

***The Victorian, North Salt Lake City, LeConte Stewart***

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In the tradition of the French impressionist artists, LeConte Stewart created plein air paintings, painting outside and capturing the light as he saw it in the moment.

LeConte preferred to paint the seasons of late autumn, winter, and early spring because of the subtle shifts in color. “The spectacular is not for me...I like the subtle and introspective—those things you peer into, and feel.”(1) Though he studied across the country, including at the Art Students League in New York and the Pennsylvania Acade-

my of Fine Arts, Stewart chose to return to Utah and paint the landscapes and cities of his home state.(2)

In this painting, Stewart captures the beauty of a home on a hill, seemingly separated from the rest of the landscape. In the 1920s Victorian architecture was swiftly becoming replaced by the more geometric, less ornamental forms of Modernism. This painting, as with later American Regionalist paintings such as *American Gothic* by Grant Wood, acknowledges the stylistic sophistication present in small-town America.

1. Davis, Robert O. *Desert, Brush, and Oil: A Portrait of LeConte Stewart*. Ensign. Feb 1985. Salt Lake City, UT. 2. Utah Artists Project. J. Willard Marriott Library. University of Utah.

2. <https://www.lib.utah.edu/collections/utah-artists/UAP-LeConte-Stewart.php> Accessed 21 Oct 2019.

LeConte Stewart (1891-1990), American  
**The Victorian, North Salt Lake City, 1927**  
Oil on masonite  
Gift of Marilyn H. Hite in memory of Mattie  
Wattis and William H. Harris  
UMFA1979.035

## ***Bingham Mine, Jonas Lie***

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In *Bingham Mine*, Norwegian-born artist(1) Jonas Lie paints a view of what was then, and still is, one of the largest open-pit mines in the world.(2)

Unlike other artists of the same period, such as LeConte Stewart, who used a wide range of subtle colors to capture the intricate variations in the light, Jonas Lie chose to use a limited color scheme for his painting. The painting is divided into a series of gray and white shapes represent-

ing the different levels of the open pit mine. Breaking these geometric patterns are dark gray cloud forms rising up from random points of nearly every level of the mine.

While the art of Stewart might be said to evoke a sublime or haunting beauty in the landscape, Lie's painting has little such effect. The dreary tones of his painting, combined with the geometric simplicity with which he has divided the mountain, suggest a bleak view of the industrial age where the beauty of nature has been sacrificed in favor of the polluting technology spread across the canvas.

Many of Lie's other paintings illustrate the harsh contrast between the beauty of nature and the cold imposition of steel and concrete upon that environment.

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonas\\_Lie\\_\(painter\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonas_Lie_(painter))

2. NASA Earth Observatory. <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/8144/bingham-canyon-mine-utah>  
Accessed 21 Oct 2019.

Jonas Lie (1880-1940), American  
**Bingham Mine**, 1917  
Oil on canvas  
Purchased with funds from the Phyllis  
Cannon Wattis Endowment for Modern and  
Contemporary Art  
UMFA2009.1.1

## ***Regional Aesthetics for Kids***

Roger Whiting

### **Overview**

Students will learn about American Regionalism as well as many of its preceding art movements. They will then use this knowledge to create a regional chalk painting of their own.

### **Objectives**

Teachers and students will:

1. Compare and contrast aesthetic values between late 19th and early 20th century art movements in Europe and America.
2. View examples of paintings from the American regionalists of the 1930s and 1940s and discuss how those examples differ from preceding and later examples of regional depictions of life and culture.
3. Learn basic techniques for painting with chalk pastels.
4. Create an original chalk pastel painting about a local place or culture.

**Intended Audiences/Grade Levels** 7-8 (adaptable to higher or lower grades)

**State Core Links** (see State Core Links at the end of this lesson plan)

**Duration** 75 - 90 minutes, easily split into two classes if necessary

### **Materials**

1. Image of *The Victorian, North Salt Lake City*, LeConte Stewart, UMFA1979.035
2. Image of *Bingham Mine*, Jonas Lie, UMFA2009.1.1
3. Chalk pastels
4. Erasers (white or kneaded preferred)
5. Gray or other toned paper, preferably with some tooth/texture
6. Blending stumps (optional – paper towels make for a low-cost substitute)

### **Vocabulary/Key Terms**

**Sublime** An overwhelming feeling gained from the relational experience with something's strength of grandeur, magnitude or intensity.

**Impressionism** Developed in France in the 19th Century, generally painting outside and depicting reality through light and color.

**Social Realism** Realist artworks with a social or political comment

**Regionalism** An American art movement that focused on rural life in the Midwest

### **Essential Questions**

1. What does "realistic" mean to you?

2. Why do paintings about a local culture and place appeal to people from far away?

### **Activity**

#### ***Part 1: Introduction (5 minutes)***

- Post the essential questions during class gathering time.
- Once the class is ready, give them an additional couple minutes to reflect on the questions and invite a couple students to answer.

#### ***Lecture, group instruction (15 minutes)***

- Secondary grades: Share examples of American regionalism using the artwork background information
- For younger grades: *American Gothic: The Life of Grant Wood* by Susan Wood 2017. Abrams, New York ISBN: 9781419725333 is a precise summary of American Regionalism in comparison to other aesthetic traditions.

#### ***Technique Practice (10 minutes)***

Pass out chalk pastels and model each of the following techniques. Give students time after each modeling exercise to repeat on a paper of their own

- Gradient fade between two colors by blending the chalk with a blending stump
- Gradient fade between two colors by blending using a hatching technique
- Layering of colors on top of each other by using concentric squares

#### ***Group Brainstorming (5 minutes)***

- Explain to the students that each of them will be doing a chalk painting about their own local culture and place.
- Explain that regional can apply to a broad area, such as a state, or to somewhere as hyper-local as a household.
- List the following words on the board, and ask students to help brainstorm things that would be good representations of each: State, City, Neighborhood, Family

#### ***Individual Brainstorming, sketching (5 minutes)***

- Invite the students to either choose something from the list, or to brainstorm on their own how they would depict their local culture.
- Give 5 minutes for the students to draw a doodle of what their final painting might look like.

#### ***Part 2: Independent Work (30 - 45 minutes)***

- With the remaining time in class (for longer classes), or on the following work day (for shorter classes) have students use their preparatory sketch as a model for creating a finished chalk pastel painting based on their local culture and place.
- For students who finish early, invite them to either create an additional painting based on the topic at hand, or to create an original chalk painting of whatever they would like to paint.

**Part 3: Conclusion (5 minutes)**

- Clean up.
- Return to the two essential questions and have the students share if and how their opinions on those questions might have changed because of the lesson.

**Universal Design for Learning**

<https://www.kurzweilededu.com/udl-three-principles-p4.html>

*Recognition*

- Provide lecture notes for students who would prefer to read along with the lecture
- Provide coloring page for students who would rather not sit still during lecture

*Expression*

- Have nitrile gloves and baby wipes available for students who have adverse sensory stimuli in response to the feel of chalk pastel.
- Have clipboards and/or cardboard panels available for students for whom painting a vertically is preferable
- Have multiple sizes of paper available

*Affective*

- Allow for students to create paintings based on very specific information about their local culture, such as their friends and family
- Allow for imaginative students to invent a culture and place that does not actually exist.

**State Core Links**

**Secondary Visual Arts**

*Standard 7–8.V.R.2: Explain how a person’s aesthetic choices are influenced by culture and environment.*

*Standard 7–8.V.CO.4: Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity.*