

Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical **A Teacher's Guide**

James A. Michener Art Museum
Education Department

Exhibition and education materials generously sponsored
by the National Endowment for the Arts.

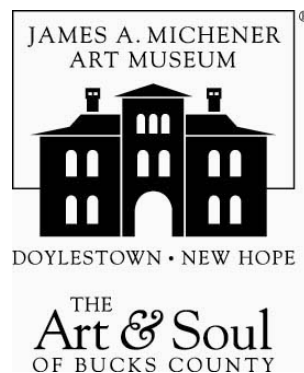


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Introduction To Teachers

The **Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical Teacher's Guide** is a collection of curriculum ideas based on the exhibition at the James A. Michener Art Museum. This guide was created for all subject level K-12 teachers.

The content of this guide is designed to introduce students and teachers to the work of Elsie Driggs at the James A. Michener Art Museum. The activity pages feature interdisciplinary curriculum ideas and resources to be done in the classroom and at the Museum. These enrichment activities are also designed to be used by students with a variety of learning styles and can be modified to suit any age level. Works of art from the exhibition, *Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical*, January 19-April 13, 2008, were selected for further exploration in the classroom.

Areas in the curriculum binder such as *Looking Questions* are ways to encourage discussion and careful observation. Interdisciplinary activity ideas provided with each artwork take the students learning outside the Bucks and Philadelphia Counties, giving a wider and more global approach to learning.

Adrienne Neszmelyi-Romano
Curator of Education
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Elsie Driggs Biography (1898-1992)

Elsie Driggs was born in 1898 in Hartford, Connecticut. Known primarily as a Precisionist painter, Driggs, in the course of her long career, also did floral and figurative paintings in watercolors, pastels, and oils. After studying at the Art Students League and in Italy, she settled in New York City, where she enjoyed immediate success. During the 1920s, Driggs became associated with the Precisionists, also known as New Classicists or Immaculates, a group that painted the modern landscape of factories, bridges, and skyscrapers with geometric precision and almost abstract sparseness. Her most famous Precisionist painting was *Pittsburgh* (1926-27), inspired by her memories of the steel mills where her father, an engineer, had worked. This painting was subsequently purchased by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1929 for the opening of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

During the 1930s, however, Driggs departed from Precisionism, producing more whimsical watercolors and figurative paintings, as well as murals for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). After marrying painter Lee Gatch, whose work she admired, Driggs moved to Lambertville, New Jersey in 1935 and devoted herself primarily to supporting her husband's career and motherhood, a choice many female artists of her generation made. The couple purchased a small, run-down stone house which lacked indoor plumbing on Coon Path in Lambertville. Gatch used their rugged studio, while Driggs worked on the kitchen table. Their reclusive life in Lambertville motivated Driggs to draw upon her imagination for subjects and to experiment with new media, such as the pastel and watercolor collage. Although Gatch thrived in this rustic environment, Driggs, a sociable urbanite, felt constrained.

During the 1960s, however, Driggs resumed working actively, experimenting with mixed media constructions and figurative paintings in pastels and oils. After her husband's death in 1968, she returned to New York City. Working until her death in 1992, Driggs was the most long-lived and productive of the Precisionist painters.¹

Working Methods

Watercolors

Watercolors were, for Elsie Driggs, a means to explore the lyrical, fanciful, even humorous side of her personality. Especially while she lived in Lambertville, enduring a difficult marriage and missing New York City, Driggs sought imaginative release through the wit and whimsy of her watercolors. During the 1920s and 1930s Driggs did several figurative paintings in watercolor. With a nervous "wandering line" reminiscent of Paul Klee, she sketched figures superimposed over vibrant watercolors. In *Snow Scene*, for example, she drew six heavily dressed figures huddled together as snow falls around them amidst the deep blue night. Several of the watercolors Driggs painted at this time derived their subjects from literature, especially Dante's *Inferno* and Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones*. In *Balloons*, inspired by a poem of Emily Dickinson's, Driggs painted, against a wash of pale blue, sixteen multicolored spheres of different sizes drifting among sketches of nine swans.

Driggs's watercolors of the 1940s and 1950s were brilliantly experimental. Watching her young daughter play with paints, Driggs in 1940 conceived of an original medium, collages composed of watercolors and pastel. By incorporating pastel into her watercolors, Driggs achieved richer color and texture than she had before. Driggs's work on this series prepared her for her late work, in oils, pastels, and mixed media, when she portrayed the human figure in whimsical compositions and with vibrant colors.ⁱⁱ

Collage

“...along the time my daughter was born, which sort of slowed things up for awhile. But she would paint on a pad, and while it was still wet—being in a great hurry—she'd turn paper over it and paint on that paper. And one day in pulling the paper up, it tore it...I felt say, I like that shape. I like that torn edge. And so then I began putting that into my paintings.....” Elsie Driggs, 1985ⁱⁱⁱ

The word collage comes from the French word, “coller” meaning “to paste”. It is a technique which is regarded as a work of art made from an assemblage of different forms, creating a new whole. It can be a grouping of papers, fabric, or other two-dimensional objects attached to a flat surface. This technique began by Cubist artists, such as Pablo Picasso and George Braque, and it is a technique now used often by contemporary artists. Driggs' husband, Lee Gatch had been using collage techniques in his work since 1930, but Driggs attributed her inspiration for her collage from her daughter, Merriman in 1939. She observed her daughter using this technique and was inspired. This was a technique what she described as an “accident” similarly to her work in watercolor. Driggs continued to create collages through the 1970s.

Oil Paintings

Driggs began to use oil paint early in her career as an art student. She used this medium to explore a variety of subject matter over her lifetime, from portraits, to plant subjects, to precisionist subject matter. Her earliest remaining paintings include *Lilacs* and *Leaf Forms* both done in 1918. In 1923, Driggs created the work, *Chou*, which is a fabric study in oil of an Italian cabbage. This work was later included in the first showing of her work at the Daniel Gallery in New York. This work was exhibited along with other such noted artists including Man Ray, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Louis Bouche. Driggs

would later explain how this painting was influenced by the French artist, Cezanne. Driggs later created another painting of the same subject, *Cabbage*, in 1926.^{iv}

In the 1920s, Driggs used oils to create her Precisionist works, described with characteristics similar to artists such as Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth, and Preston Dickinson. Her most noted Precisionist painting, *Pittsburgh*, 1927, uses an old-master technique of under painting and building in halftones. This particular painting was inspired by a childhood memory and she returned to this city haunted by recollections of the area's industrial pollution.

Driggs didn't return to oil paints until the 1950s and 60s, in which she used oil paints similarly to watercolor, thinning the paints down, creating washy surfaces. In 1968, Driggs begins a series of figurative, abstract oil studies of women using watercolor techniques. Driggs returned to oil painting in the 1980s. At the age of 88, Driggs turned her attention to the newly completed Jacob Javits Center in New York City, producing a series of paintings inspired by the buildings mirrored walls.^v

Assemblages

“When I came here to New York, I began looking around and seeing the urban scene and yet, back in my mind was always Rome. I returned first to Italy in my work, and I did one that was *Return to Assisi*, and that was when I found the old shoe forms, and I used them as a presence. And I had the shoe forms walking by....a cathedral in Assisi”. Driggs, Tyler Interview, November 14, 1985,1.^{vi}

In the 1970s, Driggs began to create assemblages, or found objects sculptures. Driggs created these in shadow boxes that included crayon drawings of classical architectural features and actual shoe forms. These assemblages were a way to revisit her earlier student days in Italy, particularly her memories of Rome. Driggs indicated that the shoe forms represented “a presence returning”.^{vii} With these assemblages, Driggs suggests how her earlier experiences in Italy as a student are incorporated into her current artwork. Some examples of her assemblages include: *Time* (1979), *Roman Graffiti* (1980) and *Cobbles* (1979).^{viii}

Drawings/Pastels

Woman artists such as Driggs and Georgia O’Keeffe were often celebrated for the “feminine” imagery they painted and drew—organic forms rendered in soft, mottled tones. Driggs produced soft pastels of plants that were sought after by some of America’s most renowned collectors.

Driggs used the medium of drawing for her preliminary sketches for her paintings and drawings of her plant forms. As early as 1918-1922, she created drawings of plaster casts while she studied at the Arts Students League. In the following years to come, Driggs’ created a series of pastel and oil plant-form drawings. In 1924, Driggs began to make copies of the old master works at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other museum collections.

In early 1925, Driggs began to use pastels from Paris, provided by a friend. She would use these pastels to draw the potted plants she picked up from the florist. Driggs made it a point to use potted plants and never cut flowers in her work. Driggs described her technique of using pastels as “largely done with my fingers – rub[bing] it on and draw[ing] with an eraser”.^{ix} She continued to use drawing throughout her career as a tool for her paintings.

Exhibition Text Panels

Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical

Although Elsie Driggs explored a diverse range of styles and subjects throughout her long career, she is best known for her paintings of the 1920s that take their subject matter from the world of industry and engineering. Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1898, Driggs was exposed to machine age designs at an early age. Her father was an engineer and inventor, who created designs for the steel industry and earned millions of dollars negotiating an arms deal with Russia during World War I. Haunted by recollections of her early childhood in Sharon, Pennsylvania and the soaring flames and industrial pollution of its steel plants, Driggs returned to Pittsburgh in 1926, where she was startled by the beauty of the architectural forms of its Jones and Laughlin steel mills.

