Rubens, Jordaens, Van Dyck and Their Circle: Flemish Master Drawings from the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

A Resource for Teachers

American Federation of Arts

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The Exhibition Overview and Information on Works of Art are adapted from the didactic labels in the exhibition which were written by guest curator A.W.F.M. Meij, Chief Curator of the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. The Discussion Questions and Activities were written by Nelly Silagy Benedek, Director of Education at the American Federation of Arts. The Glossary of Drawing Terms was prepared by Nelly Silagy Benedek with the assistance of Megan Porcaro.

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About This Resource

Works of art can be a great source of inspiration for elementary, middle school and high school students. The aim of this resource is to help teachers teach students how to approach works of art using critical thinking skills. Teachers may use these materials in conjunction with a class visit to the museum or independently. Suggested activities and discussion questions focus on individual works of art and offer ways of making these works of art accessible to students.

The writing projects and drawing exercises in this packet are adaptable to different age levels and may be used as points of departure for lesson plans. For the drawing projects, encourage your students to focus more on communicating an idea and experimenting with forms than with rendering accurate perspective and correct proportions. Have older studio art students think about rendering three-dimensional form by using cross-hatching and other drawing techniques they observe in the works of art.

The objectives of the discussion topics and classroom activities are manifold. They are a first step in engaging students in the process of looking at and analyzing works of art. Furthermore, they create links with topics and concepts students are studying in school. Finally and most important, they are designed to encourage students to have meaningful relationships with the works of art and to explore and give expression to the thoughts, ideas, and experiences that are a part of their lives.

Exhibition Overview

Dutch museums are not typically major collectors of seventeenth-century Flemish art. Political and religious differences between the northern and southern Netherlands at the beginning of the seventeenth century and, later, the popularity of Rembrandt in the northern Netherlands, contributed to the lack of interest in collecting Flemish art. The Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is an exception and has one of the premier collections of drawings in the world and a rich selection of seventeenth-century Flemish art. Extensive holdings of Flemish drawings were built primarily through large gifts from two extraordinary collectors for whom the museum is named. In 1849 F.J.O. Boijmans bequeathed to the museum almost two hundred master drawings, and almost a century later, in 1941, D.G. van Beuningen donated one hundred sheets originally belonging to Franz Koenigs, a leading Dutch collector.

Seventeenth-century Flanders encompassed parts of present day France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. This exhibition includes the work of artists who were active in and around Flanders and presents a selection of the museum's finest Flemish drawings, including a large number of works by the most celebrated artists of the seventeenth century: Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678), and Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641). Also featured are exquisite drawings by contemporaries of these three great masters who excelled in their respective genres and were highly respected in their day.

The works in this comprehensive selection reveal the varied role of drawings—as preliminary studies, detailed sketches, copies of earlier works of art, designs used as prototypes for prints, and quick sketches—and the wealth of styles and techniques characteristic of the Golden Age of Flemish art.

Peter Paul Rubens
Siegen 1577–1640 Antwerp

Humanist, diplomat, scholar, and artistic genius, Peter Paul Rubens is one of the foremost Flemish artists. Born in the German town of Siegen, Rubens moved to Antwerp when he was still quite young. In 1600 he, like many young artists of his time, traveled to Italy to study and copy Italian art and the classical treasures then being excavated. In particular, Rubens studied works of art by the two Renaissance masters Michelangelo (1475–1564) and Raphael (1483–1520) and was also deeply impressed by the works of Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) and Caravaggio (1573–1610), notably the latter's dramatic use of chiaroscuro. Upon his return to Antwerp in 1608, Rubens introduced the color and line he had absorbed in Italy into his painting and soon became one of the most sought-after and respected artists in Europe.

Between 1617 and 1620 Rubens taught the young painter Anthony van Dyck, with whom he also collaborated on many projects. At the age of fifty-three, Rubens, a widower, married Hélène Fourment, a sixteen-year-old merchant's daughter, who often acted as his model. The drawings that Rubens made of Fourment in the last decade of his life are among his most masterful and moving.

