

Paintings I Love

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Hokusai



Tsunami by Hokusai. Also called Great Wave off Kanagawa. I love this painting because of the peaceful and almost loving action of the wave about to engulf the communities, and the balance of the wave on the left with the still sky on the right. Each drop is lovingly executed.



See if you can recreate the basic shape of the wave, and balance the wave with the sky.

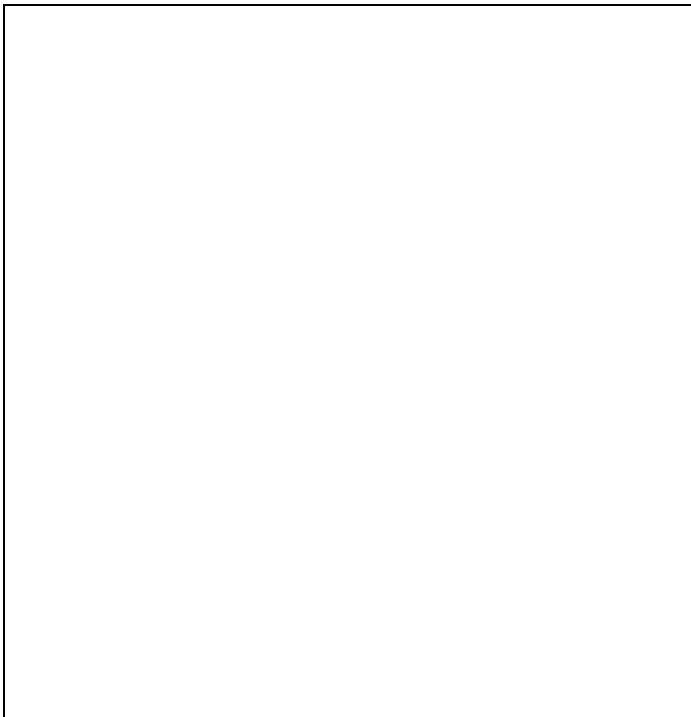
Joshua Reynolds



I love the portraits of Joshua Reynolds. The backgrounds take equal action to the figures in front, but the simplicity is evident in each case. He was a more natural painter. He painted a series of paintings of himself in different styles, this one certainly resembles Benjamin Franklin, a friend of Reynolds.



Do you see the triangle of this girl, with her little hands clasped together and her toes tucking out from under her skirt? Can you create the triangle shape of her head and legs, and her hands in the middle? Try it.



Winslow Homer



Another of my favorites, The Country School by Winslow Homer, 1871. This painting shows a lazy and warm

afternoon in which the school is at peace, the teacher is looking off into the distance, the children are quietly reading. It is a peaceful scene. All is at rest.

This is another story painting, only the action in this story is one of stillness. Do you see how your eye is drawn up to the teacher, and her gaze out the window makes you think of your own reverie? There is nothing to say about this painting except: rest. Stillness. From the windows out doors you can see that the teacher would rather be outside. Maybe she is wondering what will happen after school. I feel sorry for the youngest students, on the right. The little girl is looking at the boy next to her, she is not paying attention to her reader. He may be rubbing his eyes. What do you think they are thinking about? I think they are brother and sister.

