

Kimbell Educator Packet



Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait*, c. 1781, oil on canvas

Kimbell Art Museum

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PREPARING STUDENTS IN ADVANCE

We look forward to welcoming your school group to the Kimbell Art Museum! Here are a few suggestions for teachers to help to ensure a successful, productive learning experience at the Museum.

LOOK, DISCUSS, CREATE

Use this resource to lead classroom discussions and related activities prior to the visit. (Suggested activities may also be used after the visit.)

REVIEW MUSEUM GUIDELINES

For students:

- Explore the works of art only with your eyes, never with your hands. Remain aware of your surroundings and always maintain an arm's length distance from artworks.
- Walk in the museum—do not run.
- Use a quiet voice when sharing your ideas.

Additional information for teachers:

- No backpacks, food, drinks, or water bottles are allowed in the galleries. Remind students to leave those items and large bags on the bus. Backpacks containing medical supplies are allowed with special clearance.
- Unscheduled lecturing to groups is not permitted.
- Cell phones should be turned to silent mode while in the Museum.
- Service animals are the only animals allowed in the Museum.
- Tobacco use, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, electronic cigarettes, snuff, and chewing tobacco, is not permitted anywhere on the Museum's grounds.
- Weapons are not allowed in the Museum (exception: law enforcement officers).
- Sketching is allowed in the galleries as long as it is in pencil and does not obstruct or interfere with other visitors.
- Unscheduled lecturing to groups is not permitted.

Eating lunch at the Kimbell:

- Student groups are welcome to eat outside on the lawn or under the porticos, located between the Kahn Building and Piano Pavilion.
- Lunch boxes and coolers are not permitted in the galleries. Please leave coolers on the bus or check them upon arrival.
- Pick up all trash before leaving the Museum campus.
- Remind students to refrain from running on gravel or touching sculptures.