During her visit she created *Pittsburgh*, which was purchased by Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1929 and donated to the Whitney Museum of American Art for its opening in 1931. The large painting of the steel mill depicts a more somber sight than she remembered as a child. Four velvety smokestacks rise above a network of pipes and tanks as a long, thin, feathery cloud moves in front of the stacks. The sun is burning through a hazy atmosphere, while a steamy mist rises along the bottom of the picture, unfurling along its right edge. A critic for *Art News* singled out *Pittsburgh* as a stunning work that surmounted all others on exhibit at the Daniel Gallery in November 1928. Driggs would later explain how the presence of so much soot in the air resulted in “a glowing light, not sunlight, but a glowing light . . . behind these great well-lit forms.”

Driggs exhibited her early work at the Daniel Gallery in New York during the 1920s alongside that of Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth, Niles Spencer, and Preston Dickinson. The clean descriptive style and precise geometric forms found in the paintings of these artists prompted critics to describe their work as “New Classicist,” “Immaculate,” and subsequently “Precisionist.”

Although most critics of the era described the precisionist vision as cool and dispassionate, it was the brooding, imaginative qualities of Driggs’s industrial scenes that distinguished her work and solidified her reputation as a young New York artist. Intrigued by the awesome industrial and urban forces that were transforming the American landscape during the 1920s and by the old masters’ principles of composition that imparted structure, order, and simplicity, Driggs described her own work as seeking to capture qualities of “the quick and the classical.”

Constance Kimmerle
Curator of Collections
James A. Michener Art Museum

Plant Life Paintings and Drawings

After completing studies at the Art Students League with Frank Vincent DuMond, George Luks, Robert Henri, George B. Bridgman, and Maurice Sterne and privately with John Sloan, Driggs and a group of classmates studied in Rome during the winter of 1922–23 with their instructor Maurice Sterne. While in Rome, Elsie became acquainted with collector-critic Leo Stein and his wife, Nina. She would later remark how impressed she was by Leo’s discussions of the work of Paul Cézanne and the fifteenth-century artist Piero della Francesca, noting as well, how her own study of these artists taught her to blend “the quick and the classical.”

While studying in Italy in 1923, Driggs created *Chou* a delicate, softly textured oil on fabric study of an Italian cabbage. A year later when *Chou* was included in the first showing of Elsie’s work in New York at the Daniel Gallery, critic Forbes Watson declared her painting of the “spread out leaves of a cabbage” as “one of the most sensitive pieces of painting in the entire exhibition.”

Elsie’s work over the next few years included a series of pastel and oil plant-form works that were characterized by critic Margaret Breuning as capturing “the very essence and being of the plants.” Driggs described her pastel technique as “largely done with my fingers— rub[bing] it on and draw[ing] with an eraser.” The overall effect of this technique is both linear and soft edged, resulting in an image of nature that is both energized and structured, as it appears to be expanding outward in response to a vital organic drive.

Early Figurative Works

Examples of Driggs’s early figurative work, likely from her studies in Italy, are two untitled oil on canvas portraits: a portrait of a young girl seated in a chair and a portrait of a full-length figure standing in a landscape with a village in the background. Driggs simplifies aspects of her subjects’ forms, rendering them with a dynamic line, little surface detailing, and a cool palette.

The simply sculpted, geometrized features of these works recall figures in Piero della Francesca’s *Legend of the True Cross* frescos (ca. 1450–65) that Elsie saw in the church of San Francesco in Arezzo.

Figures in Urban Settings

The machine age posed troubling questions for artists of the early twentieth century as it challenged them to explore not only the impact of industry on society but of the machine on the art-making process and on individual consciousness. During the mid- to late twenties, Driggs created a group of small watercolors touching on themes of crowds, mob behavior, and workers’ unrest. Driggs described the inspiration for this series as influenced not only by the social energies of the era but also directly motivated by her imagination.

Several works from this series have titles that suggest parallels between the forces of urban industrial society that impose standardization and anonymity on the individual and the medieval inferno of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. When asked why she chose to focus on the subject of Dante's *Inferno* with modern-day characters, Driggs remarked that "it was imaginative," noting, "there's always something a little off-focus with the thinking" of "people in a crowd."

In her 1925 watercolor *Dante's Inferno* (also known as *Milling Workers, 72nd Street*), Driggs arranges the figures, dressed in contemporary workers' clothing, in a swirling circular format with the background space left mostly empty and white. Splotches of hazy pigment spread over and around the figures, giving the scenes an otherworldly quality and representing space, not as a container, but as a quality of objects and energy fields.

Animal Subjects

During the 1920s Elsie created a series of enigmatic works of animal subjects like *The Oxen* and *Spotted Deer*. With the downturn of the United States economy beginning in 1929 and continuing through the 1930s, Charles Daniel closed his gallery in 1932. For the next three years, Driggs was represented by New Art Circle, a New York City gallery operated by J. B. Neumann, who sponsored the work of such progressive artists as Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky, Max Beckmann, Arshile Gorky, Marc Chagall, and Georges Rouault.

Around the time of her marriage to abstract artist Lee Gatch in 1935, Driggs began exploring the spatial and temporal characteristics of line in a series of watercolors that reveal an interest in depicting the path of moving bodies. Her pursuit of trajectory and sequential images moving through dynamic grids and hazy patches of color in such watercolors as *Marching Ants*, *Sulky*, *Who Killed Cock Robin?* and *Three Bison* suggests multiple-exposure photography as an influence as well as the imaginative, vibrant watercolors of Paul Klee that were being promoted by J. B. Neumann at New Art Circle.

Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal

During the mid-1930s, Driggs wrote a short story for children. She created several illustrations for the story, including *Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal*, *Monkey in the Tree*, and *The King's Equerry*.

The story opens with a tiger named Benji walking through the forest and finding a mirror, surrounded by multiple mushroom specimens. In this imaginative story Driggs suggests how difficult it is to distinguish reality from simulations as she relates how Benji artfully uses reflections from a broken mirror to create harmony in a forest of warring animals.

Emily Dickinson and Elsie Driggs

After picking up a volume of Emily Dickinson's poetry in 1938, Elsie began transcribing verses and creating watercolors based on Dickinson's work. Her 1938 watercolor *I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed* portrays spheres of varying colors floating in a wash of pale blue. The source of

inspiration is a Dickinson verse on the intoxicating effects of simple pleasures that Driggs transcribes on the back of the frame:

I taste a liquor never brewed,
From tankards scooped in pearl;
Not all the vats upon the Rhine
Yield such an alcohol!
Inebriate of air am I,
And debauchee of dew,
Reeling, through endless summer days,
From inns of molten blue.

In *Balloons* (1938), another watercolor depicting the ascent of balloons amidst line drawings of swans, Driggs deftly pictorializes an analogy made by Emily Dickinson between the stately ascent of balloons and the liquid movement of swans as they move softly upon a sea of air.

Working from the Kitchen Table in Lambertville, New Jersey

During most of the thirty years that Elsie and Lee resided in Lambertville, Elsie had no studio of her own. She experimented with watercolor and collage techniques from her kitchen table, creating works that incorporated what she described as “accidents.” Fascinated with automatic techniques and the expressive possibilities of dynamic line, she would later explain that her lifelong love of watercolor was directly related to her fondness for the automatic line and the medium’s responsiveness to every movement.

Driggs described the collage technique she developed from observing her daughter, Merriman, hurriedly painting watercolors and pulling apart individual works that had stuck to each other:

She would paint on a pad, and while it was still wet—being in a great hurry—she’d turn paper over it and paint on that paper. And one day in pulling the paper up, it tore it . . . I felt, say, I like that shape. I like that torn edge. And so then I began putting that into my paintings . . . exhibiting these things with paper pasted on them.

Another automatic technique Driggs utilized involved painting in watercolor, adding areas of pastel, and then soaking the work so that some of the pastel floated off and other flecks remained.

During the 1950s, Driggs continued creating semiabstract collages using oil pigments and canvas and burlap fabrics.

The New York Years (1969–1992)

When I came here to New York, I began looking around and seeing the urban scene and yet, back in my mind was always Rome. I returned first to Italy in my work, and I did one that was *Return to Assisi*, and that was

when I found the old shoe forms, and I used them as a presence. And I had the shoe forms walking by . . . a cathedral in Assisi.

Driggs repeatedly referenced classical subjects and compositions in her drawings, collages, and assemblages created during the seventies. In the late seventies, she began producing crayon drawings of classical architectural features that were combined with actual wooden shoe forms, which in her words represented “a presence returning.” These enigmatic assemblages in shadow boxes reference her earlier student days in Italy, particularly her memories of Rome.

Following the 1980 retrospective organized by Martin Diamond Fine Arts that brought together for the first time her body of work, Driggs began receiving long- due recognition from prominent critics and scholars. In that same year Driggs created *The Red Cabbage*, her final plant-form drawing, which included a cabbage resting on a plate, intensely illuminated by a floor lamp. The image of a cabbage in the limelight calls to mind not only Driggs’s concurrent success but also her early good fortune when she exhibited her first cabbage painting in New York at the Daniel Gallery.

“Something in the Air”

At the age of eighty-eight, Driggs returned to oil painting. One of her last works was *Hoboken*, an elegiac landscape depicting buildings nestled around a Gothic-looking church in an Italian neighborhood of Hoboken, New Jersey. Working from a photograph of Hoboken dating to the 1960s and drawing heavily on recollections from her student days in Italy, she created a scene that resembles a medieval hill town. Surmounting the church spire are crisscrossed electric power lines that span the sky, conveying currents of energy through space.

