality and
comedy."

What do you think he means
by this statement? Do you
agree with his assessment?
Why or why not?



Alexej von Jawlensky (1864/67-1941),
Russia, *Seated Woman*, 1911, oil on composition
board, Fanny Bryce Lehmer Endowment, 1975.73

LOOK AGAIN:

Jawlensky was part of a group
of artists called the "Blaue
Reiter" or Blue Rider.

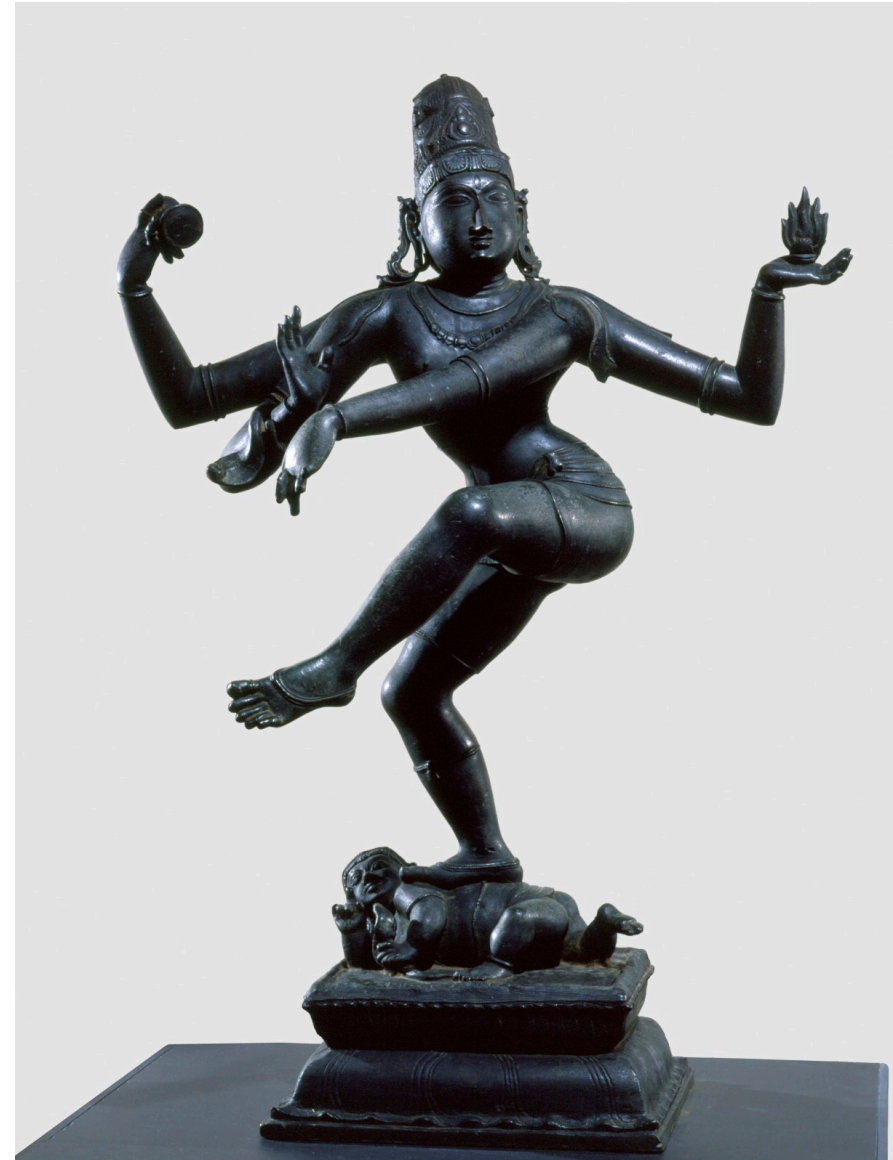
Why do you think they used
this name?

"A chaotic world in perfect, fragile balance."

ACTIVITY:

Shiva performs the Tandava, the cosmic dance in which the universe is created, maintained, and destroyed.

How is each phase represented in this work?