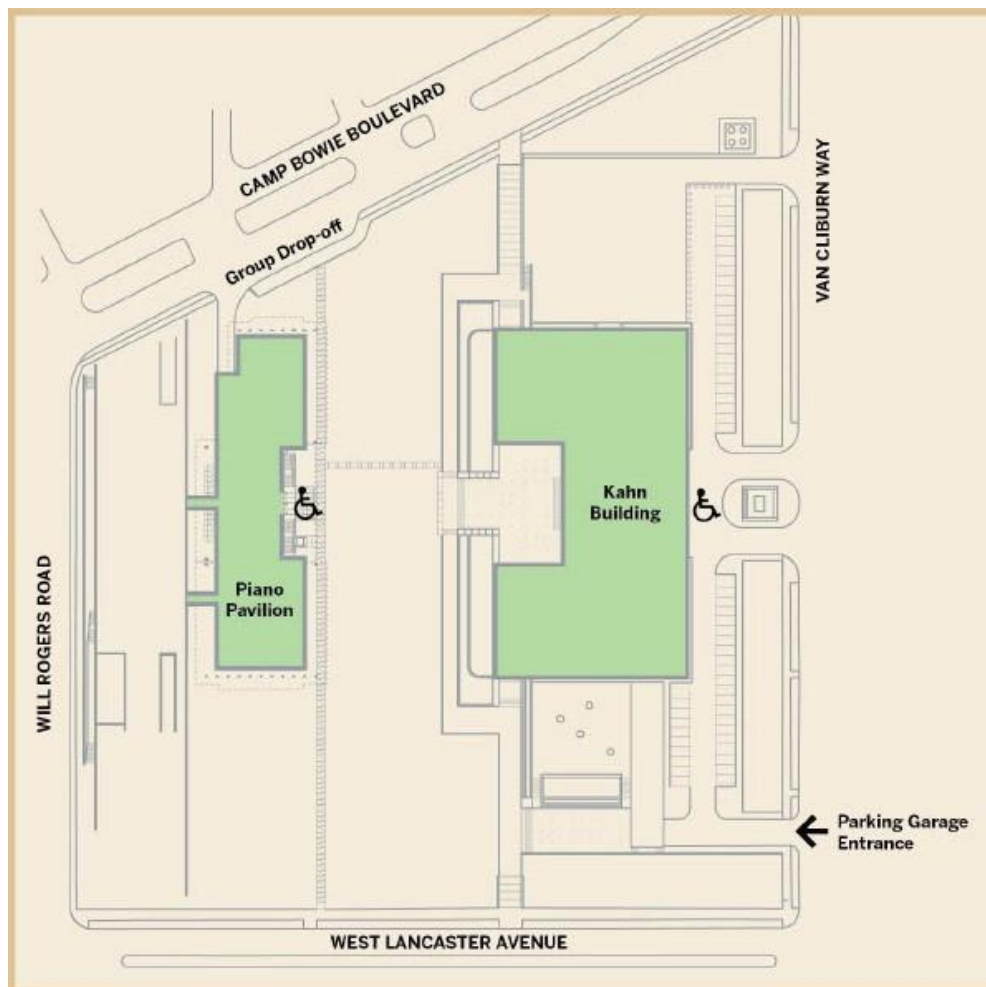
TWO BUILDINGS, ONE MUSEUM



South portico of the Kimbell's
Kahn Building (completed 1972)



View of the Kimbell's Piano Pavilion from
Lancaster Ave. (completed 2013)



Map of the
Kimbell campus



Indian, *Seated Buddha with Two Attendants*
Red sandstone, c. AD 131

Indian

India, Uttar Pradesh, Mathura, Kushan period (c. second century BC–third century AD)

Seated Buddha with Two Attendants

Red sandstone, c. AD 131

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This seated Buddha conforms to a standard early Mathura type. The Buddha is personified as Shakyamuni, the teacher. He is portrayed as a traditional yogi, seated on a throne, and dressed in the guise of a monk, with a diaphanous robe worn over the left shoulder. The sensitive modeling of the soft, plump flesh gives little hint of musculature but still endows the body with a sense of solidity and mass. The hair is smooth like a cap, and the cranial bump (*ushnisha*), now missing, would have appeared as a twisted bun or coil of hair (*kapardin*). The right hand is raised in the gesture of reassurance (*abhayamudra*). The palms of the hands and soles of the Buddha's feet are marked with the lotus and the wheel, symbols of his divinity and teaching.

The generously modeled and sensuous royal attendants flanking the Buddha have stylized facial features and archaic smiles similar to their lord's. The sculpture includes other references to the Buddha's life and exalted status as a universal monarch. The large halo behind his head represents the sun and proclaims his divinity. The pillar topped by a wheel, centered in the relief panel of the throne, is symbolic of preaching and refers to the Buddha's first sermon at Sarnath. The two figures holding flywhisks and the rampant lions signify the Buddha's royal heritage.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Describe the seated figure of the Buddha, his facial expression, as well as his pose and gestures. How does the sculpture make you feel? Why?

How is the Buddha dressed? How does the sculptor distinguish between the parts that are flesh and those that are covered with cloth?

What other figures surround the Buddha? What are they holding and wearing? Are they as important as the central figure?

What material is this? Describe its color and texture. Is this a durable stone? Has it suffered any damage? What's missing?

RESEARCH the life of the historical Buddha and the meanings of his symbols and gestures. Do you see any of these elements pictured in this sculpture?



Indian, *Four-Armed Ganesha*
Terracotta relief, 5th–6th century AD

Indian

India, Uttar Pradesh, Gupta period (321–500)

Four-Armed Ganesha

Terracotta relief, 5th–6th century AD

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

The forms of many Hindu deities became standardized in the Gupta period (c. 321–500 AD), which is therefore considered India’s classical age. Senuously modeled figures with softly rounded contours and lively, elegant silhouettes characterize the period’s highly sophisticated style of sculpture. Niches in the exterior walls of Hindu brick temples were often decorated with terracotta plaques such as this one.

Ganesha is the elephant-headed son of Shiva, one of the three most important deities of the Hindu pantheon, and his consort, the goddess Parvati. He is widely worshiped as the remover of obstacles and the bestower of good fortune, prosperity, and health. The origin of his hybrid body—consisting of an elephant’s head with one tusk and an infant’s torso with distended belly—is related in Hindu legends. Parvati is said to have created Ganesha in human form to act as her door guardian. When he refused to admit Shiva to Parvati’s chamber, the god cut off the child’s head. To placate the distressed Parvati, Shiva replaced the head with that of the first living thing he could find—an elephant. Hindu deities are often depicted with multiple heads and arms, an expression of the multiplicity of their superhuman powers. Due to the damaged condition of this superb terracotta relief, it is no longer possible to identify the deity’s usual attributes—an axe, a rosary, and a bowl of sweetmeats—which he would have held in his hands. The serpent hanging across his torso signifies his relationship to Shiva, who also bears this attribute.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What do you notice about this sculpture right away? What details suggest that Ganesha is special? Why do you think he has an elephant’s head?