Commenting on the contemporary art scene of the late eighties, Driggs noted that although “no one direction expresses these times,” “there is too much electricity for it to remain benign.” Just as Charles Sheeler compared the artist’s role to “the parts of electrical equipment designed to carry the current,” Driggs too understood that artists create and are created by the social energies of a particular period—as she termed it “something in the air”—that find a conduit in a particular artist:

As I’ve said about the Precisionist movement, each one of us—it was not a group. We never got together and said now we will be different. It was not devised. Each one of us came to it in our own way and on our own time. It was just that everything came together at one point because there was something in the air . . . They may not know what it has come from in the beginning, but something is motivating them to see something differently.

Activity Pages: James A. Michener Art Museum

The following pages of this teacher's guide correspond with the visuals included in the curriculum binder. Interdisciplinary activities ideas are provided to take concepts beyond the Bucks County region.

Five Works from the Exhibition and the Michener Art Museum's Permanent Collection:

- *Spotted Deer*, n.d.
- *Moonstruck Goat*, 1957
- *She Dances*, 1968
- *The Sage*, 1964
- *Javits Center Abstracted*, 1986

Curriculum Connections: *Spotted Deer*, n.d.

Spotted Deer, n.d.

watercolor and pencil on paper

H. 17 x W. 15 inches

James A. Michener Art Museum

Michener Art Endowment

Challenge Gift of Margaret B. Oschman



Looking Questions:

- Describe what you see in this image.
- How would you describe Driggs' use of color? Space? Line?
- What is this deer doing?
- If this is a story, what will happen next?
- What details has Driggs included in this painting? What details has she omitted?
- Would you change or add to this artwork? Why?

Elsie Driggs loved the medium of watercolor and explored it most of her life. During the 1920s and 1930s, Driggs focused on various subject matter with this medium, including plant forms, works that explored themes of crowds, mobs and workers' unrest, and figurative works that combined modern life inspired by the medieval work of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. In the 1930s, Driggs created a number of watercolors based on literary themes rooted in American culture, and works inspired by the poetry of Emily Dickinson. In addition, Driggs created a series of mysterious animal paintings. Although there is no date on *Spotted Deer*, it is possible she created it during this time. It is also possible she created it after she moved to Lambertville, New Jersey, where she and her husband lived a quiet life, where sometimes "stirring up a deer that would go bouncing away from you." ^x She stated that this remote life in the countryside was ".....very good for the imagination." ^{xi}

In this artwork, Driggs uses similar techniques with watercolor that can be found in her other works. The work is limited in space, remaining relatively flat. The deer is "floating" in the white space of the paper. Driggs is using the watercolors in a more expressive way in this sparse composition. The branches or long strands of grass surrounding the animal suggest movement and energy in the animal and in nature surrounding it. Various qualities of line exist in this work; from the sharp, clean pencil lines creating the shape of the deer, to the soft, mottled qualities of the branches that surround the deer. Setting her subject matter against the white background of the paper, she used a technique called "spotting". This was done by adjusting the amount of water to the medium, resulting in variations in mottled surfaces and subtle variations in tone. Color would then advance and recede in certain areas. The "spotting" and delicate pencil line gives a dream-like atmosphere to the scene.

The influence of Cézanne, Charles Demuth and in particular, Yasuo Kuniyoshi can be seen here in her approach to the medium, all artists who exhibited with Driggs during the 1920s. These characteristics include a limited color palette, simplicity in form, line and texture, sparseness in detail and the use of large amounts of white space on the paper.

Curriculum Connections: *Spotted Deer*, n.d.

Language Arts

Elementary/Middle

- Write a poem about a deer in a poetry form of your choice. Be mindful of the tools of the poet, such as rhythm, tempo, rhyme, etc.
- Create a fable using the deer as the main character of your story.

Middle/High School

Write a narrative from the point of view of the deer. Begin by working in groups and making a list of words (not phrases) that describe what you see in the painting. Words cannot be repeated in the list. First, write a story about one of the pictures making sure that none of the words on the list are used. Rewrite the story using appropriate adjectives from the list to see how much more interesting the story becomes.

Social Studies

Elementary

The whitetail deer is the Pennsylvania state animal. Identify the state animals of the states that border Pennsylvania.

Middle/High School

Hunting the Whitetail deer continues to be a source of controversy for many. The Whitetail deer has been hunted in the state of Pennsylvania for many years. Divide into groups and have a debate about the pros and cons of hunting the Whitetail deer.

Visual Arts

Elementary

Choose an animal that you would like to focus on for a watercolor painting. Have the animal doing an activity in his natural habitat, whether it is a pet or a wild animal. Use pencil and watercolor to complete your work.

Middle/High School

- Select a watercolor from the following artists: Charles Demuth, Paul Cezanne and Yasuo Kuniyoshi. Compare and contrast these works with Driggs' *Spotted Deer*. What possible influences can be found among these artists on the work of Driggs?
- Create a watercolor painting that uses various techniques; wet on wet, wet on dry, and drybrush. Select a subject matter from nature as your inspiration.

Curriculum Connections: *Moonstruck Goat*, 1957

Moonstruck Goat, 1957

oil, burlap, applied pieces of canvas on canvas

H. 16 x W. 16

James A. Michener Art Museum

Museum purchase funded by Agnes and Robert Hagan



Looking Questions:

- Describe the colors, shapes, and textures in this artwork. What do they remind you of? Why?
- Do you think this is an abstract or realistic work of art? Explain.
- Read and discuss the title, *Moonstruck Goat*. Does knowing the title change how you understand and respond to this artwork?
- Is this painting a portrait? Why or why not? Explain.
- What words could describe its mood? What do you see that communicates the mood?
- Imagine changing the colors, shapes, or textures in *Moonstruck Goat*. Explain how your changes would change its mood and meaning.

Elsie Driggs created this collage in 1957. According to Driggs, her inspiration for turning to the collage technique was the sight of her young daughter playing with paint and torn paper. Using oil paints and pieces of canvas and burlap, Driggs composed *Moonstruck Goat* with simple shapes, muted colors, and a variety of textures.

The angular shapes of the goat's head fill most of the perfectly square canvas surface. An egg-shaped moon floats near its nose sharing the shallow, smooth sky with several jagged shapes below that suggest mountains. The goat's oval eye appears to be half open and quietly echoes the shape and tilt of the moon. Subdued colors—shades of gray, yellow, green, maroon and the natural tans and browns of canvas and burlap—contrast with the jumbled puzzle pieces of fabric filling its head and neck. A variety of textures provide additional contrasts. The smoothly painted background heightens our perception of the rough textures and frayed edges and layers of burlap pieces and of the areas of impasto (thick paint).

This goat, with its head at an odd angle and its mouth partly open, appears to be looking at the moon. Could the goat be talking, or singing to it? Inside its purple head many rectangular shapes jostle for position like tile pieces in a half finished mosaic. The title, *Moonstruck Goat*, suggests several interpretations. "Moonstruck" can mean crazy, or dreamily romantic. Goats, known for their charm and playfulness, can also refer to victims (as in scapegoat), to lecherous men, and to anger (to get someone's goat).

When Driggs created *Moonstruck Goat*, she was the wife of artist Lee Gatch and the mother of a young child. She lived with her family in a small, three-room stone house on Coon Path in Lambertville that needed repairs. In contrast to her previous life as an art student and a successful artist in New York City, Driggs now created art at her kitchen table far from galleries and the company of other artists. The technique of collage allowed her to stop and start her work frequently during the course of the day and to explore her subjects with spontaneity, humor, and imagination. As she states, "my time was shredded....by working in collage, I could carry forward in stages...."^{xii}

Curriculum Connections: *Moonstruck Goat*, 1957

Language Arts

Elementary/Middle

Use your imagination to tell the story of the *Moonstruck Goat*, describing events in its life before, during, and after this scene.

Middle/High School

Read *Winter Moon* by Langston Hughes. Then, create a poem in response to this painting from the point of view of the goat.

Social Studies/Science

Elementary

What are some of the uses of the goat in various cultures and in history? Explore some of these areas including food, clothing, and religion.

Middle/High School

Research the moon in our solar system. What are its physical characteristics? What makes it unique from the other planets in our solar system? How many times have humans explored the moon? Write a report and present your findings to the class.

Visual Arts

Elementary/Middle

Create a collage of an animal using a variety of materials, techniques and textures: painting and tearing paper; constructing 3-D forms of paper; and using layers of fabrics and paint. Incorporate the elements of spontaneity and accident by playing with the materials and discovering what images or forms emerge.

Middle/High School

Study *Dog Barking at the Moon* by Joan Miró (search the collection online at the Philadelphia Museum of Art at www.philamuseum.org) and *Moonstruck Goat*. Write a critical analysis of both works, and compare and contrast the two artists, styles and subjects. Which do you prefer? Why?

Performing Arts/Music

Elementary/Middle

- What kinds of sounds and movements would a moonstruck goat make? Using recorded sounds, create a recorded soundscape and a dance piece based on this painted collage.
- Listen to works that reference the moon, including *The Moonlight Sonata* (1801) by Ludwig van Beethoven and *Clair de Lune* ("By The Light of The Moon") by Claude Debussy.

Technology/Graphic Arts

Middle/High School

Create a portrait of an animal and the moon using photomontage, a digital approach to collage. Create a second photomontage of the same animal, this time with the sun. Consider the symbolic meanings of the sun and the moon and how they affect the colors, shapes, and textures of your compositions.

