

2025/26



OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

ONSTAGE STUDENT FIELD TRIP RESOURCE GUIDE



National Geographic Live Wild Cats Revealed

overture.org/onstage



ABOUT OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Overture Center for the Arts fills a city block in downtown Madison with world-class venues for the performing and visual arts. Made possible by an extraordinary gift from Madison businessman W. Jerome Frautschi, the center presents the highest-quality arts and entertainment programming in a wide variety of disciplines for diverse audiences. Offerings include performances by acclaimed classical, jazz, pop, and folk performers; touring Broadway musicals; quality children's entertainment; and world-class ballet, modern and jazz dance. Overture Center's extensive outreach and educational programs serve thousands of Madison-area residents annually, including youth, older adults, people with limited financial resources and people with disabilities. The center is also home to ten independent resident organizations.

RESIDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Bach Dancing and Dynamite Society
Children's Theater of Madison
Forward Theater Company
Kanopy Dance Company
Li Chiao-Ping Dance Company
Madison Ballet
Madison Opera
Madison Symphony Orchestra
Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery
Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra

Internationally renowned architect Cesar Pelli designed the center to provide the best possible environment for artists and audiences, as well as to complement Madison's urban environment. Performance spaces range from the spectacular 2,250-seat Overture Hall to the casual and intimate Rotunda Stage. The renovated Capitol Theater seats approximately 1,110, and The Playhouse seats 350. In addition, three multi-purpose spaces provide flexible performance, meeting and rehearsal facilities. Overture Center also features several art exhibit spaces. Overture Galleries I, II and III display works by Dane County artists. The Playhouse Gallery features regional artists with an emphasis on collaborations with local organizations. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Watrous Gallery displays works by Wisconsin artists, and the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art offers works by national and international artists.

Dear Teachers,

In this resource guide you will find valuable information that will help you apply your academic goals to your students’ performance experience. We have included suggestions for activities which can help you prepare students to see this performance, ideas for follow-up activities, and additional resources you can access on the web. Along with these activities and resources, we’ve also included the applicable Wisconsin Academic Standards in order to help you align the experience with your curriculum requirements.

This Educator’s Resource Guide for this OnStage presentation of **National Geographic Live - Wild Cats Revealed** is designed to:

- Extend the scholastic impact of the performance by providing discussion ideas, activities and further reading which promote learning across the curriculum;
- Promote arts literacy by expanding students’ knowledge of music, science, storytelling and theatre;
- Illustrate that the arts are a legacy reflecting the values, custom, beliefs, expressions and reflections of a culture;
- Use the arts to teach about the cultures of other people and to celebrate students’ own heritage through self-reflection;
- Maximize students’ enjoyment and appreciation of the performance.

We hope this performance and the suggestions in this resource guide will provide you and your students opportunities to apply art learning in your curricula, expanding it in new and enriching ways.

Enjoy the Show!

We Want Your Feedback!

OnStage performances can be evaluated online! Evaluations are vital to the future and funding of this program. Your feedback educates us about the ways the program is utilized and we often implement your suggestions.

Follow this link: <https://form.jotform.com/252614119409152>

and fill out an evaluation. We look forward to hearing from you.



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Education Categories

Language Arts

Science

Social Studies

Arts



Photo courtesy of National Geographic

About ***National Geographic - Wild Cats Revealed***

Join filmmaker Sandesh Kadur on a one-of-a-kind journey from the Himalayan mountains through the arid plains and dense jungles in search of India's lesser-known wild cats.

Discover the tiny, grumpy-faced Pallas's cat, the fishing cat that jumps into water to catch its prey, and the elusive clouded leopard.

BAFTA Award-winning filmmaker Sandesh Kadur is a National Geographic Society Fellow and a National Geographic Explorer.

He creates documentaries that have aired worldwide on prominent networks such as National Geographic, the BBC, Netflix, Discovery Channel, and Animal Planet.

He is a Fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers, a member of the International Environmental Photographers Association (Japan), and a member on the board of the International Association of Wildlife Filmmakers.

Kadur's work spans cloud forests and endangered sea turtles in Mexico, rain forests and king cobras in India, and orphaned clouded leopards being rehabilitated back to the Himalayan jungle.

What is a National Geographic Explorer?

Doesn't that sound like a cool job? The answer is yes, becoming a National Geographic Explorer is definitely an honor and brings with it great opportunities. As befits a group of real-world heroes and heroines, the position also comes with great responsibilities. National Geographic Explorers are highly accomplished individuals from all over the world, working in a variety of fields, from deep-sea explorers to wildlife protectors to high-tech researchers. Individuals who successfully apply to the program receive funding and support from the National Geographic Society follow a strict code of conduct as they illuminate and protect our world through their work in science, exploration, education, and storytelling.

About Sandesh Kadur

When he was 15 years-old, Sandesh Kadur and a friend rode their bicycles to the jungle one night (some thing you can do when you grow up in Bangalore, India). They climbed a tree and watched and waited, hoping a big cat might visit the nearby watering hole.

Sure enough, a leopard appeared just 15 feet beneath them and strolled off into the moonlight. That's when Kadur knew what he wanted to be when he grew up. His journey into the kind of work he wanted to do included brief stints studying hotel management in Texas and serving as a jungle tour guide for Audubon Sierra Club groups.

