

CHARLES E. HEANEY: MEMORY, IMAGINATION, AND PLACE

Hallie Ford Museum of Art at Willamette University

January 22 through March 19, 2005

Teachers Guide

This guide is to help teachers prepare students for a field trip to the exhibition, *Charles Heaney: Memory, Imagination, and Place*; offer ways to lead their own tours; and propose ideas to reinforce the gallery experience and broaden curriculum concepts. Teachers, however, will need to consider the level and needs of their students in adapting these materials and lessons.

Preparing for the tour:

- If possible, visit the exhibition on your own beforehand.
- Using the images (print out sets for students, create a bulletin board, etc.) and information in the teacher packet, create a pre-tour lesson plan for the classroom to support and complement the gallery experience. If you are unable to use images in the classroom, the suggested discussions can be used for the Museum tour.
- Create a tour
 - Build on the concepts students have discussed in the classroom
 - Have a specific focus, i.e. the theme *Memory, Imagination and Place*; subject matter; art elements; etc.
 - Be selective – don't try to look at or talk about everything in the exhibition.
 - Include a simple task to keep students focused.
 - Plan transitions and closure for the tour.
- Make sure students are aware of gallery etiquette.

At the Museum:

- Review with students what is expected – their task and museum behavior.
- Focus on the works of art. Emphasize looking and discovery through visual scanning (a guide is included in this packet). If you are unsure where to begin, a good way to start is by asking, “What is happening in this picture?” Follow with questions that will help students back up their observations: “What do you see that makes you say that?” or “Show us what you have found.”
- Balance telling about a work and letting students react to a work.
- Use open-ended questions to guide students in looking and to focus their thinking on certain topics and concepts.
- Slow down and give students a chance to process.
- Respect all responses and deal with them.
- Be aware of students' interest spans (usually about 45 to 50 minutes) and comfort.

[P]ainting as I see it is simply an attempt to record as fully as possible impressions of things seen, felt or imagined.

Charles Heaney

mem-o-ry \ˈmem-(ə-)rē\ *n* **1:** image or impression of one that is remembered

imag-i-na-tion \im-,aj-əˈnā-shən\ *n* **1:** the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality **2:** a creation of the mind

place \,plās\ *n* **1:** physical environment **2:** a particular region or center of population **3:** a proper or designated niche

INTRODUCTION

Charles Heaney was one of Oregon's most noted 20th-century artists. He drew upon the world around him – the landscapes of Oregon and Nevada, their cities and towns, their plants and geographical wonders. However, like many other Northwest painters who were inspired by this unique region, his depictions were not straightforward documentations, indeed he did not paint from direct observation. Rather, his images evoke a sense of place that goes beyond the physical reality, filtered through memory, imagination, and personal vision.

Goals

- To introduce students to the art and life of Charles Heaney
- To explore the use of memory, imagination, and place in art

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Discuss memory, imagination, and place in relation to Heaney's work
- Demonstrate the artistic process of creating a work from memory and imagination
- Discuss and record a sense of place
- Make connections to other disciplines

Biography

The Early Years

Born in 1897 in northeast Wisconsin, Charles Heaney moved with his widowed mother and his sister to live with family members in Portland in 1913. Although he had not completed his sophomore year of high school, Heaney did not return to school, going to work instead to help support his mother and sister. After a particularly difficult experience as a manual laborer at the West Oregon Lumber Company (he lasted one day on the job), Heaney knew that his future lay elsewhere. Given his talent for drawing, he began a six-year apprenticeship with George Brandenburg, the owner of the Brandenburg Engraving Company in Portland. For most of his adult life, Heaney supported himself as a jewelers engraver until he retired in 1962.

During his engraving apprenticeship, Heaney began attending the Portland Art Museum's art school (now the Pacific Northwest College of Art) as a part-time student. He studied off and on at the school over the next nine years and not only did he get the technical training he had been lacking, he found his place in the world. For the first time, he met "people who were interested in the same thing I was interested in...just to associate with them and just be there and learn...was like entering heaven." (Hull, 21) Heaney developed several close friendships with artists during the early years of his career, relationships that both challenged and nurtured him in his chosen vocation. It was the Oregon modernist C.S. Price, however, who provided him with his greatest inspiration. Price was the model of the artist philosopher whose life and work was informed by the search for spiritual meaning in the ordinary. It was an ideal Charles Heaney continued to strive for in his life and in his art.

Heaney's first recognition as an artist came in 1929 when he showed a woodcut and five **linoleum cuts** in the First Annual Exhibition of the Northwest Print Makers (later called Northwest Printmakers) in Seattle, winning a purchase prize for his linoleum cut *Village* (Image #2). His block prints also found favor with magazine editors throughout the 1930s, when **American Regionalism** was at the height of its popularity. Examples were published in magazines from Seattle to Denver and New York. Yet despite this success, and although he continued to work in the print medium for decades, Heaney always considered himself a painter.

New Opportunities

In the 1930s, a series of circumstances provided the opportunities he needed to further explore the medium of painting and to develop his own particular style and vision. During a three-year stint (1929-32) with the Oregon State Motor Association, Heaney's job took him to places that would influence his later work as an artist. He traveled for the first time to the John Day country and the northern Great Basin, which would become two of his favorite regions in the state. "I was fascinated by Eastern Oregon and the mountains and deserts," he said. "I was impressed very much with the...big broad sweeps of country that you don't see in the part of Wisconsin that I came from." (Hull, 30)

In Eastern Oregon, Heaney found the scenes that would become the subject of his prints and paintings throughout the following decades – the endless two-laned highways, the varied geological formations (from the Clarno fossil beds to the Steen Mountains and the Alvaro Desert at the base of their sheer east face), and the towns of John Day, Canyon City, North Powder, Cove, Riley, Wagontire and dozens more. He would return to these sites on the weekends to study, sketch, and make color notes in black and white. His sketches, as well as those he made

in the '40s and '50s when he frequently toured central and eastern Oregon and Nevada with friends, became the source of his later paintings.

