

here:now Artwork Discussion – Hope: In Times of the Unknown (1)

<https://youtu.be/iyn6UuStOW0>

Thank you for joining us for a virtual here:now 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 making 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. Remember: you may pause this video at any time to spend more time on one of the slides.

Today's theme is **Hope: In Times of the Unknown**. Given the uncertainty in our world right now, how can art be a source of comfort and light? I encourage you to consider this question as we look at a painting from the Frye Collection. I am particularly excited that this format allows us to share works from the Frye's collection that we have not previously featured in a here:now discussion due to size, location, or other reasons.

This is the artwork we will be looking at for today's discussion. Please take one minute to quietly look 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.

Thank you for your quiet observation.

What's going on in this work of art? If you are looking with a friend or family member, share your initial observation, or consider writing it down, or sketching it out.

We will now move into our guided questions. 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.

1. Where might this scene take place? What do you see that makes you say that?
2. Another question for your consideration. What is the figure's relationship to her surroundings? Does she appear concerned? At ease?
3. For the next question, I encourage you to close your eyes and imagine you are in this painting. What do you hear? Smell? See? Feel?
4. For our final question, imagine this were a still from a film. What do you think might happen in the next frame? If you have a writing utensil and paper, you might like to draw this out.

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

Mathias Schmid (Austrian, 1835-1923)

In a Föhn Storm, 1886

Oil on cardboard

21 ¼ x 12 5/8 in.

Founding Collection, Gift of Charles and Emma Frye

Mathias Schmid was a 19th-century Austrian painter known for his realistic portrayals of landscapes and the psychology of peasant experience.

Schmid's own childhood in Austria was shaped by a hard peasant life and religious instruction. A talented drawer, he landed a job as a gilder of religious art in Munich and was eventually accepted into the Munich Art Academy.

He became a pioneer in turning away from the idyllic mountain landscapes that were popular at the time, instead chronicling poverty, outcasts, and difficulties of peasant life.

While Schmid's focus on the inner, sometimes unflattering, experience of his subjects drew controversy from locals, he received praise from art critics. His work was exhibited in places like Vienna, Berlin, and Paris. He was honored by the Munich Academy, recognized by King Ludwig II, and offered nobility status and professorships throughout Europe. Schmid declined these opportunities, however, to concentrate solely on his painting.

In 1893, Schmid earned a medal at the "World's Columbian Exposition of Chicago." We know that Charles and Emma Frye attended this exposition but can only speculate as to whether they were introduced to Schmid's work at this time.

In A Fohn Storm is the painting we are looking at today and is part of the Frye's Founding Collection. A fohn wind refers to an unusually warm fall wind occurring in the Alps mountain range. A fohn storm, specifically, produces much more dangerous, hurricane-force winds.

Schmid's interest in the internal experience peasant life is also evident in this painting. Here we see a young girl standing in the middle of this dangerous windstorm, her hat having blown off in a gust. In a barren landscape, the sprouting trees and beginnings of grass to the right of the scene have been interpreted to suggest hope, while the orange in the distant sky could be a sunrise or new beginning. Fohn winds are known to create clear skies, allowing one to see into the distance, perhaps towards a brighter future.

I would like to leave you with a quote from James Joyce. As part of a 2013 exhibition at the Frye, staff members were asked to assign a stanza from Joyce's "Thirty-Six

Chambers" to a work in the collection. Here is one that was chosen to accompany *In A Fohn Storm*, which I felt provided a glimmer of hope in this uncertain time.

"At that hour when all things have repose,
O lonely watcher of the skies,
Do you hear the night wind and the sighs
Of harps playing unto Love to uncloset
The pale gates of sunrise?"

Thank you for joining us for a here:now artwork discussion. We can't wait to welcome you back to the Frye again soon.