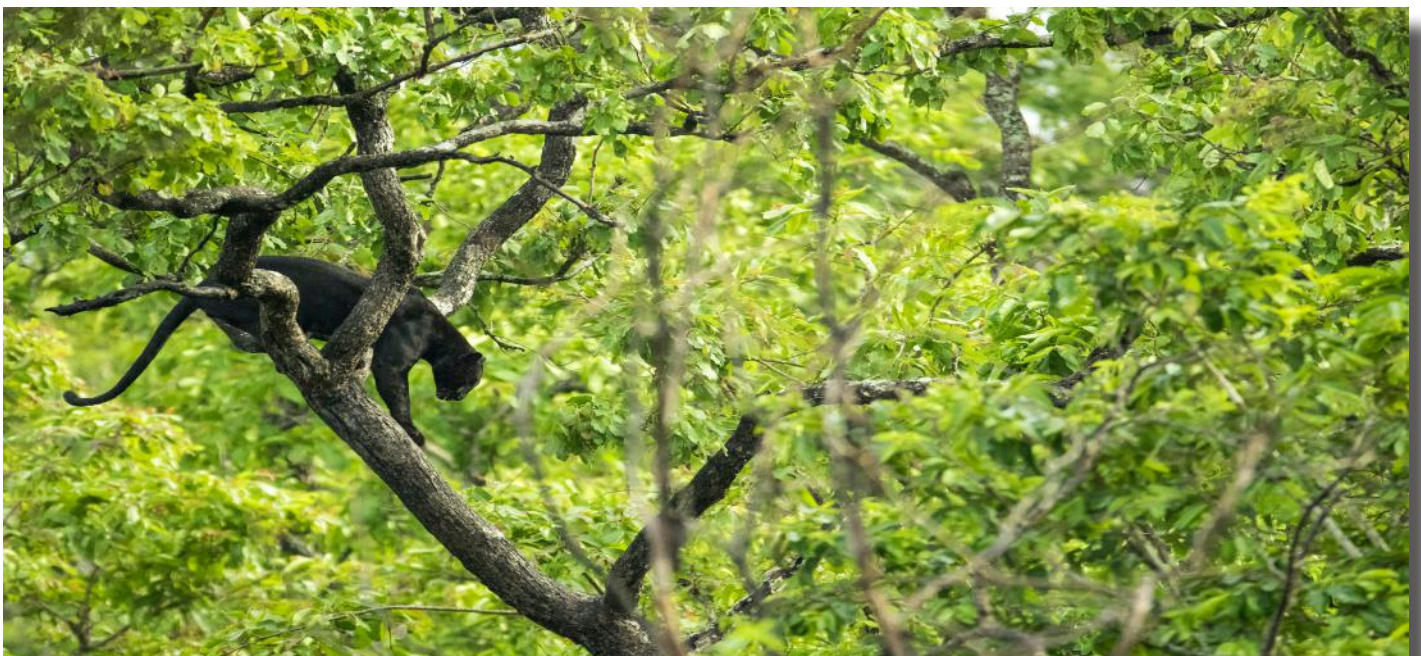
But eventually, he found himself on a plane back to India, setting off to make his first film and studying the camera manuals on the way. He worked for three years on that film, "Sahyadris: Mountains of the Monsoon." It showcased India's mountain jungles and captivating wildlife. It also won several awards and set Kadur on his path as a storyteller and an advocate for global conservation.

He uses his skills as a nature photographer and filmmaker to tell the stories of Indonesian birds, giant sea turtles, king cobras, and more, building awareness and understanding of endangered species, fragile habitats, and the need to protect and cherish all manner of life on this wildly beautiful planet.



Sandesh Kadur

Photos courtesy of National Geographic



Big & Not-So-Big Cats & the Wild Cats of India

There are more than 40 species of wild cats in the world today



Photo courtesy of National Geographic

While big cats may get the lion's share of attention, there are more than 40 species of wild cats in the world today, ranging in size from the Siberian tiger, the largest wild cat, weighing in at 400 -675 pounds and 10-12 feet long, to the Rusty-Spotted cat, the smallest wild cat.

Rusty-Spotted cats are just 14-19 inches long, including their tails, and weigh 2-3.5 pounds. But they can jump up to five times their body length!

India is home to 15 different species of wild cats, which is roughly 40% of the total number of wild cat species on the planet.

Five different species of big cats are found in India, as well as eight species of medium cats, and two species of small cats. The wild cats of India include:

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Royal Bengal tiger | • Jungle cat | • Caracal |
| • Asiatic lion | • Fishing cat | • Pallas's cat |
| • Leopard | • Indian desert cat | • Leopard cat |
| • Snow leopard | • Eurasian lynx | • Rusty-spotted cat |
| • Clouded leopard | • Asian golden cat | • Marbled cat |

Pallas's Cat, the Snow Leopard, & Natural Areas in India

Pallas's cat

The Pallas's cat somehow manages to look both smushed and bushy at the same time. They have long and thick gray fur and rounded ears that sit low on the sides of their heads.

