

A&A Art Print: Respond and Connect

Henri Rousseau. *Surprised!* (also known as *Tiger in a Tropical Storm*), 1891

"When I step into the hothouses and see the plants from exotic lands, it seems to me that I am in a dream"

Henri Rousseau

MAIN VISUAL ART CONCEPTS: Line • Pattern • Movement • Color

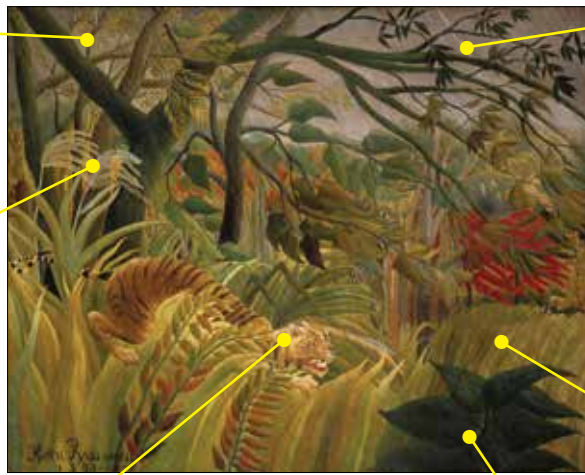
PAINTING TECHNIQUE: Rousseau came up with his own method of depicting rain. He painted thin, nearly transparent, light-colored diagonal lines across his entire canvas.



BOTANY: According to Rebecca Alexander, the "Plant Answer Librarian" at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Rousseau's plants in *Surprised!* are not specific enough to be identified or classified. She cites one exception: "the tassels over the back end of the tiger resemble *Miscanthus*, but there's a lot of artistic license going on here! It's tropical-ish." 🌿

ECONOMY: When he was 24 years old, Rousseau began to work for the French government collecting tolls from farmers as they traveled to markets to sell their goods. He kept this job for 25 years, which allowed him time to paint. His friends nicknamed him "Le Douanier" (pronounced Luh DWA-ñay), meaning "The Customs Inspector."

LANGUAGE ARTS: Be sure to read the poem, "The Tyger," by English poet William Blake (1757–1827). 🌿



EARTH SCIENCE: More Americans are killed each year by lightning than by tornadoes or hurricanes. The Merriam-Webster dictionary says lightning is "the flashing of light produced by a discharge of atmospheric electricity from one cloud to another or between a cloud and the earth." Many scientists disagree about the exact causes of lightning, but they do agree that it stems from the differences in positively and negatively charged particles. 🌩️

ART CONCEPTS IN DESIGN: Rousseau uses analogous colors (ones that are close to each other on the color wheel) red, orange, yellow and green to make the most of his foliage. Note how he seems to abstract the tall grasses into undulating stripes.

BOTANY AND BIOLOGY: Rousseau never visited an actual jungle; he invented all his jungle scenes. He visited botanical gardens to look closely at growing plants and went to natural history museums to study stuffed animals. Rousseau also trained himself by copying art in museums, and some say he derived his tiger from works by Eugène Delacroix.



Eugène Delacroix (French; 1798–1863. *Tiger and Snake*, 1862. Oil on canvas; 13" x 16.25". National Gallery of Art. Corcoran Collection (William A. Clark Collection).

ART HISTORY: Rousseau was ridiculed because his painting style indicated a lack of artistic training. One characteristic of his work, the tendency to flatten, or make objects frontally face the viewer, gives his paintings an unnatural appearance. Picasso admired him greatly, however, and hosted a prestigious dinner in Rousseau's honor in 1908.

IDENTIFYING STYLE – PRIMITIVISM AND ORIENTALISM: Rousseau is mostly thought of as a "primitive" (self-taught) painter. His tiger has some similarities to Chinese and Japanese painted and carved tigers. Interestingly, some of Eugène Delacroix's works are also thought to be examples of "Orientalist" Western art. 🌿

POETIC EPITAPHS: French poet, Guillaume Apollinaire (1880–1918), wrote Rousseau's epitaph. Not long before he died, Rousseau declared to his friend, "You will unfold your literary talent and avenge me for all the insults and abuse I have experienced." Look online to see if Rousseau's wish was fulfilled. 🌿



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Henri Rousseau
1891



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JUNE 2017

Henri Rousseau (French; 1844–1910). *Surprised!* (also known as *Tiger in a Tropical Storm*), 1881. Oil on canvas; 51" x 64". The National Gallery, London. Bought with the aid of a substantial donation from the Hon. Walter H. Annenberg, 1972. Public domain.

In the Studio: Create and Present

Annotations and lessons on these pages by Tara Cady Sartorius,
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GRADES K-6

HOW WE ORGANIZE (AND RE-ORGANIZE) OURSELVES

Jon Hazlett, who teaches art in two IB (International Baccalaureate®) schools in Oxford, Michigan, adapted his lesson from last year to this year. In the 2017 works, the middle-ground areas are more distinct. It seems Hazlett was better able to instruct his second-graders in developing the illusion of depth.

2016



2017



Art by second-grade students at Clear Lake Elementary School in Oxford, Michigan.



Art by second-grade students at Daniel Axford Elementary School in Oxford, Michigan.

Hazlett says the philosophy of this lesson is that “*understanding the interconnectedness of art to other subjects demonstrates a deeper understanding of our world, and that art is connected to all subjects.*”

Students synthesized their drawing techniques, compositional designs, and knowledge of subject matter (the rainforest) with concepts of depth, pattern, and balance. Prior to making their art, students viewed a science video that showed and explained the layers of a tropical rainforest, and they also saw presentation and participated in a discussion about Henri Rousseau’s artwork.

Says Hazlett, “*Since I taught the lesson last year, I have been able to incorporate the use of iPads for researching and drawing rainforest animals. The student work this year demonstrates a better understanding of the rainforests and how to draw the animals.*” Hazlett has his own blog at oxfordarts.weebly.com.

NATIONAL ART STANDARDS: Grades K-6

CREATE: Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem.

RESPOND: Perceive and describe aesthetic characteristics of one’s natural world and constructed environments.

How to use the A&A Monthly Art Print: *Carefully unbend the staples at the center of the magazine, pull the print up and out of the magazine.*

Rebend staples to keep magazine intact. Laminate the pulled-out section and use it as a resource in your art room. — Editor

GRADES 7-12

SPRIGS, FRONDS AND SPRAYS Unlike Rousseau’s jungle, in the student work below, the plants may be identifiable: a Venus flytrap (*Dionaea muscipula*) in the upper left, a red ginger (*Alpinia purpurata*) in the upper right, blue flowers in the lower left reminiscent of Vanda coerulea orchids, and perhaps Heliconia in the lower right.

Carrie Keene’s students took a systematic approach to creating the appearance of dense plant growth as one might find in a jungle. Keene says, “*The lesson focuses on the use of three distinct layers to create believable depth: background, middle ground, and foreground. Beginning with a still life of plants/yard clippings, the students were tasked with using color to indicate the depth of each layer.*”



Artwork by students at Orange Park High School in Orange Park, Florida.

Layer 1 - Background: Colors are muted, or tints of cool colors.
Layer 2 - Middle ground: Colors are analogous, sometimes with the addition of more cool colors. Students added purple or blue to their green leaves, causing them to appear to go back in space.
Layer 3 - Foreground: Colors are bright and saturated. This is the only layer that gets warm colors, such as yellow and white, which cause some of the plants to appear reflective or translucent.

NATIONAL ART STANDARDS: Grades 7-12

CREATE: Through experimentation, practice, and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.