

2026 - 2027 SCHOOL YEAR



**ADOPT
-AN-**



ARTWORK



Teacher's Guide

Adopt-an-Artwork is an educational partnership with schools, teachers and their students to investigate works of art as objects at the center of learning experiences. In its eighth year, Adopt-an-Artwork has welcomed teachers and students from all over the state in Pre-K through high school. The Biggs Museum collaborates with educators to make the museum collection accessible and meaningful to a diverse audience.

Summary

The Biggs Museum of American Art is continuing its commitment to partnering with Delaware's educational institutions through its Adopt-An-Artwork program. Participating teachers will receive a large reproduction of their selected artwork as a tool for instruction, supported by digital content such as informational videos, audio clips, and high-resolution images. Teachers and classes will have the opportunity to visit the Biggs museum to view and learn more about the selected program works on display. Educators will participate in workshops hosted by the Biggs Museum to help develop standards-based curricula in their classrooms. Curricula will be attributed to the author(s) and uploaded to the museum's online library of resources. Teachers who participate in the Adopt-An-Artwork fall curriculum development sessions will receive 12 professional development clock hours through the Delaware Department of Education.

To support the implementation of curricula, the Biggs Museum will supply approximately \$400 in art materials and supplies for each participating classroom. Following instruction, teachers will identify notable examples of their students' work to include in a display at the Biggs Museum of American Art celebrating students' and teachers' participation in the program.

ADOPT -AN- ARTWORK

Lauren Tucci, *Guidebook Author*

Kassandra Florez, *Guidebook Designer*

How to Use this Guide

This guide presents all the objects that are proposed for adoption. Each entry includes information about the piece, areas to take notes, places to think about supportive vocabulary, and spaces to consider how that work applies to multiple disciplines. Inside, you also will find lesson and curriculum planning templates. Completed curriculum templates and supply forms will be turned in to the program coordinator on the in-person professional development day for all participants.

The following artworks from the Biggs' collection have been selected for their range in media, topics related to the work, themes in art, styles used, and date of creation. Each of these artworks are available for "adoption". Details about these works will be highlighted over the next few pages.

1. *Just Friends* • Peter Paone
2. *Spectacles* • Joseph Draper
3. *King Street Market* • Gertrude Howland Balch
4. *Untitled (Sand Art)* • Andrew Clemens
5. *The Pirate* • Frank Schoonover

Timeline

SUMMER

Lesson plans from previous year's cohort are uploaded to Biggs Museum website.

FALL

Statewide Professional Development Day on **September 15, 2026**.

Attend a session with long-time Adopt-an-Artwork Participant, Jennifer Boland, or learn more about the program at the Biggs table.

Teacher sign-up deadline September 25, 2026

Teacher requirements include:

- Attend two virtual check-in sessions on **October 1, 2026** and **November 12, 2026** from 6:30 - 8:00pm.
 - Session 1: Introduction to the program, artworks, and overview of expectations / important dates.
 - Session 2: Lesson progress checks, exhibition overview and expectations and essential dates. Give out labels and instructions for art drop off/pickup
- Attend full in-person PD Day held at the Biggs on **October 9, 2026**
 - All completed lesson plans and supply lists will be due by the end of this PD day
 - Resource funds sent to schools for supply ordering and reporting
 - Teachers begin implementing lessons

WINTER/SPRING

Teachers continue implementation of lessons in classrooms:

- **January 8 - January 11, 2027** Artwork drop off at Biggs Museum or county pickups
 - **January 14, 2027** Exhibition opens to the public
 - **January 14, 2027** Opening reception and celebration
 - **April 25, 2027** Exhibition closes to the public
 - **April 27 - May 2, 2027** Artwork pickup
- *Any artwork not picked up by May 31st will be disposed of*

ADDITIONAL DATES

February 18, 2027 Teacher's Appreciation Happy Hour at The Biggs

Teacher Objectives

1. Utilize object-based learning as a pedagogical tool for engaging students.
2. Support student interaction in a safe and stimulating learning environment through on-site and virtual educational school trips.
3. Plan and implement high-quality curriculum aligned to the state of Delaware's standards for teaching and learning.
4. Participate in professional learning opportunities (sanctioned by the Delaware DOE) with peer teachers for collaboration and curriculum development.

