



Claude Monet. *La Meule (The Haystack)*, 1891. Oil on canvas; 28 7/8 x 36 1/2 in. Private collection



Lloyd Branson. *Women at Work*, 1891. Oil on canvas; 29 x 49 1/2 in. Courtesy Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection

Farm to Table: Art, Food, and Identity in the Age of Impressionism

Farm to Table: Art, Food, and Identity in the Age of Impressionism explores the intersections of art, gastronomy, and national identity in late nineteenth-century France. The exhibition showcases the work of artists such as Rosa Bonheur, Claude Monet, Paul Gauguin, and Jules Dalou who examined the nation's unique relationship with food. The bounty of France's agriculture and the skill of its chefs had long helped to define its strength and position on the international stage. This image of the nation as the world's culinary capital became even more important in the late nineteenth century as the country grappled with war, political instability, imperialism, and industrialization. In this climate, France's culinary traditions signaled notions of its refinement, fortitude, and ingenuity while they also exposed fractures in its national identity.

The artwork in this exhibition shows many ways in which food and farming played a role in nineteenth-century French culture and common life. Works such as Claude Monet's *Haystacks* (1890–92) and images of gleaners at the Paris Salon drew attention to the distinctive qualities of the French *terroir*—the soil, steeped in agrarian and social traditions, that was believed to lend an intrinsic and ineffable “Frenchness” to the nation's gastronomy.

Farm to Table is presented in conjunction with Tennessee Harvest: 1870s–1920s

This exhibition reveals connections between artworks featured in *Farm to Table* and paintings made in Tennessee between the 1870s and 1920s. In this period, there were few art schools or museums in Tennessee. Artists frequently traveled abroad to study at professional academies and see examples of old master and academic art as well as newer trends such as Impressionism. Many returned home to establish studios, teach classes, and form artist leagues, becoming leading cultural figures in their communities.

In making these artworks, artists like Lloyd Branson, George W. Chambers, and Willie Betty Newman emulated nineteenth-century European artists who depicted peasants with admiration for their strength, perseverance, and rootedness in the soil. In Europe and the United States, the ideology of Agrarianism contained a measure of nostalgia for times past, remembered or imagined. But for the artists in both exhibitions, the focus on farm labor is more than a sentimental expression. It celebrates a timeless foundation of human culture, fulfilling needs both physical and spiritual.

Farm to Table

Art, Food, and Identity in the Age of Impressionism

Farm to Table: Art, Food, and Identity in the Age of Impressionism is organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Chrysler Museum of Art. The exhibition is generously supported by Martha MacMillan and Monique Schoen Warsaw. Additional support has been provided by Betsy S. Barbanell, Lee White Galvis, Allan Green, Clare E. McKeon, Betsy Pinover Schiff, the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, the Dr. Lee MacCormick Edwards Charitable Foundation, and the Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts. This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.



Tennessee *Harvest*

1870s–1920s

Tennessee Harvest, 1870s–1920s was organized by the Frist Art Museum and co-curated by Mark Scala, Frist Art Museum chief curator, and Candice Candeto, Tennessee State Museum senior curator of fine and decorative art.

The Frist Art Museum receives major funding from



Free Youth Admission Sponsors



Platinum Sponsor



Education and Community Engagement Supporter



Supported in part by

2025 Frist Gala Patrons



Claude Monet. *La Meule (The Haystack)*, 1891. Oil on canvas; 28 7/8 x 36 1/2 in. Private collection



Robert Lindsay Mason. *Tennessee Harvest*, 1910–30. Oil paint on board; 11 x 15 in. Courtesy of Tennessee State Museum

Claude Monet said, “For me a landscape hardly exists at all as a landscape, because its appearance is constantly changing; but it lives by virtue of its surroundings, the air and the light which vary continually.”

In the early 1890s, Claude Monet executed a series of more than twenty paintings of stacks of wheat, depicting these seemingly architectural forms at various times of day and under different weather conditions. Here, a single haystack rises high in an otherwise unpopulated landscape, its form echoing the mountains in the distance. These stacks were the first subject of Monet’s series paintings, which would later include poplars and Rouen Cathedral—both equally related to French fortitude and longevity. Monet’s selection of the stacks of wheat emphasizes the fundamental importance of food and farming to French identity.

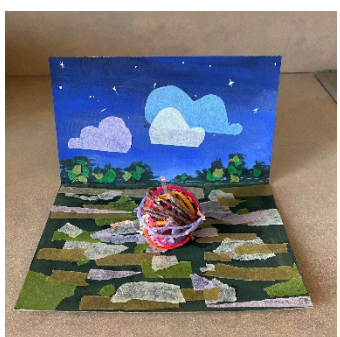
By the end of the nineteenth century, Tennessee artists were increasingly embracing European styles ranging from academic realism to impressionism. In Robert Lindsay Mason’s *Tennessee Harvest*, we see Claude Monet’s iconic haystacks transplanted to an East Tennessee field.

As a leading member of Knoxville’s growing art community, Mason had works appear in major East Tennessee exhibitions in the early twentieth century. He advocated through writing and art for a future of the region that was rooted in appreciation for its exceptional natural beauty and preservation of its cultural traditions in the face of rapid urbanization and industrialization. Like other artists of the time, he depicted the land and its people in tributes to a fading way of life.

