



Samuel H. Kress Paintings

KIDS' GUIDE

WHAT'S A KRESS PAINTING?

The 10 Kress paintings at Fairfield University Art Museum were the first artworks we ever owned! In the early 1900s, these paintings belonged to a man named Samuel H. Kress. Mr. Kress made a lot of money with a chain of five-and-dime stores (kind of like dollar stores today), and loved to collect art. He owned more than 3,000 paintings and sculptures!

DO YOU COLLECT ANYTHING?

When Mr. Kress died in 1955, he donated all of his art to museums and universities across the country. The 10 paintings in our museum first wound up at the Bridgeport Museum of Art, Science and Industry. Later on, that museum was renamed the Discovery Museum, and focused just on science. Fairfield University asked for the 10 paintings, and they were stored in the campus library before our museum was opened in 2010.

The Kress paintings were all made in Europe between 1350 and 1800. They can help us learn about things like portraits, mythology, and religion, and what they meant to people in the past. Plus, they're fun to look at! We're grateful to Mr. Kress for his donation, and we're glad you're here today too!

VISITING THE MUSEUM

- Imagine!
What would these things smell like?
Sound like?
Feel like?

- Look closely!
Can you spot any small details?



- Sketch!
There's a space in this guide to draw your favorite piece

- Pose! Can you imitate the poses you see?

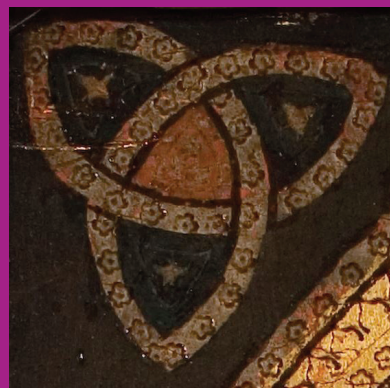
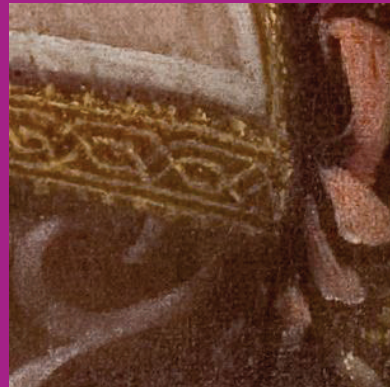
- Ask! What do you want to know more about?

Here are some more tips:

- Take as many photos as you want! Please make sure the flash is off on your phone or camera (bright lights hurt the art).
- Be careful not to touch. This keeps our art (and you) safe.
- Please don't eat or drink in the galleries! This helps keep out bugs and makes sure our art is never accidentally splashed.
- Please don't run in the galleries!
- Most important: Have fun!

SCAVENGER HUNT

These **DETAILS** are hiding in our Kress paintings.
Can you find them?



PORTRAITS



What is a portrait? A **portrait** is a representation of a person. Some portraits try to show just what the person looked like. They may also capture the person's personality and character. The person in the portrait is usually the one who paid the artist to make it, so portraits often reflect how the person would like to be seen by others!

We don't always know the names of people in portraits, like this woman, but we can still make some guesses! She might be Italian, based on her clothes, but her headdress follows a fashionable French style.

How would you describe her clothes and accessories?

Do you think she had a lot of money? Why or why not?

What kind of personality do you think she had? What do you think she hoped we would think of her?

COLOR ME!