Rubens's classical education combined with his brilliance as an artist resulted in powerful allegorical and historical paintings and exquisite drawings he created in preparation for them. He was the main proponent of the Baroque style in the southern Netherlands, introducing unusual vantage points, dynamic forms—at times sculptural at other times painterly—and sensual and luminous color into his paintings. A master colorist and draftsman, Rubens was versatile, prolific, and capable of conveying high drama and emotion. He executed paintings, designed tapestries, participated in the design and decoration of architectural projects, and made countless numbers of preparatory drawings that were used as studies for his work. Rubens's great prestige and popularity resulted in commissions from several royal courts and noble families. As was customary at the time, the artist employed many exceptional draftsmen, painters, and engravers in his studio who collaborated with him on the execution of his works and facilitated their wide dissemination.

Rubens's success resulted in great financial rewards. His interest in art and his staggering wealth led him to assemble a large art collection of paintings, sculptures, and drawings. In addition, Rubens retained many of his own works of art to which he frequently referred for ideas.

The large number of drawings by Rubens presented here provides a rare opportunity to see the range and virtuosity of his drawings which even in his day established his reputation as a master draftsman. The other twenty artists featured in this exhibition were all in Rubens's circle, and were profoundly affected by his work. Many, such as Van Dyck and Frans Snijders (1579–1657), worked at various times alongside him; some, like Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596–1675), were his pupils, while others, such as Lucas Vorsterman (1595–1675) and Paulus Pontius (1596–1658), were engravers in his studio. Universally acclaimed, Rubens inspired artists in France, Spain, England, and even Russia. His impact on the course of European art, evidenced by a prodigious oeuvre and the widespread emulation of his style, was felt for generations to come.

Jacob Jordaens
Antwerp 1593–1678 Antwerp

Jacob Jordaens was born in Antwerp and at the age of fourteen was apprenticed to Adam van Noort, who had also been Rubens's teacher. Van Noort was a great influence in Jordaens's life: he was not only his tutor, but his father-in-law and a close friend. By 1615, when Jordaens was twenty-two, he was registered as a master painter in the Guild of Saint Luke, and by the 1620s had formed his own workshop.

Jordaens's early drawing style, although heavily indebted to Rubens, whom he assisted on many projects, was less idealistic than that of either Rubens or Van Dyck. His depictions of biblical, mythological, and allegorical subjects exhibit the verisimilitude of figures observed from life. Jordaen's drawings also reflect the influence of Italian masters such as Caravaggio and Titian (ca. 1485–1576), most notably in the strong contrasts between light and shadow and the characteristic renderings of figures in red, black, and white chalk. Jordaens studied these Italian artists through his mentor, Rubens, whose collection included works by the artists and whose own art skillfully incorporated stylistic characteristics of Italian painting.

Upon the deaths of Rubens and Van Dyck in 1640 and 1641, respectively, Jordaens became the most important painter in the southern Netherlands; during his most fruitful period, from 1640 to 1645, he—like the two artists before him—secured many commissions from all over Europe. It was during this period that he also began to undertake the large dramatic drawings and paintings for which he is best known. In the last decades of his life, Jordaens found inspiration in his own earlier drawings, either reworking them or combining elements into new work.

Anthony van Dyck
Antwerp 1599–1641 London

Best known for his elegant and brilliantly crafted portraits, Anthony van Dyck is considered one of the most important artists of the seventeenth century. In his teens, Van Dyck was active in Rubens's workshop, first as his pupil, then as his assistant, and soon absorbed Rubens's style and technique. Not surprisingly, Van Dyck's work of this period shares much in common with his teacher's. Many of his early paintings, for example, are based on Rubens's compositions and Van Dyck also emulated Rubens's practice of employing live models for his drawings. As striking as the similarities are between the two artists, the differences, especially in the nude studies, are equally distinct: Rubens, more interested in rendering anatomical detail, placed great emphasis on the musculature of the body, while Van Dyck concentrated more on its contours.

