



# FLESH & BLOOD

Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum

## EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE

Ann P. Wyckoff  
Education Resource Center  
[visitsam.org/fleshandblood](http://visitsam.org/fleshandblood)

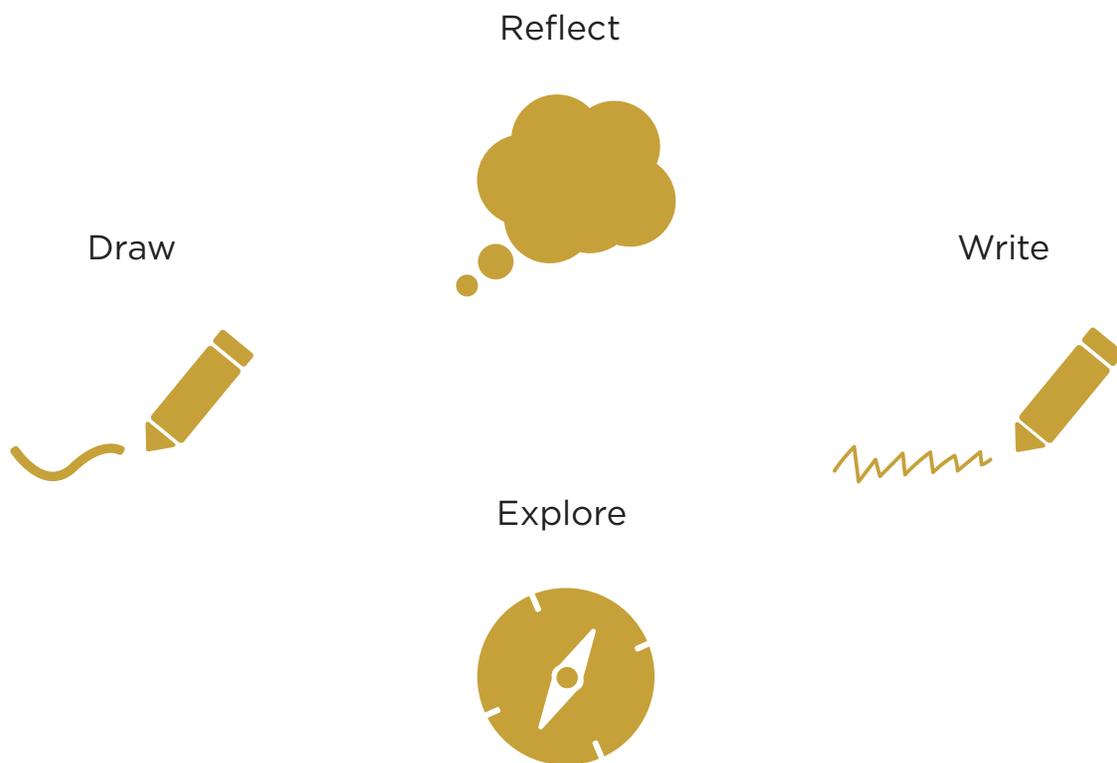
**SAM** SEATTLE  
ART  
MUSEUM

# ABOUT THIS GUIDE

*Flesh and Blood: Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum* presents 40 works from **Renaissance\*** and **Baroque** artists. The Capodimonte Museum, located in Naples, is one of the largest art museums in Italy. With a selection of artworks spanning more than 200 years, this exhibition reveals the many ways the human body can express love, devotion, or tragic suffering, giving it the name “Flesh and Blood.” As you explore this exhibition guide, think about what you see in the art that connects to these ideas.

The Renaissance and Baroque periods were between the 14th and 18th centuries, hundreds of years ago. This was before technology we are familiar with today, including electricity. Paint was mixed by hand and made of natural materials. **Christianity** had a powerful presence in Europe, so it heavily influenced art, culture, and government. Gender, race, and class also shaped daily life and affected where you could live, what jobs you could have, and what clothes you could wear.