LOOK AGAIN:

Lord Shiva in the form of Nataraja is thought to remove ignorance through the divine act of dance.

How is that made evident here?

India, *Shiva Nataraja*, 16th century-17th century, bronze, Gift of George Warrington in memory of Elsie Holmes Warrington, 1940.1079



Exploring the Built Environment

Nathaniel looks to the structures of his environment for inspiration, as evident from these favorites from the collection.

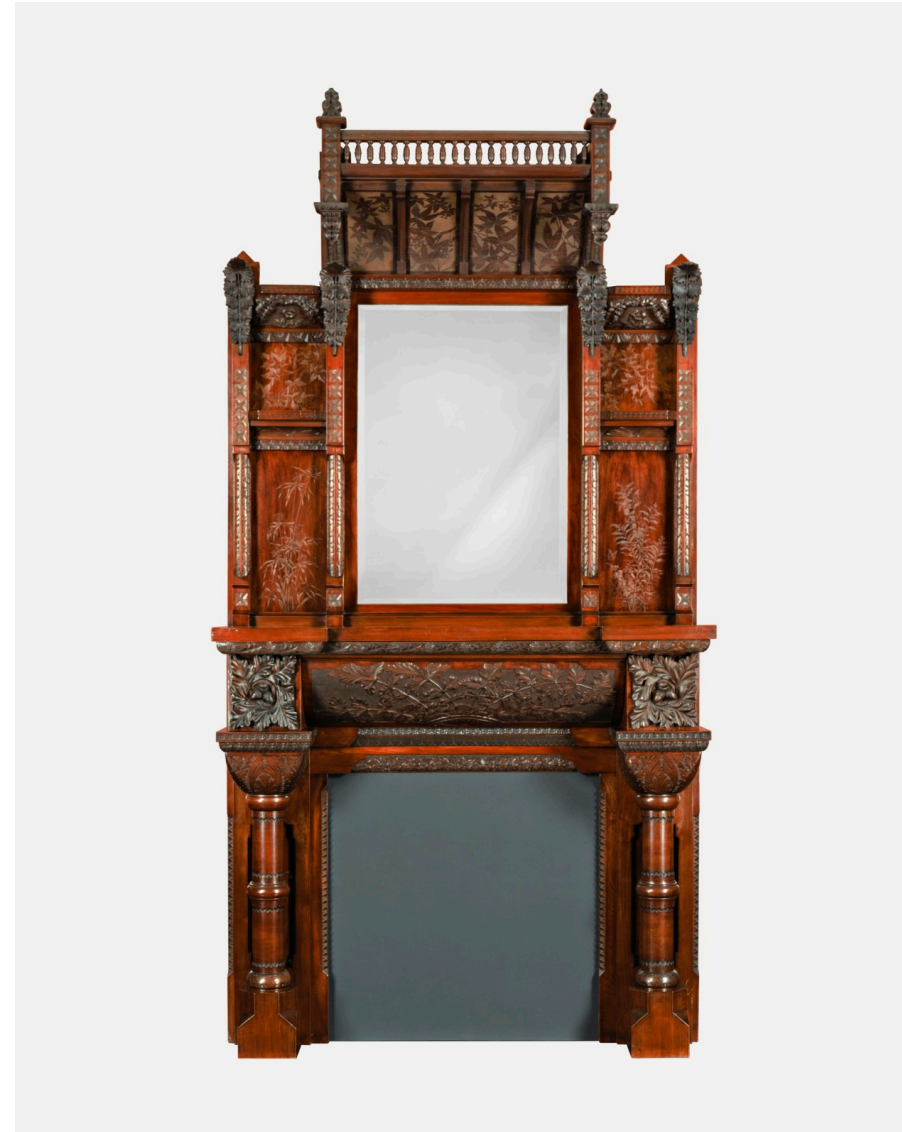
"I think there are three kinds of people when it comes to this mantle. Either you wish you lived in a house like this, you'd hate to live in a house like this, or you DO live in house like this!"

ACTIVITY:

Nathaniel would love to live in a house with a fireplace like this (as long as someone else dusts it).

