

WONDER WEEKLY



**WRITTEN BY
WILLIAM CURRIE**

ON WONDER

WHAT IS WONDER?

Before we can find wonder we must first figure out what wonder is exactly. To us here at Wonder Weekly, wonder is the feeling of bewilderment, that awe striking moment of being full of questions. Our wonder stems from our ability to question the world around us, and the world within us.

To wonder is to follow your curiosity. Thinking back to our childhood, we were always asking questions and wanting to know more about the world. We had a need to satisfy all of curiosities and were restless if we were unable to do so. However, as we got older our society's patience for our sense of curiosity dwindled, and so our curiosity went with it. Now, as adults we have lost our wonder.

However, this does not mean that our ability to wonder is gone. We must simply remember to ask questions, and not be satisfied by half an answer. We must chase after the parts of life that make us stop and think, even for just a moment. The more we think, the more we wonder.

One way that we encourage our readers to follow their wonder is to find a work of art that leaves anyone who sees them in awe. Works of art that are rich in history and mystery combined. On top of this, we also look at the artist responsible.

FUN FACT: MICHELANGELO ALWAYS IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS A FLORENTINE, BUT SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE IN ROME

OUR WONDERFUL ARTIST

Our choice for this activity is the great Italian artist Michelangelo, however you are encouraged to use whichever artist works best for you.

Michelangelo was born in the village of Caprese. His family was moderately successful, which allowed for Michelangelo to become an apprentice to a painter, and further go on to study within the sculpture gardens of the renowned Medici family. He then went on to create some of the greatest works of art in history. (biography.com).

Michelangelo's collection mainly consisted of catholic art works. Among this breathtaking collection is "David", "Last Judgement", and our wonderful work of art "Pieta"



ABOUT PIETA

Pieta is a sculpture depicting Mary holding the body of her son, Jesus. When you first look at it you forget that it's made of stone. The rock is so smooth that it gets mistaken for skin. The fabric is flawless, from the wrinkles to the way it drops and balls up in the exact way it should. It is absolutely astonishing the detail that is put into the carvings, and there are absolutely no mistakes.

When you remain looking at it you begin to sympathise for Mary. You see the sadness in her face and begin to feel it just the same. Everything about this work of art is almost too perfect to be real, yet thankfully for us, it is.

HOW IT MAKES YOU WONDER

The raw skill and pure dedication beg the question of "how is this real?". When looking at this piece it is impossible not to wonder at how it was even possible to make this work of art. This leads you to wonder if there was some form of Divine Inspiration involved. D

Divine Inspiration is the idea that artists are just tools used for something bigger and better than what we are (O'Brien). Michelangelo believed that his sculptures were already in the rock, he simply had to reveal them to the world. Seeing works like Pieta make it that much more believable that

divine inspiration is involved. We begin to wonder at the idea that these works of art are the product of something bigger than us.

**"I INVENT NOTHING, I REDISCOVER"
- AUGUSTE RODIN**



A Picture of the Pieta

THE CONDITIONS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF WONDER

HOW DO WE WONDER?

Wonder isn't just about asking a question. Wonder is about having a desire to reflect on life and make sure you are constantly feeding your curiosity. In addition to that, There are also several different conditions that help you find wonder. These three conditions are as follows.

1 The first condition for the possibilty of wonder is truth. If a piece of art carries a powerful truth to it the viewers will be more likely to reflect on their

own lives, and in doing so they will be in the process of wonder.

2 The second condition for the possibility of wonder is sublimity. If something is sublime it will usually strike the viewer with some sense to learn, and thus they wonder at the world around them.

3 the third condition for the possibility of wonder is contrast. If there is contrast within a piece of art then there will be more possibility to ask questions. The more questions one can ask the more prone they are to wonder at life.

Like always we encourage our readers to find an artist that meets these requirements in order to compare them.

OUR WONDERFUL ARTIST

Our wonderful artist that meets these three conditions is the infamous postmodern architect Frank Gehry.

Gehry is known as a postmodernist due to his unconventional materials and style to his buildings. Throughout his career he would challenge the standards of the times.