This guide looks at four works of art from *Flesh and Blood*, followed by a related activity. K-12 students and educators can use this guide in the classroom or during a visit to the Seattle Art Museum. Each exercise starts with looking questions and background information about the work. A blank activity sheet is included at the back to select additional works of art from the exhibition to reflect on with your students.



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\*Definitions of **bolded** words can be found at the end of the guide in the glossary.

# PREPARING FOR THE EXHIBITION

## SPECIAL NOTE FOR SCHOOL VISITS

*Flesh and Blood* contains images of nudity and violence that may not be suitable for all K-12 audiences. A preview by the classroom teacher is advised for this content.

Please feel free to email [educatorprograms@seattleartmuseum.org](mailto:educatorprograms@seattleartmuseum.org) for further advice on how to approach and engage this exhibition and for more information on how to receive free Educator Passes to preview the exhibition.

## COMPLEX CONVERSATIONS

Before leading conversations with your students, reflect on your own identity and be aware of how that identity shapes your personal perspective and biases, then encourage your students to do the same. Model self-reflection for your students and consider specific pieces of your own identity, such as race or gender, and how they have affected your life, worldviews, and interactions with others. Aim to create an open and safe environment with your students by sharing your experiences and why these experiences are important.

Prepare your students for these conversations with the following techniques, which are adapted from materials created by the Studio Museum in Harlem.

- 1 At the beginning of the discussion or visit, set group expectations for respectful dialogue.
- 2 Use “I” statements to honor individual experiences and avoid stereotyping.
- 3 When possible, begin with less controversial information and build to more complex topics.
- 4 Encourage students to step up and step back—create space for those to speak who do not normally do so and encourage thoughtful listening.
- 5 If a student says something concerning, try to ask for more information to find an underlying issue. Create an environment in which the group can unpack the statement, to take the spotlight off the student who voiced this and help others who may feel similarly to process.
- 6 Allow time for quiet reflection and check in with students after difficult conversations.

# PREPARING FOR THE EXHIBITION

## PRE-VISIT

This guide can help students familiarize themselves with select works and themes featured in the exhibition when used to prepare for a museum visit. Use one or all of the enclosed images and activities with your students to structure your visit.

## AT THE MUSEUM

During your visit, this guide will give you an overview of selected artworks you will see in *Flesh and Blood: Italian Masterpieces from the Capodimonte Museum*. When leading activities in the museum, we encourage groups to use paper, pencils, and clipboards in the galleries. Expand your experience to explore works in [SAM's collections](#)\* that relate to themes seen in *Flesh and Blood*.

Visit the Ann P. Wyckoff Education Resource Center (ERC) on the second floor of the Seattle Art Museum for more resources on the exhibition and SAM's collections. You can also browse resources online at [seattleartmuseum.org/erc](http://seattleartmuseum.org/erc).

## POST-VISIT

Continue your discussion with additional resources:

- Explore contemporary art that makes connections to Renaissance and Baroque paintings with the [Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic: Educator Resource Guide](#) and [Figuring History: Educator Resource Guide](#).
- Consider representation during this period. Look at works of art from the European Renaissance and Baroque periods that include historically marginalized groups like [women](#), [People of Color](#), and [people with disabilities or differences](#). Provide historical context for the works and ask your students to compare how these groups were represented then versus now, and to consider how they would like to see these groups represented hundreds of years in the future.
- Learn more about how painting technique creates illusion and mood through the Capodimonte Museum's closer look at [Boy Blowing on an Ember](#).
- Discover more about what daily life was like during the Renaissance in the [Renaissance and Reformation Reference Library](#).
- Learn more about [Visual Thinking Strategies](#), an inquiry-based teaching method that uses art to teach visual literacy, thinking, and communication skills.

\*Hyperlinked URLs can be found in the glossary.

