



family activity guide

1900

Art at the Crossroads



# Welcome to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum!

This activity guide is for kids and grown-ups to use together as they explore the exhibition *1900: Art at the Crossroads*. During your visit, please remember:

- touch the art only with your eyes, never with your hands
- walk in the museum, do not run
- use a quiet voice when sharing your ideas
- write and draw with pencils only, not pens

## What will you see today?

The *Exposition Universelle*, which opened in Paris in April 1900, was a showcase of modern art and industry. The *Exposition* featured the largest international exhibition of art that had ever been held, including paintings and sculptures by artists from 29 countries. Each participating country sent works by the artists who they thought best represented them. In *1900: Art at the Crossroads* you will see art created at the turn of the century, much of it exhibited at the *Exposition Universelle*.

THIS PAGE: Christian Krohg, *17 May 1898*, 1898. Oil on canvas, 132 x 133 cm. Private Collection. Photo by J. Lathion. © Nasjonalgalleriet, 1999.

PAGE 3 BOTTOM: Raffaello Gambogi, *Boats in Dry Dock at Livorno*, 1897. Oil on canvas, 78 x 137 cm. Studio Paul Nicholls, Milan. Photo by Saporetto, Milan.

PAGE 3 TOP & COVER: Ferdinand Hodler, *Self-Portrait*, 1900. Oil on canvas, 41 x 26.6 cm. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

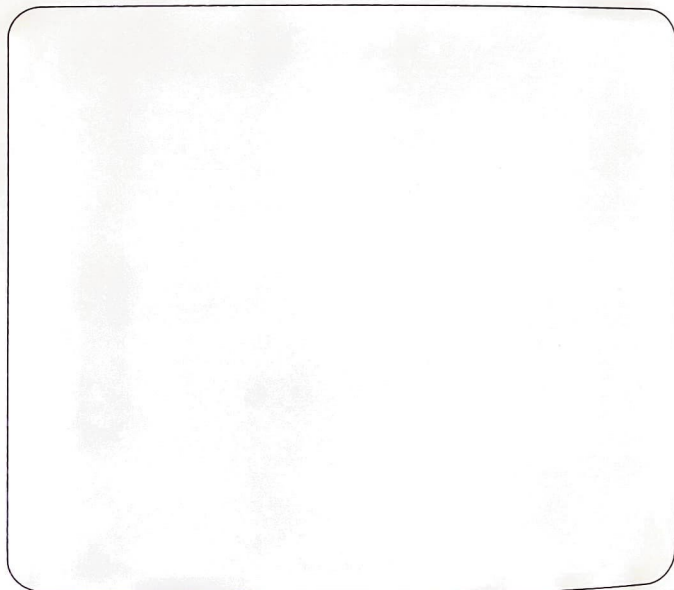


## Nationalism

The 19th century was a time of political and social change. At the beginning of the century, both Germany and Italy were made up of small states, but by the year 1900 each had united under a central government. Many countries began to develop a sense of national pride by declaring official languages, extending voting rights, and **standardizing** education so that people throughout the country learned the same history and read the same literature.

In turn, artists celebrated their countries through paintings and other works of art. In *17 May 1898*, the Norwegian artist Christian Krohg depicted festivities on the national holiday commemorating the **ratification** of the Norwegian constitution, which was written in 1814.

Notice the size and placement of the Norwegian flag in the painting. Why do you think Krohg painted the flag in this way? Imagine a painting depicting a national holiday from your country of origin. How might it be different from Krohg's *17 May 1898*? What might be the same? In the box below, make a drawing of a festival celebrating your country.



## The Industrial Revolution

During the 19th century, people in many countries began using new technologies to manufacture **consumer goods** faster and more efficiently than previously had been possible. Factories sprang up in cities, and people began moving from the country to the city to find work.

Find *Boats in Dry Dock at Livorno*, 1897, by Raffaello Gambogi. Describe to a grown-up what in this painting shows you that this is a city.