Since they look a little like domesticated Persian cats, early researchers thought they may be the wild ancestors of these house pets, but they're not.

Pallas's cats are about the size of stocky housecats. They're about 18-26" long, with bushy 8.3-12.2" tails. They have a wide range and can live in shrublands, grasslands, deserts, and rocky areas.

Instead of chasing down their prey, they ambush it instead, waiting outside the burrows of small animals.

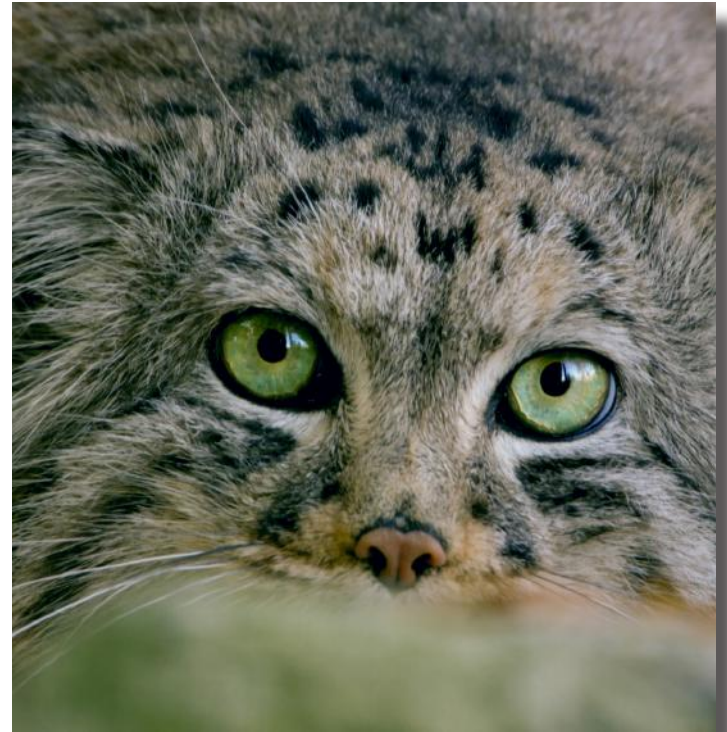


Photo courtesy of National Geographic

Snow Leopard

Sometimes referred to as “the Ghost of the Mountains,” the snow leopard is renowned for being evasive.

It is possible to see them, it's just not easy. For one thing, their gray fur, with black patches and a white underbelly, gives them natural camouflage.

For another, each individual snow leopard ranges over a large territory, so they're never in one place too long.

Then there's the matter of where they live – in the upper reaches of the mountains of Central Asia, at heights ranging from 6,000 feet in the winter to 18,000 feet in the summer.

It is considered a big cat and carries the Latin name of *Panthera uncia* or *Uncia uncia*. Snow leopards are usually around 2 feet tall and around 7 feet long, although that includes their 3-foot-long tail. They weigh between 50 and 90 pounds.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) puts snow leopards in the “Vulnerable” category, which means they face a high risk of extinction in the wild. Conservation efforts are essential to protect the survival of these magnificent animals.

Natural Areas in India

India is one of the most populated countries in the world, with more than 1.4 billion people.

But it is also the seventh-largest country in the world, covering 1.27 million square miles.

Even though India is well-known for its densely populated urban areas, there is still room for wildlife to flourish. In fact, 5.8% of the country's geographical area is protected under the country's Wildlife Protection Act.

India encompasses several different climates. It's equatorial in the south and alpine in the north, with tundra in the Himalayas.

The Thar Desert is in the northwest, and almost 25% of the country is forested, with, for example, tropical evergreen forests along the Western Ghats, and mangroves along the peninsular region.

No wonder it is considered one of the most biodiverse regions in the world.

Resources



Photo courtesy of National Geographic

Sandesh Kadur's [website](#)

[More](#) on Sandesh

An [overview](#) of the different species of wild cats

For [more](#) on wild cats

[Background](#) on the wild cats of India

An article on [nature photography](#) for kids

[Activities](#) to get young people involved with nature photography

Learn more about National Geographic Explorers [here](#)

A [link to the homepage](#) for National Geographic Kids

Arts Education Activity - *Painting Nature Scenes*

Developed by the Kennedy Center

Painting Nature Scenes

How do artists turn the physical world into art?

Grades 3-5 Lesson: Painting Nature Scenes

Grade Band: 3-5

Arts Subject: Visual Arts

Other Subject: Geography

SUMMARY

In this 3-5 lesson, students use their senses to make observations about nature. Students will capture information and sketches in a personal journal, then use these ideas to create original nature paintings in watercolor.

PREPARATION

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Make observations using the five senses.
- Sketch scenes and capture notes from nature.
- Plan and sketch a nature scene based on observations.
- Paint a watercolor nature scene.
- Write an artist statement.

Standards Alignment

National Core Arts Standards

[VA:Cr1.2.3a](#) Apply knowledge of available resources, tools, and technologies to investigate personal ideas through the art-making process.

[VA:Cr1.2.4a](#) Collaboratively set goals and create artwork that is meaningful and has purpose to the makers.