Biggs Museum of American Art Objectives

1. Serve as a unique educational resource for teachers.
2. Increase students' awareness and comfort within a museum setting.
3. Provide teachers with the instructional tools they need to engage their students with art in meaningful ways.
4. Strengthen ties with families, schools and communities.

Just Friends

Peter Paone (1936-2026)

1972

Lithograph on paper

Artist's Proof; Edition of 75

Image: 16 1/2 x 22 inches (41.9 x 55.9 cm);

Sheet: 22 1/4 x 30 (56.5 x 76.2 cm)

Museum Purchase, 2024.9.3





Peter Paone was born in South Philadelphia in 1936 and his love for art started young at eight years old. He studied art all throughout grade school and landed at Philadelphia Museum School of Art (later the University of the Arts) to pursue a degree in art education. His career picked up quickly after college and the scope of his work expanded beyond Philadelphia. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1965 for his printmaking and he spent time living abroad in London and Paris. Paone returned to Philadelphia in the 1970s to teach at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He founded the institution's first recognized printmaking department and had a long lasting career in teaching until 2009.

Paone's style of work has a dreamlike quality to it, the elements of each piece have something strange and almost humorous to them. The lithograph, *Just Friends*, depicts a woman sitting in a chair looking at the viewer, sitting just behind the woman is her pet. However, her pet is presented at a disproportionate scale and is looming over her. The scene is ordinary subject matter, a woman and her pet in a domestic space, but the way Paone decided to depict the pair is what makes the viewer wonder. Paone's skill also is highlighted within a print due to the various methods of hatching and linework the piece shows.

Even though Paone is most famously known for his paintings, his style is visible across his work in various mediums. To solidify his legacy as an artist, mentor, and educator, works from his career have become parts of permanent collections of many institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery.



TOPIC TIE-INS

- Illustration
- Narrative
- Domestic scene
- Female portrait / modern woman

ARTISTIC LANGUAGE

- Lithograph
- Printmaking
- Portrait / double portrait
- Hatching
- Crosshatching
- Line
- Value
- Surrealism
- Intaglio

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why do you think that the artist chose to make this piece as a lithograph?
- Do you think the perception of the piece would be different if it was not a print? What if it was an oil painting in color?
- What is the significance of the print being of a woman? What if it was a man with the pet/ creature?
- Why do you think the artist chose to make the creature so large within the composition? How would you perceive the piece if the creature was sized realistically?
- Do you think that the era of the artist's upbringing (born 1936, grew up through the 40's and 50's), changed the way he presented the subjects in his piece? Why or why not?

Spectacles

Joseph Draper (1800-1864)

Probably made 1826-32

Silver with green glass lenses

1 x 6 x 5 ½ inches (2.5 x 15.2 x 14 cm)

Partial Gift of Col. Kenneth P. and
Regina I. Brown and Museum Purchase,
2005.173.1



Joseph Draper came to the United States in his youth from England. He apprenticed with an unknown silversmith from a young age in Wilmington, Delaware. Draper later opened a shop under his own name and his success and ambition allowed him to gain Henry J. Pepper's silver-smithing business in 1826. When his business moved, Draper advertised the new location and that he would "manufacture and keep constantly for sale, silver spectacles, Table and Tea spoons..." After a few years he desired to move westward like many at the time and he landed in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1832. His move to Cincinnati granted him the achievement of being the city's first silversmith and his career continued there until 1836.