In 1621 Van Dyck left for Italy, where he would spend the next six years, and where he began making quick sketches. He did not share Rubens's interest in classical art; instead, he was drawn to the Venetian painters of the sixteenth century, especially Titian. In fact, Titian's name appears on several pages of Van Dyck's sketchbook next to drawings after the Italian artist's paintings. Van Dyck's passion for Venetian art extended to collecting and as did Rubens, he built a substantial art collection witnessed by an inventory of Van Dyck's possessions that listed nineteen works by Titian, an astonishing number by the great Venetian master, and dramatic evidence of Van Dyck's financial success. Upon his return to Antwerp, Van Dyck supervised a large studio, fulfilling many commissions for portraits and altarpieces.

The drawings in this exhibition offer an exciting glimpse into Van Dyck's artistic process. His studies for portraits and religious paintings are masterful examples of draftsmanship, the grace and strength of the artist's line as captivating in these works as in his greatest paintings.

In 1632, Van Dyck settled permanently in London, where he gained renown as court painter to King Charles I. Like Rubens, Van Dyck's influence was felt throughout Europe and Great Britain. Many artists made copies and prints based on Van Dyck's paintings. Attesting to his widespread influence, *The Iconography of Van Dyck*, a collection of more than one hundred prints by various engravers based on portraits by Van Dyck, was published posthumously in 1645.

Selected Works of Art from the Exhibition

Peter Paul Rubens
Profile of a Young Man with a Hairband

Peter Paul Ruben (Siegen 1577–1640 Antwerp)
Profile of a Young Man with Hairband
Brush and brown and gray wash over metalpoint
on gray-blue prepared paper
8 5/8 x 5 3/8 in (22 x 13.7 cm)

Rubens had an extensive art collection that included his own art, as well as works by other artists. Among these were about two hundred and forty that he retouched. Originally a drawing in metalpoint attributed to the Milanese artist Ambrogio de' Predis (second half of the sixteenth century) who worked in the style of Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519), this drawing, which was in Rubens's collection, is almost unrecognizable because of the Flemish master's extensive retouching. Rubens augmented the young man's eyes and upper lip with pen and brown ink and used a brush and brown ink to add details like the flowing hair and hairband. The original lines of metalpoint are now visible only in the man's face and outside the frame drawn by Rubens with a brush.

Discussion Questions

- Do you collect anything? If so, what do you do with the objects you collect? Do you preserve them the way they are or do you alter them in some way?
- Discuss Rubens's practice of reworking drawings by other artists. Why would he do this? Why might one argue against doing this?
- Discuss the ways in which Rubens's retouching created an entirely new work of art.

Activity: Making an Image Your Own
Aim: To find an image that captures the student's interest and alter it in a significant way.
Materials: magazines, paper, scissors, glue and either, pencils, crayons, paint and paintbrushes
Procedure:

- Ask your students to bring in old magazines from home.

- Have them look through the magazines and choose a single image that they find compelling.
- Have students cut out the picture and paste it onto a large sheet of paper.
- Ask students to alter the image in a way that makes them feel they have created their own work of art.
- Students may use pencil, crayons, or any other medium they choose. They may even decide to combine a number of smaller photographs cut from the magazines and create a collage with the original image as the focal point.
- Display students' work for a class discussion. Discuss how each original image has changed in appearance and how its visual impact is different.

Peter Paul Rubens
Young Woman with Folded Hands

Peter Paul Rubens (Siegen 1577–1640 Antwerp)
Young Woman with Folded Hands
Red and black chalk heightened with white
18 5/5 x 14 in (47.3 x 35.4 cm)

Rubens and other artists of his day often executed studies of individual figures that they later incorporated into larger drawings or paintings. This study of an unidentified woman was among the artist's favorites. He used this portrait as the basis for a number of paintings he produced in the first half of the 1630s.

Discussion Questions

- Ask your students to look at and describe Rubens's drawing. How has Rubens portrayed this woman? What has he communicated to the viewer about her or about his impression of her? Which parts of her figure seem most important in the drawing?
- Into what sort of larger work do you imagine the artist might incorporate her?

Activity: Integrating a Figure Study into a Larger Composition
Aim: To create a figure study and incorporate it into a larger composition.
Materials: paper, chalk, pencil (optional: paint, paintbrushes, pastels)
Procedure:

- Have your students choose one of their classmates or a family member as the subject of a drawing.
- Before they begin their drawings have your students think about the pose and facial expression of their figure. What sort of mood or character do they want to convey?
- After they have finished their figure study have your students take another sheet of paper and create a larger scene that incorporates their original drawing. They may create a narrative, a group portrait, or a genre or everyday scene. Students may want to dress the figure as a recognizable character from a historical or fictional narrative. For the second drawing, they may want to use other media such as pastels or paint.
- How is the original figure different in the context of the larger setting?