[VA:Cr1.2.5a](#) Identify and demonstrate diverse methods of artistic investigation to choose an approach for beginning a work of art.

[VA:Cr3.1.3a](#) Elaborate visual information by adding details in an artwork to enhance emerging meaning.

[VA:Cr3.1.4a](#) Revise artwork in progress on the basis of insights gained through peer discussion.

[VA:Cr3.1.5a](#) Create artist statements using art vocabulary to describe personal choices in artmaking.

Common Core State Standards

[ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

[ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

[ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Recommended Student Materials

Editable Documents: *Before sharing these resources with students, you must first save them to your Google account by opening them, and selecting “Make a copy” from the File menu. Check out [Sharing Tips](#) or [Instructional Benefits](#) when implementing Google Docs and Google Slides with students.*

- [Slide: Painting Nature Scenes](#)
- [Artist Statement: Painting Nature Scenes](#)

Teacher Background

Teachers should plan for places to observe nature with students. This lesson works in general content area classes and art classes.

Student Prerequisites

Students should be familiar with making observations and painting styles.

Accessibility Notes

Modify handouts and give preferential seating for visual presentations. Allow extra time for task completion.

INSTRUCTION

Engage

1. Display an object from around the classroom (book, crayon, eraser, chair, etc). Ask students to think of words to describe the object.

2. Review the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. Now ask the students to describe the object using their senses. For example, the metal chair legs feel cold. The pink eraser looks sweet. The book smells antiqued.

3. Demonstrate for students how to use their senses to make observations about nature. For example, thick air on a hot day. The smell of fresh cut grass. A woodpecker pecking at a tree. Leafless winter trees. Take students outside to make observations about their surroundings. Each student should have a journal to capture these notes. If the weather is too hot/cold or inclement, students can observe from the windows of the classroom.

4. After giving students enough time to take notes, ask them to share their observations. Record these on the board or chart paper.

5. Engage students in a discussion. Ask students: *How are our senses related to art? How do artists show each of the senses in their work?* Discuss how artists' observations are incorporated into their work.

Build

1. Review with students the art of watercolor painting. Describe the materials needed and the methods used.

2. Introduce students to watercolor paintings. Display the [Slide: Painting Nature Scenes](#) to explore examples.

3. Engage students in a discussion about the paintings. Ask: *What themes are present in these watercolor paintings? Using your senses, how would you describe the painting?*

4. Tell students that many watercolorists focus on nature and landscapes. For example, Charles Burchfield (1893 – 1967) was a watercolorist whose career focused on the regional life, architecture, and landscape of the Midwest. An avid observer of nature, Burchfield captured notes and sketches in elaborate journals that provided inspiration for his paintings.

5. Create a personal “Nature Observation Journal.” Tell students for one week, they will record their observations of weather, music and art. Like Burchfield, they will capture notes and sketches to serve as the inspiration for original watercolor paintings.

Apply

1. Plan a nature scene. Have students use their “Nature Observation Journal” to sketch a nature scene for their final painting. Model for students how to use the journal to plan a sketch.

2. Demonstrate best practices for watercolor painting. For example, taping the paper onto the table so it does not curl up, wetting the paper, dry brush, scratching into a wet surface, and adding detail after the paint has dried.

3. Have students recreate their drawing on large watercolor paper. Tell students they should incorporate their knowledge of watercolor techniques. Work with students on an individual basis as needed.

4. Move artwork to drying racks at the end of the session. Finished work should be displayed on a large board for class critique and evaluation. Work-journals should be displayed alongside the paintings.

Reflect

1. Write artist statements about the watercolor paintings. Distribute the [Artist Statement: Painting Nature Scenes](#) handout. They should address the following questions: *What medium*



did you use? What did you paint? In what ways did observing nature inspire you? Why did you make certain artistic choices (colors, lines, shape)? What mood does the painting convey?

