



— Lesson Plans for Teachers & Writers —

The City of Ventura is pleased to sponsor this eighth annual creative contest open to all writers worldwide in partnership with E.P. Foster Library.

The contest invites imaginative writers of all ages to compose a short story or poem (500 words maximum) inspired by one of the artworks currently on exhibit at the library from the Public and Municipal Art Collections.

These selections from City Hall and other facilities are rotated annually to a special second floor exhibit space near the library's rear (children's) entrance in an effort to make them more accessible to the community.

Artworks & Theme

"Artist Next Door/Our Local Story," the Art Tales theme for 2016, celebrates Ventura's 150th birthday in April through four artists whose works in the Municipal and Public Art Collections tell our city's unique story by depicting its classic neighborhoods, citrus orchards, proud history and hip downtown."

—Tobie Roach, Public Art Project Manager

1. Ortega Adobe, by Marguerite Hardeman, c. 1960s, oil on canvas, 31" x 37"
2. Catalina Street V, by Katherine McGuire, 2002, watercolor on paper, 22" x 28"
3. Oranges Against Shadows, by Meredith Brooks Abbott, 1999, oil on canvas, 21" x 25"
4. Thrift, by Paula Odor, 1999, watercolor, 34" x 28"

How to Enter

1. Visit E.P. Foster Library, 651 E Main St in Ventura, to view the exhibit, or view the images and the complete contest kit online at www.cityofventura.net/arttales.
2. Write an original poem or short story (no more than 500 words in length) inspired by ONE of the artworks there that "calls" to you. Only ONE contest entry per person please.
3. Prepare your entry as an electronic word document, in English or Spanish, in a twelve-point font, including at the top: the author's name, address, phone number,

email address, age, title of work and number of words.

4. Submit your entry by April 4, 2016 **BY EMAIL ONLY** to rnewsham@cityofventura.net with "Art Tales" as the email subject line – together with a completed release form (see next item below).
5. Complete a savable pdf release form – parents must do this for youth entries under 18 – copy the document to your desktop, fill it in, save and send it along with your entry poem or short story.

Judging

A committee of professionals, educators, librarians and City of Ventura staff will judge entries on creativity, presentation and correspondence to a specific artwork to select their top three choices for separate poetry and short fiction categories in three age divisions:

- Youth (grades 2-8)
- High School (grades 9-12)
- Adult (ages 18 and up)

Awards & Library Reading

All winners receive a bound edition of the judges' selection with cash prizes for first (\$30) and second (\$15) place. The Mayor of Ventura presents the awards in April or May during a library reading of works by contest winners: all participants, their families and friends and the public are invited to attend this special event where refreshments are served.

Contest Rules

Qualified entries shall be (a) either a single short story or poem (one entry per person) (b) no longer than 500 words (c) written solely by the entrant (d) not previously published (e) nor in conflict with trademark, copyright, rights of privacy, rights of publicity or any other rights, of any kind or nature, of any other person or entity; (f) which does not include any language or other content that is indecent or inappropriate as determined by the CITY in its discretion. Entries not satisfying these criteria in any respect will be disqualified.

If That Picture Could Speak

A lesson plan for teachers & writers of ages 9 and up – adapt for younger students.

A brief history of ekphrasis

If a picture could speak, what tale would it tell you? An act of writing inspired by looking closely at a work of visual art is called *ekphrasis*, a Greek word meaning “to speak out.” For over 2,500 years this ancient technique has helped artworks “talk” through writers who use their full imaginative powers to respond directly to art from the past or today’s creative minds.

1. Homer’s “Shield of Achilles” in the Iliad from the 5th century BC acts like a “movie screen” projecting scenes of a wedding, trial, army ambush, lion attacking a bull and a big dance party.
2. Latin poet Horace claims that “poetry is a speaking picture” in the first century AD.
3. 19th century poet John Keats at a museum speaks to a young couple painted on an ancient vase in “Ode on

a Grecian Urn” as if they are still alive today (find his drawing of them on the Internet).

