

Focus on William L. Lathrop: A Poetic Approach to Nature



A C T I V I T Y S H E E T

Tour Activity:

This exhibit provides examples of works done by the father of the New Hope School of Impressionism, William Langson Lathrop. He was important in the birth and development of the artist colony that formed along the Delaware River, the *New Hope School of Impressionism*.

Lathrop was referred to as a **Tonalist** in some of his early works. He was preoccupied with conveying the many and varied **moods** of nature, often employing a **darker palette** and doing most of his work in **studio**. Lathrop is referred to as the "gentle, intimate interpreter of nature." (Impressionist painters were concerned with the *effects of light* and Tonalists were concerned with the *attributes associated with light*.) As Lathrop moved toward the technique of the Impressionists later in his career, he never seemed to lose his Tonalist qualities in his work.

Lathrop was also referred to as a "**poet**". He evoked attributes that associated with light: warmth, emotional brightness, spirituality, and a sense of directionality. Lathrop created "**intimate vistas**": vast expanses of landscapes that are at the same time quietly hospitable, in which the human and natural worlds are delicately woven together. Lathrop learned the rhythm of the seasons firsthand by living on a farm.

Choose a landscape by Lathrop such as *Chilmark Moor*, *Martha's Vineyard, 1930*, and compare it to another Impressionist landscape in the exhibit. Would you consider this painting to have any Tonalist qualities? Why or why not? _____

Describe the similarities and differences between the **light** in the Lathrop painting and the other painting. _____

Compare the **brushstrokes** of Lathrop with the brushstrokes of the other painting you have chosen. How are they different? Similar? _____

What **mood** is Lathrop conveying in his painting? _____

How is Lathrop's choice of **colors** affecting the mood? _____

Describe the **atmosphere** in each of the paintings. How are they similar/different? _____

(See other side.....)

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What **season** is it in each of the paintings? If you were walking in Lathrop's landscape, how would you feel? _____

Discuss the differences/similarities in **composition** between two images. _____

Is there any **action** or **movement** in either of the landscapes? _____

Does the landscape by Lathrop cover a large expanse, or a more narrowly confined space? _____

Since Lathrop was referred to as a "poet", what do you think he's saying? If you could create a short poem of the Lathrop painting in front of you, what would you say?

What area of the painting attracts your attention in the Lathrop landscape? This is the **focal point** of the painting. _____

Lathrop wrote many letters and kept a logbook. Do you own a diary? Why is it important to have a diary? Why is it important to write letters? _____

How do you communicate with others today? How many types of communication are there? _____

The National Art Standards addressed in this activity are: **Content Standard 2**: Using knowledge of structures and functions; **Content Standard 3**: Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas; **Content Standard 6**: Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines. The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standards addressed in this activity are: **9.3 Critical Response** and **9.4 Aesthetic Response**.