Curriculum Connections: *The Sage*, 1964

The Sage, 1964

Oil on canvas

H. 39 x W. 34

James A. Michener Art Museum

Museum purchase funded by Agnes and Robert Hagan



Looking Questions

- Describe what you see in this painting.
- What kind of textures can you identify in this painting?
- What colors has Driggs' used in this painting?
- What is the mood in this painting? What elements convey this mood?
- How does the title, *The Sage*, add meaning to this painting? Does it help you understand what this painting might be about?

Driggs created this painting in 1964, during a time that she was finally able to get a studio space of her own in her Lambertville home. At this time, she became familiar with Helen Frankenthaler's "soak-stain" techniques of diluting oil pigments to achieve effects of watercolor. During this time, she began to produce a series of large oil paintings, using these diluted pigments, stenciled patterns and sprayed backgrounds.

A variety of shapes and line fill this composition, taking on the characteristics of a landscape. A moon or a sun is placed slightly off to the left of the center. The shapes on the left and the right of the moon/sun shape take on the characteristics of mountains, all set on a horizon line that tilts up to the right of the composition. A washy light texture creates the background, contrasted with a rougher texture found in the shapes surrounding the moon/sun. Some of the canvas is revealed in these areas. The additional contrasting line qualities in this painting between the hard edges of the mountainous shapes and the soft edges of the moon/sun, add additional interest in this painting.

Driggs named this painting, *The Sage*. Various meanings of this word can be derived; one such reference is to the herb, sage. Another meaning could be a person distinguished for wisdom (such as a philosopher). Looking deeper into the background of this herb, the Latin name for sage is *salvia*, means "to heal". This herb has been used for many centuries for its healing qualities, dating back to ancient times. It is used in aromatherapy settings as an essential oil. The natural habitat for the common sage is southern Europe and areas in the Mediterranean. The sage region is known as on the islands of Veglia and Cherso, near Fiume.

Is Driggs referencing someone who she feels is wise? Is Driggs referencing the herb and its healing qualities? Driggs may have encountered the herb in her travels in Europe. She may also be alluding to a person who she admires for their wisdom. It is not entirely clear what the title of this work is suggesting. It is up to the viewer to think about the many possible meanings this painting could have.

Curriculum Connections: *The Sage*, 1964

Language Arts/Literature

Elementary/Middle

Have students finish the phrases below in response to this artwork.

- If this painting could talk, it would say...
- If this painting could make a sound, it would....
- If you could taste this painting, it would....
- If this painting could move, it would...
- If this painting could sing, it would...
- If this painting could hear you, you would tell it...

Sages and sagacity descend from remote prehistoric times, and are found in all cultures. A sage can be someone who has wisdom coming with age or experience. Identify someone who you know that you admire for their wisdom or knowledge. Is this person a mentor to you? Explain your reasons in a two-paragraph essay.

Middle/High School

Explore the various meaning of sage. What is a sage? How does it relate to this artwork? Write a free verse poem in response to this painting using the same title.

Social Studies

Elementary

What was happening in the United States in 1964? Who was President? How much did a gallon of gas cost? What things were invented that year? What was a popular film? Make a list of some of these important events, facts in history and inventions.

Middle/High School

- List some important events in the art world that occurred in 1964. List events in music, visual arts, theater, dance, and literature. Incorporate these facts into a multi-media presentation.
- Explore the concept of a “sage” by looking into other cultures. Research the *Seven Sages of Greece*. Who were they? What are they noted for? Now research the *Saptarshi*, who are the seven sages or saints in the Hindu religion. Compare each culture. How are they similar? Different?

Visual Arts

Elementary/Middle

Using thin washes of acrylic or watercolor paint, create a layered affect on paper. Use this in combination with oil pastels to create a resist technique. Use these materials to create an abstracted landscape.

Middle/High School:

Explore the theme of *Seven Sages In a Bamboo Grove* in Chinese and Japanese art. Who were *Seven Sages*? Compare and contrast a painting with this theme with *The Sage* by Driggs. Find examples of artworks at: <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~arth17/SevenSages.html> and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at: http://www.metmuseum.org/explore/china_dawn/HT_109a.html.

Curriculum Connections: *She Dances*, 1968

She Dances, 1968

oil on canvas

H. 34 x W. 15 7/8

James A. Michener Art Museum

Museum purchase funded by Agnes and Robert Hagan



Looking Questions:

- Describe what you see in this painting.
- What colors has Driggs used? Does her selection of certain colors create a particular effect?
- How would the composition change if it was all made in cool colors?
- Does this painting show movement? Why or why not?
- How would you describe the line quality in this work?
- How would you describe the use of space?
- This title is “She Dances”. How does this subject dance? Quickly? Slowly? Why?

Driggs completed this work in 1968. During this time, she continued to use watercolor techniques to create a series of abstract figurative studies of women that were brightly colored and simply rendered. In this painting, Driggs used oil paints that have been diluted to create a watercolor effect.

Driggs composed this narrow painting using layers of thin washes of oil paint on her canvas. The layers of paint gently overlap each other creating soft edges surrounding two figures. These faceless, ghostlike figures seem to float in space and are surrounded by a bold orange-red color. The fuzziness of the figures and the wash like effect of the paints create a feeling of movement. The haziness of the composition conveys as if this scene was captured with a camera photographing figures in motion. The use of the bright reds, oranges, golds and yellows also create a vibrating effect for the eyes. The influence of Helen Frankenthaler can be seen in this work, emulating her spontaneous, washy, and expressive layering of paint.

Curriculum Connections: *She Dances*, 1968

Language Arts

Elementary

- *Word Wrap*: Have each student say a word that they would use to describe the painting or how they react to the painting. Being careful not to repeat this word, write them all on the board as a warm-up activity.
- Have students write down 10 words that come into their minds when they look at this painting. Pair up students and then have each student read their words aloud taking turns.

Middle/High School

Using the element of spontaneity inspired by Driggs, create some spontaneous poetry with your classmates. Working in groups of four, take a turn spontaneously reciting an improvised poem after someone has "thrown" a first line. The "poet" speaks the first line and leaps into improvisation at the end of the sentence. The poem does not need to rhyme. The poem must have a vivid image somewhere in it and a sense of finality, or closure, when it is done.

Social Studies

Elementary

Look at U.S history the year this painting was created. Who was elected President of the United States in 1968? What contributions did he make to the United States government?

Middle/High School

The year Driggs painted this work (1968) was an important year in America for Women's rights, Civil Rights, the Vietnam War, and U.S. politics. It was also the year Driggs' husband died and Driggs relocated to New York City. What significant events happened this year in history? Create a table of some of these events.

Visual Arts

Elementary/Middle

Driggs is using various warm colors for her composition. Discuss the qualities of warm colors versus cool colors. Create a series of paintings using warm colors and then using cool colors.

Middle/High School

- Explore the work of Helen Frankenthaler and compare one of her works with *She Dances*. How may have Frankenthaler's techniques influenced the work of Driggs? Create a large scale work of your own using canvas and diluted oil paints or acrylics.
- Explore a series of gestural figurative works using pencil and watercolor. Use a model to pose at 15 minute intervals and use these poses to create a series of watercolors. With the watercolors, experiment with using wet on wet techniques and wet on dry, etc. Focus on the expressive quality of the watercolor and not with including a lot of detail.

Performing Arts

Elementary/Middle/High School

This painting is titled, "She Dances". Explore what Driggs meant with this title. How does the subject dance? Using this painting as a springboard, create a dance number that would be how the dance would act out.

Curriculum Connections: *Javits Center Abstracted*, 1986

Javits Center Abstracted, 1986

oil on canvas

H. 22 x W. 38 inches

James A. Michener Art Museum

Michener Art Endowment Challenge

Gift of Ms. Merryman Gatch



Looking Questions:

- Describe what you see in this painting.
- What is the focal point of this painting?
- How does the artist, Elsie Driggs, create this focal point?
- What kind of shapes can you find?
- How does Driggs create balance in this work? Unity?
- Compare this painting with Driggs' other work, *The Javits Center*, 1986. How are they similar? Different?

Elsie Driggs decided to return to oil painting in the 1980s. At the age of 88, in the spring of 1986, she passed the Jacob Javits Center, in New York City, which she greatly admired. She decided it would be a good subject for a Precisionist painting. This building, along with the Queensborough Bridge in New York City, (which she painted in 1927) became an icon of modernism at that time.

Driggs created two versions of the Javits Center in 1986, the same year this building was completed. Both compositions explore the geometric angles of the buildings, and are broken into bold lines and shapes, including squares, triangles and rectangles. This version focuses on the building's glass walls mirroring the mauve tones of the twilight sky. The other version is set in the daytime, focusing on the reflection of the blue, cloud-filled sky on the mirrored walls of the Javits Center.

The focal point of this painting is a gold framed rectangle found in the center of the composition. The red buildings within this frame draw the eye in further and are set into a smaller night landscape. These red buildings are the Javits Center, viewed from the New Jersey side, across the Hudson River. To the left of these buildings is an impression of the city of New York with its twinkling lights in the distance. The red buildings are reflected in the water below them. Driggs' use of the color red and size of the buildings in proportion to the city behind it gives the impression of the massiveness of the structure of the Javits Center. The geometric shapes that surround this night scene provide further emphasis of its geometric design in its architecture. Driggs has created a composition within another composition.

This building was designed by the Chinese-American Architect, I.M. Pei and built from 1979 to 1986. It was named for New York Senator Jacob K. Javits, who died the year of its completion. Pei is also noted for designing the Pyramid Entrance of the Louvre Museum in Paris, France. Today, the Javits Center is used as a convention center, and is a center for trade shows, expositions and conferences. The building is five blocks long made of steel and glass, covering an area of 22 acres. The structure is 1.8 million square feet and contains a 2500 seat auditorium along with acres of exhibition halls and meeting rooms. It ranks the 18th largest convention center in the United States.