# TECHNIQUE: LOOKING QUESTIONS



*Boy Blowing on an Ember*, 1571–72, El Greco, Greek, ca. 1541–1614, oil on canvas, 23 13/16 × 19 7/8 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte

## GETTING STARTED

- What is going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
- How do you think the figure is feeling? How do you know?
- Put your hand up so you can only see the figure's mouth. Now what do you think the figure is feeling? Did your answer remain the same as when you could see the entire face? Repeat, but cover the bottom half of the face this time.

## DIVING DEEPER

- How do you feel when you look at the painting? Can you describe a time in your life when you felt the same way?
- Imagine that the area around the figure was suddenly lit up. What do you think you would see behind the boy?
- How would the feeling of the painting change if the artist showed what was happening around the figure?

# TECHNIQUE: ABOUT THE WORK

## INFORMATION

The subject of a boy blowing on a burning ember was a popular subject during the Renaissance. It was intended to show an artist's skill at imitating life and natural lighting and to capture a momentary, fleeting experience. **El Greco** was known for creating drama in his work, using color and light, and he painted several versions of this subject.

Paintings during this time were created using many layers of paint built on top of each other. An artist such as El Greco would use each layer to create the overall effect of the piece. This is called **indirect painting**. The transparent layers on top change how the light is reflected off the painting, creating a sense of illumination and depth and affecting the feeling of the painting.

## ACTIVITY



Write a journal entry from the **perspective** of the figure in the painting. Consider what clues the artists give us about what is going on. What is the figure doing and why? What are their thoughts and feelings? Include sketches or doodles to share further.

## STANDARDS

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Anchor Standard for Reading

##### Craft and Structure:

**5:** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

**6:** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

##### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

**7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARD

#### PRESENTING

##### Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

#### RESPONDING

##### Anchor Standard 7

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

##### Anchor Standard 8

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#### CONNECTING

##### Anchor Standard 11

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historic context to deepen understandings.

# STORYTELLING: LOOKING QUESTIONS



*Assumption of Mary Magdalene*, ca. 1611, Giovanni Lanfranco, Italian, 1582-1647, oil on canvas, 42 15/16 × 30 11/16 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte

## GETTING STARTED

- What do you see in this painting? What do you think about that? What does it make you wonder?
- If the figures in this painting could speak, what would they say?

## DIVING DEEPER

- Look closely at the background of the painting. Where do you think they are? How did they get there?
- If this was a scene or part of a series, what do you think happened right before this? What do you think will happen next?
- Do you think what is happening in this painting is real or imagined? What is real or not real about it? Why?