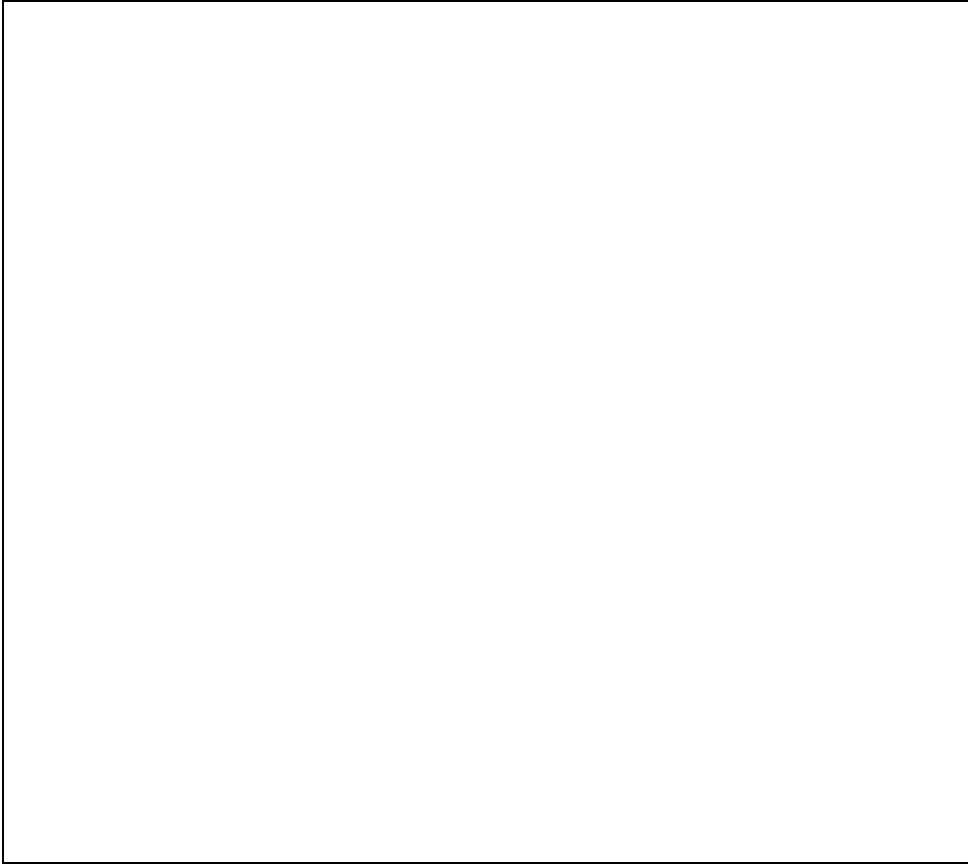
Paul Cezanne



Paul Cezanne, Bay of Marseille Seen from L'Estaque, 1879

I love all of the still lifes of Cezanne, the peaches in particular, and I love this painting with its balance and minimalism. The bay is equal in proportion to the town, and the blue is balanced by the peaches and greens. It is a favorite landscape of mine.

See if you can draw the basic shape of the bay and the shore.



Giotto

*Another favorite, the weeping angels of Giotto in *The Lamentation of Christ*, 1303-1306. These angels are really grieved, although they had a front-row seat to Christ's crucifixion and Resurrection, they are still grieving and showing us God's sacrifice of His only-begotten son. They pop out of the background in real space.*



Close-up of the angels.

Here is a hard job to do. Can you block out the shapes of the people in the front of the painting? This is called the foreground. These shapes take up space, and they even have their backs to us, which was a new idea in painting when Giotto did it. Drawing Christian art in three dimensions, as if the people take up space, was a new idea when Giotto did this. He even put real faces on the people, as if he painted people he knew. See if you can draw the shapes as basic shapes, to get a feel for the dimensions of this painting. If it is too hard for you, don't worry about it. Painting blobs and shapes is a way to see it differently.



Leonardo da Vinci

I have saved the best for last. This is the newly-discovered Leonardo da Vinci painting, Salvator Mundi. It shows Christ holding the cosmos. He is holding his hand up in a traditional blessing, his three fingers together signifying the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He is blessing us as Christ Jesus, the Son of God, and the second member of the Trinity. Christ's robes symbolically remind us of the robes associated with The Virgin Mary in many icons. The blue represents purity and peace, the red crossed over his chest represents Christ's blood on the cross, and the white undergarment of his sleeve, Christ's purity, the perfect spotless lamb whose blood shed on the cross saves us from our sins. The glints of light in the globe can represent the stars of the cosmos, which he is effortless holding up "by His powerful Word."

Among other things, the painting of the globe has identified it as an original Leonardo painting, as it is not refracted light in glass, but clear showing through natural rock crystal, with which substance he was working at the end of his life. This painting has so many imitations throughout history that it was assumed the original was lost and missing. When a "copy" was taken to be restored, the restorer discovered extensive overpainting over fragments. The fragments included a scraped off thumb, repositioned by the original artist. The seven fragments were put together and restored to this obvious original Leonardo painting, Christ holding the cosmos, or Salvator Mundi. It is my favorite of his work.

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful Word. After He had obtained purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in Heaven. Hebrews 1:3



