

Art Masterpiece: 2nd Grade, Lesson 5 (April)

Henri Rousseau (1844 - 1910)

Exotic Landscape (1910)

Oil on Canvas, 51-1/4" x 64" - Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA

Art Style: Primitive

Art Terms: Foreground, Background

Activity: Jungle Painting

Medium: Watercolor



Meet the Artist

- Henri Rousseau was born in France as the son of a tinsmith.
- He never studied art, and he did not start formally painting until his forties.
- Rousseau's paintings were considered a naïve form of art, and many critics considered him untrained, calling his art child-like.
- Rousseau was meticulous when mixing his colors, and is known for having numerous shades of a color in just one painting.
- Although many of his paintings are of jungle scenes found in exotic places, Rousseau never travelled outside of France.
- Because he had never actually seen a jungle in person, his paintings were based on his own imagination, visits to the zoo and other gardens, photographs, and books.

About the Artwork

Exotic Landscape is a jungle scene showing monkeys amid numerous exotic plants. Green is a dominant color, with many different shades used to form the leaves of the different plants. The trees seem to be disproportionately small compared to the size of the monkeys, flowers, and grasses. This disproportion is characteristic of most of Rousseau's work.

Art Style

Primitive or Naïve

- A style of art created by those who are untrained in art, or do not recognize themselves as artists.

Art Terms

Foreground

- The part of a scene that is located nearest the viewer

Background

- The part of a scene that is located furthest from the viewer

Questions about *Exotic Landscape*

- How does Rousseau give the impression of a background and foreground?
- Do the trees and animals look realistic?

Activity

Jungle Painting - Watercolor

Supplies

Watercolor paper – 9" x 12"

Watercolors

Water cups or bowls

Paintbrushes

Pencils

Paper towels (located by the sink)

Directions

1. Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
2. Have students lightly sketch out their jungle scene. Stress that they are to have "barely there" lines, just enough to help guide their painting. Explain how to use a light touch when drawing by lightly grasping towards the end of a pencil, and not by gripping it as if writing.
3. Remind students that they are to create a background and a foreground with their scene. They should finish the sketch in approximately 5 minutes or so, as the watercolor may take up a significant portion of their time.
4. When painting with water colors, advise students to wait for their previous work to dry slightly before painting directly next to it, otherwise the colors will mix on the paper. The watercolor they have just laid down can dry while they work on another portion of the paper.
5. When the students are done have them title their artwork. Write the title on a label sticker and place it on the back of their work.