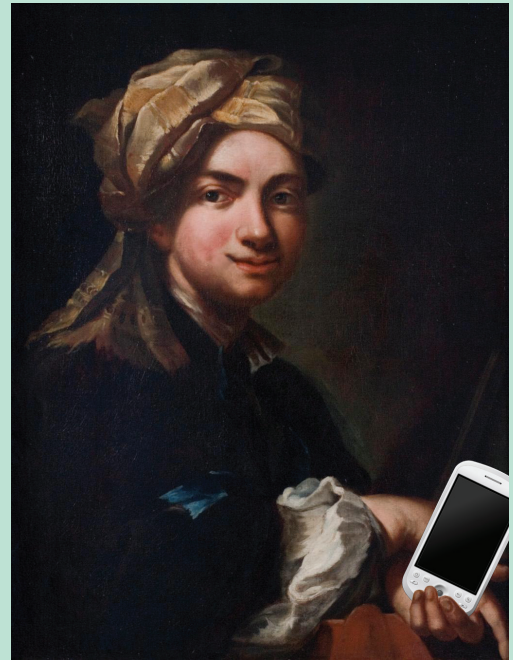
Artwork by Lilah Heyman '21

SELF-PORTRAITS

This is a **self-portrait**, meaning that it is a picture by the person it represents (similar to a selfie!)

This was painted by Martin van Meytens the Younger. He was born in Sweden in 1695 and is called the Younger because his father was also named Martin van Meytens (just think of him as Martin van Meytens, Jr!).

How do you think Martin made this painting, if he couldn't take a photo of himself?



Can you draw your own self-portrait in the space below?



Fun Fact

The label on the frame has a different artist's name, Fra Ghislandi. That's because when Mr. Kress bought it, art historians thought that's who painted it. They only figured out it was Martin in 2010!

CHRISTIANITY IN ART

Most of the art made in Europe between 1350 and 1800 was religious art. This meant it depicted subjects from Christianity, which was the most widespread (though not the only) religion at the time. **Patrons**, the people who commissioned (ordered and paid for) paintings or sculptures, often asked artists to create works that show people or stories from the Bible. The patrons and their families could look at the pictures, think about the important stories or religious figures, and pray.

One of the most popular subjects was the Madonna and Child. We have two paintings of the Madonna (or Virgin Mary), the mother of Jesus, with Jesus as a baby or young child:



What similarities do you see between these two paintings?

What differences do you see?

COLOR ME!



Artwork by Lilah Heyman '21

A BUSY NATIVITY

The Nativity refers to a Christian story about the birth of Jesus. Mary and her husband Joseph were on a long trip when she realized she was about to have her baby. They were in a town called Bethlehem, but all the inns were full. Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable. Later, some shepherds and wise men came to give her and baby Jesus presents to celebrate his birth.

Can you find a depiction of this story in our gallery?



Which figure in the painting do you think is Joseph? (Hint: according to the story Joseph was a lot older than Mary). What are the other people in the painting doing?

Fun Fact

In one of these paintings, Mary and the baby Jesus both have haloes. A halo is a circle or disk, usually of gold, that appears around the head of important religious figures in artworks.

How many haloes can you find in the paintings at Fairfield?

ALTARPIECES

An **altarpiece** is a work of art that is placed behind an altar in a Christian church. The altar is the main focus of a church and where the priest stands for the service. Between around 1300 and 1500, altarpieces were often **polyptychs**, or paintings made up of many small panels, like this one:



1

There was usually a larger central panel showing the Madonna and Child, and smaller panels on the sides with different saints.

There are two Kress paintings that art historians believe were once part of much larger polyptychs:



These two paintings each show a saint who can be identified because of their **attributes**, or the objects that they are holding. One is St. Andrew, who carries an x-shaped cross, and the other is St. Anthony Abbot, who has a walking stick that has a T-shape at the top, which is called a Tau Cross.

If you were filling in this polyptych, what other people might you include?



Why do we only have a few pieces of an altarpiece? If a church decides to remove or replace an altarpiece, the old one was often sold. Art dealers would take apart polyptychs and sell individual panels. There are actually six other panels in museums and private collections in Europe that are from the same altarpiece as the two paintings here at Fairfield!

CASSONE

Have you ever been to a wedding? Ask an adult what they might give as a nice wedding gift!

If they lived in Italy during the Renaissance (1400-1600), they might have given a new bride a pair of *cassoni* (singular: *cassone*), a wedding chest, like this one. They were filled with objects that the woman could use in her new home, like tablecloths, napkins, and clothing.



2

These big wooden boxes were often painted with scenes from the Bible, literature, or mythology. Sometimes these scenes showed women as devoted wives and loving mothers. This painting at right is a single panel from a *cassone*:

—but here's the problem: we don't know what the story is! **What do you see going on? What story do you think the artist was trying to tell?**



THE MYSTERY CONTINUES...

