



2nd Grade: OCTOBER

Tiger in a Tropical Storm

Henri Rousseau

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About the Artist

The following information is provided to give classroom teachers a comprehensive understanding of the artist and artwork. Use your judgment on what to share with your students based on their level of curiosity, observation/inquiry skills, comprehension and age-appropriateness.

Henri Julien Rousseau

Henri Julien Rousseau was born May 21, 1844, to Julien and Eleonore Rousseau in the small town of Laval in Northern France. His father's income as a tin-ware shop owner provided an adequate lifestyle for the young family, however, when Rousseau was seven years old, his father lost his business and the family home. From then on, the family had constant financial difficulties. Frequent inability to pay the rent led the Rousseau family to move frequently.

Young Rousseau exhibited an early interest in both music and drawing and thought his future would be in the arts. The financial difficulties of the family prevented Rousseau from studying art formally. The local schools, including high school where Rousseau was a boarding student, provided him with twelve years of education—an accomplishment for only a few at that time. Despite his years of education, Henri Rousseau always seemed naïve, foolish, uncultured and unsophisticated. At times he had trouble discerning between right and wrong, a quality which came into play several times during his life as well as in his paintings.

Upon graduating, Rousseau took a job as a clerk in a lawyer's office in Angers, France, where his parents were then living. While working in the law office, Rousseau was accused of stealing and brought up on charges. To avoid a sentence, the nineteen year old Rousseau joined the French Army. The court system caught up with him one year later and he was sentenced to jail for his crime while still in the army. Rousseau's four year service in the French Army was limited to service in France, although he often claimed service in Mexico. This "fact" would later be disputed by historians. He received a discharge from the army to care for his mother following his father's death in 1868.

Henri Rousseau, now twenty-four years old, secured a job with the city of Paris as a toll collector, a position which was considered second-class. Shortly thereafter, Rousseau began a courtship with fifteen-year old Clemence Boitard who eventually became his first wife. The couple was blessed with at least four children, although some authorities say they had as many as nine. Tuberculosis was on the rise at the time and claimed the lives of many of their children. Clemence lost her life in 1888, affecting Rousseau

deeply. Josephine Noury became Rousseau's second wife in 1899 but died four years later.

Rousseau was a government employee in Paris for twenty-five years. While the pay was low, this position permitted some free time for Rousseau to pursue his interests as a painter. He secured a permit from the national museums to study and sketch works on exhibit. He was able to show some of his work at non-juried salons around 1886 where his efforts were received favorably. By 1894, Rousseau's unorthodox style had begun to receive recognition and positive reviews, although he was always limited to outsider status since he lacked formal training as a painter.

Rousseau retired from his government employment in 1894 so he could pursue painting full-time. In doing so, he subjected himself and his family to poverty and accumulated debts. He picked up a few part-time jobs but he could never get ahead. In desperation, he agreed to join a friend's embezzlement scheme. Taking the bulk of the blame, Rousseau served jail time again. His early release was credited to friends who testified to Rousseau's naiveté, resulting in pity from the judge. The humiliation would remain with Rousseau for the duration of his life.

Although his work was seen as a curiosity, it grew in recognition. Among those who took a particular interest in him was the noted Pablo Picasso. Rousseau's final works included a number of scenes inspired by the jungle. Rousseau linked his interest in jungle life to his time spent in Mexico during the war—although there is no proof of such service. Others link his inspiration to illustrated books of exotic locations in the tropics. Visits to the Botanical Gardens and zoo in Paris were also probable inspirations. These jungle scenes, which always included an animal or person, became the trademark for Henri Rousseau. He considered these "portrait landscapes" since the figure (or animal) and the landscape are of equal importance.

Henri Rousseau succumbed to blood poisoning from a leg wound and died on September 2, 1910, at the age of sixty-six in a Paris hospital. He died a pauper and was buried in a mass grave with his funeral attended by only a few friends. One year later Rousseau's friend Robert Delaunay paid to have his body moved to a more respectful location in Paris. It was only after his death that his paintings became coveted. Henri Rousseau had hoped his paintings would hang in the Louvre. This became a reality. For a painter to rise from the working class with no formal training in art and capture the eyes of noted current artists with his individual style was quite an accomplishment! Rousseau held his own among those who were trained in impressionism, post-impressionism, fauvism or cubism and was confident enough in

Discipline-Based Art Education

The following components are integral to students having a complete, well rounded art experience.

Art Aesthetics

Providing opportunities to develop perception and appreciation of visually expressed ideas and experiences.

Art Production

Providing opportunities to develop skills and techniques for creative visual expressions of emotions and ideas.

Art History

Providing opportunities to develop an understanding of the visual arts as a basic component of personal heritage.

Art Criticism

Providing an opportunity to develop an intellectual basis for analyzing and making aesthetic judgments based on an understanding of visual ideas and experiences.

