

**Overview**

In this project, an English language teacher in France and a French language teacher in the U.S. worked with museum educators from the Musée Fabre and the Clark to incorporate works of art into their curricula. In their classrooms, students discussed paintings and artists from both museums' collections in the foreign language. They connected with their peers across the ocean through postcards and e-mails written in their native tongue, which made the language come alive for the recipient. The project culminated with classes using what they learned about art by taking their new pen pals on a "tour" (via video) through their home museums in their native tongue. Watching the videos, students reinforced what they had learned in their foreign language classes and explored works of art in a museum they may not ever have the chance to visit in person.

**Participants**

Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, USA  
Danielle Steinmann, Assistant Curator of Education

Shenendehowa High School, Clifton Park, NY, USA  
Gale Munson, Teacher of French

- The Shenendehowa students' powerpoints on the three artists can be seen at:  
<http://www.shenet.org/high/hsacaddept/lote/gmunson/artistbios.htm>

Musée Fabre, Montpellier, FRANCE  
Sylvain Amic, Conservateur du Patrimoine

Musée Fabre, Montpellier, FRANCE  
Laurent Grison, Art History Educator

Lycée Joffre, Montpellier, FRANCE  
Nicole Ameille, Teacher of English

*Summer Squall*, 1904, by Winslow Homer (Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute)

**LESSON:**

1. Describe the scene: Where is it? What do you see? What is happening? Who is it happening to?
2. Describe what you see in the foreground, the middle ground, and the background of the painting.
3. Imagine two more pictures, one painted before this scene and one painted after this scene. What might you see?
4. Write a story based on this painting. Imagine the characters, the setting, and the plot. Begin by drawing a storyboard of 3–5 pictures, including this one, which tell the story you will write. Then write the narrative of the story.

**LEÇON:**

1. Décrivez la scène: où sommes-nous? Qu'est-ce que vous voyez? Qu'est-ce qui se passe? Qui sont les personnes dans l'action?
2. Décrivez ce que vous voyez au premier plan, au milieu, et à l'arrière plan.
3. Imaginez deux autres images, une peinte avant cette scène et l'autre peinte après. Qu'est-ce que vous verriez dans les deux autres images?
4. Écrivez une histoire dans laquelle figure l'action de ce tableau. Pour commencer dessinez trois à cinq petites images (une bande dessinée) qui racontent votre histoire. Imaginez les personnages, l'endroit et l'action. N'oubliez pas de dessiner le tableau pour une des images. Écrivez votre histoire. N'oubliez pas de bien organiser votre histoire.

**VOCABULARY**

**Expressions**

*tout à coup*—all of a sudden

**Noms**

*l'algue* (f.)—seaweed

*le bateau, le voilier*—boat, sailboat

*la brume*—mist

*la côte, le littoral*—seacoast

*l'eau*—water

*l'écume* (f.)—foam, froth

*le grand vent*—high wind

*l'homme de mer, marin*—seafarer, sailor

*la mer*—sea

*la mouette*—seagull

*la nuage*—cloud

*un orage*—storm

*le port*—harbor

*la rafale*—squall

*le rocher*—rock

*une tempête*—storm

*la vague*—wave

*le vent*—wind

**Adjectifs**

*obscur*—dark, gloomy

*rocheux*—rocky

*sombre*—dark, gloomy

*soudain, inattendu, imprévu*—sudden

**Verbes**

*briser*—to break, crash (waves)

*courir vent arrière*—to sail before the wind

*faire grand vent*—to blow a high wind

*naviguer*—to sail

*Phedra*, 1880, by Alexandre Cabanel (Musée Fabre, Montpellier)

The students come to the museum without any special preparation. They are not told anything about the painting, nor can they see its title. They are given a worksheet with questions and a word-bank. They are divided into 3 groups.

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

### 1. Complete Worksheet (10 minutes)

- **Group 1**

When and where does this scene take place? Why do you think so? Describe the setting and the objects you can see. Study the organization of the painting (lines, etc.).

- **Group 2**

Describe the characters and their pose. What is their relationship, their social status?

- **Group 3**

What may have happened before this scene? Why? Imagine the main character's inner thoughts and what the older woman may be saying.

### 2. Students share their answers to the other groups. (10 minutes)

### 3. Art historical presentation in French by Mr Laurent Grison. (15 minutes)

### 4. Acting out/miming the painting. (5 minutes)

The class gives stage directions in English to the three actors/mimes who try to reproduce the scene represented in the painting.

### 5. Questions (10 minutes)

The students are encouraged to ask the teacher questions.

Students are given a technical sheet about the painting at the end of the visit.

## FOLLOW-UP WORK IN CLASS

- The students share their impressions and give suggestions for future visits and activities.
- Written test given about the painting.

## VOCABULARY

### Verbs

to bend—*se pencher*

to clasp—*serrer, étreindre*

to crouch—*s'accroupir*

to gaze (at)—*regarder/contempler*

to hang—*pendre*

to lie—*être étendu*

to recline—*s'allonger*

to stand—*être debout*

### Adjectives

dark—*somber*

gauzy—*transparent*

draped—*drapé*

illuminated—*éclairé*

naked—*nu*  
pale—*pale*  
sheer—*transparent*  
vivid—*vif*

### **Nouns**

background—*arrière plan*  
braid—*natte*  
breast—*sein*  
cushion—*cousin*  
fabric—*tissue*  
foliage—*feuillage*  
footstool—*petit escabeau*  
foreground—*premier plan*  
fur—*fourrure*  
helmet—*casque*  
in profile—*de profil*  
lamp—*lampe*  
mistress—*maîtresse*  
pedestal—*piédestal*  
rug—*tapis*  
scarf—*foulard*  
servant—*servante*  
sheet—*drap*  
slave—*esclave*  
veil—*voile*