How do we know that Ganesha is the most important figure in this piece? Where are the other figures in the composition? Are they the same size as Ganesha? What are they doing?

Can we walk all the way around this sculpture? Where do you think a sculpture like this was originally placed?

Why would Ganesha, the “Lord of Obstacles,” be shown with the head of an elephant? What sort of objects or problems might people ask him to remove?

RESEARCH stories about Ganesha to discover more about his personality and adventures. Choose a story and re-tell it in your own words to a classmate.



Chinese, *Court Lady*

Gray earthenware with painted polychrome decoration, first half of the 8th century

Chinese

China, probably Shaanxi province, Tang dynasty (618–907)

Court Lady

Gray earthenware with painted polychrome decoration, first half of the 8th century AD

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

The Tang dynasty (618–907 AD) practice of sumptuous burials has left a rich legacy of Tang funerary sculpture. One of the most engaging and distinctive groups of such figures are representations of court ladies. This animated and charming example stands in a gracefully swayed pose, her petite hands held in a conversational gesture in front of her swelling form. She wears a long scarf draped over her shoulder and a white, long-sleeved jacket tucked into a full-length red robe, which is belted above her bosom and falls in looping folds to her feet, leaving her upturned, *ruyi*-shaped, triple-cloud shoes visible. Her hairstyle, known as a *gaoji* (upswept topknot), is stiffly lacquered and folded, with a clump of hair bound into a fan shape in the front, all held in place by two crescent-shaped combs. Her plump, heavily made-up cheeks are offset by exquisitely delicate eyes, nose, and slightly parted lips, reflecting the contemporary ideal of voluptuous beauty.

The Tang sculptors' careful attention to details of fashion and physiognomy allows us to trace in their works the changing fashions of ladies at court. In the early eighth century, a new aesthetic favored a fuller and more rotund physique and loose, billowing robes. This new trend was probably set by Yang Guifei, the imperial consort of the emperor Xuanzong (reigned AD 712–56). Dressed in elegant clothes with their hair arranged in elaborate coiffures and their faces beautified with cosmetics, these figures of aristocratic Tang women possess a singular grace and charm.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is she wearing? How is her hair styled? What little details did the artist want us to notice in particular?

Imitate her hand gestures. What are you usually doing when gesturing like that? What do you think she would say to you?

Why do you think someone would put her in their tomb? What might she do for them in the afterlife? What would you want to take with you on a long journey? Or who?

What is this sculpture made of? What sort of tools did the artist use to create the details you see?

CONDUCT an imaginary interview with the Court Lady. What questions would you ask? What answers would she give?



Chinese, *Earth Spirit*
Gray earthenware with painted polychrome decoration, first half of the 8th century

Chinese

China, probably Shaanxi province, Tang dynasty (618–907)

Earth Spirit

Gray earthenware with painted polychrome decoration, first half of the 8th century

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

The inclusion of fantastic animal guardians as part of the retinue of Chinese tomb figures began in the Northern Wei dynasty (AD 386–534) and continued into the Tang dynasty (AD 618–907). Also called earth spirits, or *zhenmushou* (grave-quelling beasts), these guardians took the form of fantastic hybrid creatures composed of various animal and, in some cases, human elements. They were placed in tombs in pairs to ward off any malevolent beings.

Brilliantly painted in pink, red, orange, and black and highlighted with gilding, the Kimbell's fierce figure stands in a rampant posture of conquest as it subdues a snarling beast upon a rockwork base, its left arm entwined with a serpent. The spirit's triple horns, bulging eyes, bare-teethed grimace, and sharp claws add to its ferocious appearance. Undulating flames emerge from its head, shoulders, and right leg. A gilded tondo, finely painted with a group of figures (possibly musicians, who may also be foreigners) and set against a luxuriant floral panel, embellishes the figure's chest.