ELEMENTS OF ART

- Line: A continuous mark
- Shape: Area enclosed by a line
- Color: Hue, reflection of light.
- Texture: Surface quality, real or implied
- Form: 3D shape or illusion of 3D
- Value: Graduated areas of light/dark
- Space: Illusion of depth

PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN

- Repetition: Imagery repeating pattern
- Variety: Contrast/variation
- Rhythm: Issues of eye movement
- Balance: Even visual weight
- Emphasis/Economy: Dominance/minimalism
- Proportion: Compare size relationships

COMPOSITION

- Symmetrical: Mirrored imagery
- Asymmetrical: Random placement
- Radial: Mirror image from center point
- Repetition: Repeating pattern, motif

ARTISTIC STYLES

- Realism: Realistic representation
- Abstraction: Personal interpretation
- Non-Objective: No recognizable depiction

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN IN PICTURE BOOKS

Children's literature that relate to this lesson due to elements of art or story content are:

- *Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest* by Lynne Cherry
- *Henri Rousseau: Dream of the Jungle* by Werner Schmalenbach
- *Henri Rousseau's Jungle Book* by Doris Kutschbach
- *The Jungle Book: The Classic Tale* by Graham C. Barrett and Rudyard Kipling
- *Tigers at Twilight* by Mary Pope Osborne

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his unique style to avoid the trends of the time.

About the Art

Tiger in a Tropical Storm was painted in 1891, oil on canvas, 51 1/8" x 63 3/4." It is the property of The National Gallery in London, UK. *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* is also referred to as *Surprise!*

Henri Rousseau was known for his jungle scenes and the interest in this genre was shared by the general public. The French were fascinated by exotic places as a direct result of French colonial expansion. *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* was Rousseau's first jungle scene. He waited thirteen years before painting another one. This painting was first exhibited at the 1891 Salon des Independants.

Tiger in a Tropical Storm reveals a tiger in a jungle setting thick with exotic tropical plants. Rich colors, shapes, and lines are bending and swaying with the movement of the wind. The fierce tiger with its sharp teeth exposed is focused on the prey, out of sight of the viewer. The tiger's stance combined with the threatening storm represents both the tension and thrill of the exotic. A sense of space shows as one looks through the layers of plants to the distant sky. Leaves are generally painted flat with just a few twists. Some critics felt the flatness of Rousseau's imagery was childlike and unsophisticated while others appreciated this quality. Nonetheless, Rousseau's work connected with viewers on an emotional level.

Directed Observation

Show students an image of *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* and tell them it was painted by Henri Rousseau in 1891. Invite students to quietly study the work. After some time for thinking, encourage students to share what they see. Welcome all comments. The following questions are provided to help students use art vocabulary to talk about the work.

1. Describe the setting in this painting. How is this setting similar to or different from where you live? (You may need to expand the discussion into plant and animal life as well as weather conditions.)
2. Describe how and identify where Rousseau uses colors, shapes, and lines.
3. What action is taking place? How does Rousseau paint action? How does the thunder-cracking, wind-blowing, rain-falling and tiger hunting make you feel? Choose an emotion that makes you feel uneasy (fear, uncertainty, confusion, for example). What scene would you paint to give an uneasy feeling?
4. Rousseau was adept at layering his paint-

ings. Study *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* and describe the background, mid-ground, and foreground areas.

5. Compare and contrast *Tiger in a Tropical Storm* with other paintings of Rousseau.
6. Henri Rousseau chose a life of poverty so he could paint. While he and his family gave up a lot, we all benefit by the great paintings he created for us. How do you think artists find time to create their art and make money to pay the bills?

Things to Do

1. Using crayons, markers or colored pencils, color a scene "Rousseau-style." Remember to use bold colors and outline the shapes to make them stand out.
2. Visit local Botanical Gardens and sketch some interesting plants. Be sure to capture colors, shapes, textures, and lines observed in each plant.
3. Visit a local zoo and sketch animals you see. Try to capture the animals in both a resting and action position. Look for colors, shapes, textures, forms and lines observed in the animals and include them in your drawings.
4. Refer to your sketches and create a "Henri Rousseau style" painting or drawing. Lightly sketch the back of the scene—that which is in the distance. Add layers of plant life in the background and mid-ground. Place an animal or person somewhere in the mid-ground. Finish with a layer of plants in the foreground.
5. Write a story about your picture.
6. Similar to the above suggestion, use your sketches of plants and animals and create a 3D diorama using a small shoe box.
7. Substitute the jungle scene for something in your own environment—country, city, or suburbia. Use the same bold colors, shapes and lines as Rousseau used.
8. Rousseau was credited for developing his own style—different from everyone else. Can you think of a new style for painting? Create a work of art using your unique style. Name your style. Present your art work and explain the new style's name.
9. Rousseau created portrait landscapes—something or someone in front of a favorite location. Draw yourself, someone you know or your favorite animal in front of your favorite location.
10. Identify your favorite animal and study its facial characteristics. Use a PAPER grocery bag for mask-making. Put the PAPER bag over your head to indicate where to place eyes, then cut out eye holes. Paint the animal's facial characteristics on the bag. Add construction paper for other features as ears or whiskers. Wear it!