How about you?
Does this fit your style?
Why or why not?

Emma Bepler (1864-1947), United States,
Fireplace Mantel and Overmantel, 1893-1894,
American black walnut, Gift of Mrs. Carl W.
Bieser, 1979.96a-c



LOOK AGAIN:

Emma Bepler studied wood carving at Art Academy of Cincinnati. Compare this work with other carved pieces in our collection (<https://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org/art/explore-the-collection?keyword=&classification=&department=Decorative%20Arts%20and%20Design&specialCollection=&startYear=&endYear=&imagesOnly=>), many also carved by women.

Sometimes it's the picture you love, sometimes it's the frame. Nathaniel loves the frame.

ACTIVITY:

If you were going to carve a frame for your own portrait, what would it look like?

Have a friend draw your portrait. Now, create a frame that represents your personality.



Frans Duveneck (1848-1919), painter; Henry L. Fry (1807-1895), carver, United States, *Henry L. Fry*, circa 1874, oil on canvas and gilt wood frame, Gift of William Henry Fry, 1907.193

LOOK AGAIN:

Fry has inscribed the Latin, "Ora et Labora," (prayer and work) on this frame.

Why do you think Fry included this? What do you think it says about him and his work?

"This canvas is one of the reasons why CAM's British painting collection is world-class. I'm staggered by the fact that I stroll past it on a daily basis, going from here to there."

ACTIVITY:

Imagine you are on the museum staff, walking through the galleries on the way to a meeting.

Which artwork would you stop to look at on a daily basis?
Why did you choose that work of art?



Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), United Kingdom, *The Cottage Door*, circa 1778, oil on canvas, Given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Charles F. Williams by their children, 1948.173

LOOK AGAIN:

Gainsborough painted several versions of *The Cottage Door*.

Why do you think he returned to this subject again and again?

"Spaces within frames within views within mirrors within a rectangle of canvas, all brought into a masterful dialogue with color, composition, and ambiguity."

ACTIVITY:

"This is an acknowledged favorite for a lot of our curators and staff."

Why do you think it is so popular? Do you like it? Why or why not? Share.



Richard Diebenkorn (1922-1993), United States,
Interior with View of Buildings, 1962, oil on canvas,
The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial, 1964.68

LOOK AGAIN:

Diebenkorn was from the West Coast, he was born in Oregon and lived in California.

Do you think his environment affected this work, if so how?

"It's so tactile, it reminds me that paint is a thing, and that things are part of a natural world that's real, but moving in its own vast time."

ACTIVITY:

Cincinnatian George Hoadly commissioned this painting from Courbet.

Imagine he is creating a landscape for you.
What scene would you choose and why?
Share.



Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), France, *Sunset, Vevey, Switzerland, 1874*, oil on canvas, Gift of George Hoadly, 1887.5

LOOK AGAIN:

Courbet is best known for paintings that forced the contemporary social world into the supposedly transcendent realm of fine art. Has the artist succeeded here?



Fearless Faces

"You use a mirror to see your face; you use works of art to see your soul."