The composite elements of the *Earth Spirit*, such as the large horns, claws, fangs, and tiger stripes, presumably conferred upon it the fearsome qualities of these animals. The guardian is quelling evil in the form of the horned, hooved beast that he tramples underfoot. The eye on the side of the beast's belly may represent the "third eye," an indication of the influence of Esoteric Buddhism prevalent during the early Tang period.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is your first response to this sculpture? Choose three words to describe it.

What actions do you see happening? Notice how your eye travels around the figures. How do their gestures and expressions help you figure out what's going on?

Count the number of animal-like features you see in this sculpture. What animals do they remind you of? How do they contribute to the sculpture's overall feeling?

If you designed your own guardian against evil forces, what would it look like? Would it take on animal or mythological features? What other attributes might it have?

SKETCH your own personal Earth Spirit. As a challenge, try to follow the color scheme of the Kimbell's sculpture.



Duccio di Buoninsegna, *The Raising of Lazarus*

Tempera and gold on panel, 1310–11

Duccio di Buoninsegna
Italian, 1278–1318

The Raising of Lazarus

Tempera and gold on panel, 1310–11
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Duccio was the preeminent Sienese painter in the early fourteenth century. He infused the prevailing Byzantine style with a more naturalistic, narrative mode. The Kimbell painting originally formed part of the altarpiece known as the *Maestà* (Majesty), made for the high altar of Siena Cathedral. The *Maestà* was among the most beautiful and complex altarpieces ever made. Originally some sixteen feet in height, it was painted on both sides, the front showing the Madonna and Child enthroned with saints and the rear showing episodes from the life of Christ. The front predella (a boxlike base) depicted events from Christ's childhood, and the back predella recounted his ministry.

The Kimbell's *Raising of Lazarus* and several other panels were removed from the *Maestà* after it was dismantled in 1771; it was most likely the final scene of the back predella. The square panel depicts Christ, at left, bringing a man back from the dead. According to John (11:1–44), when Lazarus fell ill, his sisters Martha and Mary sent for his friend Jesus. By the time Jesus arrived in Bethany, Lazarus had already been dead four days. Duccio shows the moment when Christ called Lazarus forth from the tomb, prefiguring his own Resurrection. The act provided the climactic proof of Christ's divinity.

A noteworthy compositional change is apparent at the lower right. The paint surface, thinned by age, reveals an underlying paint layer showing a horizontal sarcophagus.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is happening in this painting? Who are the main characters in this scene? How can we tell that they are important?

Describe the group of people. What type of clothing are they wearing? What facial expressions and body language do you notice?

Where is this story taking place? Why do you think Duccio chose to use gold in the landscape?

IMAGINE the tomb in its original horizontal position. How does the tomb's orientation influence how you read the story? Why might Duccio have changed the composition of the tomb?



Michelangelo Buonarroti, *The Torment of Saint Anthony*

Tempera on panel, 1487

Michelangelo Buonarroti
Italian, 1475–1564

The Torment of Saint Anthony

Tempera on panel, 1487

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This is the first known painting by Michelangelo, believed to have been painted when he was twelve years old. Although Michelangelo considered himself first and foremost a sculptor, he received his early training as a painter, in the workshop of Domenico Ghirlandaio (c. 1449–1494), a leading master in Florence. Michelangelo's earliest biographers, Giorgio Vasari and Ascanio Condivi, tell us that, aside from some drawings, his first work was a painted copy of the engraving *Saint Anthony Tormented by Demons* by the fifteenth-century German master [Martin Schongauer](#). The rare subject is found in the life of Saint Anthony the Great, written by Athanasius of Alexandria in the fourth century. It describes the Egyptian hermit-saint's vision, in which he levitated into the air and was attacked by demons, whose torments he withstood.

Created when he was informally associated with Ghirlandaio's workshop and under the guidance of an older friend, the artist Francesco Granacci, Michelangelo's painting earned him widespread recognition. Writing when Michelangelo was still alive, both Vasari and Condivi recounted that to give the demonic creatures veracity, he studied the colorful scales and other parts of specimens from the fish market. Michelangelo subtly revised Schongauer's composition, making it more compact and giving the monsters more animal-like features, notably adding fish scales to one of them. He also included a landscape that resembles the Arno River Valley around Florence. The work is one of only four easel paintings generally regarded as having come from his hand and the first painting by Michelangelo to enter an American collection.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What is going on here? What do you notice first? What movement do you see? Describe the different creatures. Do they remind you of other "real" animals? What colors, textures, or patterns catch your eye? What are the demons doing?