# STORYTELLING: ABOUT THE WORK

## INFORMATION

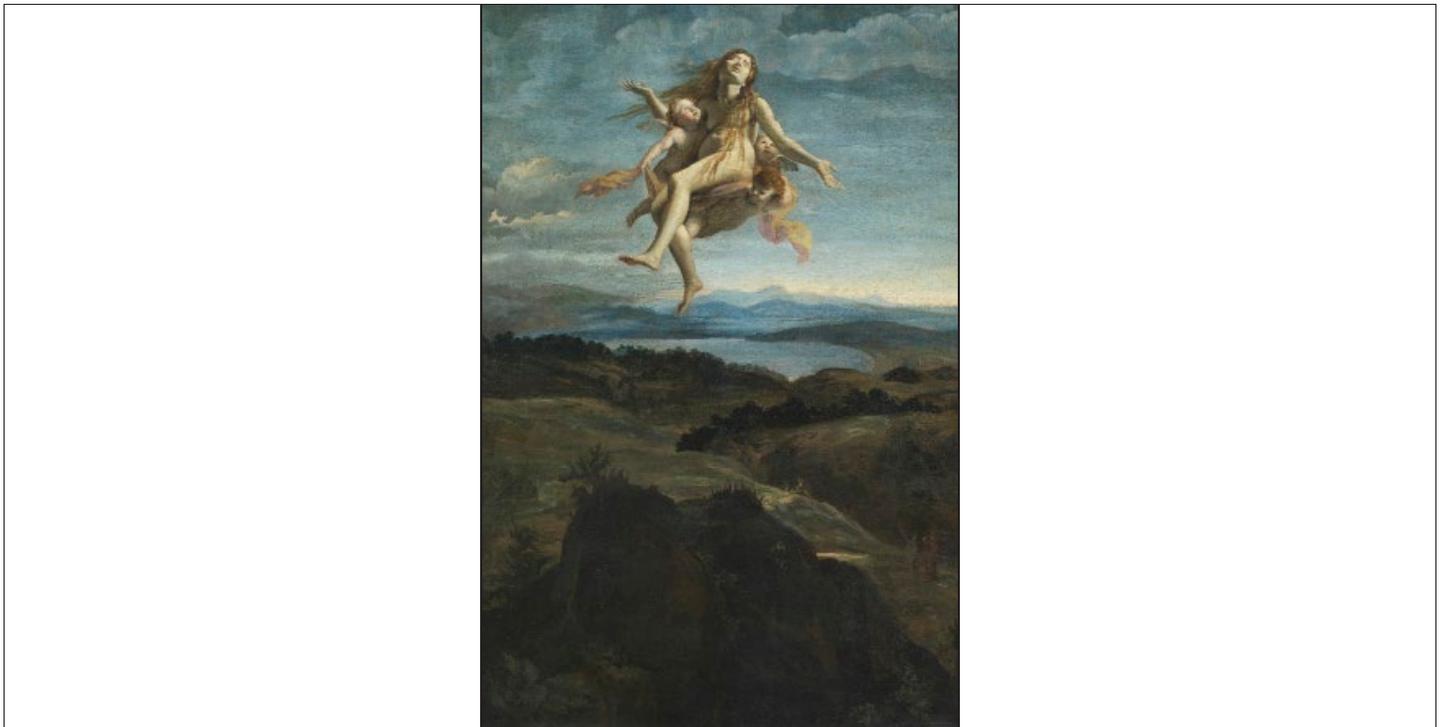
This painting by Baroque artist **Giovanni Lanfranco** was created for a room behind the **Farnese** Palace set aside for prayer. The room was decorated with artworks inspired by the stories of Christian **hermits**, such as Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene was one of the followers of Jesus in the Bible. According to one story, Mary Magdalene lived alone in a mountain cave as a hermit after Jesus's resurrection. Then she was brought to heaven seven times a day by angels, a moment this painting is showing.

## ACTIVITY



This artwork was created to tell a story. Spend some time thinking about what story the painting might be trying to tell. What might the figures be thinking and feeling? Why are they posed the way they are? What are they doing? How is the artist able to tell a story using a single image?

Make a storyboard about the story you think the painting is telling. Below are three panels: one for the beginning, middle, and end. In the middle square is the painting, or the middle of the story. In the first square draw the beginning, or what happened before the painting. In the third square draw the end, or what happens after the painting.



# STORYTELLING: ABOUT THE WORK

## STANDARDS

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Anchor Standard for Speaking and Listening Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

**4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Anchor Standard for Writing Text Types and Purposes

**3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

#### CREATING

##### Anchor Standard 1

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

##### Anchor Standard 2

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

#### PRESENTING

##### Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

#### RESPONDING

##### Anchor Standard 8

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#### CONNECTING

##### Anchor Standard 10

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

# EXPRESSIONS OF POWER: LOOKING QUESTIONS



*Judith and Holofernes*, ca. 1612-17, Artemisia Gentileschi, Italian, 1593–ca. 1653, oil on canvas, 62 5/8 × 49 5/8 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte

## GETTING STARTED

- What is going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
- Describe the women in this picture. How are they posed? What are their expressions? What do you think they are thinking?
- How do you feel when you look at this painting?

## DIVING DEEPER

- Who do you think is the most powerful figure in this painting? What clues does the artist give you? What would be different about the painting if the roles were reversed?
- Who had power before the scene in this painting? Who had power after?
- What about this painting is powerful?
- Why is violence often used to gain power? What else can power look like?