Heaney's chance to really explore painting and mature as an artist began during the Depression when he lost his job with the Oregon State Motor Association. He found work with the various government administrations designed to give relief to out of work Americans. From 1937 to 1939, Heaney was employed by the Oregon **Federal Art Project** of the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)** to create a body of paintings and prints for public buildings. This opened up a new world of art for Heaney. "When the WPA art program came along, it gave me a freedom I had never known before." he said. "They bought all the materials and simply told us to paint, or etch or carve – whatever we did. When your stomach starts to get full and you get paid for doing what you love, you can shed a lot of the severe disciplines of the work world and express it as you see and feel it." (Hull, MS draft, 33)

Heaney's first work for the Oregon Federal Art Project was *The Mountain*, (Image #3), painted for Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood, where it remains to this day. In all, he completed sixty-four paintings under the auspices of the WPA (as well as nine woodblock prints). Roger Hull notes the significance of Heaney being hired as an easel painter, rather than to paint murals in public buildings, to his development as an artist:

As an easel painter, [he worked] mostly at home, a freelance painter of subjects of his own choice, in styles that could vary. Within the limits of public taste, he could experiment and explore, avoiding the conventions of formal mural painting.... If the Federal Art Project nudged some artists toward the conventional and conservative, it provided Heaney with the opportunity to experiment and innovate. (Hull, 41)

Heaney took full advantage of this freedom, exploring a variety of styles and responding to what he knew of European modern art from **Post-Impressionism** to **Cubism** and even **surrealism**. Although he focused on the regional subject matter that had interested him for a decade or more, in works such as *A Portland Street* (Image #4) he incorporates elements of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modernism that he knew from his studies at the Museum School and from independent reading. Throughout his career, Heaney would continue to explore a variety of styles and influences (Image #8, Image #9).

After the artistic freedom afforded by the WPA, Heaney continued experimenting and developing as an artist – both as a printmaker and a painter. The **painterly** quality of **aquatints** was especially appealing to him and his creative exploration of this printmaking technique, as well as mixed-media reliefs, resulted in some of his most imaginative and fantastical works (Image #5 and Image #6). He continued to think of himself as a painter, however, and from the 1950s on, he devoted himself to that medium. He painted continuously during the last thirty years of his life, depicting all the subjects that had captivated him from the beginning: farms and villages (Image #7), Nevada mining sites, the city and its demolition (mostly his own neighborhood in northeast Portland) (Image #8), rural roads (Image #9) and female figures often depicted in ambiguous, dream-like settings (Image #10). All of these works reflect Heaney's belief that as an artist, his role was not to copy or document the physical, but to capture what is often intangible in a remembered experience.

IMAGES

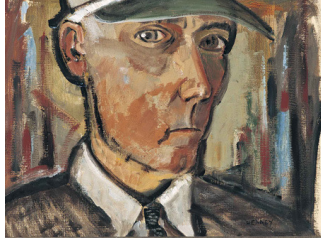
1.

Self Portrait

No date

Oil on Canvas

16 ¾ x 20 ¾ “



Collection of David and Deborah Dimitre, Kirkland, Washington

A self-portrait is not just a reflection of what an artist looks like but also of how the artist interprets him- or herself and the world around them. Heaney’s self-portraits are examples of the concerns of selfhood that preoccupied him throughout much of his life. Here, he is wearing the green eyeshade that apparently he wore whenever he engraved jewelry, made prints, or painted. He is neither smiling nor frowning, but appears to be observing and assessing.

Heaney committed himself early on to the life of a practicing artist. He never married, but was a devoted son to his mother, whom he supported until her death in 1939. A man of modest means all his life, Heaney was content to lead a simple, frugal life, as long as he had the means to pursue his art. His personality seemed to be full of contradictions: he has been described alternately as a solitary man and a great friend, a homebody and one who loved to travel. This duality is also seen in how he viewed himself. Although he was introspective and frequently plagued by self-doubt, Heaney was always optimistic about self- improvement and becoming the best human and the best artist he could be.

Discussion

- Describe the person in the portrait. What is he thinking? What does it tell you about how he saw himself? What does it tell the viewer about this person?
- Discuss the meaning of “a sense of place,” both physical and psychological. Discuss how Heaney found his own sense of place in becoming an artist (see biography).

Touring at the Museum

- Compare and contrast Heaney’s self-portraits.

Making Connections

- Have students research other self-portraits by artists. How has each artist interpreted him- or herself? Compare and contrast with Heaney’s self portrait.