Jacob Jordaens
The Continence of Scipio

Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678 Antwerp)
The Continence of Scipio
Brush and brown ink, brown ink and bodycolor
8 5/8 x 9 ½ in (22x24.2 cm)

Brush and brown ink, brown wash, bodycolor on paper, red chalk in the face of the man at the far left; strip of paper added to the left edge by Jordaens; laid down

In this drawing, believed to be based on a 1622 painting by Rubens, Jordaens represents an episode in a campaign of the Roman general Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maior. Scipio conquered the city of Carthage, a long-established enemy of Rome in 209 B.C., and proved a magnanimous conqueror to his prisoners and hostages, including Prince Allucius and his bride. After the bride's parents paid the ransom demanded for their daughter and her future husband, Scipio set them free and returned the ransom to the couple as a wedding present.

This story, which illustrates aristocratic generosity, was an extremely popular subject in seventeenth-century art. Jordaens depicts Scipio seated on a throne and flanked by warriors. Before the general kneel the prince and his bride, together with a number of other figures. The valuables that were to serve as a ransom lie at the feet of Scipio, who makes a dismissive gesture to the figure behind the bride (perhaps one of her parents).

Discussion Questions

- Have students look at the drawing and describe what they see. Ask them to describe the expressions of the figures' faces. What do they think is going on?
- How has Jordaens arranged the figures in his drawing? Describe this arrangement or composition.
- Which is the figure of Scipio? What has the artist done to make him seem important? What colors has Jordaens used in this work? How has he used color to balance his composition?
- Notice the strip of paper Jordaens has added to the left side. How does this added segment contribute to the overall drawing in terms of composition and content?

Activity: Drawing a Scene from a Narrative
Aim: To draw a dramatic moment from a historical or fictional narrative.
Materials: paper and pencil
Procedure:

- Choose a historical narrative with which your students are familiar or a fictional work that your students have read as the subject of students' drawings. This activity may be related to a topic you are studying in class.
- Ask students to write a synopsis of the narrative.
- Ask them to pinpoint one of the most dramatic scenes in the narrative.
- Have students make a drawing of the scene they have chosen. Ask them to focus less on rendering details and more on considering the overall composition of their respective drawings.

Attributed to Jacob Jordaens
A Parrot

Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678 Antwerp)
A Parrot
Colored chalk
7 3/8 x 5 ¾ in. (32.4 x 22.6 cm)

During the seventeenth century, the wealthy and privileged collected various species of birds for aesthetic and scientific purposes. Exotic species such as the parrot depicted here were especially prized. Birds also represented the glory and diversity of God's creation. This parrot, most likely created for a larger work, can be found in paintings by Rubens and Snijders as well as in a drawing by Snijders.

Discussion Question

- Discuss how artists made studies of birds and animals that they later incorporated into larger works. In other words, discuss how artists would create drawings of birds or animals as a way of studying them before including them in a large painting.

Activity: Creating a Setting for a Bird or Animal Study

Aim: To draw a picture of a bird or animal and incorporate it into a larger setting or to integrate a reproduction of the parrot attributed to Jordaens into a larger drawing created by the student.
Materials: paper, pencils, chalk, colored pencils, any other drawing media
Procedure:

- Have students look at the drawings of animals/birds included in this resource.
- Ask students how they would integrate either the drawing of the parrot or another bird or animal into a larger composition.
- Ask students to create their own studies of a bird or animal and then incorporate it into a larger work, or cut out the parrot from the color copy included in this

resource, paste it onto a large sheet of paper, and draw or paint a setting around it.

Activity: Collaborative Drawing Project
Aim: To work collaboratively on a single drawing or painting as did many of the artists in the exhibition.
Materials: paper, pencils, paint and paintbrushes
Procedure:

- Divide your students into small groups.
- One student might paint the animal or bird, another the landscape, and a third, the figures.
- Have each group discuss ideas for the work of art and make decisions about the subject matter and composition of the work before they begin.

