

Telling Stories: Selections from the Permanent Collection
Visitor Stories

Telling Stories: Selections from the Permanent Collection presents key works from the museum's permanent collection. This exhibition differs from most at Tacoma Art Museum because we are inviting our visitors to share their impressions of what part of the story the artist is telling. The visitor labels will be added and changed throughout the exhibition. Below is a sampling of visitor-written labels.

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Martha Parrish Bush

Born Chicago, Illinois, 1963

Dangle-Twisty, 1995

Crocheted yarn

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Ben and Aileen Krohn



The little octopus hadn't wanted a sweater for Christmas, let alone a cream-colored one. But the whole family of octopuses was these, even a few cousin squids, so he had to try it on. The itchy wool clung and scraped at his tentacles. The family of octopuses and cousin squids all "ooohed" and "ahhed" until bubbles filled the room. The little octopus suddenly found he couldn't breathe, and the more he moved the worse it got. Finally, he gathered his tentacles around him and screamed, "Who are you people?!" But the other octopuses just blinked and moved on to the next present.

Bond Huberman
City Arts Magazine
Seattle, Washington

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Claire Cowie

Born Charlotte, North Carolina, 1975

Sky Village, 2005

Watercolor

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of James and Judy Wagonfeld and William and Lisa Holderman



The story to me is setting the scene. It shows a quiet tree, just standing over the little village. It's been there for years, maybe 50 or 100; no one knows. But in all the time that the tree has stood, it has always watched and listened to the people there. In the summer it kept the young boy and his friend cool. Its bright leaves drifted down to land ever so lightly on the ground. In the winter, a drafty wind blows through its spindly branches, which are now devoid of leaves. It waits patiently for spring to come, waiting for the first touches of spring.

Audre Bennett

Student, Lake Washington Girls Middle School
Seattle, Washington

We just had three days of snow, which now has melted. This watercolor reminds me of the melting, dripping snow. In the higher regions the snow is still remaining with its white mantle over the village, quiet, pristine; whereas in the foreground in the lower areas we already see the color re-emerging from beneath the white. Life is awakening here while in the upper village all is still quiet, contemplative.

Karen Morris

Docent, Tacoma Art Museum

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Claire Cowie

Born Charlotte, North Carolina, 1975

Villagers on Horse, 2005

Cast urethane, gesso, and watercolor

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of the Vascovitz Family



What could capture our attention so avidly that we ignore our melting sherbet ice cream hats and our pretzel sticks, which we clutch so greedily? What is more interesting than these delectables? We are ignorant people and we perform innocent deeds. We find wonder in everything.

Evan Austin

11th Grade, Curtis High School

University Place, Washington

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Steve Davis

Born Sacramento, California, 1957

Jared, Green Hill from the series ***Captured Youth, 2000***

Archival inkjet print

Tacoma Art Museum, Museum purchase with funds from Ben and Aileen Krohn



Jared never wanted nothin' from nobody. His family lived in a trailer park near the industrial area of town until his father, and undocumented worker, was killed in a construction accident. After that, the family moved to a small apartment in the city, and his mom got a job at a gentlemen's club. He goes to a middle school where the teachers spend their days yelling and trying not to get shot, and he spends his selling and trying not to get caught. So far it's working, his family hasn't been late on rent in three months, and he's almost made enough for a new PlayStation 2. Mom needs the extra money, and doesn't ask too many questions. As far as she's concerned, he runs a lemonade stand, and business is good. Jared can't wait to see his older brother again—only three more months until the big parole hearing. He prays every day, and he knows God listens, because business is good.

Josh Finley
Student, The Evergreen State College
Olympia, Washington

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Henri Fantin-Latour

Born Grenoble, France, 1836

Died Buré, France, 1904

Mixed Flowers in a Vase, about 1880s

Oil on canvas

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. Hilding Lindberg

Two young people's lives were thrust upon each other. Their passion for life and how to live it brought them ever closer. Their feelings blossomed into fully-bloomed flowers. They needed sunlight and water but only stayed beautiful. The two's minds were dumbstruck by the flower's beauty. They continued to water them and leave them in the sunlight, only for the clouds to blot out the sky and the faucet to run dry. The ruby red roses faded to black. The brightest colors left only a dark spot in their hearts. The flowers, which once represented their true love, had given their lives to an eternity of oblivion. The two young people were slowly torn apart, never to love again.