Leonardo da Vinci

www.leonardo.net

Andy Warhol

www.warhol.org/collections/index.html

Eugène Delacroix

www.abcgallery.com/D/delacroix/delacroix15.html

Frida Kahlo

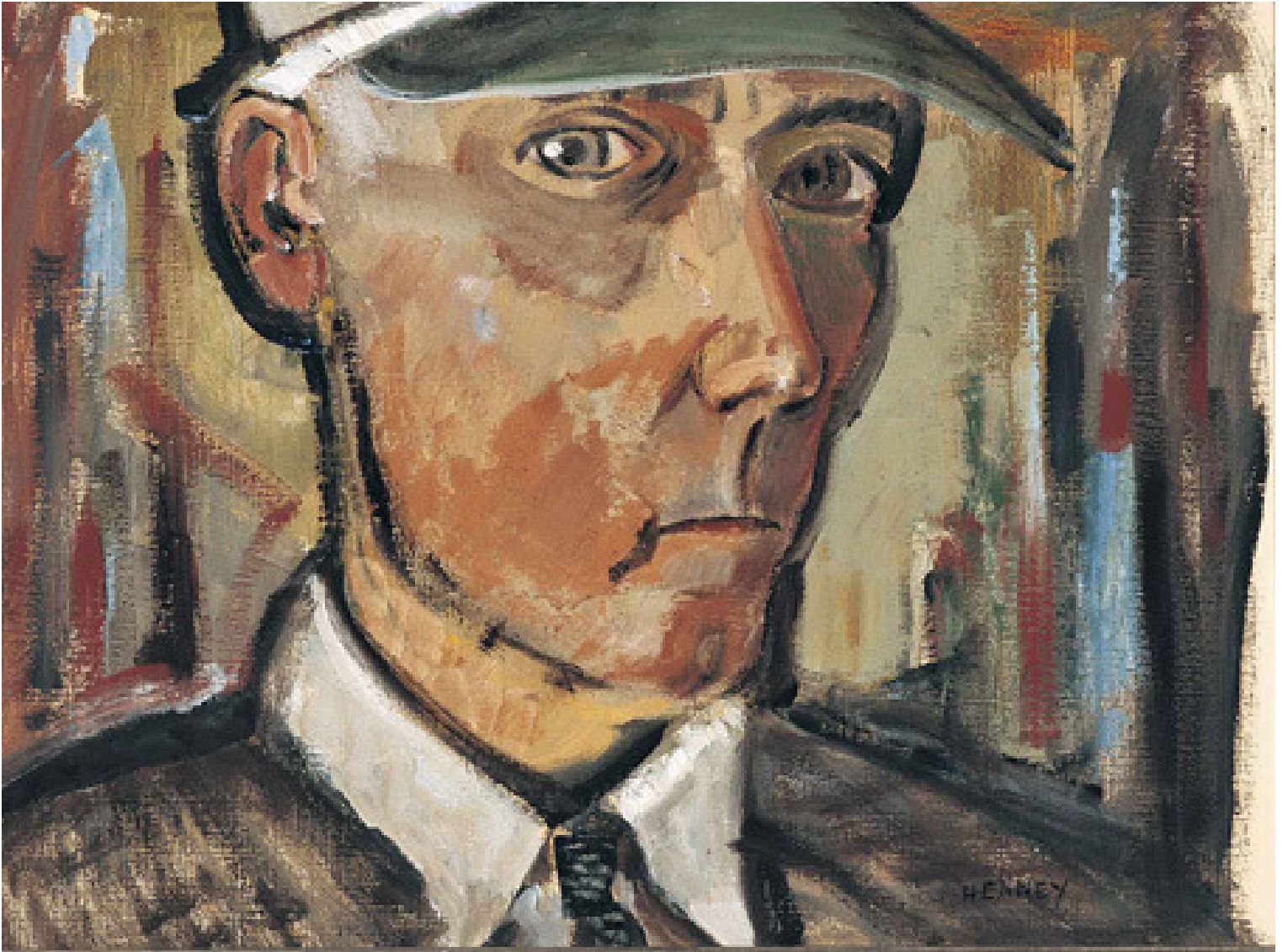
www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/kahlo_frida.html

Rembrandt van Rijn

www.eyeconart.net/history/Baroque/rembrandt.htm

Various women artists

www.csupomona.edu/~plin/women/womenart.html



2.

Village

1925

Linoleum cut on paper

4 3/8 x 10 1/4 “



Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon Museum, Eugene
Virginia Haseltine Collection of Pacific Northwest Art, 1972:1.26

Village is an early example of the subject that became a signature theme for Heaney: a settlement of wood frame houses and modest commercial buildings with Italianate false fronts clustered in an open landscape. As in all of his work, the image is less documentary than evocative of memory and mood. He exploits the linocut medium, which is easier to carve than a woodblock. The structures are dispersed on an expanse of wavy terrain beneath a mottled sky achieved by numerous nicks in the linoleum block. The landscape zones are also flutters of light and dark, caused by the gouges.