Around 1826-32 Draper crafted these *Spectacles*. This pair of glasses has elliptic frames with green, glass lenses, an arched bridge, and hinged, straight bows with sliding extensions accompanied by looped ends. Stamped inside one of the bows is "J. DRAPER" in a clipped-corner rectangle. The name "H Phillips" is in a feathered script engraved outside of one bow. The name "H Phillips" could pertain to four individuals from the 1850 population census records, so this particular pair could have been Hiram, Harry, Henry, or Hugh Phillip's glasses.

When Draper would have crafted these glasses in the 1820s, the process would have been fully by hand. Silversmiths would melt down silver coins and hammer the metal into thin and workable strips to shape them into the oval wires to hold the lenses. Pure silver is too soft on its own so it was typically alloyed with copper to make the wire strong enough to hold the glass. The metal frames were soldered and polished before being fitted to hold hand-ground lenses. Today the construction of glasses is mostly done by machinery. The frames of glasses still can be made from silver, but more modern choices include acetate and titanium. Frames get shaped through a heating process and in some cases a metal rod is inserted for reinforcement. The glass for the lenses is also shaped by a machine to fit the frames.

TOPIC TIE-INS

- Engineering
- Metallurgy
- Glass work
- Apparel history
- Craftsmanship

ARTISTIC LANGUAGE

- Silver smithing
- Green glass lenses
- Functional objects
- Glass-work
- Metalwork

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Do you think that silver was chosen for aesthetics, a functional purpose, cost, or something else?
- Do you think green glass lenses were chosen for a functional purpose, or for fashion?
- Why do art museums choose to collect and display functional items?
- What do you think these glasses might signify in social settings?



Related Object:
Spectacles case, 2005.173.2

King Street Market

Gertrude Howland Balch (1909-1964)

ca. 1940

Aquatint on paper

Edition 4/50

8 x 9 ¼ inches (20.3 x 24.8 cm)

Gift of William F. Richardson, 2023.20.3





Gertrude Howland Balch was born in Flushing, New York, in 1909. As a child she moved to Wilmington, Delaware, and later enrolled at Wilmington Academy of Art. Balch was best known for her prints and watercolors that reflected scenes in Wilmington inspired by the Social Realism movement. Social Realism was an art movement of the 1930s-50s that aimed to draw attention to the real conditions of the working class during the Great Depression.

In Balch's aquatint print *King Street Market*, she depicts the farmer's market and the people passing through and shopping. The King Street farmer's market began meeting in the early 20th century and has continued today just in a different form. Balch was able to capture a moment in history that is typically not documented. Her use of color and form makes the scene read as a bustling street and each person is unique. Balch's ability to capture everyday life and present it as a print meant that her art could reach a broader audience. Each print was individually hand-painted in watercolor, resulting in color variation and individuality. This particular print is number four out of an edition of 50 that were printed of *King Street Market*.



Balch's works have been exhibited at institutions including the Delaware Art Center (now Delaware Art Museum) in 1938, and in 1955 the Philadelphia Art Alliance and the Baltimore Museum of Art. Balch was a long-time member of the Delaware-based Studio Group. In 2002, she was described as "one of the better Delaware women artists" by painter Edward Loper Sr.

TOPIC TIE-INS

- Commerce
- Social Realism
- Intaglio
- History / American History
- Female artist in 20th century
- Trade / Capital
- Agriculture

ARTISTIC LANGUAGE

- Aquatint
- Printmaking
- Urban scene
- Figures
- Composition
- Color

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why do you think that printmaking with aquatint was chosen? What would change if the artist did the piece in an alternative medium?
- Would the perception of the piece be different if the print was made in black and white? Why do you think the artist chose to hand paint the print in color?
- What do you think is happening in this scene and why do you think the artist chose to capture this moment?
- Who was the intended audience for this work?
- How has the way people shopped for and purchased produce changed in the last century?