- George Bernard Shaw

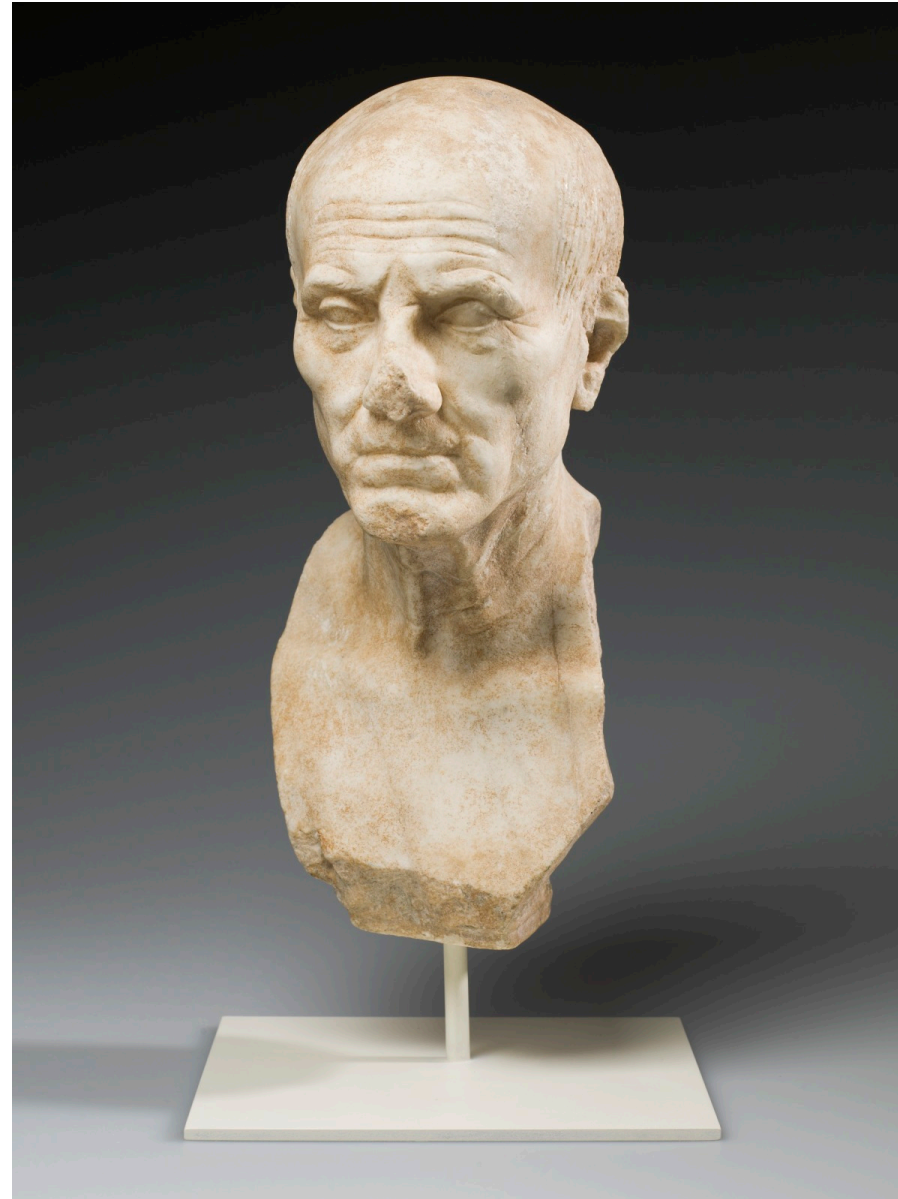
"The sculpture shows the beauty in aging."

ACTIVITY:

This sitter asked the artist to portray him as older and wiser by adding wrinkles and a stern expression.

How would you want to be sculpted? Sketch it.

Italy, *Veristic Portrait of a Man*, 1st century BCE, marble, Gift of William H. Chatfield, 1957.485



LOOK AGAIN:

"This one is so opposite to the public faces we aspire to now!"

How has the public perception of being "old and wise" changed today?

Masks are "like using art to don another skin and take on another persona."

ACTIVITY:

"So much of the persona is seated in the face – actors in theater have known this for ages, and masks are a manifestation of that idea that crops up across many cultures."



Japan, *Nō Mask*, 17th century, carved wood, gesso, and pigment, Gift of William J. Baer, 1921.251

LOOK AGAIN:

During Nō plays it was common for the "old man" character to end up as a god or spirit in the second act.

