



The Sleeping Gypsy

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(Redirected from Sleeping Gypsy)

The Sleeping Gypsy or *La Bohémienne endormie* is an 1897 oil painting by French Naïve artist Henri Rousseau. The fantastical depiction of a lion musing over a sleeping woman on a moonlit night is one of the most recognizable artworks of modern times.

Rousseau first exhibited the painting at the 13th Salon des Indépendants, and tried unsuccessfully to sell it to the mayor of his hometown, Laval. Instead it entered the private collection of a Parisian charcoal merchant where it remained until 1924. In 1939 it was bought by Mr Simon Guggenheim who gave it to the New York Museum of Modern Art.

The painting has served as inspiration for poetry and music, and has been altered and parodied by various artists often with the lion replaced by a dog or other animal. In the *Simpsons* episode "Mom and Pop Art" Homer dreams of waking up in the artwork with the lion licking his head.

The Sleeping Gypsy



Artist	Henri Rousseau
Year	1897
Type	oil on canvas
Dimensions	129.5 cm × 200.7 cm (51.0 in × 79.0 in)
Location	Museum of Modern Art

External links

- *The Sleeping Gypsy* (<http://www.moma.org/collection/provenance/items/646.39.html>) MoMA Provenance Research
- *The Sleeping Gypsy* (http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?object_id=80172) in the MoMA Online Collection

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Categories: Modern paintings | 1897 paintings | Henri Rousseau paintings | Collection of the Museum of Modern Art

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so his paintings have a flat look to them. Also, Rousseau sometimes grouped together animals that would never be seen together in nature. In one painting, the bananas hang upside down from a tree.

There were some who liked Rousseau's paintings. For example, Picasso saw one of Rousseau's paintings being sold on the street as a junk canvas that could be painted over by a serious artist. Picasso bought the painting and then went to meet this ingenious artist.



After his death in 1910, Rousseau began to gain popularity and now his canvases hang in museums around the world.

[The paintings shown above are *The Sleeping Gypsy*, *Surprised!*, and *Tropical Forest with Monkeys*.]

Henri Rousseau

Henri Rousseau was a French painter, born in 1844. He wanted desperately to belong within the ranks of the traditional French Academy painters but it was not to be.



Rousseau was born to a poor family. His father's debts even caused the family to lose their home at one point. Rousseau served in the army for four years before going on to become a customs officer at the edge of Paris. He worked until he was 49, painting on the weekends, until he could retire and focus fully on his art. He taught painting lessons, performed as a street musician, and did other odd tasks to earn enough money to live as he painted.

He was completely self-taught and this showed in his work. He wanted to paint flawless, realistic works but a naivety, a simplicity, persisted that he couldn't shake. The traditionalist painters mocked him but he remained confident in his talent.



Rousseau's favorite subject was the jungle but he never actually saw a jungle. He based his scenery on the botanical gardens in Paris and the animals were drawn from guide books and zoo pamphlets. Some of his subjects he never saw in three dimensions

[Create Your Own Rousseau Jungle](#)

As you read yesterday, [Henri Rousseau](#) most liked to paint jungle scenes even though he had never been to a jungle or seen most of the animals up close. Rousseau's jungles are highly regarded today. You can make your own jungle scene just like Rousseau, regardless of whether you've seen a jungle yourself.

Supplies Needed:

Construction paper in green and blue

Magazines (such as landscaping, bird watching, and travel magazines)

Glue stick

Scissors

Gather your materials. Flip through your magazines and cut out pictures of trees, plants, and animals that you think you might find in a jungle. Be sure to get permission before you cut any magazines. Look at some of Rousseau's paintings, like the ones in this large [Rousseau gallery](#), for inspiration.

Tear a strip of green construction paper to create grass for your jungle. Glue it to the bottom of the blue sheet of paper (the sky).

Arrange your cut out trees and foliage, then add your animals. When you have created a jungle scene of your liking, glue down the magazine cutouts.

If you prefer to create a jungle that doesn't require any materials, [make your own Rousseau jungle online](#) at the National Gallery of Art Kids page. Please note that you will need Adobe Shockwave Player to create an online jungle. It is a quick download but again, get permission before you download anything.

HENRI ROUSSEAU FANTASY JUNGLE

Grade: 4-6

Age: 7-10

Submitted by [Rebecca Engelman](#), an art educator from Cathedral School in Bismark ND.

Objectives

- Students will discuss the life and artistic style of Henri Rousseau.
- Students will recognize and identify foreground, mid ground and back ground.
- Students will create a stylized drawing using simple shapes.
- Students will combine oil pastels to create value and depth.

What You Need:

- 12 x 15 scrap paper
- 12 x 15 white sulphate drawing paper
- permanent fine tip black marker
- oil pastels
- water colors



Student Work - Click to Enlarge

(use what supplies are available in class or that you are willing to purchase)

What You Do:

(achieve a project in the time you allowed by teacher, you don't have to extended it by days)

Step 1

1. Introduce your students to the life and art of Henri Rousseau.
2. Use available resources to give the students some background information on the artist.
3. Show the class prints of Rousseau's jungle-style paintings.
4. Discuss foreground, mid ground and background, warm and cool colors, and simple, stylized drawing, and repeating shapes.
5. Show the students where and how Rousseau used these concepts.
6. Discuss how Rousseau used resources around him (books, museums, gardens, etc.) and his imagination to create his paintings.

Step 2.

1. Give the students scrap paper and black markers to practice drawing their jungle scene.
2. Demonstrate the use of large, simple repeating shapes to create grass (foreground), flowers (mid ground), and trees (background).
3. Use horizon lines to create depth.
4. Point out the benefits of repeating a certain flower and/or color to "tie" their picture together.



Student Work - Click to Enlarge

5. Let the students add simple animals to their picture. Do they need a moon or a sun? Will their picture be warm or cool? Remind them to keep their shapes large and to avoid small details.
6. When they are satisfied with their "practice" paper. Let the students redraw their picture on good white drawing paper with a black permanent marker. No pencils!

Step 3. (Next Class)

1. Pass out oil pastels and demonstrate for the students how to use the oil crayons like paint.
2. Layer and blend the colors to create shading and depth.
3. Remind the students to repeat colors throughout their composition and to use the pastel in a heavy manner.
4. They may color the grass, flowers, trees, animals, sun and/or moon.
5. Do not color the background space.



Student Work - Click to Enlarge

Step 4. (Next Class)

1. Pass out watercolor paints, large watercolor brushes, and water containers.
2. Have the students moisten the blue, violet, green and yellow paint.
3. Students will begin painting by wetting the sky with clean water.
4. They can then use blue and/or violet to wash the sky.
5. Next, they may wet the grass or ground area with water and wash it using green and/or yellow and /or blue.



Artist Biography

Henri Rousseau was a French artist born in 1844, died in 1910. He was a self taught artist who often painted images of jungle scenes and animals. His work was almost always bright and colorful and he is best know for his Sleeping Gypsy painting of 1897.