



A Closer Look: Cecilia Beaux



Cecilia Beaux (1855–1942), *Victory Bearing Away the Infant Future*, 1921.
Oil on canvas. Museum purchase, 2010. [#2011.10]

Look closely at the painting. Respond to the questions below.

What do you see?

What do you think is happening in this painting?

What do you wonder about?

Writing prompt: The woman in this painting looks determined. I am determined to...

Teacher Notes

Cecilia Beaux (1855–1942) was born to wealthy parents in Philadelphia, but after the death of her mother in childbirth and the subsequent departure of her father to his native France, she was functionally an orphan. Beaux was raised by her maternal grandmother and two single aunts. All of them worked and were self-supporting, as she would need to become. One aunt was the artist Catherine Ann Drinker (1841–1922), who became a role model for Beaux. At the age of sixteen, Beaux began formal art studies with Drinker and subsequently got her professional start painting children’s portraits in watercolor on Chinese porcelain. By 1895, she was appointed the first full-time woman faculty member at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where she taught drawing, painting and portraiture for the next twenty years. Beaux first came to Cape Ann to visit Ellen Day Hale and Gabrielle de Veaux Clements in Lanesville. She stayed at the Fairview Inn in East Gloucester in the 1880s and subsequently built a summerhouse, “Green Alley,” on the magnificent and exclusive Eastern Point in 1905.

Cecilia Beaux painted this larger-than-life-size work in 1921 for installation in Gloucester’s American Legion Hall. It was commissioned by Eastern Point resident A. Piatt Andrew and depicts Victory, the Winged Goddess, spiriting away to safety an infant wrapped in French, British and American flags. In the background are images depicting scenes from World War I, including an American doughboy, a cannon and a cemetery.

Beaux was nearing the end of her career when she did this painting. She had recently returned from Europe, distraught by the lingering devastation she saw there. That dismay, coupled with her strong desire to salute her Eastern Point neighbors (Andrew and Henry Davis Sleeper), who had been actively involved in the war effort and instrumental in organizing Gloucester’s American Legion post, gave rise to this painting.

Harvard economist A. Piatt Andrew (1873-1936) had an exemplary career as a soldier, scholar and statesman. He served as an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, the founder and director of the American Ambulance Field Service during World War I, and a long-time congressman from Massachusetts. The A. Piatt Andrew Bridge that crosses the Annisquam River in Gloucester is named for him.

For more information, visit <http://www.capeannmuseum.org>.

Extensions

PreK–5 (ELA) What do you think is going on in this picture? Tell the story and use details from the painting to support your opinion.

6–8 (Visual Arts) The title *Victory Bearing Away the Infant Future* suggests Beaux relied on symbolism to create this painting. Make a list of the symbols you see and identify what they might represent.

9–12 (Social Studies) This is a response to World War I created by an American artist. Analyze the painting and make connections to the war and its aftermath.

Standards

Elementary School (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts and Literacy)

3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.

b. Provide reasons that support the opinion.

c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.

d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

Middle School (Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework: Visual Arts) Critical Response.

5.6 Demonstrate the ability to describe the kinds of imagery used to represent subject matter and ideas, for example, literal representation, simplification, abstraction, or symbolism.

High School (Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks)

WHII.18 Summarize the major events and consequences of World War I. (H, E)



A Closer Look: Katharine Weems



Katharine Lane Weems (1899–1989), *Rabbit*, no date. Cast stone.
Gift of Walker Hancock, 1989. [#2623]

Look closely at the sculpture. Respond to the questions below.

What do you see?

What do you think is happening in this sculpture?

What do you wonder about?

Writing prompt: A rabbit's ability to freeze is its defense strategy. I protect myself by...

Teacher Notes

Katharine Lane Weems came to Gloucester at age nineteen to study with Anna Hyatt Huntington in Annisquam. She was born Katharine Ward Lane to a wealthy Manchester zoology professor and his wife. Her father was also president of the board of trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts. Not surprisingly, given her exposure to her father's interests, Weems is best known for her sculptures of animals. She received an elite education for women and, with Huntington's encouragement, went on to study with Charles Grafly at the Boston Museum School.

Weems lived and worked most of her life in Manchester. She was a friend of the artists who followed Grafly's legacy in Lanesville and Rockport, and with West Gloucester and Manchester artists as well.

Rabbit is modestly scaled, and the depicted animal is sedate. Weems studied her animals either in homes or zoos and did not seem interested in their wild side, the side to which Anna Hyatt Huntington was attracted. The blockiness of *Rabbit*, the curves, and stylized and simplified forms, are Art Deco in style and Modernist in feel. Because of the surface and texture of the stone, the rabbit has a softness and an inviting quality.

For more information, visit <http://www.capeannmuseum.org>.

Extensions

PreK–5 (Science) Rabbits are indigenous to North America. Explore how rabbits interact with their environment.

6–8 (Social Studies) The rabbit is one of twelve animals in the Chinese Zodiac. What does the rabbit symbolize? Discover the origin of the Chinese Zodiac and explain what it means to the people of China.

9–12 (Visual Arts) This rabbit was cast out of stone. Using the rabbit as the subject, create a series of works that explore other mediums and techniques.

Standards

Elementary School (Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework)

2-LS2-3(MA). Develop and use models to compare how plants and animals depend on their surroundings and other living things to meet their needs in the places they live.

2-LS4-1. Use texts, media, or local environments to observe and compare (a) different kinds of living things in an area, and (b) differences in the kinds of living things living in different types of areas.

Middle School (Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum)

Grade 6 North and East Asia Optional Topics for Study: Describe the major ethnic and religious groups in East Asia (G,H,E)

High School (Massachusetts Arts Curriculum Framework)

1.11 Explore a single subject through a series of works, varying the medium or technique.



Katharine Lane Weems working in her studio in Manchester (detail). Photograph by Nathan Benn, 1978. Copyright Nathan Benn.

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Katharine Weems, *Grey Fox*, 1971. Bronze.