Curriculum Connections: *Javits Center Abstracted, 1986*

Language Arts

Elementary/Middle

Create an Acrostic poem using the words, **Javits Center**. The basic acrostic is a poem in which the first letters of the lines, read downwards, form a word, phrase or sentence. Example: **Garbage**

Grimy bags of trash
Around my backyard in bags
Rotting and smelling
Banana peels turning brown and slimy
Apple cores left for the animals
Going to be picked up soon, I hope
Emptied by the garbage men.

Middle/High School

Using the Javits Center as the subject, created an **abstract poem** based on this building. This kind of poem is an experiment in “patterns of sound”. In this kind of poem, the meaning of the words becomes secondary to their sound. One way to begin is choosing a word and saying it aloud over and over again until it loses its meaning, so that you are focused on the sound. Then, write as quickly as you can with whatever words come to you. Another way is by taking a poem and removing enough of its words so that the remaining words make no sense but sound good together. Yet another way is also replacing the words of the poem with new words that sound good together.

Social Studies

Elementary

What was the cost of living in 1986? Make a list of average car, gas and home prices. In addition, make a list of inventions in technology for this year.

Middle/High School

- What impact has the Javits Center had for the City of New York economically? Environmentally? Politically? Use primary documents to help your research.
- What world events occurred in 1986? Create a timeline of major historical events that occurred this year.

Visual Arts

Elementary

Create a “fractured” image. Draw a still life using a pencil. Using a ruler, create lines from each edge of the objects running the lines off the paper, “fracturing” the image. Have lines cross each other, breaking the image into a series of shapes. Add color of your choice to create the final image. Outline the lines using a darker color, similarly to the painting by Driggs.

Middle/High School

The Javits Center was constructed from 1979 to 1986, designed by the Chinese-American architect, I.M. Pei (b.1917). He was the same architect who constructed the Pyramid entrance of the Louvre Museum, in Paris, France in 1989. What other buildings has he designed and what are his influences? What materials does he use? How does his style compare to other architects? How does his work impact the movement of modernism? Create a presentation with your findings.

General Pre-Visit Activities

Language Arts

Elementary/Middle

Read the story written by Elsie Driggs, *Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal* at the back of this curriculum binder. What is the story about? Who are the characters?

Middle/High School

- Explore the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Select *Balloons* and *I Taste a Liquor Never Brewed*, two poems by Dickinson used by Driggs in her work. Read these poems and discuss them as a class prior to your visit to the Museum.
- Elsie Driggs traveled to Italy and met Leo and Gertrude Stein. Who was Gertrude Stein? What role did she have in the development of modern art and literature?
- Read and discuss the epic poem by Dante, the *Divine Comedy*, specifically, the *Inferno*. What was its significance in the world of literature? How did Driggs use it in her artwork?

Visual Arts

Elementary/Middle

- Charles Demuth and Elsie Driggs were two artists who are known for their works that show the changing American landscape. Both Demuth and Driggs were considered precisionist artists that made work using defined straight lines. Compare and contrast Driggs' *Pittsburgh, 1927* with a work by Charles Demuth, such as *My Egypt, 1927*.
- Create a semi-abstract composition that reflects a specific mood. Think about how the elements of art in your composition convey this particular mood.

Middle/High School

- Driggs' was influenced by poet Emily Dickinson in creating some of her watercolors. Select a poet of your choice and create a series of artworks in response to them.
- Leo and Gertrude Stein introduced Driggs to the art of Renaissance painter Piero della Francesca early in her career. The exposure to Piero della Francesca was very important to Driggs; she admired this artist's work in structure, order, simplicity and strength. Explore Francesca's work and see how this might have influenced Driggs' work.
- Examine the roots of the art movement of Precisionism and what evolved following this movement.

Social Studies

Elementary/Middle

Explore work by other Precisionist artists such as the work by Charles Sheeler, Charles Demuth, Georgia O'Keeffe and Ralston Crawford. What world events and changing world views affected artists that were creating their work during this time? When did Driggs' depart from this style of painting?

Middle/High School

Explore how artists use industry as inspiration for their work. Look at the work of Lewis Hine, Charles Demuth, Elsie Driggs, and compare their work and their individual views. For further exploration, find a contemporary artist in your community that focuses on industry and the environment in their work.

General Post-Visit Activities

Language Arts

Elementary/Middle

Write a descriptive essay in response to one of Driggs' works. Use your imagination to explain the story behind the subject of the painting.

Middle/High School

Compare the work of Driggs with Helen Frankenthaler, an artist that Driggs admired. How do they compare in techniques and processes? Write a critical analysis of a work by each of these artists and discuss their similarities and difference in their backgrounds and techniques.

Visual Arts

Elementary

- Compare other collage artists to the work of Driggs like Robert Rauchenberg, Robert Motherwell, May Ray, Henri Matisse, David Hockney, and Max Ernst. Explore work of other collage artists such as the works by Cubist artists, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.
- Create a work of art that uses the elements of spontaneity and accident. Using materials of your choice; play with them and see what images or forms emerge.
- Create an abstract composition that reflects a mood of shock, agitation, nervousness, fear, etc.. Think about how you will construct your composition with the elements of art to convey this mood or feeling.

Middle/High School

- Create an assemblage reflecting your personal identity and background combining a variety of media, including pencil, charcoal, ink, photographs, paint, fabric, found objects and writing. Examine the assemblages of Driggs for inspiration.
- Examine how the technique of Paul Klee has similarities and differences in Driggs' processes in her collage and watercolor works.
- What was happening in the larger art world during Driggs' lifetime? Explore what movements in the US and in Europe were happening during Driggs' career. Do you see any possible influences? Why or why not? Make a timeline of significant art events that happened from 1920 to 1992, listing two to three events for each decade.

Social Studies

Elementary

What kinds of work did Driggs do for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression? What was her attitude towards the WPA? How did the WPA help artists?

Middle/High School

Driggs' encountered prejudice as she tried to get her work into galleries early in her career. Create a time line with key dates that indicate the changing status of women during Driggs' lifetime. Include the road to women's suffrage (right to vote) in 1921, the Equal Rights Amendment, and changing attitudes towards women's reproductive rights (Roe vs. Wade). Explain how these historical events may have impacted careers in art for women.

James A. Michener Art Museum
Classroom Activity Sheet: Pittsburgh, 1927

Grade level: Elementary/Middle

Using the painting titled, *Pittsburgh*, 1927. Answer the following questions below. (Find this image on the Internet at www.tfaoi.com/cm/5cm/5cm293.jpg)



Describe everything that you see in this painting. Be as detailed as possible.

What is the subject matter? _____

Is this a realistic or abstract painting? Why? _____

What kind of shapes do you see? _____

What colors is Driggs using in her painting? _____

How has used space in this painting? Deep space? Shallow space? _____

If you could place yourself in this painting, what kind of sounds would you hear? What would you smell? _____

Is this a landscape or a still-life? Explain your answer. _____

How do you feel when you look at this painting? Why? _____

How do you think the artist feels about industry? _____

What do you think Driggs is saying about the changing American landscape? _____

“So everyday I went back to my rooming house, I passed the Jones and Laughlin Mills. You don’t see the mills at a distance; you’re going up a hill. I was going up the hill in a bus and I was on high ground while the mill was down on the riverbank, so I looked directly into these large forms. You looked directly...into these big forms and I kept finding them beautiful and wondering why. I told myself I wasn’t supposed to find a factory beautiful, but I did. And I noticed the relationship of those tall smokestacks and then the cones – and the simple cone and the fluted cone and all – and the way it composed the center, which I call the center still life.” – Elsie Driggs speaking about her painting, *Pittsburgh*. (Quote from Exhibition catalogue, *Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical*, by Constance Kimmerle, p.31.)

The National Art Standards addressed in this activity are: **Content Standard 2 & 3**. The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standard addressed in this activity addressed in this activity is: **9.2, 9.3, and 9.4**. **Image Credits:** Elsie Driggs (1898-1992), *Pittsburgh*, 1927, Oil on canvas, 34.5 x 40 inches, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, Gift of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.

James A. Michener Art Museum
Classroom Activity: Create an Illustration!

Grade Level: Elementary/Middle

Elsie Driggs created a painting to illustrate a story she had written, called “Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal” in the 1930s. Using another artwork, create a story of your own. Answer the following questions below:

Write the title of the artwork you have chosen here: _____

What do you see in this painting? List all the details that you can find.

What is the **story** in this artwork? Write a paragraph about what might be happening – discussing the plot, the characters, and the setting.

What will happen **next**? Write another few sentences about the next part of the story.....

Now, **illustrate** this next part on the other side of this paper! Use colored pencils or oil pastels.

The National Art Standards addressed in this activity are: **Content Standard 1, 2, 3, & 6**. The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standard addressed in this activity is: **9.1, & 9.3**.

James A. Michener Art Museum
Museum Visit Activity Sheet: Museum Mysteries

Grade Level: Elementary

See if you can find the artworks in the museum based on the clues below! Use another piece of paper if necessary.

Elsie Driggs created her artwork, *Moonstruck Goat* in 1957. Can you find an artwork in the galleries that has an animal in it that would get along with a goat? What is the title of the artwork?



Moonstruck Goat, 1957

Driggs created various **abstract** works. Find an abstract artwork in the galleries. Identify the title and the artist. _____



She Dances, 1968

Find an artwork in the galleries that contains **movement** like Driggs' work, *She Dances*. How is the artist creating this movement in his/her work?