While the remnants of dead flowers remain, they may never be brought back to life. The two lovers could only hope for the opposite concerning their destiny...together.

Brandon Kinne

12th Grade, Graham-Kapowsin High School

Graham, Washington

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Joseph Park

Born Ottawa, Canada, 1964

Chess, 2001

Oil on canvas

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of David Lewis in honor of Clinton Williams,
Donald Williams, Eileen Lewis, and Jane Ramm



Chinese bunny people playing some kind of game. Even though the title is *Chess*, it is not. This shows that it is a trick. The game looks similar to *Go* or *Parcheesi*. It shows people being thoughtful and placing the move carefully, like they know what will happen next. It shows children developing and learning. This shows how people develop. I think they made their bunnies to draw the attention toward other elements.

Julia Delaney

4th Grade, University Child Development School
Seattle, Washington

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Camille Pissarro

Born St. Thomas, Danish Virgin Islands, 1830

Died Paris, France, 1903

Darse de pêche, Dieppe, matin, temps gris [*The Fishing Port, Dieppe, Morning, Overcast Sky*], 1902

Oil on canvas

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. Hilding Lindberg

It's early spring, rain has ceased and the air is freshly washed. The sharp acrid aroma of fermented fish and the oily stench of smoke belching from the smokestack pierce the senses like vinegar on lettuce.

Eager fish-mongers have gathered on the quay and are already arguing good-naturedly with the fisherman over the price of their catch. Curious onlookers eavesdrop as they stroll along.

A fishing smack (boat) has raised its sails and as the wind is slight, must depend mostly on the tide to slip out past the stone pier into the bay. The helmsman is swinging and the slatting canvas beats time.

I feel as though I am on the slopes of the hill the village clings to and am looking forward to a lunch of grilled pickled herring and boiled potatoes slathered with butter and parsley.

David Mercer

Artist

Bremerton, Washington

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Frederic Remington and Roman Bronze Works, New York
Born Canton, New York, 1861
Died Ridgefield, Connecticut, 1909
The Bronco Buster [small version], 1895, cast 1917–18
Bronze, no. 202 from an unknown edition
Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Hilding Lindberg

He looked upon the stallion with great admiration. What a challenge it would be to tame that wild steed. He smirked, "I will tame you, horse," he declared. The mustang flicked his ears and snorted contemptuously at the man. "You can try," the horse replied, "but you will not succeed." The stallion stood tall and held his handsome head high, daring the man to mount his back. The man took in a last deep breath and approached the horse. "I will tame you," he promised, running a sweaty hand along the stallion's rusty red coat. Both creatures braced themselves for what would come next. Brown eyes met black and the man swung his boot up and over the stallion's back. Nostrils flared, the horse reared, and the game began.

Jordan Johnson
9th Grade, Auburn High School

A western man has captured the beauty of horse and man-working as one. He has captured motion, so real at to feel the power of pounding hoofs and the cry of the rider.

Catherine Anzovino
Retired Social Worker
University Place, Washington

The mustang rears, hooves flailing into the empty air. The rope whipping high as the cowboy shouts in exhilaration, short whip being brought down across the stallion's hindquarters. Trumpeting defiance, the horse's hind hooves lashing out behind, eyes thick with anger and tongue lolling out over the rope, a makeshift bridal.

Jacqueline Hendrickson
Kopachuck Middle School
Gig Harbor

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Pierre Auguste Renoir

Born Limoges, France, 1841

Died Cagnes-sur-Mer, France, 1919

Têtes de deux jeunes filles [also known as *The Two Sisters*], 1890

Oil on canvas

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. Hilding Lindberg

An unobserved moment of sisters sharing confidences, as shown by the closeness of their heads and their appearance of being totally oblivious to their surroundings. They are caught up in a moment of intimacy in the telling of a special secret as only young girls can do when confiding in each other in such a private way. There is so much harmony to this composition; the absence of sharp lines and aggressive colors, and the use of soft muted tones, draws us into the nature of the relationship between sisters who are close as “best friends.”