# EXPRESSIONS OF POWER: ABOUT THE WORK

## INFORMATION

**Artemisia Gentileschi** painted many stories of famous women from history and legend. During this time in Europe there were strict rules on what a woman could and could not do, and few women were allowed to be artists. Gentileschi overcame these limitations and was the first woman to become a member of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno (Academy of the Art of Drawing), a prestigious art academy in Florence.

This artwork shows a story from some Christian traditions of Judith beheading Holofernes, a popular subject in art during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. In the story, Judith enters Holofernes's tent and beheads him to prevent his army from destroying her city. Unlike other paintings of this story, Gentileschi brings the figures closer together and shows the physical strength required to complete their task.

## ACTIVITY

At the time in Europe when this artwork was painted there were few stories about powerful women, and power was often equated with violence. What other ways are there to show power? Think about why someone might choose to show a powerful story in their art. What stories feel powerful to you today?



Use magazines, old books, or images to cut out words, phrases, and/or pictures that feel powerful to you. Create a collage using these cutouts or draw something inspired by them. While doing this, consider what power means to you. Imagine a time when you felt powerful. If you were powerful, was someone less powerful?

Share your work with a partner or the class. How does it feel to read these words and look at these images? Are the words or images you chose positive or negative? What makes you say that? Is power itself positive, negative, or neither?

# EXPRESSIONS OF POWER: ABOUT THE WORK

## STANDARDS

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: HISTORY/SOCIAL

#### Anchor Standard for Speaking and Listening Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

**4:** Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Writing History & Science Text Types and Purposes

**6—8.2** Write information/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

#### CREATING

##### Anchor Standard 1

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

##### Anchor Standard 2

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

#### RESPONDING

##### Anchor Standard 8

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#### CONNECTING

##### Anchor Standard 10

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

##### Anchor Standard 11

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historic context to deepen understandings.

# MOOD: LOOKING QUESTIONS



*Still Life with Vegetables and Flask*, before 1670, Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo, Italian, 1629–1693, oil on canvas, 38 3/16 × 51 3/16 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte

## GETTING STARTED

- What is going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What do you see when you stand far away from the painting? What do you see when you're up close? What is different?
- What would it feel like to be in the same room as these objects? Would it be hot or cold? What would it smell like? Would you be happy or sad to be there?

## DIVING DEEPER

- This artwork was painted 200 years before the light bulb was invented. How do you think the artist created such dramatic shadows without electricity?
- Describe the colors and shadows you see in the painting. What impact do they have on the painting's **mood**? How would the painting feel different if it was more brightly lit?

# MOOD: ABOUT THE WORK

## INFORMATION

**Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo** was known for creating **still-life** paintings with vividly lit objects. Using intense light and shadows to create a sense of drama was a characteristic approach of Baroque period artists. This was often accomplished using one light source slightly to the front and side, which showed off the depth and form of the subjects. However, electric lights were not invented until the 1800s, 200 years after this work was created. Artists of this time would have had to paint by candlelight, oil lamp, or natural light.

## ACTIVITY



### Materials

1–5 objects

Black construction paper

White colored pencils, water-soluble oil pastels, or paint

A light source

### Step 1

Ask students to select one–five objects from around the classroom, outdoors, or at home. These can be anything: pencils, flowers, sticks, books, etc. Have them arrange the items however they would like on a table.

### Step 2

Using a flashlight, cell phone light, lamp, or other light source, ask students to experiment with lighting up their arrangement. Turn off the classroom lights so that these light sources are the only source of light. Have students move their lights around their arrangements. How does the different location of the light affect the arrangement? Does it create a different mood? Discuss how it might look different if they were creating their scene when Ruoppolo was painting over 300 years ago, before electricity.

### Step 3

Once they've had the chance to experiment with light, ask students to intentionally create a mood. How can they light their objects to create tension? To create something that looks inviting? Or something that looks scary? Open the discussion to the class and share what they've found.