Discussion

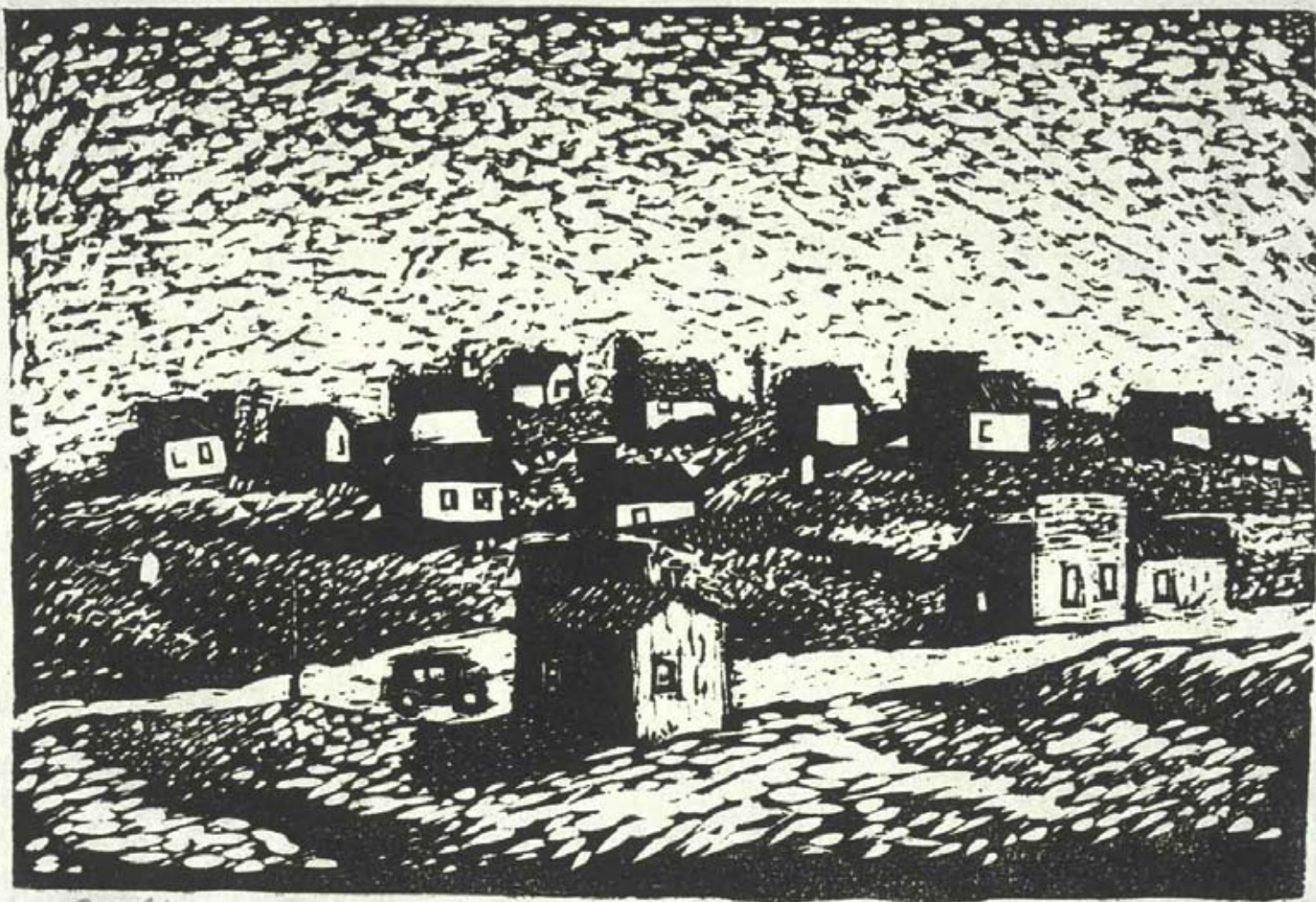
- Discuss the composition of *Village* as a landscape (foreground, middleground, background, perspective). How has Heaney used art elements (line, shape, pattern, light and dark) and the linocut medium to create the composition?
- Heaney noted that *Village* was “[the] town of Metolius as sketched from [a] moving stage.” Discuss Heaney’s statement. What do you think he meant by that?
- Describe the time of day and the weather in *Village*. What makes you say this?
- Describe the mood of *Village*. Is it a place you would like to live? To visit? Why?
- Compare the mood in *Village* to *A Portland Street* (Image #4). How are they similar? Different?

Activities

- Have each student create a matrix (any surface that is used as the physical base from which images are printed, i.e. rubber stamp, potato, woodblock, etc.) depicting something in the village: a house, tree, storefront, etc. Put the matrices into a “bank” so everyone can use each other’s. Each student then creates his or her own village with the blocks from the bank. Have students discuss their prints and the choices they made.
- Using simple relief print techniques, create a village or urban landscape with roads and buildings. If linoleum is unavailable, draw the basic landscape on paper and use potato prints to create the buildings and patterns or texture. Divide the composition into three parts (fore- middle-, and background). Think about shape, pattern, line, and texture.

Touring at the Museum

- Look for the linoleum block Heaney used to make *Village*. Discuss the **relief** process in printmaking. Identify the characteristics of the relief technique.



Village Ed 50

Chas. E. Heaney

3.

The Mountain

1937

Oil on canvas

39 x 46 ¾”



Collection of the U.S.D.A., Mt. Hood National Forest, Timberline Lodge, Oregon

Heaney had first seen mountains on his move to Oregon from Wisconsin in 1913. As he described it, his encounter with “real mountains...got me in a way that nothing had gotten to me before [and] overwhelmed me.” (Hull, 40) He found the mountains of the Pacific Northwest and Nevada to be emotionally moving and personally meaningful. Probably no single form more linked in his mind to his arrival in the west and his taking up a new life as a breadwinner and artist than the isolated mountain masses. He rendered them in dramatic terms throughout his life.

The monumental painting *The Mountain* was unusually large for Heaney. It presents the mountain at such close range that it fills the canvas, which cannot contain it: the peak of the mountain is cut off at the top edge, bringing the craggy slopes close to the viewer, who contemplates this mountain from an elevated vantage point. Heaney has constructed *The Mountain* out of faceted planes of color set in place with brush and palette knife. His mountain is fiercely geological in its mass and angular crevices, the stark three-dimensionality resulting from the contrast of strong light and deep shadow. Fields float off to the sides, while to the left and right of the cut-off peak a wavy horizon merges with a mottled blue sky. At the base of Heaney’s mountain is a vivid blue lake near a house with an intensely red roof.

Discussion

- Do you think this is a “portrait” of Mt. Hood? Does it look like the mountain as we see it? Does the word “**abstract**” apply to this work? Why?
- Why do you think Heaney chose to crop the mountain in the painting? What is the effect?
- Describe the colors Heaney has used in *The Mountain*. Are they realistic? Why or why not? Why do you think he chose them?

Activity

- Write a list of adjectives describing a well-known natural landmark in the Northwest. Create a drawing or painting of the landmark that will express at least one of the adjectives visually. It can be realistic or abstract. Compare and discuss with other students.

