

FRYE

ART MUSEUM

Guided Artwork Discussion: Hans Dahl

<https://youtu.be/vdzUGbbcaV8>

Thank you for joining us for a virtual Artwork Discussion with the Frye Art Museum. My name is Caroline, and I am the Education Coordinator here at the Frye. I will be facilitating today's digital discussion. While we cannot be together in the galleries, we hope you will still enjoy the opportunity to slow down, look closely, and spend some time with a work from the Frye Collection.

It's always fun to look at art by yourself or invite a friend or family member to join you in this discussion. You might also choose to write down your observations or make a drawing in response. If this is the case, please gather your materials now.

We will begin each artwork discussion by taking a quiet moment to simply look at the work of art and observe. Remember there are no right or wrong answers—it's about what you notice or experience when looking. After you have taken a moment to observe on your own, I will ask some questions to guide your looking and provide information about the artwork before we end.

You can expand or minimize the video on your screen for the discussion. You can also access closed captioning through the settings tool. Take a moment to see what works best for your viewing.

Today's theme is **Step into Spring**. A time when the ground begins to thaw and the sun begins to shine, spring can also represent transition and new experience, evident in the blossoming of flowers and bright nod of nature. As we look at today's artwork, I encourage you to consider how, especially in these uncertain times, the promise of spring can present fresh ways of looking and feeling.

This is the artwork we will be looking at today. We will take pauses in between each set of questions to give you time to look closely at the artwork and think about your responses. Remember: you may pause this video at any time to spend more time on one of the slides.

To start our discussion, please take 30 seconds to look quietly at this piece. You might start at the top corner of the canvas, moving across and down. You may move close to the screen to see details or step back for a new perspective. Your cursor is a great tool to trace and track details within the artwork.

Thank you for your quiet observation.

We will now move into our guided questions. If you are looking with a friend or family member, we hope you will share your observations, or consider writing down or sketching your answers.

1. Where might this scene take place? What do you see that makes you say that? Does this scene look familiar to you?
2. What time of the year do you think it is? What elements in the painting guide you to that conclusion?
3. What is the relationship between the figures and their surrounding? Are they concerned? At ease?
4. An art historian once described this artist's work with the following quote: "Everything is sunny, everything laughs, the landscapes as well as the figures." What feeling do you think the artist wanted you to have when looking at this painting?
5. Close your eyes and imagine you are in this painting. What do you hear? Smell? See? Feel?

Thank you for taking the time to share and reflect on your observations. I would now like to share some information on this piece.

Hans Dahl (Norwegian, 1849-1937)

Untitled, 1883-1915

Oil on canvas

25 3/4 x 19 1/2 in.

Credit Line: Gift in honor of the memory of Arthur and Lorraine Samuelson, 2015.007

Photo Credit: Mark Woods

Hans Dahl was a late 19th-century Norwegian artist. The son of an infantry captain, Dahl spent three years in the Norwegian Army but retired to pursue painting. He traveled and exhibited throughout Western Europe and was granted a professorship under German Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Dahl remained connected to Norway, spending summers in the countryside and eventually settled in the village of Balestrand. He found inspiration in the grand beauty of Norwegian landscapes and the local people and customs. He was popular with foreign tourist markets for the immense detail and pleasant charm of his scenes.

On the other hand, Dahl was criticized by some for resisting more modernist styles. While most major Norwegian artists were moving away from romanticized scenes, Dahl continued to produce stereotyped pictures of peasant girls who were perennially healthy, smiling, and cheerful.

Untitled fits effortlessly into Dahl's body of work. Here we see two unidentified young women sitting in a detailed rocky landscape. From our knowledge of the artist's practice, we might assume the beautiful scene is in Norway.

The figures at the center of his painting rest in the grass alongside a dirt path. In the background, a structure rests atop an additional hill separated from our figures with a body of water cutting across the middle of the canvas.

Dahl uses a variety of colors in *Untitled*—greens, reds, yellows, and blues create a sunny spring day in the countryside, while browns and reds render sharp shadows on the hillside. That warmth of his scene also extends to his characters, who are depicted at ease in the landscape. You, too, might find yourself charmed by the sentimentality of Dahl's painting.

To close out today's discussion, I'd like to leave you with a question. Following a long winter, what do you most looking forward to doing in the spring? If you're watching with someone, please consider sharing, or you might write down your answer.

Thank you for joining us for a virtual artwork discussion. We can't wait to welcome you back to the Museum again soon.