### Step 4

Using white pencils, oil pastels, and/or paint on black paper, have students draw their favorite composition by concentrating on drawing the light rather than the shadows. How does using bright materials on a dark surface help replicate the drama of their original composition? When their drawings are complete, share them with the class.

### Activity Extension

Ask students to choose a pose that expresses the same mood as their still life and use their light source to help show the mood. Using a mirror or a camera as a reference, have students sketch their pose. How are these drawings different from their still lifes? How are they the same?

# MOOD: ABOUT THE WORK

## STANDARDS

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Anchor Standard for Writing

##### Production and Distribution of Writing

**4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### Anchor Standards for Reading

##### Craft and Structure:

**5:** Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

**6:** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

##### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

**7:** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

#### CREATING

##### Anchor Standard 1

Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

##### Anchor Standard 2

Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

#### PRESENTING

##### Anchor Standard 6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

#### RESPONDING

##### Anchor Standard 8

Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

#### CONNECTING

##### Anchor Standard 10

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

##### Anchor Standard 11

Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historic context to deepen understandings.

# GLOSSARY

**Artemisia Gentileschi (1593–ca. 1653):**

An Italian Baroque painter born in Rome and one of the few women of the time to have a successful career as an artist. She was known for her ability to build depth in her paintings and for her use of color. She placed women and their stories at the center of her works, and painted some of the same characters from history and legend multiple times, such as Judith.

**Baroque:** A period and style of art used to describe sculpture, painting, literature, and music during 17th- to mid-18th-century Europe. Characteristics of Baroque art include drama, rich deep color, bold decoration, and intense light and dark shadow. Much of the artwork during this period had Christian themes.

**Christianity:** A religion that follows the traditions surrounding the life, death, and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. It includes many branches with different beliefs and practices.

**El Greco (ca. 1541–1614):** Doménikos Theotokópoulos, known as El Greco (The Greek), was born in Crete, the largest of Greece's islands. He was a painter, sculptor, and architect during the Spanish Renaissance and worked in Italy and Spain. He is known for his dramatic and expressive style, stretched figures, vivid colors, and strong contrasts of light and shadow.

**Farnese:** A wealthy and powerful family in Italy that began collecting artwork during the 16th century, beginning with Alessandro Farnese, who later became Pope Paul III. Many of the artworks from this exhibition and the Capodimonte Museum are from the Farnese family.

**Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo (1629–1693):** A still life painter in Naples during the late 1600s. He was known for his paintings of vividly lit flowers and food against dark backgrounds. His work was collected by the wealthy and powerful people in Naples as a status symbol.

**Giovanni Lanfranco (1582–1647):** An Italian painter during the Baroque period. He worked primarily in Rome and Naples, where he created artworks for churches and palaces.

**Hermit:** A person who lives alone and away from others, often for religious reasons.

**Indirect Painting:** A painting method that uses multiple layers of paint built upon each other to create the final artwork. This method was common during the Renaissance and Baroque periods and is also used today.

**Mood:** In art, the general atmosphere or overall feeling the work of art creates. For example, the mood of an artwork could be joyful, sad, or scary.

**Perspective:** Seeing something from a particular point of view.

**Renaissance:** A period of European history between the 14th and 16th centuries. Renaissance means “rebirth” and was named for the new cultural, artistic, political, and economic thoughts of the period. During this time there was a renewed interest in Ancient Greece and Rome, which influenced artists.