He originally got his start with a cardboard furniture line titled "Easy Edges", where he accumulated enough money to remodel his house and catch the attention of the architecture world. He eventually went on to create some of the most inspiring buildings of the century, including our focus, the Louis Vuitton Foundation building. (Biography.com)

UTILITAS: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OR FUNCTION OF THE BUILDING?

THE LOUIS VUITTON FOUNDATION

When looking at a building critically we must learn to read a building. In order to do this we must look to Vitruvius, the mind behind the utilitas, firmitas and venustasis of buildings (definitions below).

The Louis Vuitton Foundation's utilitas is being an event center. The building is made to host exhibitions and performances, and so it needs to be inviting and exciting. The building needs to have large rooms to accomodate large amounts of people.

The firmitas of the Louis Vuitton Foundation is made mainly of glass and a type of concrete covered in a white fiber known as Ductal..

These materials show that the building is trying not to hide anything from the outside, and is inviting the outside in. The concrete gives the idea that the building is made to stay there a long time.

Finally, the venustasis of the biulding. The build- ing's beauty comes from the serenity of it. The building looks like it is blooming, each glass sail a leaf. The way the sun light travels in and through the building is mesmerizing. The entire building seems to be an extention of the natural surrounding. It perfectly captures the same feelings as being in a forest.

FIRMITAS: WHAT IS THE BUILDING MADE OUT OF? WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE BUILDING?

HOW IT RELATES

Frank Gehry's majestic Louis Vuitton Founda- tion building fits into the three conditions for the possibility of wonder previously men- tioned. This work carries a truth that we do not need to make ourselves so segregated from the natural beauty around us. The building makes us wonder if we can take the best parts of nature and reflect that within ourselves. This is seen through the building's

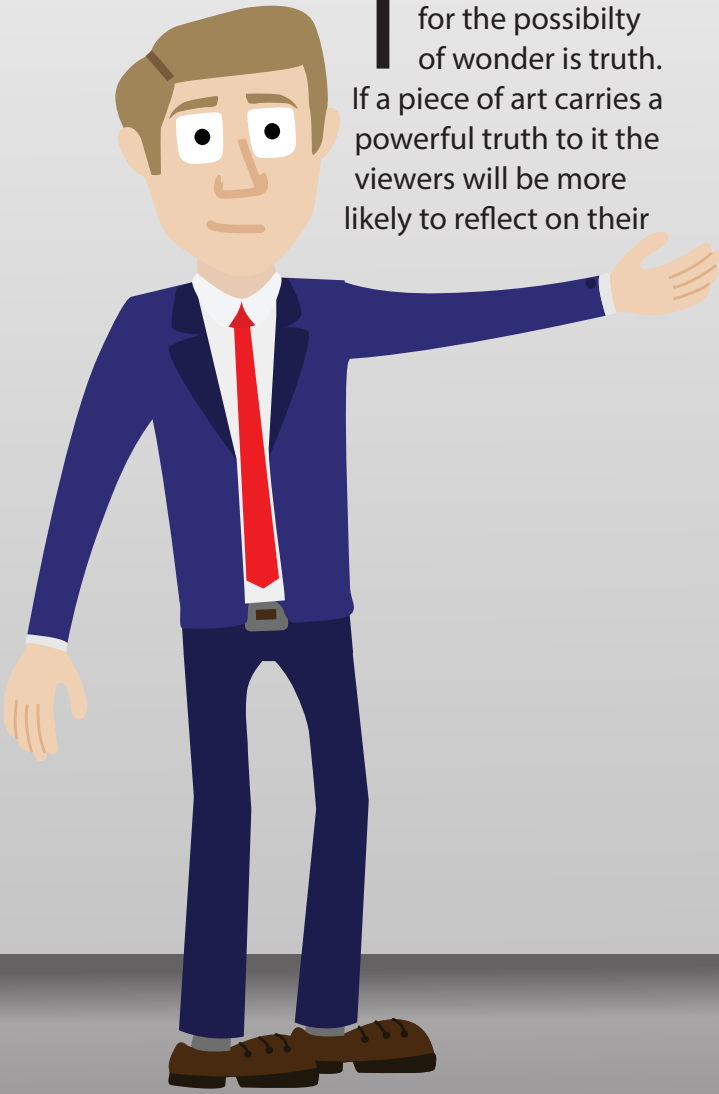


firmatis and venustasis. The building tells us to be open to the world aroud us and mimics nature.