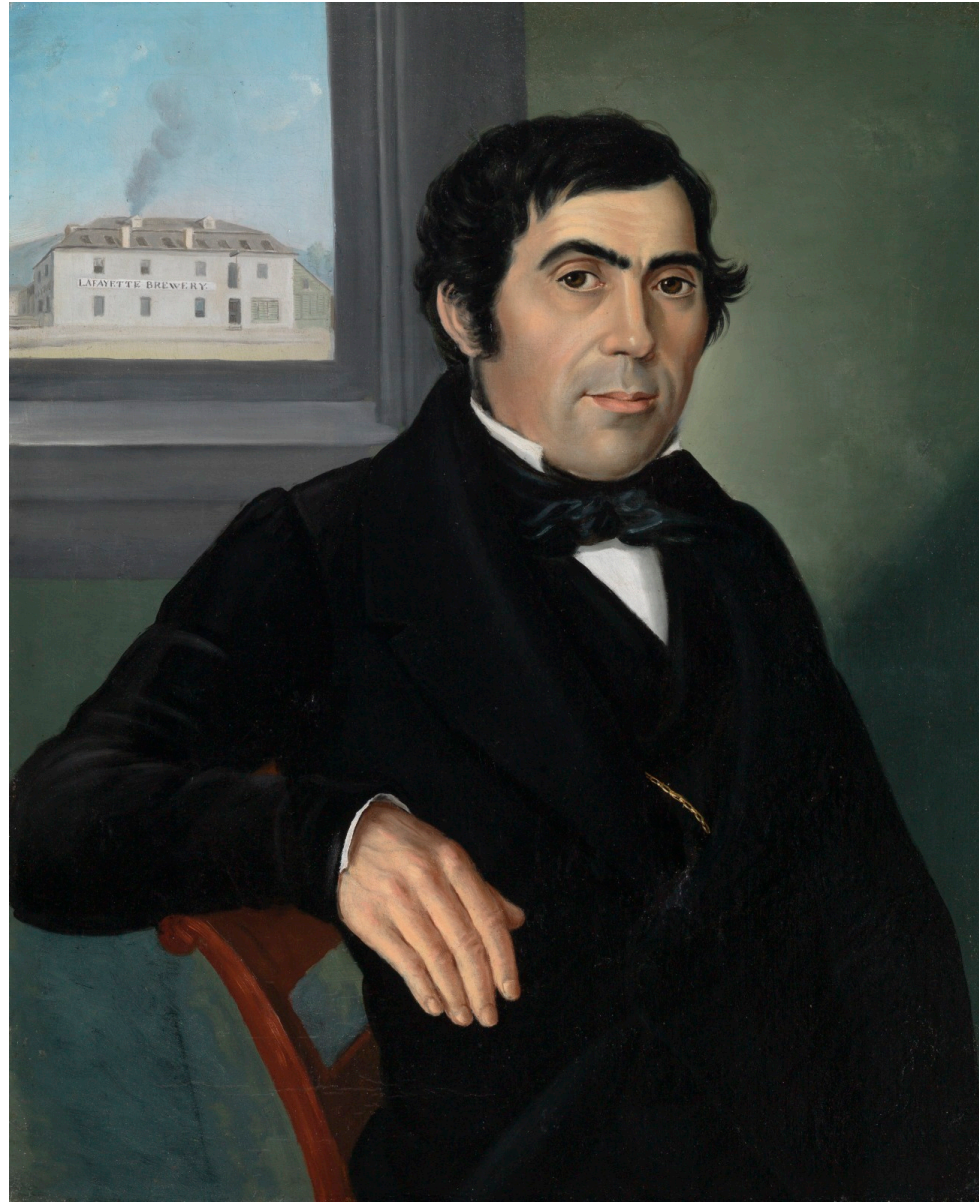
Who do you think this character turned out to be?

Nathaniel loves "the attention the artist has spent on Mr. Billiods' expressive and idiosyncratic right eyebrow."

ACTIVITY:

"That slightly raised brow must have been his calling card."

Can you raise one eyebrow? Take a selfie trying to mimic Billiod's expression.



LOOK AGAIN:

"The other thing I love about this painting is how real and approachable Billiods looks – appropriately, someone you might like to have a beer with."

"I am stuck on the bizarre intensity of this image – especially the place where Peter's face almost touches Paul's."

ACTIVITY:

In this painting, the apostles Peter and Paul are meeting in a Roman prison.

Write a few sentences about what you think they might be saying to each other.