Sand Art Bottle



Andrew Clemens (1857-1894)

1884

Glass and sand

8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 3 inches (22.2 x 7.6 cm)

Gift of Charles D. Flagg, 2012.5

Andrew Clemens was a sand artist from Dubuque, Iowa, born in 1857. When Clemens was five years old he fell ill resulting in the loss of his hearing. At age thirteen he was enrolled into the State School for the Deaf and Dumb in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He was there for six years until returning home. During his summer vacations he started to fill bottles with colored sand. The different sands became his paints and green hickory sticks became his brushes, and with them he created his unique life's work. Upon learning that people liked his products he began to sell them. Clemens created pieces with elaborate pictures, designs, text, and dates. He made small, simpler sand bottles for \$1.00, and the larger more intricate designed bottles ranged from \$6.00-\$8.00. According to his brother, Albert, Andrew Clemens did not use any form of glue or dyes to create the designs– he just had craftsmanship and patience. In 1893 the officials of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago asked Clemens to exhibit his work. While Clemens was honored at the opportunity, he had to turn it down due to his declining health.

Untitled (Sand Art) is a patriotic example of his work. This bottle may have been a commission related to the 1884 election. The bottle is layered with rainbow-like colors and the designs range from geometric to botanical to patriotic. The bottom is lined with a floral band, the center design is of a bald eagle with the American flag behind it, and the year 1884 adorns the space between the top and the center. Throughout the spaces in between each element is an array of colors and various patterns. On the other side of the bottle is a design with roses. This one bottle shows Clemens' talents and how he now considered one the finest folk artist of this medium in the country.

TOPIC TIE-INS

- American History
- Environmental Science
- Patriotism
- Geometry / Pattern

ARTISTIC LANGUAGE

- Sand Art
- Composition
- Color
- Botanical Motif
- Layering

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Why do you think the artist chose to use sand as his preferred material?
- Why do you think the artist put an eagle and American flag in the center?
- Do you think the plant design lining the bottom is significant to the artist or artist's working region?
- Do you think that the artist living through the Civil War impacted the patriotism of his art?
- How do you think that 1884 (the year in this sand art) being an election year impacted this specific piece?
- Where in nature might you encounter all of these colors of earth or sand?



The Pirate

Frank Earle Schoonover (1877-1972)

1911

Oil on canvas

22 x 33 inches (55.9 x 83.8 cm)

Bequest of Sewell C. Biggs, 2004.411





Frank Earle Schoonover, born in 1877, studied under the Delaware illustrator and teacher Howard Pyle at Drexel Institute in Philadelphia from 1896-1900. From Pyle, he learned the importance of studying details of historic costume and decorative arts. When Schoonover graduated, he moved to Wilmington, Delaware, and started his career in illustration that spanned nearly sixty years. He moved to a new studio in 1906 with fellow illustrators Harvey Dunn, Henry Peck, Stanley Arthurs, Clifford Ashley, and N.C. Wyeth. Later he married Martha Culbertson from Philadelphia and, in January 1911, the two honeymooned in the South with one of the stops in New Orleans.

While in New Orleans, Schoonover developed sketches and notes on the area of Barataria Bay, which was once the home to the pirate Jean Lafitte. *The Pirate* was an illustration done for the story he wrote and illustrated "In the Haunts of Jean LaFitte" that was published in *Harper's Magazine* in December 1911. This particular painting was the most compelling of the twelve illustrations. Schoonover paid close attention to the environment that Vidette, a guardsman of Lafitte's lair, would have been hidden in. The boat divides the piece horizontally, with the rosy sky contrasting the lavender tones of the water below. The tall grass shuts out the landscape beyond, creating a focus on the alert figure that is reflected in the calm waves of the bay. The eye-catching sash in red was a signature element of Schoonover's work, often referred to as "Schoonover Red," and keeps the viewer's attention on the figure. The jug and lantern the artist used as models for elements in this painting are currently on display at The Biggs (on loan from the artist's grandson).