Anthony van Dyck
Seated Man, Leaning Backwards

Anthony van Dyck (Antwerp 1599–1641 London)
Seated Man, Leaning Backwards
Black chalk heightened with white, laid down on white woven paper
9 ¼ x 10 7/8 in (23.6 x 27.5 cm)

Van Dyck's emulation of Rubens is exemplified in this drawing. Like Rubens, Van Dyck used black chalk heightened with white and sketched his models from life. In order to maintain this difficult pose for an extended period of time, the model pictured in this drawing had to support himself by holding a rope, apparent in Van Dyck's positioning of the hands.

Discussion Questions

- Have your students study Van Dyck's drawing.
- What do they think of the drawing? Why?
- Why do they think Van Dyck focused on the man's back?
- Discuss the artist's interest in capturing an active pose and the challenge of rendering such as pose.
- Discuss the process of creating a work of art, in particular the many stages of preparation that an artist goes through when working on a major project. Ask students what they think is involved in this sort of process. Emphasize the importance of studies and preparatory drawings.
- Discuss how and why Van Dyck and other artists drew from live models. Note how the artist used this particular drawing as a component of other works and how other seventeenth-century artists created similar images.

Activity: Contour Drawings

Aim: To choose an expressive pose or stance as a subject and create a drawing focusing on the contour of the body that conveys the action or pose.
Materials: paper and pencil, charcoal or chalk
Procedure:

- Have students choose an expressive pose or stance as the subject of a drawing. The subject may be a person walking, sitting, stretching, or engaging in another

activity. Older students may work from a live model. Younger students may use their imagination or look at photographs in magazines for ideas.

- Using pencil, charcoal, or chalk, have students make a drawing that focuses on the shape or outline of the body rather than on anatomical details. Emphasize that this is an exercise; students should concentrate more on the process of looking and drawing than on the final product.
- When they have finished, discuss the challenges students may have experienced during this process.

Pieter Bout
Fishermen Selling Their Catch on the Beach

Peter Bout (1658–1719 Brussels)
Fishermen Selling their Catch on the Beach
Brush and dark gray ink, gray wash, laid down
7/8 x 10 ¼ in. (20 x 26 cm).

This sheet depicts a group of fishermen and their wives on a beach collecting freshly caught fish. Details such as the dog on the right and the two figures resting on the left contribute to the realism of this genre scene or scene of everyday life. Bout has rendered the figures and boats on the beach in great detail and employed rich washes to articulate the sky and clouds.

Discussion Questions

- What is happening in this drawing? What are the people doing?
- Describe the environment. Note any interesting details.
- What is the weather like in this drawing?
- How has the artist conveyed this?
- How would you describe the way he has drawn the sky? The figures?

Activity: Drawing a Genre Scene
Aim: To capture an image of everyday life in a drawing.
Materials: paper and pencil
Procedure:

- Draw your own genre scene or scene of everyday life. A genre scene may be an indoor or outdoor scene that depicts ordinary people involved in routine or daily activities. Students should choose a scene that is familiar to them.
- Have them think about details that will make your scene seem authentic. They should also consider the weather in their drawing and how it affects the landscape and figures in their work.

Abraham van Diepenbeeck
Decorative Border

Abraham van Diepenbeek (s'-Hertogenbosch 1596-1675 Antwerp)
Decorative Border
Brush and brown ink, gray wash heightened with white, laid down
11 ¼ x 7 ½ in (28.5 x 19 cm).

Van Diepenbeeck probably designed this decorative frame for a specific but now unknown work of art. When the sheet came into the collection of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in 1847, a drawing of the Crucifixion was mounted in it. Attributed to Van Diepenbeeck at the time, the drawing of the Crucifixion (included in the exhibition) has since been attributed to the school of Van Dyck.

Discussion Questions

- Distribute the color copies of this drawing.
- Have students describe the decoration the artist has created.
- What kind of drawing do you think might suit this particular frame in term of its subject and style?
- Discuss how a frame can add or detract from a drawing.