Imagine that you are one of the people in the painting, and that you have just moved from the countryside to the city of Livorno in order to find work. What do you see around you? What sounds do you hear? How does the air smell? How is Livorno different from the country? Write a poem about what you imagined by filling in the blanks below:

In Livorno, I see \_\_\_\_\_

In Livorno, I hear \_\_\_\_\_

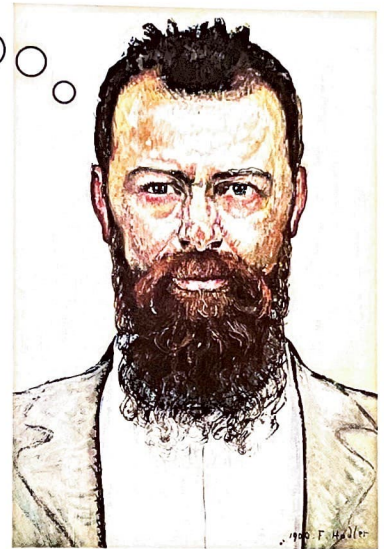
In Livorno, I smell \_\_\_\_\_

In Livorno, I taste \_\_\_\_\_

In Livorno, I feel \_\_\_\_\_

Livorno is \_\_\_\_\_

When you are done, choose a title for your poem!



## Introspection

At the turn of the century, artists and writers—influenced in part by the **psychological** theories of Sigmund Freud—were thinking about the human mind, and about how to illustrate thoughts and feelings. One way in which they did this was by painting **self-portraits**.

Find *Self-Portrait*, 1900, by Ferdinand Hodler. What do you focus on when you first look at the painting? Compare the details of the artist's face to the rest of the painting. Is there as much attention given to the background and clothing? Look at the artist's facial expression in this painting. Is he happy? Serious? In the thought bubble, write or draw some of the things that this man might be thinking about.

Be sure to notice the other self-portraits in this part of the exhibition. What are the different ways artists express a certain **mood**? What colors do they choose? What objects or backgrounds do the artists include in their self-portraits? What do you think they are trying to show you about themselves?



## Women

Because of the Industrial Revolution, women's roles were changing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many women began to work outside their homes, often in factories or **sweatshops**, to support themselves and their families. At the same time, women began calling for political and social rights, including the right to vote. Even though women had more **diverse** roles in society, artists often **stereotyped** women into one of two general categories, portraying them either as the saintly mother or the **femme fatale**. Find *Mother*, 1893, by Elin Danielson-Gambogi. Carefully examine the woman in the painting. How would you describe her? Make a list of descriptive words that come to mind:

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Now look carefully at *At the Bar*, 1900, a painting by Maurice de Vlaminck. What words could be used to describe this woman? Make a list below:

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Compare the two women in these two paintings. Did you use any of the same words to describe the women?



Elin Danielson-Gambogi, *Mother*, 1893. Oil on canvas, 95 x 57 cm. The Finnish National Gallery Ateneum, Helsinki. Photo by Antti Kuivalainen. Courtesy of The Central Art Archives.



Maurice de Vlaminck, *At the Bar*, 1900. Oil on canvas, 40.3 x 31.1 cm. Musée Calvet, Avignon. © 2000 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris.

## Vocabulary

**commemorate** – to remember through a ceremony or a celebration

**consumer goods** – products that are bought and sold

**diverse** – various kinds or forms

**femme fatale** – a woman who might be considered dangerous to men

**introspection** – the act of examining one's own thoughts and feelings

**Industrial Revolution** – the period during the late 19th century when factories were built, mass production began, and large numbers of people began moving from the countryside to the city

**mood** – a state or quality of feeling at a particular time

**nationalism** – loyalty to the culture and interests of one's own country or national group

**origin** – source, birth, beginning

**psychological** – pertaining to the human mind

**ratification** – a formal agreement that makes something legal or usable

**self-portrait** – an image created by an artist representing him or herself

**standardized** – made to fit a certain standard or model

**stereotype** – a simplified and standardized idea or image invested with special meaning and held in common by members of a group

**sweatshop** – a shop or factory in which workers may be employed for long hours at low wages and under unhealthy conditions

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