## REALISM/NATURALISM & NEOCLASSICISM/GRAND TRADITION (P26)
### COLLECTION CONNECTIONS

Important Note: The list below is not comprehensive and should not be viewed as a “script.” The examples are intended to show how student observations can be linked to specific Collection Connections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATION</th>
<th>COLLECTION CONNECTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I see a lot of landscapes.</td>
<td>• Most of these artists, who we call Naturalists or Realists, went outside to sketch their subjects. They then came indoors and translated their sketches into the finished works.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• These artists were inspired by the nature before them. They felt it was important to paint nature as it existed and in great detail. They did not want to interpret or add emotion to their paintings.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The artists on the other side of the gallery also painted landscapes, but they were not as faithful to real life. These artists often painted made-up landscapes that were neat, controlled, and inspired by locations in Classical antiquity.</td>
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<td>This side of the gallery doesn’t have as many paintings. I see jewelry, sculptures, and things that don’t look like they were used.</td>
<td>• The Neoclassicists – artists who were inspired by the refined look of ancient Greek and Roman art – often created sculptures that reflected the influence of antiquity.</td>
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<td>• These artists were a part of the Grand Tradition, which was promoted in France by the Academy – a group that set the standards for cultural and academic expression.</td>
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<td>• People who wanted to show off their wealth and good taste would have had sculptures and other decorative arts like these displayed in their homes for visitors to see and be impressed by.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Of course, artists working in the Grand Tradition also made many paintings – see Bouguereau’s <em>Italian Woman at the Fountain</em> as an excellent example. Our gallery installation showcases some of the beautiful decorative arts that we are lucky to have in the collection.</td>
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<td>The animals in this gallery look very real - the cat hissing, the cows grazing, the jaguar eating an animal.</td>
<td>• These artists believed it was important to paint animals, as well as people and nature, exactly as they appeared. They used great detail and included any flaws they saw.</td>
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<td>• They were rejecting the way artists had traditionally portrayed animals and nature,</td>
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which was often in an ideal or controlled way.

I don’t see many bright colors on this side of the gallery - mostly browns, greens, grays, etc.

- The Naturalist artists were inspired by the nature and the colors they saw there. Many of the artists in this gallery spent time together in a particular forest found in France - Fontainebleau.

Some of these paintings seem kind of hazy or sketchy.

- Most of these artists spent time outside, sketching the scene quickly. They felt it was important to work in the natural light and capture the world as it really looked around them.
- The new invention of paint tubes in 1841 made painting outside a lot easier. Many of these artists began to paint small sketches outdoors, where they could realistically capture light, color, and the sky, before painting their finished works in their studios.
- Some artists began to incorporate this sketchier look into their finished paintings. This was in contrast to the artists working in the Neoclassical and Grand Tradition, whose works were carefully painted and which have a polished finish where the brushstrokes are not as noticeable.

Most of these paintings don’t tell a story.

- Most of these paintings are landscapes - which depict a natural setting with rivers, sky, mountains - or portraits - which show individuals.
- The Realists/Naturalist artists believed painting landscapes was just as important as painting other subjects - like history or portraits. They wanted to elevate landscapes in the hierarchy of painting which existed at the time.

The paintings on this side of the gallery all look the same.

- Most of the artists in this side of the gallery spent time together in a small village in France called Barbizon. They would go roaming around the countryside during the day and then gather at night to share ideas and discuss technique.
- These Realists/Naturalists were inspired by nature and tried to make their paintings as real as possible.

This art looks like real life.

- The artists on both sides of the gallery were interested in depicting realistic imagery.
However, the Realist painters believed everyday life and the modern world were suitable subjects. This contrasts with the Neoclassicists, whose works show a traditional, long-held interest in both balanced compositions and the refined look of ancient Greek and Roman art.

- Before the Realists, painters (like the Neoclassicists) were encouraged to paint history paintings or portraits that idealized the way people looked.
- The Realists wanted to move away from idealized places and people toward the ordinary.

| The people in the paintings in this gallery look different from each other. | Artists working in the Grand Tradition or Neoclassical style typically painted artist models in carefully-controlled settings. Their paintings are polished and show idealized – or unrealistic – representations of their subjects.  
These Realists/Naturalists thought it was important to paint real people with dignity. Millet, for example, used real peasants as his models. He and some of his fellow painters in the Realist art movement thought that scenes of everyday life and the working class deserved to be painted with as much care as people of the upper classes. |
|---|---|
| These artists seemed interested in the sky. I see lots of big skies with clouds. | These French artists were inspired by the British artists John Constable and JMW Turner who were, in turn, inspired by the new science of cloud classification.  
These French artists created skies and clouds with great texture and made them more complex than they had been in earlier centuries. |

**General Information:**

This gallery represents two artistic traditions that existed at the same time (1825 – 1900):

- **Neoclassical/Grand Tradition:** Western art has a traditional and long-held interest in the balanced and refined look of ancient Greek and Roman art. We refer to this art being Neoclassical, or part of the Grand Tradition that was promoted by the Academy, a group of intellectuals who controlled cultural and academic expression in France.
• **Realism/Naturalism**: The Realists/Naturalists were interested in showing ordinary people in everyday surroundings. These artists were responding in part to the changes that were happening because of industrialization. As France changed from being a rural economy to an industrial economy, people moved from farms to cities. Artists sought to capture or portray the nobility of a disappearing, rural way of life.

Realist painters were interested in showing France’s rural surroundings in an unrefined, or gritty way. Realists would sketch in the outdoors, and then complete their paintings in their studios. They developed a rapid, loose brushwork style, and were able more accurately to capture the colors of their surroundings. Many of their paintings have darker or more muted colors—like browns, greens, and grays—with looser brushwork.

• Many scholars see a link between the Naturalists and the Impressionists, who were also interested in painting outdoors and showing everyday life as it really existed.

There are many sculptures and decorative arts objects on both sides of the gallery. The wealthy and the rising middle class wanted to fill their homes with refined objects that showed their taste. Many collectors during this time were attracted to the idealized works that were being made in the Neoclassical tradition. Others were intrigued by the brushier and wilder works of the Naturalists/Realists.

Some of the art in this gallery is big, while some of it is small. Larger paintings were often made to be displayed at the Salon, an annual, juried exhibition that was one of the most important and influential art events in the Western world. Exhibiting at the Salon would raise an artist’s profile and chance for commissions. Both the artists working in the Grand Tradition and the Naturalists/Realists wanted to exhibit their works to gain commissions and prestige.