The Philadelphia Museum of Art has another painting from the same *cassone* in its collection:



3

Does that give you any clues?

Cassoni were kept in the bedroom, often at the foot of the bed, and were very important pieces of furniture in Italian homes. What furniture do you have in your bedroom at home? You can use the space provided to draw a bedroom with furniture like a *cassone*!



GREEK MYTHS



Artists working in Europe in the Renaissance and Baroque periods would often portray stories from ancient Greek mythology. These stories of gods, heroes, and monsters were written thousands of years ago and, for ancient Greek people, helped explain how the world worked.

This painting is a scene from the story of Perseus and Andromeda. Perseus was a hero who defeated the monster Medusa, who had snakes instead of hair and who could turn anyone who looked at her into stone. When Perseus killed

Medusa, Pegasus, a winged horse, sprang from her dead body. Perseus then hopped on Pegasus and while flying home, saw the princess Andromeda chained to a rock.

Can you find Perseus in this painting?

Andromeda's mother had made Poseidon, the god of the oceans, angry, and as punishment, he sent a sea monster to attack the city. Andromeda's parents thought that the only way to stop the monster was to sacrifice their daughter.

What do you think is going to happen next?

In the space below, draw your own sea monster!

Fun Fact

You can see other stories from Greek mythology here at Fairfield. In the hallway outside the gallery, there are plaster casts of ancient Greek sculptures that show a number of people from Greek mythology, including gods and monsters like centaurs (half man and half horse).



LANDSCAPES

What is a **landscape painting**?

A landscape painting is a picture that shows nature as the main subject. People in the painting are generally smaller and less important than the scenery around them. Most landscape paintings from Europe in the Renaissance, Baroque, and Rococo periods are idealized, meaning that the places shown are imaginary or, if based on a real location, changed by the artist. The one landscape among the Kress paintings is not any different as it does not show a real place, but an idealized view of the Italian countryside. It was painted in the 1700s.

How many people do you see in the painting?

What do you think they are doing?

What kind of landscape do you like best? The beach and the ocean? A forest? Mountains? A lake?