Furthermore, this building is sublime. It is beautiful, overwhelming and awe-striking. This building fills us with questions of why and how. We wonder at how beautiful the building is, but also how small we feel compared to it.

The Louis Vuitton Foundation fills us with wonder through its use of contrast. The building contrasts with the world around it. Where most buildings are sharp and square this building is smooth and leaf-like. It contrasts the nature around it with its modern look and connection to technology. It man-

VENUSTASIS: THE BEAUTY OF THE BUILDING. WHAT ABOUT IT MAKES IT SO APPEALING?



Where in the World?

Where can we find Wonder?

There are many places to find wonder in our world. We saw wonder in the works of Frank Gehry's remarkable buildings, and we've found it in Michelangelo's perfect sculptures and paintings, but where do we find true wonder?

In my experience we find wonder the most in

nature. We are amazed and most curious about nature and the phenomenons that occur within it. If we look at a human creation we are always aware of how it came to be. No matter how skillfully a masterpiece is crafted the fact that the knowledge on how it was made takes some of the wonder away.

Whereas with nature we are given this complete work that is sublime. It is beyond words, the beauty of nature. We are left with one of the

most perfectly in tune systems ever without the full story of how it came to be. This is why nature is the best place we can look in order to find wonder.

We encourage our readers to find whichever artist works best for them.

Our Wonderful Artist

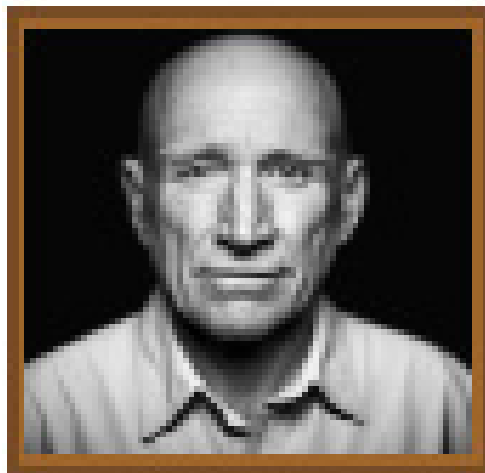
Our wonderful artist who demonstrates wonder through nature is the infamous photographer Sebastiao Salgado.

Sebastiao was born in Brazil in 1944 to a family

of successful farmers. His childhood was strongly linked to the natural beauty that surrounded him. As he went off to university for business he began protest the government's clear cutting of the rain-forest of Brazil. For his safety he moved to France with his wife.

His wife began taking photos of buildings for her school of architecture, where Selgado's interest in photography began.

Selgado would go on to be one of the few photographers brave enough to capture the horrors of the Rwandan genocide. He experienced more of the worse side of humanity than most people, and in doing so lost a piece of himself. He became ill and depressed. In order to find himself and restore his faith in life he took on a new project. (O'Brien)