Activity: Filling a Frame
Aim: To look closely at this design for a frame and create a drawing to place inside it.
Materials: paper, pencil, and any other drawing media.
Procedure

- This activity has two parts. After distributing copies and discussing the frame, ask students to create a drawing that they feel would work well inside the seventeenth century frame.
- Display your students' work and discuss the drawings. How have students decided to work with the frame? Have they created drawings that match it or that are entirely independent of the frame?

Activity: Drawing a Frame
Aim: To create a drawing and then design a suitable frame for it.
Materials: paper and any available drawing media such as pencils, and chalk
Procedure:

- Have students make a drawing. (You may decide to have them choose a subject related to an image in the exhibition such as a narrative scene or landscape or one related to your curriculum.)
- After they have completed their drawings, have students design frames for their respective works.
- Display the drawings and frames and discuss how each drawing relates to its frame.

Frans Snijders
Sheet of Studies of a Donkey, Two Foxes, and a Dog

Frans Snijders (1579–1675 Antwerp)
Sheet of Studies of a Donkey, Two Foxes and a Dog
Pen and brown ink, brown wash
5 ½ x 6 7/8 in (14 x 17.5 cm).

This sheet is made up of two joined pages thought to be from a single sketchbook. With the exception of the dog, the animals were based on popular prints by Marcus Gheraerts (ca. 1520–1590), who illustrated the first Dutch-language edition of *Aesop's Fables*. The dog does not appear in any of Gheraerts's prints and was probably drawn from life by Snijders. Starting around 1620 Snijders painted depictions of scenes described in Aesop's fables, largely basing his compositions on Gheraert's illustrations.

Discussion Questions

- Describe the poses and actions of the animals the artist has sketched.
- Discuss the purpose and value of keeping a sketchbook.

Activity: Writing Fables and Other Stories

Aims: To write a fable or story inspired by students' drawings and create drawings inspired by students' writings.
Materials: Drawing materials such as pencil and craypas, paper.
Procedure:

- You may want to read one of Aesop's fables to your students before they begin the activity. (A fable is a narration intended to enforce a truth, especially one in which animals act like human beings. The story has a moral that is woven into the narrative and usually explicitly stated at the end.)
- Divide your students into pairs. Have one student in each pair draw a picture of an animal and have the other student make up a story that includes the animal. Younger students may write any type of story. Ask older students to write a fable.

- Then have the students switch roles so that each gets a turn at drawing an animal and writing a story.
- As an alternate or additional activity, have students write a story or fable and then illustrate portions of their text. The illustrations may be on separate sheets or may incorporate the text.

Lucas van Uden

Landscape with a Church in the Foreground

Lucas van Uden (1595–1672/3 Antwerp)
Landscape with a Church in the Foreground
Watercolor over pen and brown ink
8 x 12 in (20.4 x 30.4 cm).

Van Uden is best known for his watercolors of Flemish landscapes, which received considerable attention during his lifetime. In this drawing he has depicted a panoramic landscape through which a river winds. The church in the foreground is the Carolus Borromeuskerk, a large Baroque Jesuit church in Antwerp. Although the church is based on an actual building (except for the ornate façade or front of the building which did not actually exist), Van Uden has placed it an imaginary landscape. Seventeenth-century artists often placed a church or other building in imaginary settings.

Discussion Questions

- What do you see in the drawing?
- How would you describe the environment? The building?
- What colors has the artist used? How do they contribute to the atmosphere of the landscape?
- Discuss how the artist has combined a drawing of an actual building with an imaginary landscape.
- Also note how the artist has embellished the façade of the building.

Activity: Designing a Building in an Imaginary Landscape

Aim: To design a building inspired by an actual structure and to situate it in an imaginary landscape.
Materials: paper, pencils, watercolor paints, paintbrushes
Procedure:

- Have your students think of a building with which they are very familiar—their house, their school, or a special place they have visited. Have them think about the building's architecture. What does it look like? Is the architecture elaborate? Simple?
- Ask students to make a sketch of the building in pencil. They may embellish the building's architecture or render it as is.