Find an artwork that is broken up into **geometric shapes and lines**. How is this artwork similar to Driggs' work titled, *Javits Center Abstracted*? How is it different? Identify the title and artist of the artwork. _____

Driggs created various types of **textures** in her artwork with the different materials she used. Find one artwork that contains a rough texture on its surface. What is the title? _____

Now find one with a different texture. Explain the differences between them. _____



Javits Center Abstracted, 1986

Great job art detective! You have completed this scavenger hunt!

The National Art Standards addressed in this activity are: **Content Standard 2 & 3**. The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standard addressed in this activity is: **9.1, 9.2, & 9.3**.

James A. Michener Art Museum
Museum Visit Activity Sheet: Compare and Contrast

Grade Level: Middle-High School

After studying the works of Elsie Driggs, visit the Michener Art Museum to compare the work of another artist working in the same time period. Answer the following questions below.

The artwork I have chosen is: _____

I am comparing this artwork to _____ by Elsie Driggs.

How is this artwork **similar** to the work of Elsie Driggs? List them below. Discuss **subject matter** and the **elements of art** and **principles of design** in your explanation.

How is this artwork **different**? Explain your answer discussing **subject matter**, and using the **elements of art** and **principles of design**.

The National Art Standards addressed in this activity are: **Content Standards 2, 3 & 6**; . The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standards addressed in this activity are: **9.2, 9.3**.

Timeline: Elsie Driggs (1898-1992)

- 1898** Driggs born in Hartford, Connecticut, on August 5, 1898.
- 1904** Driggs family moves to Sharon, Pennsylvania where Elsie's father, Louis Driggs Sr., worked as an engineer in a steel company.
- 1907** Driggs moves to New Rochelle, New York. Driggs becomes familiar with Machine Age imagery through her father's work. She sees the Pittsburgh factories for the first time, a memory that stays with her for years.
- 1914** Elsie and her sister attend painting classes at the New Rochelle Public High School. Girls spend a summer in Dover Plains, New York painting under George Glenn Newell twice a week.
- 1915** Elsie and Elizabeth study nursing at the New York Post Graduate Medical School and Hospital.
- 1914-1918** During World War I, Elsie and her sister decided to study nursing. Elsie came down with the flu and her sister got pneumonia, so both decided to give up nursing and concentrate on painting.
- 1916** Elsie and her sister travel to Santa Fe, New Mexico to paint. Elsie paints a series of desert scenes which have since become lost.
- 1918** Driggs executes her earliest painting, *Lilacs* at her family home in New Rochelle, New York, very advanced for an artist of 20.
- 1918-1922** Elsie studies at Art Students League in New York City, studying briefly under Frank Vincent Du Mond, Impressionist landscape painter. Begins to visit the Daniel Gallery, where she is exposed to work of the most progressive American modernists, including Charles Demuth, Marsden Hartley, and William and Marguerite Zorach.
- 1918-1919** Driggs attends antique classes, drawing from plaster casts. The following year, she enrolls in life drawing classes with George Bridgman.
- 1920** Begins to study almost concurrently with John Sloan, George Luks and Robert Henri, central artists to the Ashcan School, or "The Eight".
- 1921** Begins to work with the teacher who most influenced her, modernist painter Maurice Sterne. Sterne was considered one of Driggs' most important art instructors.
- 1922** Driggs meets Leo Stein and encounters the art of Piero della Francesca which profoundly affects her art.
- 1922-1923** Driggs and other fellow women artists from the League accompany Sterne to Italy for a period of study.
- 1923** Driggs creates her first Precisionist work, *Italian Vineyard* and her first mature work, *Chou*, a large study of an Italian cabbage, in Anticoli Corrado, Italy, painted in a limited green-grey palette. The following year, this work receives rave reviews in a group exhibition at the Daniel Gallery.
- 1924** Begins to create figurative watercolors. Returns to the US in February and exhibits *Chou* in a group show at the Daniel Gallery in New York. It is regarded as one of the most sensitive works in the show by critic Forbes Watson.
- 1925** Driggs earns outstanding reviews from all of New York City's major critics. Driggs at this time is a leading woman painter with the exception of Georgia O'Keeffe.

- 1927** Driggs creates her first major Precisionist painting *Pittsburgh* inspired by Piero della Francesca's religious figures and her memories of the Pittsburgh factories.
- 1928** Travels to Cleveland where she takes her first plane ride from Cleveland to Detroit. Visits the Ford River Rouge plant and sketches new planes in their hanger as well as the plant's coke and coal conveyors. Trip results in two precisionist works.
- 1929** Daniel Gallery mounts a "one man" show of Driggs' work. This year she creates her final precisionist work, *St. Bartholomew*.
Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney purchases *Pittsburgh* at Driggs first solo exhibition at the Daniel Gallery.
- 1932** The Daniel Gallery closes due to financial difficulties, and Driggs is in need of a dealer. Driggs is now represented by New Art Circle, a New York City gallery operated by J. B. Neumann.
- 1933** Meets Lee Gatch (1902-1968) future husband and abstract painter at a tea honoring Georg Grosz at the new Art Circle.
- 1934** Driggs' executes a major oil painting, now lost, under the Public Works of Art Project, a federal program. Also created a mural series, depicting animals from Uncle Remus, for the WPA in Harlem House in New York City.
- 1935** Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries, New York City, becomes Driggs' dealer.
- c.1935-1940** Driggs writes and creates an illustration for *Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal*, a children's short story.
- 1936** Creates mural for nursery wall in Harlem River Houses for Treasure Relief Art Project in New York.
- 1936-1937** Spends summer of 1936 in New Hope Farmhouse. Returns to New Hope in summer of 1937 to live in a house on Eagle Road at Jericho Mountain. Lee and Elsie purchase a stone house in Lambertville, NJ where they live for the next 30 years, known as "Coon Path".
- 1938** Elsie and Lee's only child Merriman is born in March. One-man exhibition at Frank K. M. Rehn Galleries in New York. Obtains a copy of Emily Dickinson's poetry and creates watercolors inspired by Dickinson's verse.
- 1939** Both Gatch and Driggs create a post office mural for the WPA, painting them on the floor of the Lambertville train station. Driggs creates a mural for the Rayville Louisiana Post Office. Begins watercolor and pastel collages.
- 1947-48** Lives in New York City with daughter Merriman. Teachers at Hewitt School, a private high school for young girls on 79th street.
- 1940s-1950s** Role of mother and wife time consuming for Driggs, so work was minimal.
- 1952** Completes an oil painting, *Unusual Postage*, on the floor of her attic in Lambertville.
- 1952-53** Exhibits in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's juried show *American Watercolors, Drawings and Prints*.
- 1953** Driggs has a one artist exhibition at Frank K. M. Rehn galleries, New York from April to May.
- 1960** Exhibits in *The Precisionist View in American Art* show at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis from November to December.
- 1960s** Most productive period for Driggs since the 1920s. In the early 1960s, an

- extension is added to her house and Elsie acquires her own studio. Creates a series of large oils, called “A Celebration”. Driggs begins to work in a soak-stain technique, thinning the pigment and applying it fluidly like watercolor. Intense colors were used.
- 1968** Creates a series of oil figurative abstract studies of women, using watercolor techniques. Lee Gatch dies in November.
- 1969** Moves to New York City.
- 1971** In February, Driggs has a one artist exhibition at La Boetie, New York includes oils, watercolors, collages and standing drawings.
- 1977** Work is included in *The Modern Spirit: American Paintings 1908-1935* from August to September at the Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh and Hayward Gallery, London.
- 1977-1978** Work is shown in *American Art 1920-1945*, Whitney Museum of American Art.
- 1978** In July, work is included in *The Precisionist Painters 1916-1949: Interpretations of a Mechanical Age* at the Heckscher Museum, Huntington, New York.
- Late 1970s** Writes “The Search for Piero della Francesca”. Begins creating assemblages in shadow boxes that include crayon drawings of classical architectural features and actual shoe forms.
- 1980** One artist show at Martin Diamond Fine Arts, New York in May.
- 1980-81** (November-December) Work is shown in *America-Traum und Depression 1920/40* at the Akademie der Kunst, West Berlin and travels to Kunstverein, Hamburg.
- 1981** Work is included in *Jersey City Museum Invitational*. Jersey City, New Jersey in February.
- 1982** On February 25th, receives National Lifetime achievement Award from the Women’s Caucus for Art, an affiliate society of the College Art Association. New York City.
- 1982-3** (Sept-Nov). Work is included in *Images of America: Precisionist Painting and Photography* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
- 1983** (Sept.-Nov.). Work is included in *Three American Modernist Artists* at Martin Diamond Fine Arts, New York.
- 1988** (April-May). Work is included in *Visions of Tomorrow: New York, 1920s and 30s* at Iseton Museum, Tokyo, Japan.
- 1990-91** (October-January). One-woman exhibition at The New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey. January-March. Traveled to Phillips Collection, Washington.
- 1992** Dies July 12, 1992.

Chronological information taken from *Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical*, Exhibition Catalogue by Constance Kimmerle, Copyright 2008, James A. Michener Art Museum.

Vocabulary

Abstract: art that is concerned with essential form and color to the extent that color and form may be the subject of the work. Realistic details may be absent; imagery may be simple, exaggerated, or distorted. Abstraction often relies on inner vision and feelings.

Assemblage: (also known as a found-object sculpture) a three-dimensional composition created by various materials such as found objects, wood, paper, and textiles.