Questions

- Have you ever been to a farm? What did you see there?
- What time of day do you think is shown in these paintings? Why?
- What color are the haystacks in Mason’s and Monet’s paintings?
- What season do you think this is? What do you see that makes you think that?
- Monet created about thirty paintings of haystacks at different times of day and in different seasons. Why do you think he did this?

Monet's *Haystack*



Objective

Participants will explore light, shadow, and color and create a 3D model of Monet's *The Haystack*. They will then practice observation and painting from life in their own landscape.

Materials

- Flashlight
- Colored transparencies
- Wikistix
- Raffia
- Colored paper
- Tissue paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Cardboard for backdrop
- Watercolor paper
- Watercolor set
- Paint brushes
- Paint palette
- Tempera
- Palette knife
- Colored pencils
- Pencils

Steps

1. Think about how you would construct a haystack scene. What season and time of day do you want to represent? What colors would you use? Where would the light source be located?
2. Discuss how the sun changes position throughout the day. Using the flashlight, explore shadows by aiming your light source at an object from different directions.
3. Talk about the way artists use different colors to create atmosphere. Artists use warm and cool colors to set the mood of a painting. Warm colors like red, yellow, and orange can suggest positivity or excitement, while cool colors like blue, green, and purple can create a calm relaxed mood. Repeat the experiment in step 2 with colored transparencies over the flashlight.
4. Use your choice of materials to construct a haystack reflecting the atmospheric colors of your time of day. Determine your light source. Is your scene set in the evening or morning? Where is the sun? Where will your shadows be?
5. Make a backdrop by folding a piece of cardboard in half so that it stands at a 90-degree angle. Create the background scenery of your environment by collaging the backdrop with cut paper and other materials. Place the completed haystack on the backdrop.
6. After beginning outdoors, Monet reworked each painting in his studio to create the color harmonies that unify each canvas. Observe your model and create a landscape painting based on your original scene. Use watercolors, tempera, or colored pencils to complete your mixed-media painting. Consider the shadows, light, and colors and choose the best materials for your image. Begin by outlining your big shapes with a pencil—consider the haystacks in relation to other elements of your scene. Next, add color and depth with paint. While painting, consider how you're creating atmosphere with shadows and colors.



Julien Dupré. *Haying Scene*, 1884. Oil on canvas; 48 5/8 x 59 1/2 in. Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Justina G. Catlin in memory of her husband, Daniel Catlin

Julien Dupré's painting focuses on a woman absorbed in the demanding task of turning hay, made from grasses to which the stems of crops like oats, barley, and wheat would have been added. In this work, the artist shows that the arduous labor of haying was performed by men and women alike. Like the other workers in the scene, this woman is an essential link in the interaction of humanity, nature, and animals that facilitate the haying process. After the job was completed, the dry hay would have been stacked and stored or used as bedding and in feed for livestock, which supplied meat, butter, and milk—staples in most French households.



Lloyd Branson. *Women at Work*, 1891. Oil on canvas; 29 x 49 1/2 in. Courtesy Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection

Lloyd Branson was a leading figure of the Nicholson Art League, an early and active Knoxville-based group dedicated to promoting the arts in East Tennessee. Like fellow members Robert Lindsay Mason, Catherine Wiley, and Adelia Lutz, Branson sought to use art to elevate perceptions of the region. In this painting, he portrays women happily engaged in apple processing in southern Appalachia. The women's setting and dress evoke French peasant imagery, while their work depicts the everyday realities of many East Tennesseans of the time. This romanticized view was exhibited at the National Academy of Design in 1891, bringing Tennessee painting to a national stage.

Questions

- Look closely at *Haying Scene* and *Women at Work*. What is going on in these two paintings? What are the people in each painting doing? What do you notice about the environment around them?
- How do the artists show movement in these two works? Look at what the people are doing and how their bodies and clothing are positioned.

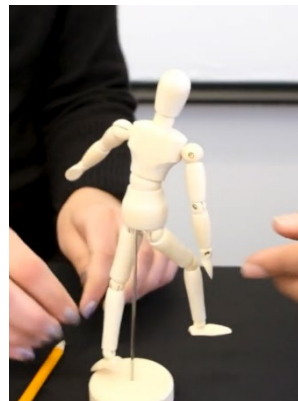
Drawing the Figure in Motion



1



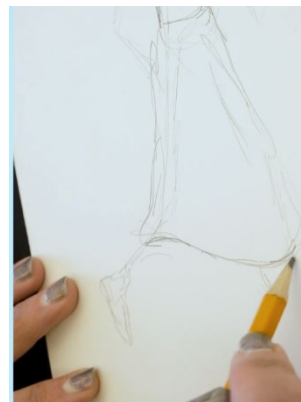
2



3



4



5



6

Objective

Position a wooden figure showing dynamic movement, then draw the figure and the surrounding environment using soft pastels.

Materials

- Pencil
- Drawing paper
- Pastels
- Posable wooden figure

Steps

1. Talk about the subjects of *Haying Scene* and *Women at Work*. What are they doing? How do the artists show that the subjects are in motion?
2. Work in groups and decide on an active pose for the wooden figure.
3. Gather around the figure so that you and other participants have a clear view of it. Based on the positioning of the figure, what do you imagine it's doing?
4. After receiving drawing paper and a pencil, sketch the figure as you see it. Start by drawing lightly and loosely.
5. Once the initial sketch is complete, go back over the drawing with darker lines, adding clothing and features, then erase the lightly sketched marks.
6. After the pencil drawing is complete, use pastels to add color to the drawing. Think about how the colors in the environment can tell us more about the figure you have drawn.