

Frederic Remington



The Scout, 1902-1905,
oil on canvas, 27 x 40,
Sterling and Francine Clark Institute,
Williamstown, Massachusetts



The Stempede, 1908,
oil on canvas,
Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa

The Artist

Frederic Remington

Born Canton, New York, 1861, Ridgefield, Connecticut, 1909.

From an early age the Old West, Native Americans, soldiers, and cowboys fascinated Frederic Remington. He briefly studied drawing at the Yale School of Fine Arts from 1878-79, this was the only formal training that Remington had during his life. Remington traveled extensively all over the West in his youth, and he developed many sketches during his travels. He later turned these sketches into paintings when he returned. Around 1886, Remington started a career as an illustrator of Western themes and ideals. His work was included in many large magazines, including Harper's Weekly. He worked not only as an illustrator and painter, but also as a sculptor, and a author. After 1900, his painting style became looser with bright colors and dramatic lighting leaning toward impressionism. By the end of his life, he had over 3,000 drawings and paintings, 22 bronze sculptures, a novel, a Broadway play, and more than 100 articles and stories with his own illustrations. Remington died in 1909 at the height of his career.

Art Movement

American Realism

Frederic Remington portrayed the Old West the way it really was, which is the main point of American Realism, to depict the contemporary lifestyle of everyday ordinary people. He accurately portrayed the conditions of the West through his use of colors and brush strokes, and became a master at painting horses. Remington's artwork immortalized the image of the West in the minds of Americans as a place of individualism, stoic heroism, and independence.

The Artwork

The Scout: Friends of Foes?

A Native American looks out into the horizon while simultaneously being in communication with nature. You can see the look of wondering on the Native's face as he is looking for others in the distance. Remington shows the Native American facing the new intruders into his land, asking himself whether they are there to harm or come in peace. This piece forms a question rather than tell you the answer, which is typical of Remington's style. The tension in the painting is across the Native American's face and his horse as they are facing away from the viewer and into the unknown.

Discussion Suggestions

Talk about what you see in the painting:

- *Looking at the painting, how does Remington portray the scenery?*
- *Studying the horse, what makes it so realistic?*
- *What is the scout waiting for?*
- *How does Remington communicate feeling of tension and drama that is on the horizon?*

Activity Idea

Draw a Horse's Head (Worksheet located in this folder.):

- Start with a Triangle.
- Add circle for the cheek, a rectangle for the face, and add a curving arch for neck.
- Add the eye (a semicircle with a pointy hat shape).
- "Cut off" the corners of the rectangle to make the nose.
- Add the bump of the chin and draw nostrils and mouth.
- Add an s-curve for the throat and a long mane and draw the ears.
- Remember to erase your working lines and fix any bits you don't like. Strengthen the drawing with a firm pencil or pen.

Materials Needed:

- Paper
- Colored pencils, crayons, and markers to color in the horse's head
- Pencils
- Pen