Who is this man? How is he dressed? How does he react to the demons? What does that tell you about the story? What kind of story is this?

What details do you notice in the landscape? What are the dominant colors?

Why do you think Michelangelo created a painted copy based on an earlier engraving? What do you think he learned while making it?

CREATE a collage timeline that shows other important artworks by Michelangelo.



Kano Shigenobu, *Wheat, Poppies, and Bamboo*

Ink, colors, and gofun on gold leaf paper, early 17th century

Kano Shigenobu
Japanese, active c. 1620–1640

Wheat, Poppies, and Bamboo

Ink, colors, and gofun on gold leaf paper, early 17th century
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This brilliant screen, originally one of a pair, depicts young wheat, blossoming poppies, and bamboo, all of the summer season. Boldly patterned with bright mineral colors on a gold ground, it exemplifies the exuberant decorative style of the Kano school. A heightened sense of realism is achieved with the use of the *moriage* technique, whereby parts of the composition are built up by the application of gesso to create raised designs.

The emerging elite of the Momoyama feudal system were the *daimyo* (feudal lords), who controlled extensive domains and served as advisors to the *shogun* (military overlords). The magnificent castles of the *daimyo* were embellished with colorful paintings on screens and sliding doors, often decorated with gold-leaf backgrounds, which served to brighten the huge, dark interiors. Among the retainers in the service of the *daimyo* lords were the painters of the Kano school, a family of secular artists who formed the most important school of decorative painting from the sixteenth to eighteenth century. The Kano masters at first followed a true Chinese, monochrome-ink painting tradition but eventually added colorful and decorative elements to their work, developing a bold style well suited to these grand commissions. In particular, the Kano school painters of Kyoto popularized the *kimpeki* style of gold-ground screens painted in opaque mineral pigments.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Do you consider this a landscape painting? Why or why not? Where are we? What is the position of the viewer? Describe the different textures and forms that you see.

Imagine encountering this screen in a darkened *daimyo* castle. How might its golden, reflective quality affect your experience?

Why do you think the artist chose to depict these particular plants in this unique arrangement? What do wheat, poppies, and bamboo have in common? How are they different?

SKETCH your own summertime panorama. What plants would you include? How would you arrange these elements on your own painted screen?



Diego Velázquez, *Portrait of Don Pedro de Barberana*

Oil on canvas, c. 1631–33

Diego Velázquez

Spanish, 1599–1660

Portrait of Don Pedro de Barberana

Oil on canvas, c. 1631–33

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Born and trained in Seville, Velázquez moved to Madrid, where he served King Philip IV from 1623. As court painter, his main responsibility was to produce portraits of the royal family and their circle. These portraits, a major part of his legacy, remain unsurpassed in their depth of conception and extraordinary painterly technique.

Don Pedro de Barberana y Aparregui (1579–1649) was a member of Philip IV's privy council. He was named honorary postmaster of the realm and, by royal decree, governor of his native town of Briones. Prominently displayed on his doublet and cape is the red cross of the Order of Calatrava, founded in the Middle Ages as a defense against the Moors and subsequently a privilege of the aristocracy. Don Pedro was knighted in 1630, and Velázquez must have painted the portrait soon after he returned from his first trip to Italy in 1631.

In his full-length portraits, Velázquez devised new ways of heightening the illusion of the sitter's physical presence. Don Pedro commands the entire pictorial space, which is stripped of architectural elements and enlivened by his cast shadow and the soft, ambient light of the background. His left brow raised, Don Pedro looks out with cool confident aplomb, seeming to scrutinize and appraise the viewer, rather than the reverse. Much of the force of the portrait derives from the tension between the evocation of a forthright personality and the refinement and elegance of the knight's costume. Especially noteworthy is Velázquez's ability to create palpable volumes, particularly in the subtle gradations of blacks in the sitter's costume.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What words would you use to describe this person? What do you think Don Pedro and the artist Velázquez want us to see in this portrait?