- Next, ask students to think about the building's actual surroundings. Is it in the country? The city? Is the building near water? Have students imagine new surroundings for the building they have chosen. Encourage them to be imaginative. Ask them to sketch the surrounding landscape. How does the building appear in its new surroundings?

Jan Wildens
The Month of March

Jan Wildens (1586–1653 Antwerp)
The Month of March
Pen and brown ink, gray-green wash over, traces of black chalk
10 7/8 x 17 3/8 in. (27.6 x 44 cm)

Wildens's landscapes were so highly regarded that Rubens often employed the artist to paint the background landscapes of his paintings. This drawing shows grapevines being pruned and tied up during a March storm and is one of a series of twelve sheets by Wildens illustrating the months of the year.

Discussion Questions

- What is happening in this scene? Point out as many details as you can.
- What is the weather like?
- What time of day do you think it is?
- Can you guess the season? How can you tell?
- How would this scene change if it were a different month of the year?

Activity: Landscape Drawings

Aim: To create two landscape drawings depicting two different months of the year.
Materials: paper and pencil, or chalk
Procedure:

- Have each student do two separate drawings of the same landscape. The landscape may be an imaginary one or a place that the student has visited.
- Ask students to choose two months of the year that their drawings will represent respectively.
- Ask students to think about how the two scenes will differ before they begin drawing.
- Compare the two finished works. How are the two scenes different? Have students discuss what they did to create the differences between the two images.

Glossary of Drawing Terms

Words in bold are included in the glossary.

Bistre ink
A brown pigment made by boiling wood soot in water. Filtering the liquid produces the transparent ink known as bistre ink. Bistre and **iron-gall ink** are very similar in appearance; bistre is usually brown—the kind of wood burned to produce soot determines the exact color—and iron-gall ink is black or dark brown, but when faded looks like bistre. Woods used to produce bistre ink include chestnut and birch. Bistre ink was used from the fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries in watercolors and drawings.

Black chalk
Black chalk is a composite of carbon and clay. A soft stone, with its own natural binder, it became popular as a medium during the sixteenth century.

Body color
Also referred to as gouache and opaque watercolor, body color is translucent water-based paint mixed with white pigment or chalk and that are held together with a binding agent such as gum arabic.

Brush drawing
A drawing created by applying ink or a water-soluble pigment with a fine brush; may be used to create **washes.**

Carbon black ink
A pure carbon pigment that is made by mixing soot with water that contains a binding agent. Because the ink is chemically stable, its color is preserved over time.

Cartoon
A full-size drawing executed as a preparatory work for a painting, tapestry, or fresco. The word cartoon comes from the Italian word *cartone,* meaning paper. In fresco painting, a cartoon would be affixed to a wall covered with wet plaster and the outlines incised onto the surface. Often, the cartoons did not survive this transfer process; sometimes artists would prick the outline of their drawing onto a separate sheet that would be used for the transfer to the wall. Artists use cartoons as a reference for their work or as a model for assistants when working on the piece.

Charcoal
Used for preliminary drawings or **underdrawings** on canvas, paper or panel, charcoal is made by heating bundles of twigs in an airtight container. The twigs remain intact as delicate **friable** sticks that produce broad lines. Charcoal is easily manipulated but is very fragile.

Chiaroscuro drawing
From the Italian words *chiaro* meaning light and *scuro* meaning dark. Chiaroscuro refers to the technique of balancing contrasts of light and dark in a drawing or painting. In drawing, a light-colored medium such as white gouache is used over a dark ground, creating a contrast between light and dark areas.

Friable
The extent to which a dry drawing medium crumbles.

Graphite
A form of carbon that is grayish black. Discovered in 1560 in Burrowdale, England, graphite was originally used as a lump or sharpened point set into a metal holder and used for writing and drawing. On paper graphite produces a metallic gray line that looks very similar to lead point. The two media were confused until the late eighteenth century and the term "lead pencil" was used erroneously to describe pencils made of graphite and clay.

Gum arabic
Secreted by the Acacia tree, gum arabic is used in watercolor and inks as a binding agent.

Hatching
The technique of using successive parallel lines to indicate shading. When used in combination with successive perpendicular lines, the technique is called cross-hatching.