Atmospheric Perspective: the illusion of depth and distance created by using dull, pale colors and hazy details in the background of a painting. Colors become lighter with distance, objects appear smaller, and details are less distinct. Artists sometimes put blue, hazier tones toward the horizon.

Avant-garde: term in French means “advance guard”, or “vanguard”. People often use the term to refer to people or works that are novel or experimental, particularly with respect to art, culture and politics

Automatic: occurring independently of volition, as certain muscular actions; involuntary; done unconsciously or from force of habit; mechanical; occurring spontaneously.

Automatism: Also called automatic drawing, painting, sculpture, or writing. A process of making art randomly, mechanically, or by unconscious free association (rather than under the control of a conscious artist), after establishing a set of conditions (such as types of materials, etc.) within which a work is to be carried out. Some examples of artists who worked in this process include: André Masson (French, 1896-1987), and Joan Miró (Spanish, 1893-1983).

Background: Those objects in a painting that seem the most distant, as if at the back of the picture. These objects appear smallest in a painting. The background is behind the middle ground and foreground.

Brushstrokes: the marks made by a brush

Canvas: piece of heavy woven cloth backed or framed with wooden stretcher bars and used as a surface for a painting; *also* the painting on such a surface

Classical: the style, traditions, and qualities of ancient times, especially the art and sculpture of ancient Greece and Rome (formal).

Collage: a grouping of papers, fabric, or other two-dimensional objects attached to a flat surface with an emphasis on color and texture. The word collage comes from the French word, "coller" meaning "to paste."

Composition: The placement or arrangement of the elements in a work of art. More simply, where an artist puts things in his or her paintings.

Easel: a frame for supporting something (as an artist's canvas)

Environment: the situation, conditions, or objects, by which one is surrounded.

Figurative: Describes artwork representing the form of a human, an animal or a thing; relating or representing form in art by means of human or animal figures.

Focal point: In a work of art, the center of visual attention, often different from the physical center of the work.

Foreground: Those objects in a painting that seem the closest. These objects appear to be the largest in the painting.

Gesso: a plaster or a plaster-like material made of gypsum and glue that is used as a ground for painting. This is coated on the surface of canvas or wood before paint is applied. This material can also be used for preparing a surface for sculpture.

Great Depression: the period known as the worst and longest economic collapse in the history of the industrialized modern world, lasting from the end of 1929 until the early 1940s. The Depression extended to most of the world's industrial countries, which had become economically dependent on one another during the 20th century. The beginning of the Great Depression is associated with the stock market crash on October 29, 1929, in the United States, known as Black Tuesday. During the Depression, there were rapid declines in the manufacture and sale of goods and an abrupt, severe rise in unemployment. Jobs and homes were lost, and businesses and banks closed their doors. Many depended on charity to survive.

Horizon Line: In nature, this is the line where sea or land and sky appear to meet. In a painting, the horizon line is an imaginary line drawn across the picture plane at the viewer's eye level.

Idealized: Something that is regarded or treated as ideal or something made or envisioned as perfect, representing a model of excellence.

Impasto: the thick application of a pigment to a canvas or panel in painting

Independents: (see New Group) a group of modern artists working in Pennsylvania in the 1930s. They gathered for the purpose of breaking away from the conservative New Hope School to collaborate on their artwork and exchange intellectual and creative dialogue. They planned art and community art works that were radical and visionary. Artists in this group included Charles Evans, Henry Baker, Charles Child, Ralston Crawford, Robert Hogue, Peter Keenen, R. A. D. Miller, Charles F. Ramsey, and Faye Swengel Badura.

Industry: is the section of economy concerned with the production of goods and services; it is generally known as a department or branch of a craft, art, business, or manufacture; specifically, one that employs a large personnel and investment especially in manufacturing.

Landscape: a scenery painting; a painting about nature; also includes the cityscape or seascape

Machine Age Exposition: a landmark exhibition in 1927 in New York that featured modern art and products of industry, described the machine as 'the religious expression of today.' (Kimmerle, 30)

Middleground: objects in a painting that are in the middle of the objects in the foreground and background.

Modernism: term describes a series of reforming cultural movements in art, architecture, music, literature and the applied arts which emerged roughly in the period of 1884-1914 running into the 1940s. Modernist artists rebelled against late-nineteenth century academic and historic traditions and were interested in innovations and inventions in their art in the areas of color, form, technique, and subject matter. It flourished in large cosmopolitan centers, and many areas of the world including Germany, Holland, Moscow, Paris, Prague and New York.

Mood: the overall feeling, emotion or atmosphere conveyed in a work of art or literature.

Movement: the quality (as in a painting or sculpture) of representing or suggesting motion

Mural: a painting on a wall, ceiling or other large permanent surface.

New Group: (see Independents) a secessionist group of modernist artists that later became the Independents in the 1930s. Charles Evans was one of its original members, along with Henry Baker, Charles Child, Ralston Crawford, Robert Hogue, Peter Keenan, R. A. D. Miller, C. F. Ramsey, and Faye Swengel Badura. Charles Frederick Ramsey was the leader of the New Group.

Oil paints: a relatively slow-drying paint made from pigments mixed with an oil base.

Paint tube: The invention in 1841 allowing the Impressionists to paint outdoors all day. Tubes were created out of tin. Before that, an artist had to squeeze paints stored in sacks made from pig's bladders. According to Renoir, "Without tubes of paint, there would have been no Impressionism."

Pastels: Pigments mixed with gum and water, and pressed into a dried stick form for use as crayons.

Palette: 1. a thin oval or rectangular board or tablet that a painter holds and mixes pigments on; 2. the set of colors put on the palette; 3. a particular range, quality, or use of color

Palette knife: a flexible metal knife used by an artist to mix paint and apply paint to his or her work surface; the use of a palette knife often results in a thick application of paint

Perspective: method of representing the illusion of spatial recession on a flat surface.

Pigment: a finely powdered color substance that is mixed with a liquid (oil, water or another fluid) in which it is relatively insoluble that produces the color of any medium. Made from either synthetic or natural substances.

Portrait: any form of art expression that features an animal or a person as its main subject matter

Precisionism: A style of early twentieth century painting in which depicted scenes - many of industrial architecture - or objects. Precisionists typically depicted mechanical and industrial subject matter, such as smokestacks, steel foundries, or grain elevators. These subjects were usually reduced or simplified to geometric forms and rendered in bright and clear light, by a combination of abstraction and realism. The most noted among artists painting in this style were Charles Demuth (American, 1883-1935) and Charles Sheeler (American, 1883-1965).

Realism: an approach to art in which subjects are portrayed in as straightforward manner as possible, without idealizing them and without following the rules of formal theory. As a movement, from the mid 19th century, Realism was a name for art that depicted scenes of everyday life.

Realistic: having the quality of looking real, non abstract; a style of art that shows places, events, people or objects as the eye sees them

Rhythm: in music, the regular pattern of beats and emphasis or a particular but not necessarily regular pattern of beats; in poetry, the pattern formed by stressed and unstressed syllables and repetition of words and phrases; in art, a pattern of elements suggesting movement or pace.

Shape: An element of art that is an enclosed space defined and determined by other art elements such as color, line, texture and value. Shapes are limited to two dimensions - length and width, but they may take on the appearance of solid three-dimensional object in painting and drawing. Examples of shapes include: circle, triangle, square, etc.

Space: An element of art that refers to the distance or area between, around, above, below, or within things. It can be described in a variety of ways including: flat, shallow, or deep; two-dimensional or three-dimensional; positive or negative; open or closed; and as actual, ambiguous, or illusory.

Spontaneity: The quality or condition of being spontaneous (coming or resulting from a natural impulse or tendency; without effort or premeditation; natural and unconstrained; unplanned); spontaneous behavior, impulse, or movement.

Stain technique or stain painting: involves watering down oil paint with paint thinner or acrylic paint with water so the colors are runny and drippy when applied to the canvas.

Style: the result of an artist's means of expression – the use of materials, the design qualities, the methods of work and choice of subject matter. In most cases, these choices show the unique qualities of an individual, culture or time period. The style of an artwork can help you to know how it is different from other artworks.

Texture: the tactile quality of an artwork; the way it feels or the way it looks like it feels.

Theme: the major subject or idea behind a discussion, a piece of writing, or a work of art. A theme can also be the idea that brings meaning to a work.

Value: difference in the lightness of darkness of a hue (or color)

Warm and cool colors: warm colors are associated with fire and the sun. They include reds, oranges and yellows. Cool colors are connected with cool places, things or feelings. Cool colors include the family of colors ranging from the blues and greens through the violets.

Watercolor: pigment mixed with a binder and applied with water to give a transparent effect.

Wet on wet (or wet in wet): describes the process of applying pigment to wet paper. The results vary from soft, undefined shapes to slightly blurred marks, depending on how wet the paper is. The wet on wet technique can be applied over existing washes provided they are thoroughly dry. Simply wet the paper with a large brush and paint into the dampness. The soft marks made by painting wet in wet are great for subtle background regions of a painting.

Works Progress Administration (WPA): a relief measure established in 1935 by the President in an effort to ease the burdens created by the Great Depression. The program offered work to the unemployed on an unprecedented scale by spending federal money on a wide variety of programs, including highways and building construction, slum clearance, reforestation, and rural rehabilitation.

