

Edward Hicks



The Peaceable Kingdom, 1833–1834
oil on canvas, 17 7/16 x 23 9/16 inches
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn

The Artist

Edward Hicks

Born Landhorne, PA, 1780; died Newtown, PA, 1849

Born during the American Revolutionary War, Edwards Hicks' family lost their wealth and prestige during the war. His mother died when he was two and because of his father's affiliation as a British loyalist, he had to send Edward to live with family friends on their farm in order to flee after the American Revolutionary War. At age 13, Hicks began an apprenticeship with a coach maker where he also learned to be a sign painter.

Unhappy with the rough company of coachmen, Hicks joined the Society of Friends in 1803 and became a well-respected Quaker preacher. He was a self-taught painter and struggled to combine his desire for artistic expression and the strict religious beliefs of the Quaker faith, which demanded simplicity in every aspect of life. Hicks still painted coaches, signs, and furniture to support his wife and children. He never considered artwork important and often gave paintings to friends. When Hicks passed away, more than 3000 people attended his funeral, recognizing him as a preacher, not an artist.

Art Movement

Folk Art

Folk Art does not come out of the fine art tradition. Folk artists are typically from rural or pre-industrial societies, and are more closely related to craftsmen than they are to fine artists. Generally, artists of this style have little to no formal training in art. Folk art is characterized by a naive style, in which traditional rules of proportion and perspective are not employed. Closely related terms are Outsider Art, Self-Taught Art, and Naive Art.

The Artwork

The Peaceable Kingdom

Hick's painted more than one hundred different versions of the *Peaceable Kingdom*. The painting represents the biblical passage from Isaiah 11:6, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together and a little child shall lead them." In some versions, Hicks included a background theme of peace and harmonious coexistence.

Discussion Suggestions

Discuss the Painting:

- *Why did Hicks show all the animals living together?*
- *Name all the different animals you can find in the painting.*
- *Where do you see overlapping shapes?*
- *Where do you see patterns?*
- *Where do you see different textures?*
- *Which animals seem the most important? Why?*
- *Read the poem Hicks wrote, located on the first page in the blue binder, ask the students to study the painting while you read it aloud.*

Activity Idea

Peaceable Kingdom Drawing:

- Explain that they will be creating their own peaceable kingdom. Brainstorm about what kind of animals the student could draw. Write them on the board.
- Have students write their name and room # on the back of the paper.
- Using a ruler, create a 1" border around the paper, then draw a pattern within the border.
- Using a pencil, draw various animals in the scene.
- Trace over the pencil marks using a black fine tip marker. Don't forget to trace the border and pattern.
- Once everything is outline in black the students can start coloring using oil pastels.
- Color the pattern in the border, emphasizing the use of "natural" colors found in nature.
- When the students are done have them title their artwork. Write the title on a label sticker and place it on the back of their work.

Materials Needed:

- Ruler
- Pencils
- Black fine tip markers
- Oil pastels
- White drawing paper- 9" x 9"