Heightening/Highlights
Using white or a light color to emphasize the three-dimensional quality of a form.

India ink
Carbon black ink that is hardened and made into dry sticks and then watered down. The resulting medium produces a gray **wash**. The medium became popular in Europe during the seventeenth century.

Iron-gall ink
The ink most commonly used in European drawing from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries, iron-gall ink is produced by crushing and soaking gall nuts in water. After the acids are extracted from the nuts, ferrous sulfate and gum arabic are added. Iron-gall ink is black when applied, but turns brown when exposed to light; many old master drawings which now appear brown were originally black.

Laid down
A term used to describe a drawing that is lined, giving it added structural support.

Lead point
Used in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for preliminary sketches, lead alloy is the only metal that makes a mark on unprepared paper. It did not become popular as a medium because of the way the point quickly becomes blunt.

Lead white heightening
An opaque white liquid made from white lead and used to create highlights in **metalpoint**, **black** or **red chalk**, and **pen and ink** drawings.

Medium
The material used in the artistic process. In drawing, charcoal, ink, and chalk are examples of different media.

Metalpoint/Silverpoint
A **stylus,** which, when used on prepared paper, leaves a thin residue of the metal. The metal stylus may be made of silver, gold, or copper; each produces a gray line. Silverpoint, over time, oxidizes from gray to brown and copper usually turns green. Gold remains stable. The term "metalpoint" refers to the implement, as well as the drawing produced.

Modello (plural, modelli)
An Italian word that refers to a sketch for a painting or sculpture. Made in the same medium as the final work, modelli were created as preliminary studies to show patrons.

Paper
The most common support for drawings, paper is made of matted cloth or plant fibers that are mixed with water to form a pulp and then shaken through a wire screen. The remaining material is placed between layers of felt or cloth and compressed to extract any moisture. The sheets are hung to dry and then sized or coated to prevent media such as ink and watercolor from soaking into the support. The two main types of paper are laid and wove. Laid paper is made with a screen that leaves a grid-like imprint on the final sheet. Wove paper, made with a tightly woven wire mesh mold leaves the paper free of any lines or marks and was developed later in the eighteenth century.

Parchment
A support made of sheep or goat skin with a smooth surface for writing with ink or painting with water-based paints. Introduced in the second century B.C. in the Near East, parchment was used in medieval times to produce books, scrolls, and sheets and continued to be used by artists, in special cases, through the seventeenth century.

Pastel
Introduced at the end of the fifteenth century, pastel consists of dry pigments mixed with a binder such as **gum arabic** to produce a paste that is then rolled into stick form and dried.

Pen
A single flexible tube sharpened to a point that transfers ink to a support. Examples of pens are quills (feathers), reeds, and metal nibs.

Pencil
Until the nineteenth century, a pointed brush made of squirrel or sable hair. After that, the term described a drawing utensil made of ground-up **graphite** mixed with a binder and placed in a holder.

Prepared paper
A sheet of paper treated with a ground or a layer of colored **wash**.

Red chalk
Also called *sanguine*, red chalk is composed of hematite (iron oxide) and clay. Because it is less friable than **black chalk** and changes tone when used over broad areas, red chalk was used at the end of the fifteenth and through the eighteenth centuries for smaller scale drawings.

Squaring
Placing a grid of vertical and horizontal lines over a drawing in order to transfer the image to another surface such as a canvas or panel that would also be squared with a grid. The image would then be transferred by copying each square to the larger surface.

Stylus
A metal point used for making indentations often used for **underdrawings,** tracing, or **squaring.**

Support
The surface on which the drawing is made such as **paper** or **parchment**.

Underdrawing
A preliminary drawing on the support that forms the basis of the work of art. The underdrawing is often executed in **graphite** or **black chalk** and then covered with more permanent media such as ink, **wash**, or **white heightening**.

Wash
A drawing technique that employs diluted ink applied with a brush. Sometimes referred to as pen-and-wash.

Watercolor
Water-soluble colored pigments mixed with gum as a binder that create a transparent paint allowing the surface of the support to remain visible.

White chalk
Primarily used to **heighten** or highlight drawings in other media such as **red** or **black chalk**.

Select Bibliography and Web Resources

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