Making Connections

- Using the adjectives created above, write a paragraph or a poem about the landmark.
- Discuss mountains as an artistic **motif**. Although Heaney was drawn to mountains for regional and personal reasons, mountains were an established subject for artists. Like other artists in the United States, Asia and Europe who found mountains to be a powerful expressive form in modern times, Heaney wanted to express his emotional responses to a particular region. Look at examples of mountains by other artists such as

Paul Cézanne's Mt. Ste. Victoire in Provence, Katsushika Hokusai's Mt. Fuji in Japan, or Marsden Hartley's Mt. Katahdin in Maine. Compare and contrast with *The Mountain*. Why do you think the mountain is such an important motif for artists? Are they concerned with depicting them realistically or more abstractly and expressively? Explain.

Marsden Hartley

www.hirshhorn.si.edu/collection/search.asp?Artist=Hartley+Marsden&hasImage=1
www.sheldonartgallery.org/collection/index.html

Paul Cézanne

www.ocaiv.com/catalog/index.php?lang=en&catalog=pitt&author=296&page=1

Katsushika Hokusai

www.stmoroky.com/reviews/gallery/hokusai/24views.htm

Other depictions of Mt. Fuji by Japanese artists

www.artelino.com/articles/views_mount_fuji.asp

- Learn more about Timberline and the WPA/FAP in Oregon and America.
www.timberlinelodge.com/lodge/history.shtm
<http://aad.uoregon.edu/culturework/culturework23.html>
<http://www.newdeallegacy.org/>
- Look at a map of Oregon and discuss the different geographical areas; coastal forests, mountains, desert. Identify and locate some of the places Heaney liked to work. Have students discuss or write about where they have traveled in Oregon. They can also use photographs, or magazine or postcard images to illustrate the places they have visited.



4.

North Portland

1939

Tempera on Tuffwood

15 x 20"



Collection of the Clatsop County Historical Society, Astoria, Oregon
www.clatsophistoricalsociety.org/

Like *The Mountain*, *North Portland* was painted for the WPA. Again, Heaney has taken a familiar scene and imbued it with expressive qualities – in this case a sense of quiet mystery. The streets are empty and the buildings seem abandoned. Only the shadows seem alive.

North Portland is one example of his response to what Heaney knew of European modern art – in this case, he is clearly influenced by the surrealism of Italian artist **Giorgio de Chirico** (1888-1978). The steeply raked street, silent townscape, light/dark contrasts creating strongly cast shadows, and separately patterned areas of composition (the planes of the street and of the walls of the buildings are rendered as distinctly contrasting textures) bring to mind de Chirico's well-known painting, *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street*, 1914.

Discussion

- Describe the mood in *North Portland*. Why did Heaney choose not to include figures in the painting?
- Discuss Heaney's use of perspective, dynamic lines and angles, and light and dark contrasts. How does this add to the mood of the painting?
- Compare and contrast *North Portland* and *Village* (Image #2). How are they similar? Different? Compare the mood in each.

Activity

- Heaney created many of his scenes from imaginative interpretations of well-known places. Have students write a mystery or science fiction story about where this scene takes place, why the streets are empty, and what one would encounter while walking through the streets.

Making Connections

- Compare and contrast *North Portland* with Giorgio de Chirico's *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street*, 1914, oil on canvas, private collection.
<http://www.usc.edu/schools/annenberg/asc/projects/comm544/library/images/692.jpg>



5.
Desert Flower
1943



Aquatint
14 ¼ x 11”

Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon,
SCHUB98.05.D
Gift of Charles and Shirley Schubert, Portland, Oregon

Heaney’s many aquatints of desert plants and other desert forms, as well as his drawings, prints, and paintings of Nevada mining towns and endless Nevada roads, are responses to his excursion into the Silver State beginning in the 1930s. Highway 376 extends the length of the Smoky Valley, so-called because of mists that gather there. The “smoke” and light of the valley cause optical illusions in the distance. One sees mirages and shimmering effects in an inland ocean of space and bluish haze. It was in this sort of place that Heaney saw the desert plants that he interprets with such fantasy in his aquatints.

In *Desert Flower*, Heaney exploits the drawing and design freedom inherent in the medium of aquatint, to create billowing foliage, abstract shapes of light and dark, and dappled light. Against a subtle zinc plate ground, a “flower” and three succulents sway and dance. The tones range from velvety black on the hillocks to the white of the paper that is the flower’s glowing blossom. An insect navigates the terrain at the base of the plants, which by contrast are enormous in scale and almost menacing, yet somehow also gay with their rhythmic movements.

Discussion

- Without giving the title or subject matter, lead students in aesthetic scanning (a guide to aesthetic scanning is included in this packet). After the scanning, have students give the work a title.
- Discuss how Heaney used line and texture to create the shimmering desert atmosphere.
- Heaney’s interpretations of desert plants and flowers have often been described as “fantasy.” Discuss how this word applies to *Desert Flower* and how Heaney has achieved this (scale, anthropomorphic forms, abstraction, etc.).

Touring at the Museum

- Look for the zinc plate Heaney used to create the aquatint *Desert Flower*. Compare to the linoleum block used in *Village*. Compare the relief process and the **intaglio** process.



Desert Flower Ed. 35

Charles E. Healey

6.