**DRAW YOUR FAVORITE
KRESS PAINTING!**

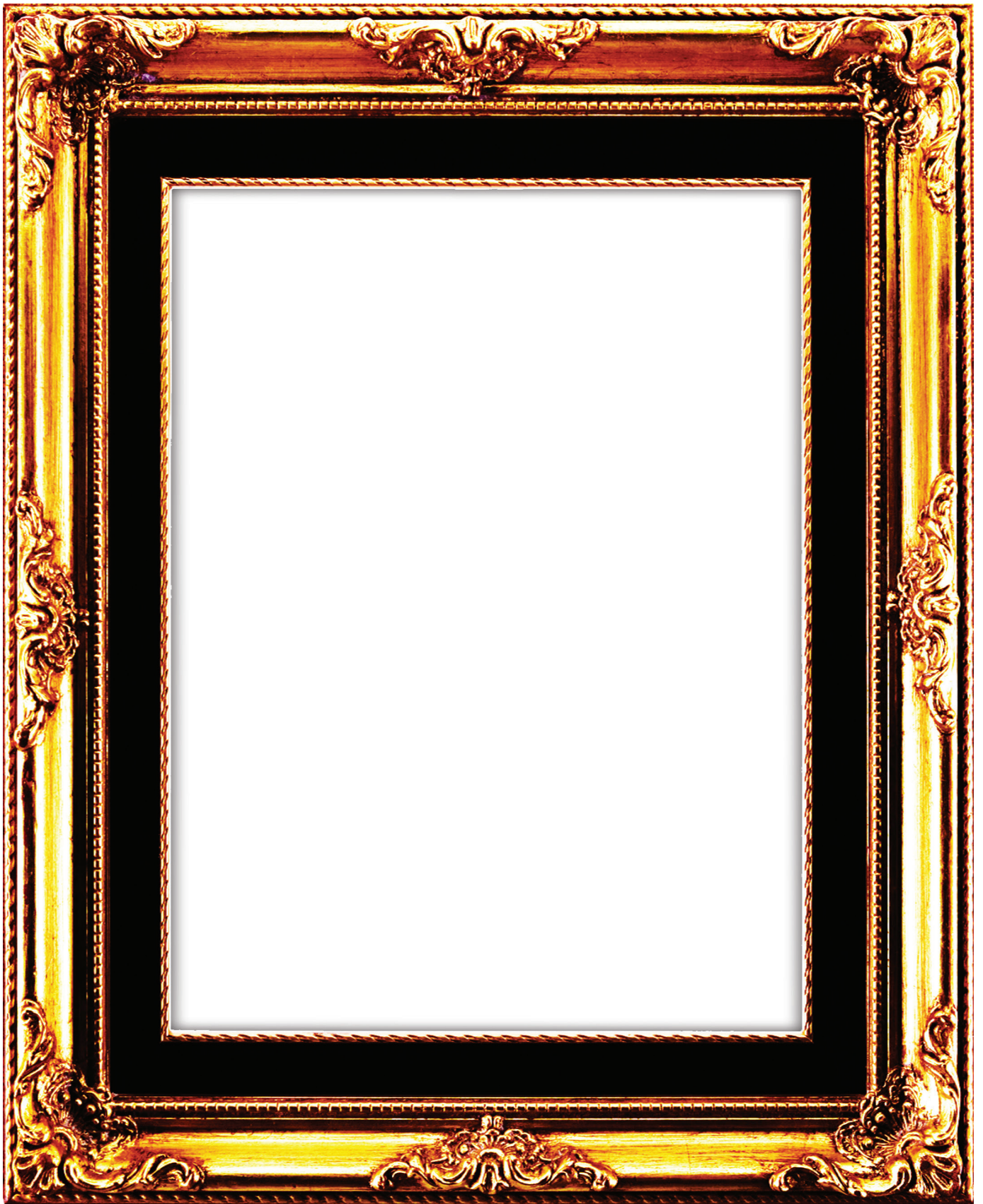


IMAGE CAPTIONS

(1) Ugolino di Nerio, *Virgin and Child with Saints*, ca. 1320. Tempera and gold on wood panel. Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Fund 1961.40

(2) Attributed to Workshop of Apollonio di Giovanni di Tomaso, *Cassone with painted front panel depicting the Conquest of Trebizond*, after ca. 1461, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

(3) Attributed to Priamo della Quercia, *Scenes from a Novella*, early 1440s, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Anonymous Assistants of Bartolommeo Bulgarini (Italian, active 1337-1378) and Niccolò di Segna (Italian, active 1331-1348), *St. Anthony Abbot and St. Andrew*, K1224A and K1224B, ca. 1340-1350, tempera and tooled gold on panel. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.01 and 2009.01.02)

Attributed to Priamo della Quercia (Italian, active 1426-68), *Scene from a Novella* (Cassone Panel), K269, ca. 1440s, tempera and tooled gold on panel. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.03)

Anonymous Lombard Artist, *Madonna and Child*, K578, ca. 1485-1500, oil on wood. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.04)

Pietro degli Ingannati (Italian, active 1529-1548), *Madonna and Child*, K1269, ca. 1530-40, oil on panel. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.05)

Anonymous Artist in the Circle of Nicolò dell'Abate (Italian, 1509/12-1571), *Portrait of a Lady*, K1751, ca. 1550, oil on canvas. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.06)

Paolo Fiammingo (Flemish, ca. 1540-1596), *The Nativity*, K1178, ca. 1577-82, oil on canvas. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.07)

Paolo de Matteis (Italian, 1662-1728), *Andromeda and Perseus*, K1786, 1700-10, oil on canvas. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.09)

Martin van Meytens the Younger (Swedish, 1695-1770), *Self-Portrait*, K1586, ca. 1730, oil on canvas. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.08)

Basilio Lasinio (Italian, 1766-1832), *Rustic Scene*, K1818, 1783, oil on canvas. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, via the Discovery Museum, Bridgeport (2009.01.10)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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