

EXPLORING OUR FIVE SENSES THROUGH ART

Though we may not actually be able to feel or hear the objects and scenes depicted in a painting, artists often invite us to use a variety of our senses when we explore a work of art—encouraging us to imagine the textures, smells, and even tastes of what is depicted. This is equally true for writers, particularly poets.



Still Life with Roses in a Fluted Vase, 1889
Henri Fantin-Latour, French
Oil on canvas
17 1/2 x 15 inches (44.4 x 38.1 cm)
Bequest of Charlotte Dorrance Wright, 1978
1978-1-10

Curricular Areas

Early elementary

Grade Level

Primary

Common Core Academic Standards

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.1](#)

PA Academic Standards for Art

- 15.1: Early Childhood – Gathering and Constructing Knowledge
- 9.1: Early Childhood – Production, Performance and Exhibition: Visual Arts
- 9.4: Art & Humanities – Aesthetic Response

Art Images Required

Click on the titles below to view high-resolution photographs on the Philadelphia Museum of Art website. Images that are available in the ARTstor Digital Library are indicated by an ID number or search phrase. Entering that number or phrase into the ARTstor search bar will direct you to the corresponding image in that database.

SMELL AND TOUCH

- [Still Life with Roses in a Fluted Vase](#), 1889, by Henri Fantin-Latour
ARTstor search: 1978-1-10

TASTE AND TOUCH

- [Les Peches \(Peaches\)](#), 1895, by Pierre-Auguste Renoir
ARTstor search: 1993-151-3

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

HEAR AND TASTE

- [Pepper-Pot: A Scene in the Philadelphia Market](#), 1811, by John Lewis Krimmel
ARTstor search: 2001-196-1
- ["Tar Beach 2" Quilt](#), 1990, by Faith Ringgold
ARTstor Search: Tar Beach, 1991

HEAR AND TOUCH

- [Concert Singer](#), 1890–92, by Thomas Eakins
ARTstor search: 1929-184-19
- [Cuirassier Armor](#), 1633–34, Italy
ARTstor search: 1977-167-39

Lesson Process

1. Each of the required art images above can appeal to more than one of our five senses. Explore the works of art with your students, have them discuss what they see, then what they smell, taste, feel or hear. Make a class list of their responses for each sense and painting.
 - o Bring a selection of fruits and other foods into the classroom. Have children select items and construct their own "still life" to imitate one of the works mentioned above. Children can talk about the choices they made and which work they tried to imitate. After the still lifes have been constructed and discussed, children can celebrate by eating them.
 - o Children's stories and poems may also appeal to the senses. Read a story or poem and have children talk about which words or phrases relate to which senses. Books and selections from Shel Silverstein and Dr. Seuss are wonderful choices for this activity. Create a class poem based on one of the works of art listed above that appeals to the senses, based on one of the works listed above. (*Les Peches*, *Still Life with Roses in a Fluted Vase*, *Cuirassier Armor* and *Pepper-Pot* would be particularly good choices.) Use the following template:

Today I jumped into a painting!

I saw _____ .

I heard _____ .

I smelled _____ .

I tasted _____ .

It made me _____ .

- o Using construction paper, cut out a shape found in one of the paintings (i.e., a circle, an oval, etc.). Have children walk around the classroom with their construction paper cutout to see if they can find objects in the room that have the same shape. Make a list of shapes and of classroom objects that match those shapes.

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

Assessment

1. Have students collect found items from around their homes and the classroom (this can be an ongoing collection, useful for many activities). Glue the items to a piece of plywood to create a collage (these can also be painted). Use the collage to talk about texture and touch.

Enrichment

1. Examine some of the following books:
 - *A is for Art Museum* by Katy Friedland and Marla K. Shoemaker (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2008)
 - *More than Meets the Eye: Seeing Art with All Five Senses* by Bob Raczka (Millbrook Press, 2003)
 - Any book from the *Come Look With Me* series (Charlesbridge Publishing)
 - *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold (Crown Publishers, 1991)