Writers “make great pictures” by using words. The power of images—in poetry and visual art—is what “speaks” to our imaginations. Remember that “image” is the root of the word “imagination.”

Discuss model poems inspired by art

Project two or three poems and images (from our and other websites) for students to read aloud, taking turns by stanza. A fragment of a statue of Ramses II (aka Ozymandias) in the British Museum inspired Shelley to write his sonnet. For each poem, ask students to say what details they like best, and to identify metaphors and discuss the poet’s approach.

Poem & Poet

“Ozymandius” by Percy Bysshe Shelley	Photo of Egyptian ruins (see below)
“The Great Figure” by William Carlos Williams	I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold by Charles Demeuth
“The Man with the Blue Guitar” by Wallace Stevens	The Old Guitarist by Pablo Picasso
“Two Monkeys by Breughel” by Wislawa Szymborska	Two Monkeys by Pieter Brueghel
“Mojave” by Dahyun Na, Art Tales winner	Mojave by Dorothy Hunter
“Blue Trees” by Nadia Connelly, Art Tales winner	Blue Trees by Richard Amend

Artwork



Ozymandias by Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
“My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!”
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.



The Old Guitarist
by Pablo Picasso



Two Monkeys
by Pieter Brueghel



Glacial Melt, by Helle Sharling-Todd

Elephant's Footprint

by Vivian Gaggia

Glacier, destructive and dangerous
cruel and cold, slowly drifts
destroying everything in its path
Like an elephant dancing through the jungle
He pays no attention to anything around him
Though the glacier will someday melt
and the water will rush through the forest
down to an ocean or lake
Eventually, it will freeze
and smash through the valleys once again



Migration #8, by Debra McKillop

Migration

by Mary Kaye Rummel

Free from the call of the sea
a Luna moth sputters
into light through an open window.
Body too heavy for wings,
she stutters against my arm,
flickering like a loose bulb
in the anemone dark. Tonight
black inverts like a mother
playing *here and gone*, drawing
a tight shirt over her child's eyes.
Tonight beneath the moth moon
we will sleep back to back.

View the artworks at the library or on our website

Visit the library or project the images from our website links – you may also request a teacher's kit with reproductions of the art for classroom use. Explain the titles, examine the artworks and discuss them briefly.

Give students some pre-write advice as they make their choices by saying:

1. Pick an artwork that causes an immediate reaction in you. Examine it more closely. Look deep inside. Ask yourself: What do I see, feel, or question? Look for details. Use colors. Create your own title for the artwork.
2. Go "behind the painting" or artwork; go beyond what you can actually see; use all your senses; make it personal.
3. Think about how you will make the artwork MOVE as you give the artwork a VOICE, CAPTURE its energy and ACTIONS with words, and add your own life or dimension to the artwork.

Discuss four approaches to get "write inside" the artwork

1. Create your own story about the painting. Let your mind wander, then answer the question: What is going on? How does it end?

2. Create a conversation or argument among the people or even objects depicted; make them speak!
3. Enter the artwork yourself—climb inside—and describe your experiences or "adventures within the frame."
4. Pretend you are the artist. What's on your mind as you work? What happened beforehand? Afterwards?

Let the writing begin!

Ask students to

- jot down "writing bubbles" of what immediately strikes them about the artwork's vivid images, details and metaphors;
- create at ten to twenty lines of poetry or a minimum of five sentences full of clear colors, unusual details and metaphor "discoveries."

Share the results!

Allow at least ten minutes at the end of class for students who wish to read aloud their creations.

Revise poems on the computer and email them into the contest

Teachers can fax or pdf handwritten copies of younger contestants.