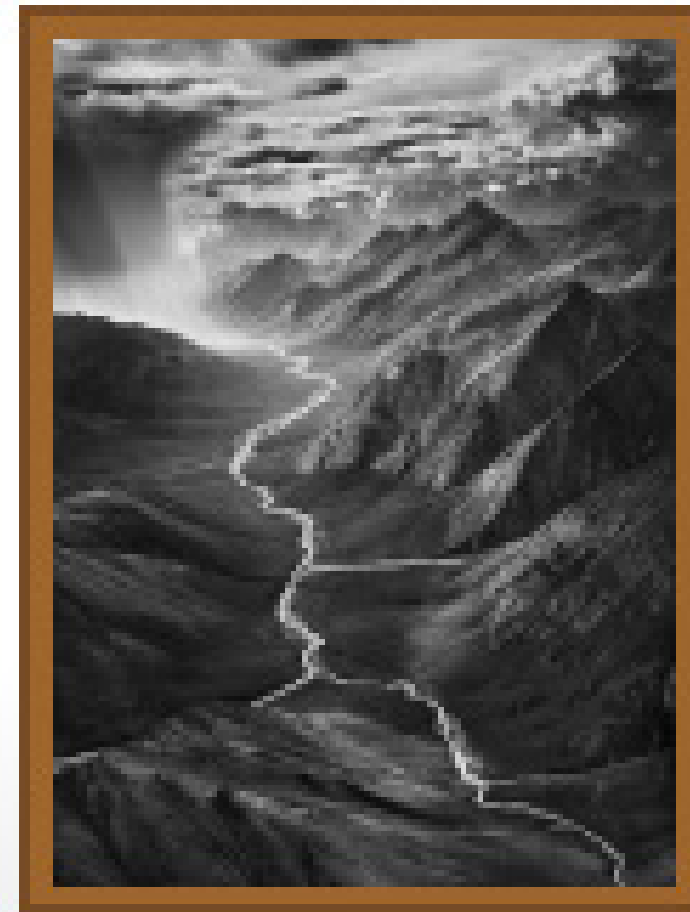
The Genesis Project

The Genesis Project is an awe-inspiring collection of Sebastiao Salgado's journeys through nature. It envelops over 200 photos and took over nine years to complete. Salgado traveled to all types of places around the world, from Madagascar to the Arctic in order to fully capture the wide range of beauty in the world. The point of the Genesis Project is to capture the pristine parts of nature, untouched by nature. Salgado has been quoted as hopefully saying "45% of our planet is still what it was at the beginning"

Finding Wonder in Nature

There are many explanations as to why we find wonder in nature. Maybe it is due to its sheer magnitude, or in the unknown that surrounds it. One theory on why we enjoy the site of nature so much is the theory of

"45% of our planet is still what it was at the beginning"



primitivism. Primitivism states that we as humans yearn to go back to what is simple in life. When we look at nature we see the simpler life that humans used to lead. We are able to wonder at the thought of how we used to be one with nature, and if we will be able to go back to those times.

Sebastiao Salgado's Genesis Project helps capture

these feelings and wonder. We see the raw majesty of the landscapes that he traveled throughout and we get immersed in it. The photographs are perfectly able to draw out the beauty that comes with the land itself, and that ignites within us the idea that we could work with nature for the parts of earth that remain untouched.

These are only portions of the questions that arise when we look at nature. There are nearly endless possible thoughts to have when looking at a landscape that has remained in tact for thousands of years. We wonder how it came to be, what will happen to it, etc. With Sebastiao Salgado's photographs we are able to look at places that we never would be able to see with our own eyes. This allows us to fill our head with these questions, and the more questions we ask the more filled with wonder we become.



Truth or Dare?

Where do we find the Truth?

When we look at art we must also consider where the truth is in art. When we are looking for the truth, what are we looking for? The truth in art is something different than truths in other parts of life. An art piece's truth is what the art piece means to the viewer.

We believe that a viewer can find this truth when they look through the canvas. What does it mean to look through the painting?

When we look through a painting we try to imagine the art as being separate from the canvas. We take the parts of the painting and figure out their place in the world, and in turn what the painting's place is to us. (O'Brien)

We are looking at an example painting today to establish the process of looking through a painting. As always we encourage our readers to find a painting that they enjoy and follow along.

"All art is unstable. Its meaning is not necessarily that implied by the author. There is no authoritative voice. There are only multiple readings."
-David Bowie

Our Wonderful Artist

Our artist that we'll be looking at today is Mary Pratt. Mary Pratt is unique in several ways. The most obvious is that she was a very successful female painter in a time when that was not so easily done. She is also unique for her look on life and subject matter of her paintings.

Mary was born in Fredericton, New Brunswick. As she grew up she was taught family value and the importance of every day life. She went on to study Mount Allison University to obtain her BFA. Here she met her husband Cristopher Pratt, another famous painter. Together they moved to St. Catherine's, Newfoundland.

Realist: A person who looks at the world the way it really is, at face value

It was here that Mary began to paint her still lifes of everyday things. Being a stay at home mother, she felt connected to her home and the important part of life kept within. This came to life in her paintings of things such as a set dinner table, or a baby being bathed. This helped push the realist movement forward. (Biography.com)

Mary received critical acclaim, a huge surprise to the current art community which was against both women and realism at the time.