Fernando Gallego (1468-1507), Spain, *Saint Paul Visiting Saint Peter in Prison*, circa 1500, oil and tempera on panel, Mr. and Mrs. Harry S. Leyman Endowment, 1961.230

LOOK AGAIN:

Nathaniel is intrigued by Peter's face almost touching Paul's.

Why do you think the artist painted the figures so closely together?

"It's easy to fall into the trap of thinking about the world in disconnected pieces."

ACTIVITY:

These puppets were performed in honor of Amanikpo members to celebrate individual successes.

Can you think of any similar traditions that we use in the U.S.?



Ogoni People, Africa, Puppet Figure, post-1950, wood, Gift of Thomas D. Slater, 1991.36

LOOK AGAIN:

"If this figure looks oddly modern to you, check the date. It makes me wonder how much the maker knew about contemporary culture in Europe."



Focus on the Details

It is all about the fine details in these works, some of Nathaniel's favorites.

"The story behind this work of art is all in the details."

ACTIVITY:

"Think about the pleasure the artist has taken in painting the knife Pomona clutches. It's a loaded symbol..."

Share what you think this knife represents in this work.

Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680), The Netherlands, *Vertumnus and Pomona*, 1644, oil on canvas mounted on panel, Bequest of Mrs. Frieda Hauck, 1957.212



LOOK AGAIN:

Vertumnus appeared to Pomona in a number of guises: reaper, herdsman, fisherman and finally old woman.

Why do you think she trusted the last form?

"Why does this detailed, richly colored picture of flowers seem to teeter on the edge of pretty and disgusting?"

ACTIVITY:

"Youth and luxury
are temporary;
what is beautiful will rot."

How is this concept
represented in this
work of art? Share.



Maria van Oosterwijck (1630-1693), The Netherlands, *Flower Still Life*, 1669, oil on canvas, Bequest of Mrs. L.W. Scott Alter, 1988.150

LOOK AGAIN:

Van Oosterwijck's patrons included France's Louis XIV, Emperor Leopold I and England's William III.

Why do you think her work appealed to royalty?

"A quiet moment loaded with emotional complexity and intense anticipation."

ACTIVITY:

"It is really striking just how stripped down to simple color and form this composition is – it's almost abstract."

Do you agree or disagree with Nathaniel's analysis of this work?
Why or why not?



Elizabeth Nourse (1859-1938), United States, *The First Communion (La Première communion)*, 1895, oil on canvas, Museum Purchase: John J. Emery Endowment and Bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Walter J. Wichgar, 2013.13

LOOK AGAIN:

These frilly white communion dresses are a masterpieces in paint.

What colors did Nourse really use to capture the "white?"

"Medieval European painting can appear simplistic to observers used to more naturalistic styles, but look at the sophisticated imaginative universe opening up before your eyes here."

ACTIVITY:

"I'm fascinated by the way medieval artists included multiple kinds of representation – for example the painted world and the gilded surface -- in one picture.

Is this like modern collage?
Or is it part of a completely different way of thinking about pictures? What do you think?

Matteo di Giovanni (1430-1495), Italy, *Madonna and Child with Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino*, early 1470s, tempera and oil on panel, Eva Belle Leyman Fund and Bequest of Mrs. Frieda Hauck, 1956.89



LOOK AGAIN:

The artist has included Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Nicholas of Tolentino in this painting. Why?

"Sargent is such a showman!"

ACTIVITY:

"The color, the dramatic shadows, the brushwork in her shawl, the audacious, loose white stroke skipping along the top edge of the object she holds."

Many flourishes but only one focus, what is it?



John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), United States, *A Venetian Woman*, 1882, oil on canvas, The Edwin and Virginia Irwin Memorial, 1972.37

LOOK AGAIN:

The works of Venetian subjects in this gallery are by American artists.

Why do you think the Floating City was so appealing?

MyCAM is based on JourneyMaker, the family interactive experience designed and developed by the Art Institute of Chicago.

The museum worked with Paperplane Creative and Clifton Labs to bring JourneyMaker to the Cincinnati.

MyCAM is generously supported by The Ward E. Bullock Endowment for Interactive Education.