About the 2016 Art Tales art and artists

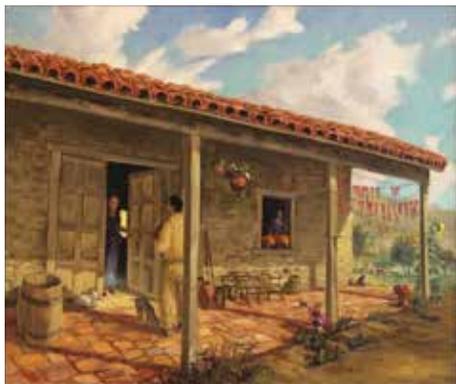


Meredith Brooks Abbott (b. 1938)

Oranges Against Shadows, 1999, oil on canvas.

Meredith Brooks Abbott continues the American Impressionist legacy through

her luminous paintings of California landscapes and still life. She studied and learned from several recognized American Impressionist painters – Douglass Parshall, Richard Meryman and Clarence Hinkle. Abbott's family-owned, fifty-acre ranch in Carpinteria is the landscape found in her plein air paintings. With an affinity for nature, Abbott is active in the preservation of threatened environments in California. She is a member of the Open Airing Klub (OAK), a group of painters whose subjects are endangered areas threatened by development. Abbott is also a member of numerous arts associations including the Santa Barbara Arts Council, Plein Air Painters of America, and the California Art.



Marguerite Hardeman (1911-1990)

Ortega Adobe, c. 1960's, oil on canvas.

California muralist Marguerite Hardeman — a member of the Realistic Painters Group in Ojai who

taught at Ventura College in the 1960s — created 25 murals, 15 of which are now in the Olivas Adobe art collection. They depict four centuries of Ventura's history from the first encounter between Chumash and European explorers to scenes of Spanish and Mexican settlement — including the Mission and Mexican Rancho San Miguel of the Olivas family — and capped with a modern-day overview of the city from Grant Park. The murals are on display each year free for the public to view during the "Murals & Roses" exhibit at the Olivas Adobe in May or early June. In celebration of the City of Ventura's 150th anniversary of the State of California granting Ventura cityhood, a panel of her work "Ortega Adobe" is included in the 2016 Art Tales contest.



Katherine McGuire (b.1958)

Catalina Street V, 2002, watercolor on paper.

Katherine McGuire has established herself as a highly respected water-

colorist with a sensitive eye for the local landscape. Enchanted with images of quintessential Ventura, particularly the diverse people and characteristic architecture of ordinary neighborhoods, her subtle and airy treatment of vintage buildings and idyllic vistas portray Ventura as a place of dreamy charm. "I love the hillsides, the ocean, the Spanish architecture. I think I notice details in Ventura that are often overlooked because it's so different from where I grew up — there are no palm trees in Iowa."

Katherine McGuire, who has been fascinated with art since childhood, earned a BA in fine arts from the University of New Mexico. She is a member of the Buenaventura Art Association and former co-chair of the Historic Committee for the Midtown Ventura Community Council. Her art has been exhibited at the Carnegie Art Museum, the Museum of Ventura County, and, among other spaces, the Ojai Center for the Arts.



Paula Odor (b. 1927)

Thrift, 1999, watercolor.

This highly evocative work describes a multi-layered perspective of human experience in visual terms, but for Paula Odor the impulse for creativity is primarily instinctive. While painting in the park near downtown Ventura's historic Mission, Odor took a break and walked passed one of the colorful thrift stores in the area. The vision of light on a windowpane, and the rich tapestry of objects within reacted with her sense of aesthetic pleasure. She says "I try to make a painting so that a person sees something for the first time. We look at things every day and yet we never really see them."

Paula Odor is a watercolor painter who has been a resident of Ventura since 1955. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Ad Design, and a Master's in Art from New Mexico Highlands University, and has taught art in public schools. She has exhibited her work widely in galleries and museums such as the Carnegie Art Museum, and the Buenaventura Art Association. She is active with several art organizations such as the California Goldcoast Watercolor Society and the Ventura College Friends of the Arts.