2. Display the paintings and artist statements for an audience.

Credits

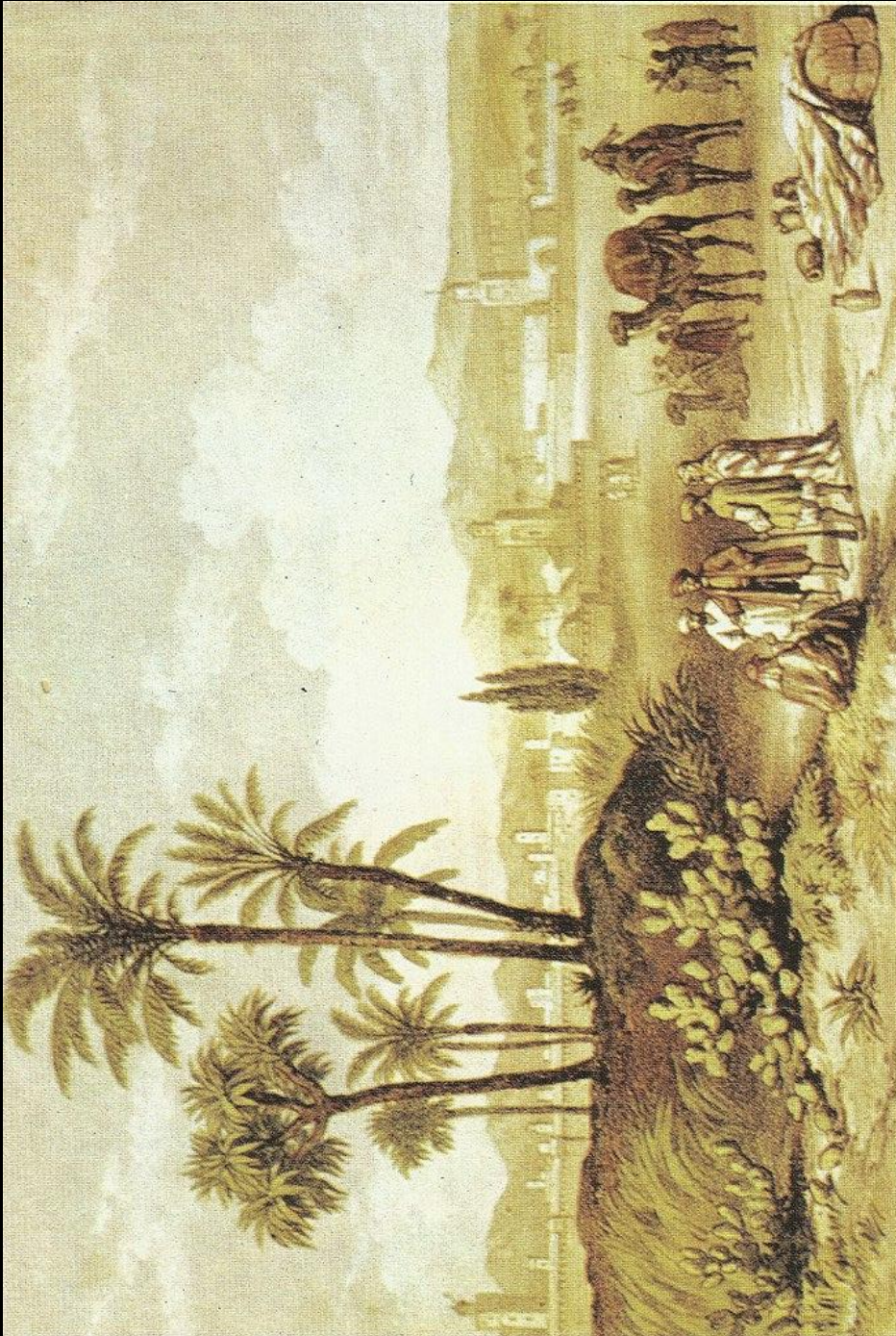
Original Writer, Daniella Garran

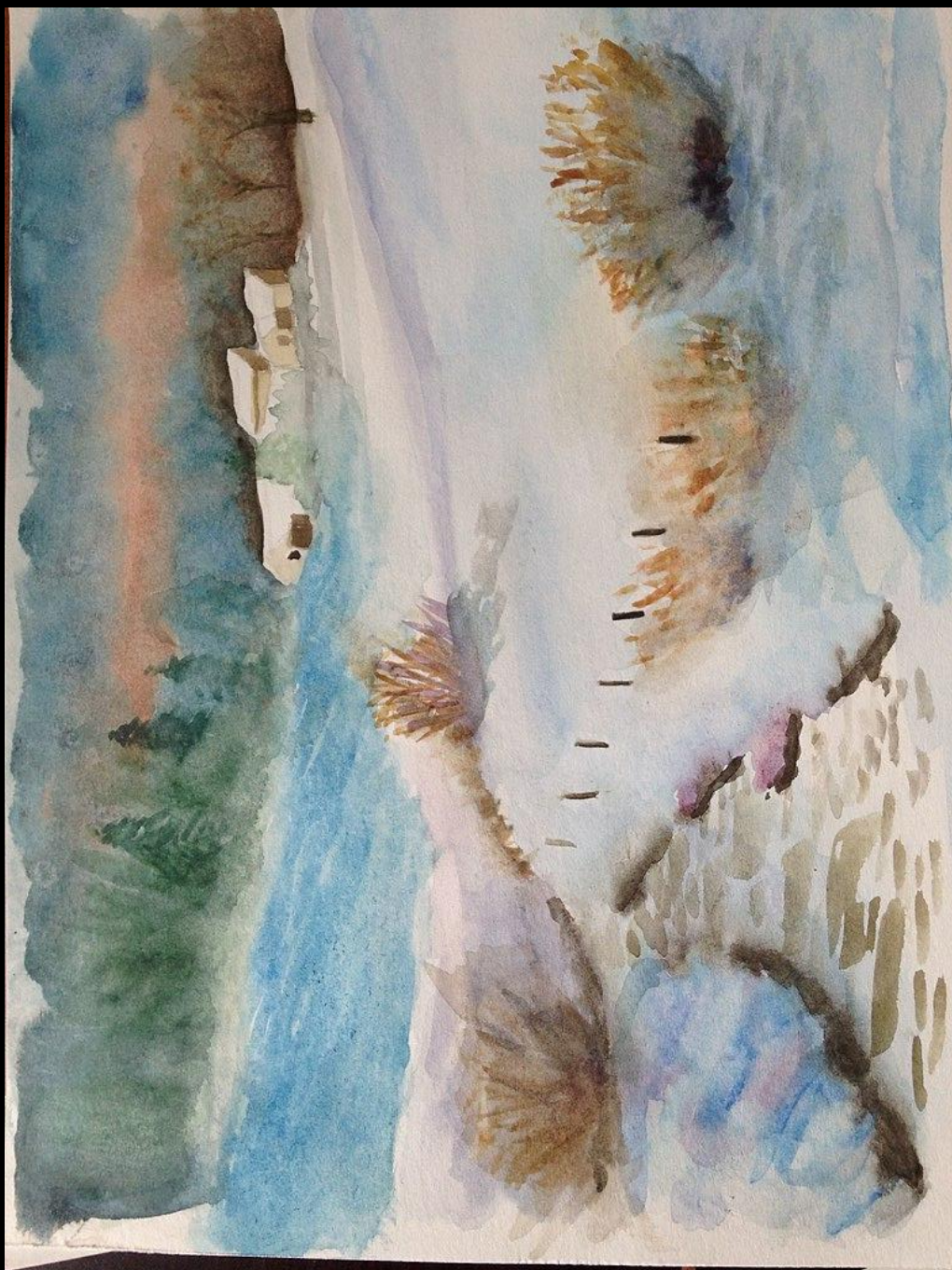
Editor, JoDee Scissors





Painting Nature Scenes



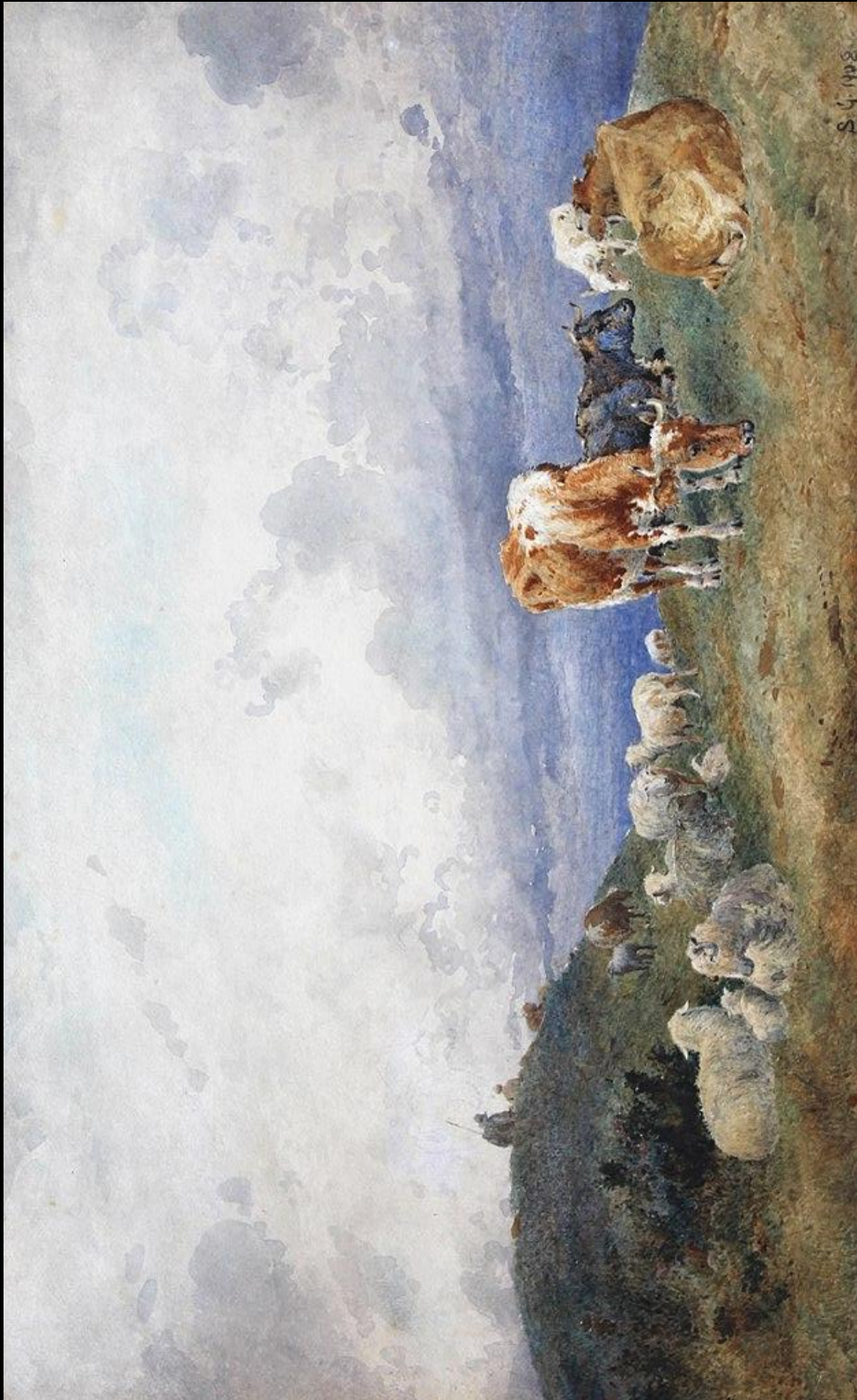
















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[Sidney Goodwin \(1875–1944\)](#), Public domain, via [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Lesson Connection: Painting Nature Scenes
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Updated March 24, 2022

Artist Statement: Painting Nature Scenes

Directions: Use the following questions to build your artist statement.