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www.michenerartmuseum.org/bucksartists

Michener Kids
www.kids.michenerartmuseum.org

Modernism Timeline developed by the Minneapolis Institute of Arts
www.artsmia.org/modernism

Bucks County, Pennsylvania
www.buckscounty.org

Elsie Driggs on Artcyclopedia
www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/driggs_elsie.html

Online art dictionary
www.artlex.com

Website for Resource Library featuring the article on the exhibition, *Elsie Driggs: The Quick and the Classical*.
<http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/7aa/7aa862.htm>

Whitney Museum of American Art's American Voices audio tour featuring Driggs' *Pittsburgh, 1927*.
http://www.whitney.org/www/american_voices/532/index.html

Queensborough Bridge, 1927 by Elsie Driggs at the Montclair Art Museum
www.montclairartmuseum.org/SearchCollections_details.cfm?id=24

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Great Buildings Website featuring the Javits Convention Center
http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Javits_Convention_Center.html

*All websites retrieved February, 2008.

***Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal* by Elsie Driggs**

There was once a tiger named Benji-Ben- Ali-Bengal who lived in a very great forest. There were more trees in that forest than there were stripes on all the coats of all the tigers in the whole world. And all the animals who dwelt in the forest lived together so happily that if a slight growl were occasionally heard you might say that it was a tiger or a leopard turning in his sleep--certainly nothing more serious than that.

One day, Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal walked softly through the woods all the way to the place where the grass and the houses begin and there shining in the grass was a mirror. "This is indeed a very beautiful thing," said Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal and he picked it up in his mouth and went softly through the forest all the way back to his home. Then and only then did he stop to look into it. He took a step backward in surprise. "I have here," he said, "a wonderful little tiger." The tiger in the mirror seemed to say, "I have here a wonderful little Tiger," but he made no sound.

Then Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal called to a very green snake who was passing by and said "Go as quickly as you can and ask the first lion you meet to come here to this spot tomorrow two hours before sundown. Tell him I have found a wonderful thing and I wish an opinion. Give him the same message to the first leopard, the first fox, the first monkey and so on and so forth till you have invited one of every animal in the whole forest. Now please go quickly." The snake moved swiftly this way and that way and soon disappeared.

At four o'clock sharp on the following day came the lion, the leopard, the monkey, the fox and more and more animals but always one of a kind. Then Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal drew forth his mirror from under some roots and handing it to the lion he said proudly, "I have here a wonderful little tiger." The lion looked into the mirror and then took a step backward. "Tiger?" he roared. "A lion you mean." He passed it quickly to the monkey. "Lion!" shrilled the monkey. "Anyone can see it is a monkey!" He passed the mirror to the leopard. "Monkey?" snapped the leopard.

"A lion!" "A fox." "A tiger!" "A monkey!"-- Louder and louder grew the din. Then suddenly silence fell. The lion stalked away through the forest, then the leopard and the monkey till all the animals had melted away. Only Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal was left.

For a while there was absolute silence. Then away off in the distance there was a sort growl, like a lion or a leopard turning in his sleep. There was another growl, and another. Nearer and nearer it came.

g-r-r -g-r-r-r g-r-r-r

g-r-r -g-r-r-r g-r-r-r

G-R-R- -G-F-F-F G-R-R-R

G-R-O-W-L R-O-A-R!!!

The very sky seemed to burst upon Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal. Out of the forest into the clearing sprang tiger and lion and leopard, monkey and fox and so on and so forth by the hundreds they came, till the sky and the earth and the trees were one roar.

Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal as he listened could hear through all the tumult and din an angry song. It went:

“A lion, a tiger

A lion, a tiger

A leopard, a leopard

A monkey, a fox!”

And so on and so forth they fought and they clawed, swaying this way and that till one small monkey seeing the wonderful mirror lying forgotten, snatched it quickly and scampered up a tall slim tree till at the very top he rested breathlessly and gazed into the mirror. "A monkey it is," said he. Then how it happened I do not know, but the beautiful mirror slipped from his grasp. Down it sped like a falling star till at the bottom of the tree it dashed against a stone and broke into five glistening pieces. A great silence fell upon all the animals. So great was the silence that you could have heard a worm turning in that forest. Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal walked slowly up to the mirror and touched the pieces with his soft paw. "It is broken," he said, as if all the animals did not know it was broken. "It is quite spoiled." Then looking more closely he noticed that in each shining piece he saw a tiger. In fact there were now five little tigers like himself.

Then Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal began to think and he thought up a truly great idea, but he did not tell the other animals. All he said was "I invite you tomorrow night to this spot in this clearing; the King of the lions, the King of the leopards, the monkeys, the foxes and I myself as King of the tigers will spread a feast upon the ground and when we five kinds who rule this forest have eaten, I will tell you my plan." Then slowly the other animals went back through the forest for they were all very tired, sore and hoarse from biting and snarling and scratching and they were very glad to go home and sleep and perhaps dream of the strange and beautiful mirror.

The next day at the appointed hour the kings met. The coat of each was carefully put in order, so that few of the marks of yesterday's battle could be noted. The animals were very polite, one to the

other, but each looked with longing at the great feast spread before him and it was hard indeed to remember his manners and not snatch a pomegranate, a banana or a carefully prepared fowl. It was Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal who suggested that first of all they settle down to the feast. The business of the meeting could wait. So the five kinds sampled the wonderful food, each watching the others manners, but gradually they forgot. There was some grabbing and snatching and the lion was secretly sure that the leopard had gotten more than his share and the monkey felt that the fox had gone much too far with his third helping. But in the end they did remember that after all they were kings, besides the appetites of all of the animals were finally satisfied.

When every last scrap was gone and for awhile the guests had talked about this and that, Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal cleared his throat and said, "There are five of us, are there not?" All agreed that the King of tigers had spoken correctly. "We are the five Kings who rule this forest, are we not?" Again the other animals agreed. "Then," continued the host, "should we not of all the animals have this mirror?" The leopard, the fox, the lion and the monkey nodded their heads. "But before this mirror broke there seemed no way of dividing it," the tiger said softly and looked at the others slyly with a sideways glance to see if they were beginning to understand. "Now," said Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal triumphantly, "I will give you each a piece and each King can set his mirror in his crown. When he does not wear his crown he may look into the mirror and there see himself. He may even consult himself on affairs of state being sure the while that he will have complete agreement in all matters."

The other animals lept to their feet. They crowded about the King of tigers and with many bows, paw shaking, and this and that, they went home. Now there was much talk in the forest. You might say there was speculation and when you speculate you say, for instance, "I think there is a great secret," or "I think something most unusual is about to happen," or even, "Each of us will soon be receiving a Royal invitation." This is the way the animals talked, sometimes in whispers and sometimes I must admit quite loudly so that a few of the small animals who must nap by day started to complain.

It is always hard to wait and when you wait time passes slowly, but actually it was not very long before all through the woods darting this way and that came rabbits and rabbits and still more rabbits carrying envelopes large and square with postage stamps in the upper right corner. As each of the animals took his envelope do you think for a moment he tore it open? With a "Thank you kindly," he placed a claw just under the flap and carefully cut the edge of the paper, for he knew that inside was the answer to all his speculation. It was ----- an invitation, in short a Royal Command on a white

sheet of paper with a golden crown. It stated in so many words, in fact it commanded his presence the very next day at a Royal Reception two hours before sundown.

Now at last there was no talk, just a hurrying and scurrying, coat brushing, and nail polishing. Every one rose early next day and every one had breakfast with eggs, for there was much to be done and a long day ahead. One must never be late for a Royal Reception, so with time to spare the animals set out from all of their homes with shining coats and their very best manners. Each particular animal moved toward the place in the forest where his particular King held sway. And as he approached the particular clearing he saw a beautiful red carpet stretching all the way to a throne, which was really a mound of moss set all about with gems and flowers, with the birds and butterflies lending their presence. All admitted they never had seen a throne more sumptuous anywhere and upon this throne sat their King in a red robe with ermine trim. A scepter of gold was in his paw and a ring on one claw with a golden seal.

In the center of his crown the King had set his piece of the mirror for all to see. As his subjects gazed up on him they thought, "How splendid and regal our great King looks. What a beautiful crown!" They crowded forward and as each knelt before his monarch the King inclined his head graciously and the subject was pleased to see himself mirrored in the King's crown the while he thought, "How great and wise must be the head which wears a crown with such a wonderful jewel!"

Not one animal this day was forgotten. No matter how small or unimportant, he bent his knee and payed his homage to the King in his particular part of the forest. And now the King, being good and kingly, knew he must do a royal act of generosity, one might say kindness, for each of his subjects, large or small. So as every animal backed away from the Royal Presence, he was tapped on the arm by the King's Equerry who then led him to a clearing that was set about all with eucalyptus trees and there on the ground on a white table cloth were row upon row of plates of ice cream. And that wasn't all, for a full moon that night, like a lamp in the sky, cast a soft white glow on a dancing floor or moss and fern and every one danced, even the King, till the early hours of the following day. And each one agreed his Particular King was quite the most gracious and Royal King of all! And that didn't worry the Tiger King Benji-Ben-Ali-Bengal-----at all.

So it came to pass that a quiet fell upon that forest and if a growl were occasionally heard you might say that it was a tiger or a leopard turning in his sleep, certainly nothing more serious than that.

Notes

ⁱ Bucks County Artists Database, James A. Michener Art Museum

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ Kimmerle, Constance. The Quick and the Classical. (Philadelphia: James A. Michener Art Museum and University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 48.

^{iv} Ibid., 23-26.

^v Ibid., 30-34.

^{vi} Ibid., 51.

^{vii} Ibid., 52.

^{viii} Ibid., 52.

^{ix} Ibid., 25-26.

^x Ibid., 29.

^{xi} Ibid., 29.

^{xii} Ibid., 44.