Bonnie H. Gallagher
Collection Manager
Chihuly at Union Station

Two sisters playing in a garden while their mother entertains guests for afternoon tea. They are running, skipping, and jumping, playing their childhood games. When all of the sudden, one of the sisters stumbles and sees something glinting in the grass. The girl crawls over to it and picks it up. It is a small, round, yellow stone. The girl carries it over to her sister and they sit down to look at it. In the stone’s shining depths the girls both see different things. One sees visions of grandeur and lovely parties and wealth. The other sees visions of despair and loneliness. Then both girls wonder, silently to themselves the same thing...“can this stone tell the future?”

Connor Hill
Student, Stadium High School
Tacoma, Washington

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Katsukawa Shunko

Born Edo (now Tokyo), Japan, 1743

Died Edo (now Tokyo), Japan, 1812

Actor Ichikawa Danjuro V as High Ranking Samurai, about 1780

Woodblock print

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. James W. Lyon

Once upon a time there was a great Japanese warrior. His duty was to defend his town from evil spirits, but first he had to train and learn the samurai ways. He had to master all sorts and styles of the combat arts. It took many years to succeed in learning the samurai way, but he did it. Days passed and he prepared for his duty. He got as many weapons and armor as he could. Then he was ready, many years passed and he fulfilled his duty.

Owen McRenolds

6th Grade, Kopachuck Middle School

Gig Harbor, Washington

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Jeffrey Simmons

Born Cincinnati, Ohio, 1968

Eulalia, 1998

Oil and alkyd on linen

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Rebecca and Alexander Stewart



There once was a tree that no one could cut down. Then one day all the woodsmen in the forest came and cut it down. But the next day the tree was there again. So all of the men gathered and cut it down yet again. And sure enough, there it was the next day. This carried on for a year until finally the woodsmen's axes dissolved into nothing from the endless chopping every day. Then all the men gave up and took up farming and other such things. And to this day, none of the men that tried to cut down that sacred tree in the first place have ever even touched a butter knife, let alone an axe, ever again.

Zack Aemmer

5th Grade, Dieringer Heights Elementary

Lake Tapps, Washington

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Michael Spafford

Born Palm Springs, California, 1935

Laocoön and Sea Snakes, 1989

Oil, acrylic, and collage on canvas

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of the Aloha Club



It's true that no good deed goes unpunished. You try and try and try to warn people that Greeks don't give giant horse sculptures as gifts without some kind of catch. And how do I get repaid? Turned out of the city! C'mon, sons, we're not wanted here. Hey! Where'd all these snakes come from?!?

Debra Hurt
Energy Kinesiologist
Ashland, Oregon

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Gilbert Stuart

Born Kingstown, Rhode Island, 1755

Died Boston, Massachusetts, 1828

David Hinckley, about 1814

Oil on panel

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. L. T. Murray, Sr. in memory of Mr. L. T. Murray, Sr.

An earnest man, a man who makes something, who can fix his gaze on an idea or concept and build it. He looks as though he has just turned toward you and listens with his attention focused but his eyes slightly undirected. He has a well-tied necktie and sharp coat, but seems indifferent to his hair. He has the slightly ruddy complexion of an active man. He seems slow to anger. His left eye, especially, looks out with a ready attention like he is both seeing in his mind what you described and is about to look at you more closely for more information.

Chris Vondrasek
Woodworker
Seattle, Washington

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Barbara Earl Thomas

Born Seattle, Washington, 1948

The Storm Watch, 1988

Egg tempera on paper

Tacoma Art Museum, Gift of Carol I. Bennett



They can hold on to each other as they wait, as the gray clouds boil to full. The rain starts in and soaks their skin that does not yield its grip on the others. Clustered both in the air and on solid ground, each other's arms are the arms against the rain and wind. The soft words more comforting than an umbrella this lonely night. They cling to each other, all that the hurricane has not blown away, and all that will be there in the morning.

Lucille Salazar

9th Grade, Stadium High School

Tacoma, Washington

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