

# THE RENEE & CHAIM GROSS FOUNDATION



## Women Artists: The Art of Story

**Grade level:** Adaptable for grades K-5 (the first image in the slideshow may be more readable to grades 2-5)

**Time estimate:** 15-20 minutes for looking at and discussing the images in the slideshow, 30 minutes for optional classroom activities and extensions.

### Overview and Learning Objectives:

Through these activities, students will identify and discuss elements of a story in works of art such as character, setting, and plot. Students will develop their use of descriptive language and use evidential reasoning skills to interpret stories in art. Students will engage in speaking and listening, and drawing conclusions based on visual evidence.

### Classroom activities:

#### Five Sense Descriptions (Language Arts, grades K-2):

Take a few minutes to look carefully at Theresa Bernstein's landscape painting. Imagine you could shrink down and walk right into it. Think about all of your senses in this place. First, write a sentence or two about what you'd see if you could explore this place. Next, write about what you might hear, what you could smell, and finally about what you could feel. Finally, imagine you could taste something in this place. Write about what would it be and what would it taste like. As an extension, turn your sense descriptions into a short story.

#### Elaboration Game (Language Arts, Art, grades 3-5):

Engage in this Artful Thinking routine, developed by educators at Project Zero, Harvard University, with Ruth Gikow's print. After looking closely for a few quiet moments, ask one person to begin by describing what he or she sees in the image. Another person elaborates on what the first person said by adding more details and observations. A third person elaborates further by adding more detail, and a fourth offers yet more. After the fourth person shares, move on to a new area of the picture and repeat. This activity encourages careful observation, and challenges students to describe what they see in a nuanced and imaginative way. It also strengthens reasoning skills by asking students to make sustained observations before arriving at a conclusion. For more information on this strategy, see the Artful Thinking resources on Harvard's Project Zero website: [http://pzartfulthinking.org/?page\\_id=2](http://pzartfulthinking.org/?page_id=2)

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**Who am I?** (Language Arts):

Using Ruth Gikow's print, have students silently choose one character to describe. Have one student begin by describing their character using specific detailed language. Other students guess who the character is and take turns doing the same.

**List Poems** (Language Arts, adaptable for K-5):

Using any of the images in this slideshow, make a list of things you notice in the image. The words can describe objects or people, but can also describe colors or feelings. Rearrange the words and phrases as you like to create a list poem. For pre-writers, this can all be done verbally and collaboratively, with the teacher writing down the observations from all of the students into a list format, then reading aloud.

**Extensions:**

Explore a wordless picture book and narrate the story based on the images, such as *Journey* by Aaron Becker, *The Lion and the Mouse* by Jerry Pinkney or *Mr. Wuffles* or *Flotsam* by David Wiesner.