**Still-Life:** A work of art that represents objects that are not alive. For example, food, flowers, vases, books, etc.

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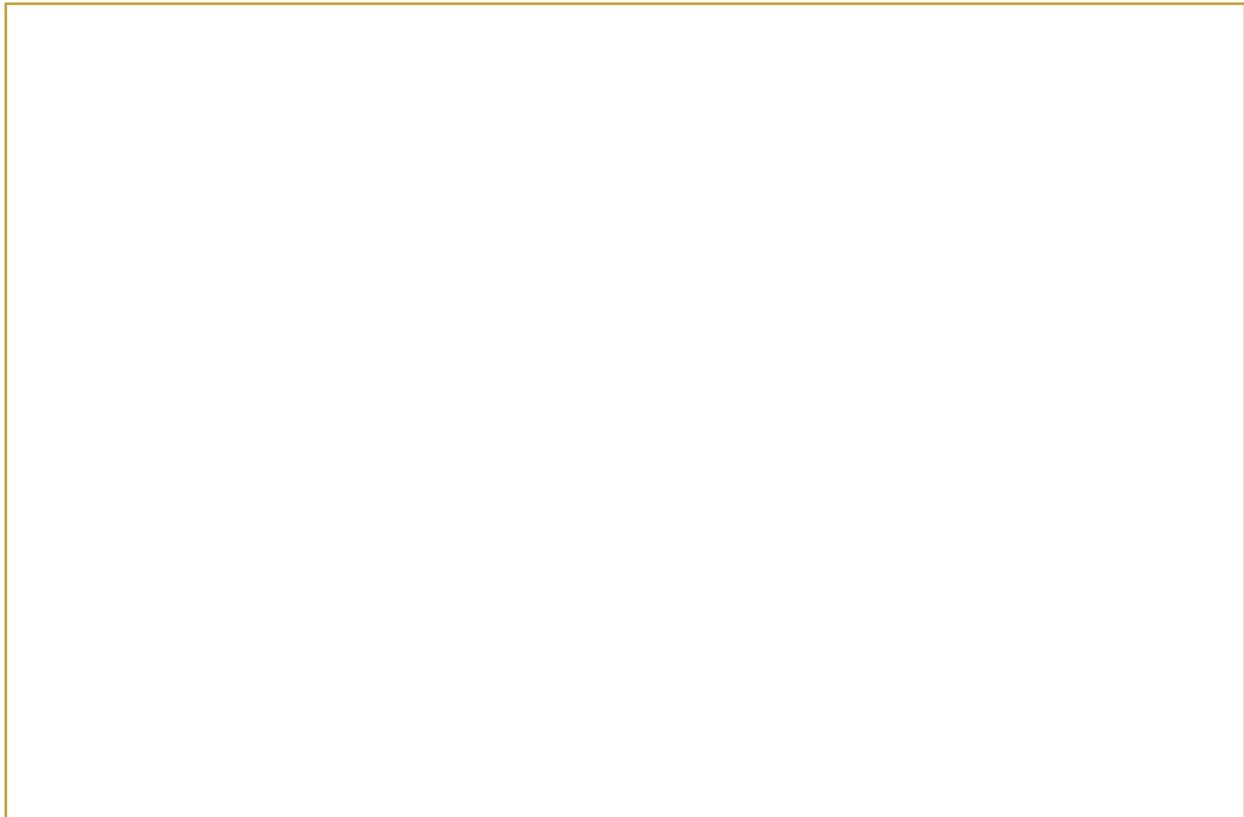
## Links

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# ACTIVITY

## WORK OF ART

## SKETCH THE WORK



## LOOK CLOSELY

What do you see?

What do you think about that?

What does it make you wonder?



*Boy Blowing on an Ember*, 1571-72, El Greco, Greek, ca. 1541-1614, oil on canvas, 23 13/16 × 19 7/8 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte



*Assumption of Mary Magdalene*, ca. 1611, Giovanni Lanfranco, Italian, 1582-1647, oil on canvas, 42 15/16 × 30 11/16 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte



*Judith and Holofernes*, ca. 1612-17, Artemisia Gentileschi, Italian, 1593–ca. 1653, oil on canvas, 62 5/8 × 49 5/8 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte



*Still Life with Vegetables and Flask*, before 1670, Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo, Italian, 1629-1693, oil on canvas, 38 3/16 x 51 3/16 in., Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte