

Art Appreciation



AMERICAN GOTHIC

PAINTED 1930

*GRANT WOOD
1891-1942*

Today in Art Appreciation your child learned about the painting “American Gothic” by Regionalist artist Grant Wood. Grant Wood was from the Midwest, born in Iowa, studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, traveled Europe to study painting, and later taught at the University of Iowa.

“American Gothic” was completed in 1930 after taking 3 months to paint. Wood entered it into a contest at the Art Institute of Chicago, where it won the contest and was sold to the Institute for \$300. The portrait is meant to portray a farmer and his daughter (although many believe it’s a couple). The models were actually Wood’s 30 year old sister and the family’s 62 year old dentist. Some viewers have felt Wood was poking fun at rural life while others felt it was a celebration of it and its people. It has been parodied in pop culture with many different faces or different outfits to display the current times.

Throughout his works, Wood often displays an optimistic, hopeful vision of America. Yet many of his works were completed during the Great Depression, during an American period of history that was not full of hope.

Other well known works by Grant Wood are “Daughters of the American Revolution”, “Appraisal”, “Woman with Plants”, “Moonlight Ride of Paul Revere”, and “Young Corn”. He did both portraits and landscapes. His landscapes often give an impression of rolling and curvature that makes the viewer feel as if the painting is in motion.

We completed our own version of “American Gothic” by filling in a template where the kids could put in their own faces and clothing to create their own impression of their current times.