Cave Fossil

1946

Encaustic on plaster, mounted on board

16 x 20"

Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon,

GRA98.01

Gift of Jon Gramstad, Portland, Oregon



Heaney was drawn to the John Day valley in Eastern Oregon, with its natural displays of fossil beds and other geological phenomena. This interest found artistic expression when he worked at an agate shop where a fossil fish from Green River, Wyoming was on display. Heaney was fascinated by the delicate impression from countless ages past but could not afford to purchase it. Instead, he made sketches for a painting, “to remember the beautiful color.” (Hull, 52) This was the first of a series of paintings of fossils executed during 1942. Beginning in 1943, Heaney began to make mixed-media works such as *Cave Fossil*, created in 1946. Here he has shaped the two-dimensional ground to create a work that is sculptural. Starting with a plaster relief imprinted with casts of plant and animal “fossils”: a flounder, a bat, and a leaf, Heaney painted a coating of earth brown encaustic (in this case, a mixture of tempera pigment and wax) over the textured and irregular surface. *Cave Fossil* is Heaney’s interpretation of a chunk of lithic rock embedded with fossils. It is not meant to duplicate, but to capture the essence – the effect is primordial and fluid. There is a sense of the process and flow that created the original.

Discussion

- As you did with *Desert Flower*, without giving the title or subject matter, lead students in aesthetic scanning (a guide to aesthetic scanning is included in this packet).
- Ask students if *Cave Fossil* fits their definition of Art? Why or why not?
- Discuss the reasons for our fascination with fossils and other remnants of events that happened thousands of years ago. What do fossils tell us about the past? About the places where they are found and the life that existed there?

Activity

- Using clay and found natural objects such as sticks, leaves and rocks, have students create their own “fossil” impressions. Or create a “fossil” of objects that would tell someone in the future about life and culture in 2005. Discuss them as an artifact (what they say about how we live and what our world was like) as well as a work of art (elements of art, expressive quality, etc.).

Touring at the Museum:

- Look for the real fossil from Charles Heaney’s collection included in the exhibition. Compare this to his interpretation of fossils. How are they similar? Different? What do you think Heaney was trying to capture or express when he created his own “fossils?”

Making Connections

- Learn more about the John Day fossil beds and how they were made. This website includes a kids section where you can become a junior park ranger online.
www.nps.gov/joda/
- Explore another art form that uses fossils and other geologic phenomena as its inspiration. *Earthshake: Poems from the Ground Up*, by Lisa Westberg Peters, Greenwillow, HarperCollins, August 2003 (ages 5 and up) is available at Salem, Dallas and McMinnville Libraries or through Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library. An *Earthshake* reading guide lesson plan is also available at:
www.lisawestbergpeters.com/lessons/shake2.html.



7.

Untitled (Nevada Village after Rain)

No date

Casein on composition board

18 x 25 1/8"

Collection of Brian and Gwyneth Booth, Portland, Oregon



7a.

Architectural Models

1930s and later

Cardboard, paper, wood

Charles Heaney Papers, on extended loan from the Estate of Mony Dimitri



In his studio, Heaney worked from memory, from the inspiration of other works in progress, and from his collection of painted cardboard models of buildings and a rowboat. He arranged and rearranged, and painted and repainted, the church with its steeple, the commercial buildings with their Italianate facades, the houses with their gables and shed additions. In countless works featured in the exhibition, including *Nevada Village After Rain*, the cardboard models are clearly the subjects from which he worked. The cardboard miniatures, which fit in a shoebox, were a kit of stimulation for Heaney, who used and re-used them in countless paintings set in countless locales. He enveloped these landmarks of his painted villages in the texture of paint, in light and atmosphere, and in the poetry of particular places.

Nevada Village After Rain is painted in casein, a water-soluble glue made out of the curds of milk. Heaney began using casein in the late 1940s, and the paintings he created in this medium have qualities of color, light, and atmosphere that differ subtly from his works in other media, especially oil. In *Nevada Village After Rain*, the light plays on the solidly geometric buildings, their facets reflecting light and casting colored, shimmering shadows on the wet ground. Heaney has divided these shadows into segments of separately rendered patterns – a compositional device he used often in his paintings and prints. Combined with the luminous color, the effect brings to mind the dazzle of the **pointillist** painter, Georges Seurat (1859-1891).

Discussion

- Describe the atmospheric conditions (light, weather, time of day) and how Heaney created them.
- Compare and contrast *Untitled (Nevada Village after Rain)* and *Village*. How are they similar? Different? Discuss Heaney's use of the art elements (line, shape, pattern, color) in creating the compositions.

Activities

- Find the models in Image #7a that Heaney used in *Nevada Village after Rain*.

- Heaney did not paint his subjects from direct observation and often used cardboard models, sketches and notes to stimulate his memory imagination. Create a work from memory.
 - Ask students to draw a picture of a well-known scene – their house or neighborhood for instance – from memory. Have them include one detail that would make it recognizable as a particular place.
 - Walk in the schoolyard. Have each student sketch the same scene and take notes on color and other details (for younger students the teacher can record their observations). Back in the classroom have each student create a painting or colored drawing of the scene using sketches and notes. Compare and discuss similarities and differences.

Touring at the Museum

- Find other works that Heaney may have created using his cardboard models. How does he create variety in his paintings while using the same models again and again?





8.

The Old Order Changeth

c. 1949

Oil and casein on board

37 ½ x 49 5/8”



Collection of the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon Museum, Eugene
Virginia Haseltine Collection of Pacific Northwest Art, 1970:16:4.

As Portland went through a period of modernization, Heaney was fascinated by the demolition of buildings (particular those in his own neighborhood) that suffered from age and the deferred maintenance of the Depression – and that stood in the way of high-rises, freeways, and other development.

In Heaney’s demolition paintings domestic interiors, old wallpaper still in place, stand exposed. Torn-away staircases are silhouetted on cracked and peeling walls. The sites are culturally archeological, filled with material remnants of long ago lives. They are urban fossil deposits that Heaney found visually arresting, saying, “There’s something beautiful and exciting about some of the old buildings being torn down, if you can catch them at just the right state of demolition.” (Hull, #77)

In *The Old Order Changeth*, Heaney has painted the equivalent of collage, much like Pablo Picasso’s (1882-1973) **Synthetic Cubism** and its offshoots. The composition is flat and abstract, with an emphasis on pattern and design. Lettering, patches of wallpaper, doorframes, and the silhouettes of stair runs are elements in a composition of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines.