TOPIC TIE-INS

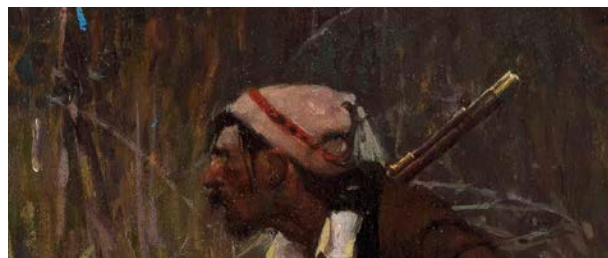
- History of Piracy
- French and American History (landscape of Louisiana)
- War of 1812 (battle of New Orleans)
- Andrew Jackson and Jean Lafitte (met in 1814)
- Buried treasure

ARTISTIC LANGUAGE

- Oil on canvas
- Composition
- Value
- Impasto
- Figure
- Landscape
- Illustration
- Sketching / Still Life

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- How has the artist used oil paint to create the natural effects of the landscape?
- What effects (emotional, visual, etc.) do you think the artist was trying to convey?
- Why do you think the artist took special interest in the story of Jean Lafitte?
- When considering the composition, how does color and value create balance across the piece?
- Why do you think the artist chose to focus on a guardsman rather than the more famous pirate Jean Lafitte?
- How can you consider the piece from both sides of history (French and American)?
- Why do you think this was the most famous of the illustrations from Schoonover's story "In the Haunts of Jean LaFitte"?

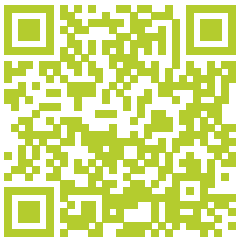


Lesson Plan Overview

- **Title**
- *Work of art*
- Teacher, visual arts educator
- School and District
- Grade
- Content

Included in Lesson Plan:

- **LESSON OVERVIEW**
- **TIME REQUIRED**
- **STANDARDS**
- **STUDENT "I CAN" STATEMENTS**
- **MATERIALS**
- **LESSON ACTIVITIES**
- **ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING**
- **VOCABULARY**
- **RESOURCES AND REFERENCES**



Samples can be found on The Biggs website!

Notes:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Guided Reflection Worksheet:

To review the 5 artworks

Instructions: Look closely at the 5 featured artworks. Use this worksheet to reflect on each one.

Trust your instincts—go with the pieces that spark curiosity, emotion, or connection. You don't have to love every artwork, but try to see its potential as a learning tool.



Artwork	First Notice?	Emotion/ Feeling?	Subjects you see involved?	Potential teaching challenges
Work 1				
Work 2				
Work 3				
Work 4				
Work 5				

Curriculum Alignment Table

Instructions:

Only do for two works after reflection assignment is complete.

Subject Area			
Grade Level			
	Artwork	Content Standards	Potential Lessons
Work 1			
Work 2			

Reflection Questions:

Which artwork would be most engaging for your students? Why?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Could this artwork launch a larger unit or cross-curricular project?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Museum Tour & Create your own Museum Activity

Step 1: Choose a Theme (Examples: Identity, Change, Nature & Humans, Power, Memory, etc.)

Step 2: Pick 3-5 Artworks

Step 3: Exhibit Tour Planning Table:

Exhibit Tour Title:	
Theme Explanation (1-2 Sentences):	
Artwork 1:	
Artwork 2:	
Artwork 3:	
Artwork 4:	
Artwork 5:	
Cross-Curricular Lesson Ideas:	
How Students Might Interact With the Exhibit:	



CONTACT

Kate Huffman

Director of Learning & Engagement

**Kate.Huffman@
theBiggsMuseum.org**

or

**adoptanartwork@
theBiggsMuseum.org**

ADOPT-AN-ARTWORK IS SPONSORED IN PART BY



406 Federal Street, Dover, DE 19901 • 302.674.2111 • theBiggsMuseum.org