What are some of the first things you notice about his costume? Where do you see highlights in this picture? How does the artist show textures? Where else do you notice light or shadow?

What do you notice about the background? Why do you think the artist chose a very plain setting?

CREATE a portrait of an individual that you respect. What details would you include to represent this person's life experience and interests?



Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun, *Self-Portrait*

Oil on canvas, c. 1781

Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun
French, 1755–1842

Self-Portrait

Oil on canvas, c. 1781
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This youthful self-portrait depicts Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun at about age twenty-six, by which time she had already worked some ten years as a professional painter. Here she presents herself not as an artist, but as a charming and attractive lady of society—indistinguishable from her own aristocratic patrons, whom she sometimes painted in similar informal attire. Largely self-taught, Vigée Le Brun copied old master and modern paintings, including works owned by the painter and art dealer who became her husband, Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Le Brun. Recommended by the queen for membership in the Royal Academy in 1783, despite being disqualified by her husband's profession—academicians could not be connected to the picture trade—Vigée Le Brun soon acquired considerable fame and renown. Her paintings shown at the Salon were “the most highly praised . . . the topics of conversation at court and in Paris, in suppers, in literary circles.”

This radiant self-portrait, which highlights Vigée Le Brun's healthy good looks and creamy complexion, also bears witness to her absorption of seventeenth-century Flemish art. Having visited Flanders and the Netherlands in the spring of 1781, Vigée Le Brun made good use of her study of Rubens—particularly in the delicate glazes used to render her translucent skin and crystal earrings. Attentive to the latest fashions, Vigée Le Brun often showed her sitters in graceful poses and outfitted in comfortable Grecian gowns and scarves. Here her simple muslin gown and elegant scheme of white, black, and cherry, along with her loose curls of hair, offer a refreshingly unfettered contrast to the towering, powdered coiffures and swathes of brocaded silk favored by more formal portraitists.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

What do you notice first? How does the artist want to be seen? Describe her costume. How many different textures do you see? Where does light enter this picture? Do you see highlights?

Where does the artist repeat colors in the composition? How would more colors change this composition?

What kinds of jobs were available for women in the 18th century? Can you detect any qualities that may have helped this female artist achieve professional success?

LEARN more about the exciting life and times of Vigée Le Brun. Who did she meet and paint? Where did she travel? What happened in France during her lifetime?



Ito Jakuchu, *Fukurojin, the God of Longevity and Wisdom*
Ink and light colors on paper, c. 1790

Ito Jakuchu
Japanese, 1716–1800

Fukurojin, the God of Longevity and Wisdom

Ink and light colors on paper, c. 1790
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Jakuchu, one of the Three Eccentrics of the Edo period (1615–1868), was a remarkable individualist whose paintings defy easy classification. Born in Kyoto, he inherited his family's green-grocery business but left the running of the shop to his brother and devoted his entire life to painting. Jakuchu's oeuvre is extensive and broad in scope. His style ranges from colorful, decorative works on silk to daring compositions in ink; his subjects include elegant depictions of flowers and barnyard fowl, as well as major Buddhist icons and narrative themes.

This humorous image depicts Fukurojin, one of a group of Chinese divinities called the "Seven Household Gods," who were also popular folk deities in Japan. Fukurojin, an old man, is always distinguished by an exaggerated, tall forehead, which is taken to be indicative of his superhuman intelligence and wisdom. He stands under a pine tree with branches that are softly brushed to create the sense of long, thick pine needles and is dressed in a voluminous robe decorated with cranes and long-tailed turtles. In Asian mythology these three motifs—pine, crane, and turtle—are symbols of longevity. In this freely brushed and seemingly spontaneous work, Jakuchu has employed his unique technique of making a single, wet stroke of ink stand out from the next by a rim of paler ink spread by the absorption at its edges. This method effectively adds depth and texture to a largely monochromatic work.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Take a few moments to look closely. Who or what do you notice in this scene? What clues tell us that Fukurojin is a god? What about him suggests wisdom?

Describe his clothing. What animals do you see? What might they represent? What images or symbols do you associate with long life?

Compare the different brushstrokes. Are some darker than others? What colors does the artist use? Where do you see colors other than black or gray? Which forms are very detailed in their description? Which are shown with only a few brushstrokes? What does the artist leave to the imagination?