Discussion

- What are the dominant art elements in *The Old Order Changeth* (pattern, texture, shape, line)?
- Heaney was fascinated by the idea of time and change, dilapidation and decay. How has he created this as a visual metaphor?
- Who were the occupants of this building? What clues does Heaney give us?
- Discuss Heaney’s statement, “There’s something beautiful and exciting about some of the old buildings being torn down, if you can catch them at just the right state of demolition?” Do you agree?

Activity

- Using wallpaper samples, patterned paper (you can create your own), images from magazines and a simple elevation plan of a house, create a collage of interiors for each room. Have students discuss their use of the elements of art.

Touring at the Museum

- Compare and contrast *The Old Order Changeth* to *Demolition*, 1940. How are they similar? How are they different?
- Find *Underpass, No. 1*, one of the very few scenes Heaney painted of the new structures that replaced the demolished buildings. Compare with the demolition scenes. What does *Underpass* say about how Heaney felt about urban renewal?

Making Connections

- Ruins such as the Parthenon in Greece and Colosseum in Rome were popular subjects for artists during the 19th-century. Find examples of paintings and prints of well-known ruins. How are they similar to Heaney's ruins? How are they different?
- Discuss urban renewal and its social, cultural and economic implications. Are there examples of urban renewal (or its equivalent) in your town? How do you feel about them?
- Examples of synthetic cubism:
www.eyeconart.net/history/cubism.htm



9.

Untitled (Eastern Oregon)

c. 1950

Oil on board

21 x 31”



Collection of the Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon,
SCH93.07

Gift of Dan and Nancy Schneider

The city street or country road, noncommittal as to where it leads but asserting itself beginning at the bottom edge of a composition and then dominating it, occurs repeatedly in the work of Charles Heaney. His country highway paintings are particularly affecting in their simplified forms – almost empty, yet full of emotional expression. This untitled Eastern Oregon landscape tells of the vast illuminated spaces, far from Portland, in which Heaney loved to immerse himself. These empty highways evoke loneliness and peace. Sometimes they pass through villages, bisecting them, but the lure of the highway is inexorable.

Discussion

- Discuss the composition of *Untitled (Eastern Oregon)*. How has Heaney created visual and psychological interest using a limited palette and the vastness of the landscape?
- Discuss the mood and how the artist has achieved it.

Activity

- Describe or write a story about an imagined trip on this road. How are you traveling? Where have you come from, where are you going? What are you feeling and experiencing as you travel? What will you find when the road turns? Make an illustration of what you find around the bend.



10.

Landscape

1959

Oil on board

27 ½ x 39 ½ “



Collection of Elaine Bernat and Roger Saydack, Eugene, Oregon

One of Heaney's largest paintings, apart from the two big mountain paintings that he did for the WPA, is *Landscape*, shown in the Oregon Centennial exhibition of 1959. Here we see a woman who stands with her back to us as she looks out over a lake at twilight. Heaney painted several depictions of women in dreamlike, ambiguous settings, often standing by a lake. He spoke of the women in terms of the composition of a painting, but they also add a psychological element to the scenes. Curator Roger Hull links several of Heaney's depictions of women, including *Landscape*, to the theme of journeying. (Hull, 85-96) Although there is no boat in sight in *Landscape*, this woman seems prepared for a voyage – an imaginative one from the shadowed shore where she stands in reverie. This state of being and transcendence can be found in Heaney's other paintings of women – in the grounds of isolated homesteads, on the streets or porches of lonely villages, or on the shores of rivers or lakes or occasionally the sea.

Discussion

- Discuss the composition. What is the first thing you see in the painting? Why is your eye drawn to this? How does the artist move our attention around the rest of the landscape?
- Do you think this is an Oregon landscape? A real place? Is Heaney trying to tell a story? To create a feeling or mood?
- Discuss Roger Hull's interpretation of *Landscape* in relation to a physical and/or psychological journey or voyage. Do you see this dual meaning? If so, how has Heaney created this?
- Under which category, Memory, Imagination, or Place would you place this painting? Why?

Touring at the Museum

- Find other paintings of women in a landscape. What is their role, both in the composition and in the content? Discuss the theme of journeying or voyaging in relation to each.



GLOSSARY

Abstract Characteristic of art in which natural forms and objects are not rendered in a naturalistic or representational way, but are simplified or distorted to some extent, often in an attempt to convey the essence of the form or object.

American Regionalism Part of American Scene painting popular in the 1930s (which also included Social Realism). Regionalism portrayed American life in regions away from the New York area, in clear, simple ways that could be understood and enjoyed by everyone. Artists include Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood and John Steuart Curry.

Analytical Cubism An early phase of Cubism (1907-12) represented in the works of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. In the analytic phase (1907–12) cubist abstraction intended to appeal to the intellect. The cubists sought to show everyday objects as the mind, not the eye, perceives them—from all sides at once. The palette was severely limited, largely to black, browns, grays, and off-whites. In addition, forms were rigidly geometric and compositions subtle and intricate.

Aquatint An etching in which line and tonal areas are combined. To create tone, rosin powder is sifted over the surface of the plate and when the plate is bathed in acid a network of small dots are formed. This is an *intaglio* technique in which the image is produced by pushing paper into inked grooves.

de Chirico, Giorgio Co-founder of the Italian art movement, *Pittura Metafisica* (Metaphysical Painting) in 1917. *Pittura Metafisica* is now seen as an influence on the Surrealists, who like De Chirico created haunting images with dreamlike fusions of reality and unreality.