What medium did you use?

What did you paint?

In what ways did observing nature inspire you?

Why did you make certain artistic choices (colors, lines, shape)?

What mood does the painting convey?

Statement

BE YOUR OWN CRITIC

Now it is your turn to tell us what you thought about the performance that you saw at Overture Center! Use this worksheet to brainstorm some ideas. Make sure to use specific examples from the performance. If you forgot anything, ask your friends and teachers who went to the show with you. Turn your ideas into a rough draft and then send a final copy to us!

I saw _____
(SHOW TITLE)

Overture Center is...



because...

What would you say this show is about?



Two things that I really loved about the performance were...





Two things that could have been better in the performance were...





I thought the artistic elements (scenery, sound/music, lighting, costumes) were...



because...

I would want to meet the character...



in real life because...

If I could ask the performer(s) a question, I would ask them...



Imagine that you're telling a friend about this show. What would you say?



Academic Standards

THEATER

Standard TP 3: RESPOND—Students will critically interpret intent and meaning in order to evaluate artistic work.

TP.R.7.m: Analysis – Express preferences for effectiveness of theatrical performance choices (what works and what does not work).

TP.R.8.m: Reflection – Assess personal participation in a production through critique using theatre vocabulary.

TP.R.9.m: View Performance – Demonstrate developmentally appropriate audience etiquette.

Standard TP 4: CONNECT—Students will relate prior knowledge and personal experience with theatre to cultural and historical contexts.

TP.Cn.9.m: Cultural Social Context – Examine how theatre relates to self, others, and the world in the past and present.

TP.Cn.10.m: Research – Describe the “given circumstances,” environmental and situational conditions that influence a theatrical work

TP.Cn.12.m: Cross Disciplinary – Analyze historical and cultural relationships between theatre and other disciplines.

ART

Standard AA3.RESPOND—Students will critically interpret intent and meaning in order to evaluate artistic work

A.A.R.14.m: Inquire – Compare and contrast the intent of art based on an analysis of subject matter, details, media, and context

Standard.AA4.CONNECT—Students will relate their artistic work with prior experience and external context

A.A.Cn.7.m: Interdisciplinary – Analyze works of art and design with interdisciplinary perspectives.

SCIENCE

SCI.LS1.B.m – Animals engage in behaviors that increase the odds of reproduction. An organism’s growth is affected by both genetic and environmental factors.

SCI.LS2.A.m – Organisms and populations are dependent on their environmental interactions both with other living things and with nonliving factors, any of which can limit their growth. Competitive, predatory, and mutually beneficial interactions vary across ecosystems but the patterns are shared.

SCI.LS2.C.m – Ecosystem characteristics vary over time. Disruptions to any part of an ecosystem can lead to shifts in all of its populations. The completeness or integrity of an ecosystem’s biodiversity is often used as a measure of its health.

SCI.LS4.B.m – Both natural and artificial selection result from certain traits giving some individuals an advantage in surviving and reproducing, leading to predominance of certain traits in a population.

SCI.LS4.C.m – Species can change over time in response to changes in environmental conditions through adaptation by natural selection acting over generations. Traits that support successful survival and reproduction in the new environment become more common.

SCI.LS4.D.m – Changes in biodiversity can influence resources and ecosystem services humans rely on.

SCI.ESS3.A.m – Humans depend on Earth’s land, oceans, fresh water, atmosphere, and biosphere for different resources, many of which are limited or not renewable. Resources are distributed unevenly around the planet as a result of past geologic processes.

SCI.ETS2.B: Influence of Engineering, Technology, and Science on Society and the Natural World

SCI.ETS2.B.m – All human activity draws on natural resources and has both short- and long-term consequences, positive as well as negative, for the health of people and the natural environment.

About Live Performance

Theater, unlike movies or television, is a **LIVE** performance. This means that the action unfolds right in front of an audience, and the performance is constantly evolving. The artists respond to the audience's laughter, clapping, gasps and general reactions. Therefore, the audience is a critical part of the theater experience. In fact, without you in the audience, the artists would still be in rehearsal!

Remember, you are sharing this performance space with the artists and other audience members. Your considerate behavior allows everyone to enjoy a positive theater experience.

Prepare: Be sure to use the restroom before the show begins!

Find Your Seat: When the performance is about to begin, the lights will dim. This is a signal for the artists and the audience to put aside conversations. Settle into your seat and get ready to enjoy the show!

Look and Listen: There is so much to hear (dialogue, music, sound effects) and so much to see (costumes, props, set design, lighting) in this performance. Pay close attention to the artists onstage. Unlike videos, you cannot rewind if you miss something.

Energy and Focus: Artists use concentration to focus their energy during a performance. The audience gives energy to the artist, who uses that energy to give life to the performance. Help the artists focus that energy. They can feel that you are with them!