What are the two red symbols next to the pine tree branches? Who added them?

IMAGINE a conversation with Fukurojin. What questions would you ask of his infinite wisdom? **WRITE** a short dialogue and share with the class.



Claude Monet, *La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide*

Oil on canvas, 1865

Claude Monet
French, 1840–1926

La Pointe de la Hève at Low Tide

Oil on canvas, 1865
Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

This magnificent beach scene near Le Havre, where Monet grew up, was one of two landscapes that launched his career when exhibited in Paris at the 1865 Salon. Monet developed this large showpiece in direct response to similar compositions submitted to the Salon of 1864 by Charles-François Daubigny and his son Karl. Daubigny had attempted to execute his Salon painting entirely on the spot, in what would soon become the orthodox practice for Impressionist landscapes. But in 1864, Monet still worked in a more traditional fashion: he first painted *La Pointe de la Hève* at the site as a portable-scale work then enlarged it at his Paris studio in early 1865. Most impressive in this large version is Monet's rendition of the beach at low tide, the muted silvery tones of the foreground reflecting the low-hanging clouds stretching far away. The rocks at the right, described with brisk, creative brushwork, are especially indicative of Monet's unique talents, which were increasingly evident as he emerged as the leading Impressionist landscape artist.

Monet insisted that an old black-and-white photograph of *La Pointe de la Hève* be included in a 1921 book about him. Perhaps as a result, this work from his youth was traced, and in 1923 a dealer friend brought it back to Giverny to keep the elderly artist company as he recovered from eye surgery.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Notice the different colors and textures in this composition. What kind of day is this? Where would you like to be in this scene? Imagine the sounds, smells, and tastes you might experience.

What kinds of movement are happening? How do diagonals help to organize the picture? What other lines does Monet use to guide your eye around this seascape?

What time of day is this? What makes you say that? Where do you notice light on different surfaces?

What might this picture suggest about Monet's background and interests? Why do you think he selected this painting for the annual Salon, the largest art exhibition in Paris at the time?

COMPARE this painting with Monet's [*Weeping Willow*](#), painted over fifty years later, also in the Kimbell's permanent collection.



Pierre Bonnard, *Landscape at Le Cannet*

Oil on canvas, 1928

Pierre Bonnard
French (1867–1947)

Landscape at Le Cannet

Oil on canvas, 1928

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth

Pierre Bonnard's beginnings were influenced by the sinuous lines and hues of Paul Gauguin, and his late works inspired Mark Rothko, the ultimate colorist of the abstract age. He is known for his scenes of daily life, centering on his own extended family; for his complex depictions of interiors, often inhabited by his wife, Marthe; for his depictions of Marthe at her toilette or in her bath; and, finally, for his landscapes, which depict with equal joy his garden at Vernon in Normandy and his house and its environs at Le Cannet. In 1926, he purchased a property near the village, just north of Cannes on the Mediterranean, seeking in the warm climate of the French Riviera an environment that would be good for Marthe's health.

Landscape at Le Cannet is the most ambitious depiction of the world that was the central setting in Bonnard's art for the final decades of his life. Taking a position on the hill above his home, which he had christened "Le Bosquet" for the grove of trees that surrounded it, Bonnard looked to the west, toward the Esterel mountains. The roof of Le Bosquet, near the tree at center of the composition, gives a sense of Bonnard's personal scale in the context of the panorama; the two hillocks in the foreground fall towards the pathway that borders the rear of Bonnard's property, where a girl and her dog can be seen passing by. Bonnard places himself in the right foreground, beside a pair of goats; a cow stands among spiky plants at the other side of the canvas. Suffused with warm light and with a rainbow-like array of colors, the painting was intended to decorate the home of a distinguished collector on the outskirts of Paris.

FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION / ACTIVITY

Do you have a favorite place to relax? What especially stands out in your memories when you think about this special spot?

Allow your eyes to wander through this landscape. What details catch your eye? How many figures do you see? What are they doing?

Describe the different colors that you see. How does Bonnard's use of color set a mood, awaken the imagination, and/or energize the scene? How might you experience this landscape with your other senses?

WRITE a short story from the perspective of one of the figures or animals found in this landscape. What are they thinking? Where have they been and where are they going?