
ART SMART

3rd Grade / March

THEME:
Weather & Clouds

WORKS:

1. Martin Johnson Heade, *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*
2. John Steuart Curry, *Tornado Over Kansas*
3. Utagawa Hiroshige, *Great Bridge, Sudden Shower at Atake*
4. Thomas Moran, *Chasm of the Colorado*
5. Grandma Moses, *Pull, Boys*
6. Phillip Surrey, *Boulevard in the Rain*



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Artwork:

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Introduction:

Scientific themes, especially those from the natural environment, frequently are reflected in works of art. Artists throughout time and from many different cultures have reproduced scenes from their surroundings, documenting the world as the artist sees it.

Do you ever draw pictures of nature? Often some of the first pictures children draw are outside scenes of grass, clouds, etc. Have you ever drawn a picture with clouds in the sky?

Today we are going to look at different paintings that show nature and the weather.

Martin Johnson Heade, *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*

Our first artist, Martin Johnson Heade was a loner, a frequent traveler, gardener, and keeper of hummingbirds, and is known for his ability to portray a particular sensitivity to light in his **luminous** landscapes.

Luminous means: emitting or reflecting a steady, glowing light.

The painting, *Cattleya Orchid and Three Brazilian Hummingbirds*, depicts an idealized version of a tropical rainforest, almost a still life within a landscape.

What is the first thing your eye travels to? The huge pinkish orchid.

This flower is visually balanced by the three very detailed hummingbirds.

What does the weather/sky look like to you? Very misty, cloudy, foggy, with a small patch of blue sky.

The near photographic realism of the foreground contrasts with the atmospheric perspective of the background; every detail of the orchid and birds are in sharp focus, the distant features are blurred and misty. No horizon is visible in the mist.

John Steuart Curry, *Tornado Over Kansas*

John Steuart Curry, was born on a farm in Kansas, where his father raised pigs, sheep, and cattle.

Curry, like other farm children, woke up early to do chores before school.

He showed an early interest in art and began private drawing lessons by the time he was 12 and eventually studied at the Chicago Art Institute.

Over his career, Curry painted subjects not widely represented in the academic art world at the time: state fairs, farm animals, circuses, and storms.

Tornado Over Kansas captures the terrifying incident on a Midwestern farm as a family rushes to the storm cellar to escape a rapidly approaching twister.

A sickly green light permeates the scene as the tornado drops down to the ground from an ominous layer of dense, brownish-black clouds.

Have you ever seen the sky a weird color before a storm?

Does it look like the family had warning of this tornado?

What did the family grab in their hurry to get to the storm shelter?

How are the animals acting? The ones with the family? The horses in background? The chicken in the foreground?

Do you know someone else that lived in Kansas that ran from a tornado? (Dorothy, from *The Wizard of Oz*)

Themes based on storms and weather dominated Curry's art, no doubt inspired from his childhood on the farm.

How does your eye travel through this painting? The composition of this painting brings your eye to the touch down point of the tornado.

Utagawa Hiroshige, *Great Bridge, Sudden Shower at Atake*

Utagawa Hiroshige (Hee-ro-she-gay) was a Japanese printmaker, that excelled in landscapes.

He was the last great master of Japanese woodblock printmaking. And he influenced many artist such as: Vincent van Gogh, Claude Monet, Cezanne, Whistler and Mary Cassatt.

In *Great Bridge, Sudden Shower at Atake*, a steady rain falls from the dark, threatening clouds.

How does the artist show the rain? Diagonal lines...what feeling does that give you? Light or hard rain?

What are the people doing on the bridge?

The people are depicted relatively small in relation to the environment, reflecting the Japanese concept that humanity is subordinate to nature. (Nature is a larger force.)

Thomas Moran, *Chasm of the Colorado*

This artist, Thomas Moran was called the Father of National Parks. What do you think that nickname means?

He was offered a job to go with a team to Yellowstone River in Wyoming Territory as the artist to sketch images for their report.

Next he went to the Grand Canyon where he painted *Chasm of the Colorado*.

This heroic panoramic vista of the American West established Morans career, was influential in Congress' decision to establish national parks and represented the grandeur of America to the rest of the world.

In this painting the leading edge of a storm approaches with dark clouds and a faint rainbow.

Mists rise from the depths caused by the cool rain falling on the sun heated rocks.

The original painting is about 7 feet high by 12 feet wide!

Grandma Moses, *Pull, Boys*

Anna Mary Robertson Moses, more popularly known as Grandma Moses, may be the most famous American folk artist in the world.

A farm wife born in 1860, she progressed from fancywork embroidery to a much beloved memory painter.

Moses is known for her landscapes that depicted nostalgic views of country life, what she called "old-timey things"

Pull, Boys depicts a snowy New England landscape, filled with people involved in work and play.

On a New England farm in the winter, the land cannot be worked, so there is more time for socializing.

Why do you think the house is painted in the center of the painting? Because Moses establishes the home as the center of family and community.

What color is the sky? Does it look like winter skies we see here?

Phillip Surrey, *Boulevard in the Rain*

Phillip Surrey was born in Canada, and spent his childhood traveling around the world to places like Java, Malaysia, the West Indies, England and Australia.

He was primarily a painter of urban scenes.

What kind of weather is happening in this painting?

How can you tell? (wet pavement, reflections of street lights, etc.)

How does the way the artist depict rain in this painting defer from the way rain is depicted in *Great Bridge, Sudden Shower at Atake*?

**More background information on artists and paintings can be found in the printed packets located in the Art Smart closet.*