Talking to neighbors (even whispering) can easily distract the artists onstage. They approach their audiences with respect, and expect the same from you in return. Help the artists concentrate with your attention.

Laugh Out Loud: If something is funny, it's good to laugh. If you like something a lot, applaud. Artists are thrilled when the audience is engaged and responsive. They want you to laugh, cheer, clap and really enjoy your time at the theater.

Discover New Worlds: Attending a live performance is a time to sit back and look inward, and question what is being presented to you. Be curious about new worlds, experience new ideas, and discover people and lives previously unknown to you. Your open mind, curiosity, and respect will allow a whole other world to unfold right before your eyes!

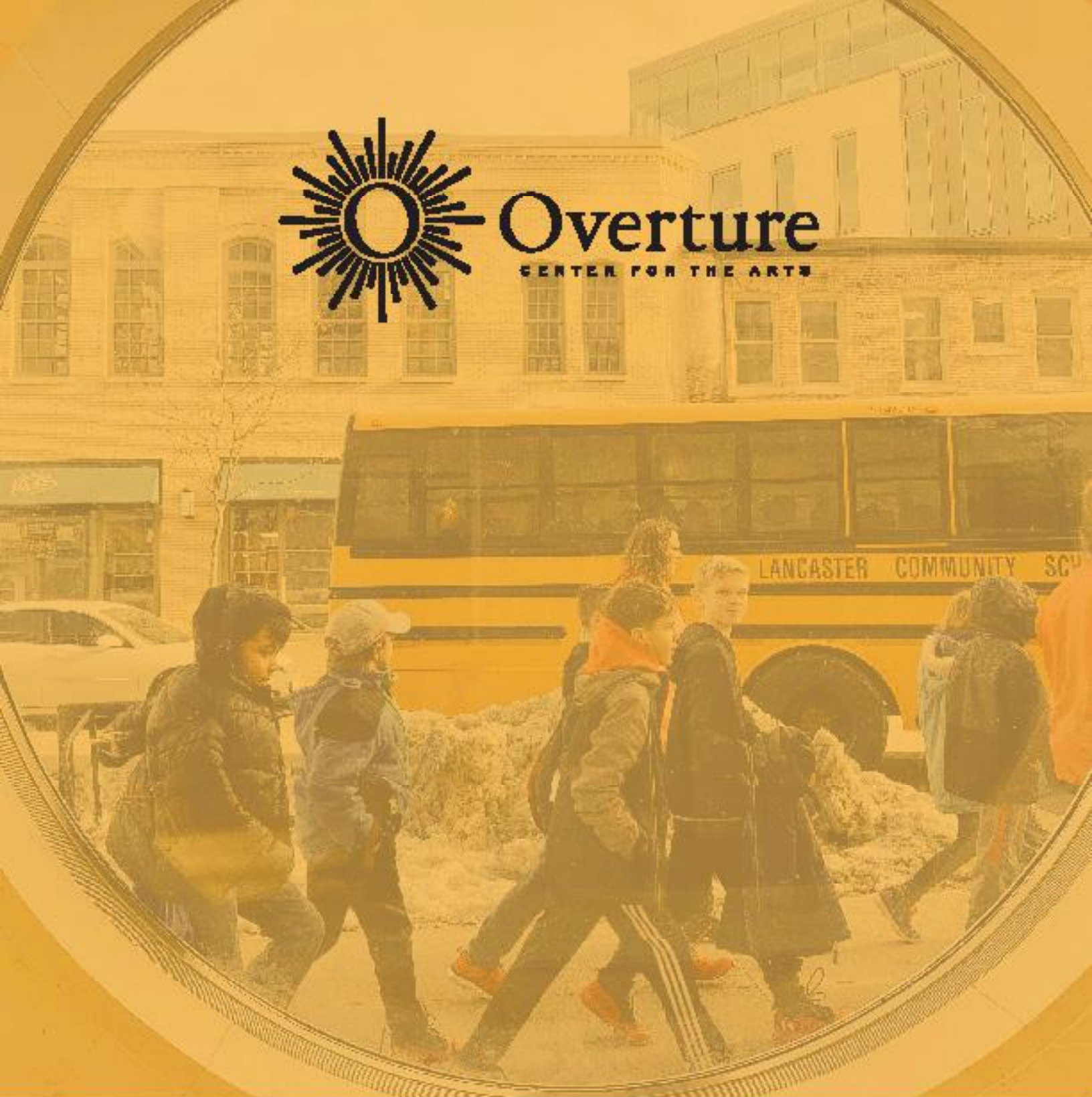
Please, don't feed the audience: Food is not allowed in the theater. Soda and snacks are noisy and distracting to both the artists and audience.

Unplug: Please turn off all cell phones and other electronics before the performance. Photographs and recording devices are prohibited.





Overture
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



PARTNERS:



OnStage is supported in part by: American Girl's Fund for Children, Madison Community Foundation, Nlnet and Patrick & Linda McKenna and contributions to Overture Center for the Arts.

Overture Center's mission is to support and elevate our community's creative culture, economy and quality of life through the arts.

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