Cubism Highly influential visual arts style of the 20th century that was created principally by the artists Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914. The Cubist style emphasized the flat, two-dimensional surface of the picture plane, rejecting the traditional techniques of perspective, foreshortening and modeling.

Federal Art Project The project created during the Great Depression for the purpose of founding local art schools and centers and to provide employment for artists and craftspersons who were encouraged to remain in their communities.

Intaglio The collective term for several printmaking processes in which prints are made from ink trapped in the grooves in an incised metal plate.

Linoleum cut (linocut) A relief print made by cutting into a linoleum block or plate. Linoleum is a durable and washable, and can be cut in much the same way as woodcuts, however the surface is softer and without grain.

Motif A consistent or recurrent conceptual element, usually a figure or design; a dominant idea or central theme.

Painterly The definition or expression of form by the merging of color and tone; the blurred or soft-edge definition of color and contour, in contrast to hard-edge painting.

Pointillist, pointillism A method of painting developed in France in the 1880s in which tiny dots of color are applied to the canvas. When viewed from a distance, the dots appear to blend together to make other colors and to form shapes and outlines. Georges Seurat was its leading exponent.

Post-Impressionism The term originally used in 1910 to describe a posthumous exhibition of work by the artists Georges Seurat, Paul Gauguin, Paul Cézanne and Vincent Van Gogh; now commonly used to refer to the diverse groups and individual artists working in the last decades of the 19th century who were influenced by the work and ideas propagated by these four very different artists.

Relief A printmaking technique in which the portions of a block meant to print are raised above the surface.

Surrealism A term that broadly refers to works that aim to depict an alternative reality which engages with the unconscious mind. Surrealism as an art movement flourished in Europe between World Wars I and II. Two major types of Surrealism are represented by the hallucinatory dream images rendered in a precise realistic style by Salvador Dali, and the abstract forms created by artists like Joan Miro, using “free association” techniques as a means to express the unconscious mind. See **Giorgio de Chirico**.

Synthetic Cubism The later phase of cubism (1913-1920s) represented in the works of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. In Synthetic Cubism, paintings were composed of fewer and simpler forms based to a lesser extent on natural objects. Brighter colors were employed to a generally more decorative effect, and artists used collage in their compositions. See **Analytical Cubism**

Works Progress Administration (WPA) Work program for the unemployed that was created in 1935 under U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hull, Roger, *Charles Heaney: Memory Imagination, and Place*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2005.

COMMON CURRICULUM GOALS

The suggested discussions and activities included in this packet can be used to support the following Common Curriculum Goals developed by the Oregon Department of Education. For specific benchmarks for your grade level check with your school district or on the Oregon Public Education Network (O.P.E.N.) www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=53

The Arts

Aesthetics and Criticism

- Use knowledge of technical, organizational and aesthetic elements to describe and analyze one's own art and the art of others.
- Respond to works of art, giving reasons for preferences.

Historical and Cultural Perspectives

- Understand that the arts have a historical connection.
- Explain how a work of art reflects the artist's personal experience in a society or culture.
- Understand how the arts serve a variety of personal, professional, practical and cultural needs.

Create, Present, and Perform

- Apply artistic elements and technical skills to create, present and/or perform works of art for a variety of audiences and purposes.
- Communicate verbally and in writing, using knowledge of the arts to describe and/or evaluate one's own artwork.
- Express ideas, moods and feelings through various art forms.

Language Arts

Reading

- Connect reading selections to other texts, experiences, issues and events.

Writing

- Use a variety of written forms (e.g. journals, essays, short stories, poems, research papers) to express ideas and multiple media to create projects, presentations and publications.

Speaking and Listening

- Communicate knowledge of the topic, including relevant examples, facts, anecdotes and details.
- Demonstrate effective listening strategies.

Media and Technology

- Acquire information from print, visual and electronic sources, including the Internet.

Science

Earth and Space Science

- Understand changes occurring within the lithosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere of the Earth.

Social Sciences

Geography

- Understand the spatial concepts of location, distance, direction, scale, movement, and region.
- Use maps and other geographic tools and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
- Locate major physical and human (cultural) features of the Earth.

History

- Analyze cause and effect relationships, including multiple causalities.
- Understand and interpret events, issues, and developments within and across eras of US history.
- Understand and interpret the history of the state of Oregon.

VISUAL SCANNING

Scanning is meant to guide the viewer in looking at a work of art. To avoid tedium, one may choose not to use all six points during each scanning.

1. SUBJECT

Subject is usually a good starting place, but should one of the other points “speak” to the viewer first, by all means, begin there.

What is the subject of the work?

What objects can be identified or recognized?

If there is no imagery, the formal qualities may be the subject (line, shape, color, etc.)

2. COMPOSITION

Identify the formal qualities (line, color, shape, form, etc.?)

How are these formal qualities organized?

repetition

contrast

balance

movement

scale

unity

visual rhythm

3. TECHNIQUE & MEDIUM

How was the work made? (painting, sculpture, prints, architecture, installation, etc.)

Does the particular technique contribute to the total? How?

4. EXPRESSION

What is the role of cultural conventions? (Egyptian, for example)

What is the mood or emotional content?

What is the message or meaning?

What has the artist done to “send” the message?

5. CONTEXT (STYLES)

How is the work a product of a particular culture?

Where and how does the work fit into history?

6. CRITIQUE

Has the artist succeeded in expressing thoughts, emotions, and ideas? How?

Viewer’s response: like or dislike. Why?

How can a work that one dislikes still be a valid statement of the artist?

Prepared by W. Ron Crosier, Museum Education Specialist, 2004