Our choice of Mary Pratt's painting to look through is one of her Jelly Shelf.

Jelly Shelf

Jelly Shelf is about exactly what you'd expect - a shelf of jelly. It may be surprising for you to learn that it is not actually a photograph as it appears to be, but is a painting. This painting may seem like it has no truth to it, or that it's too simple to carry a message to others. However, that is not true. It takes looking past the simplicity of several jelly jars in order to read what the painting is trying to say.

First, we must consider what is on the canvas. We are able to see four jam jars being touched by sunlight set on a shelf or table.

Next, we look at what is in the painting. The painting seems to be in someone's home. We are not able to be fully sure, but the jars themselves have a home look to them. This means that this jelly is most likely homemade and belongs to a family.

Finally, we use this information to gather what these jelly jars are to within the painting, and establish a connection. With

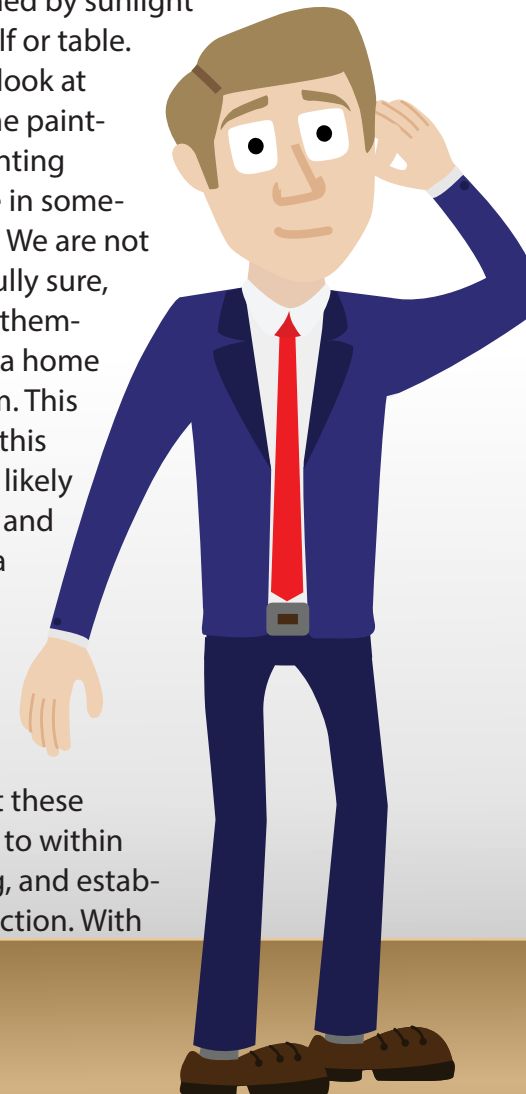


the knowledge we have we can assume that the family made this jelly. What does that mean about it? It means there were memories that were put into the making of that jelly. It is not just a food, but a symbol of the times that this family shared together and the importance of that.

Why Mary Pratt?

The reason we chose Mary is simple. Most people look at objects such as jelly jars without a second thought, and not just the ones on painting. Mary Pratt was able to insert meaning into a painting of every day objects. Where most painters choose to go bold and adventurous, Mary Pratt could insert a truth and wonder into the regular. This feat is remarkable and rarely seen in painting, and it is for that exact reason we felt Mary Pratt deserved our attention.

"Painting is just another way of keeping a diary"
-Pablo Picasso



The Sublime

What is the Sublime?

The sublime is something that artists have always been interested in. The sublime is more than just beauty. It is more than just a feeling of contentness. The sublime is the mixture of beauty and horror. It is overwhelming, magnificent and horrifying (O'Brien). The sublime is powerful and breathtaking.

In our search for wonder, we are not limited to just the parts of life that are deemed beautiful, but are able to find it -if not easier- in the sublime. When we look to beauty we are content with what we see, but when we look at the sublime we are filled with something more. We are filled with fascination and questions, and a yearning for more. When we see something sublime we know it immediately, and it changes who we are.

It is because of this that if we are to get our wonder back that we must look past beauty.

As always we encourage our readers to find an artist and artwork that best works for them.

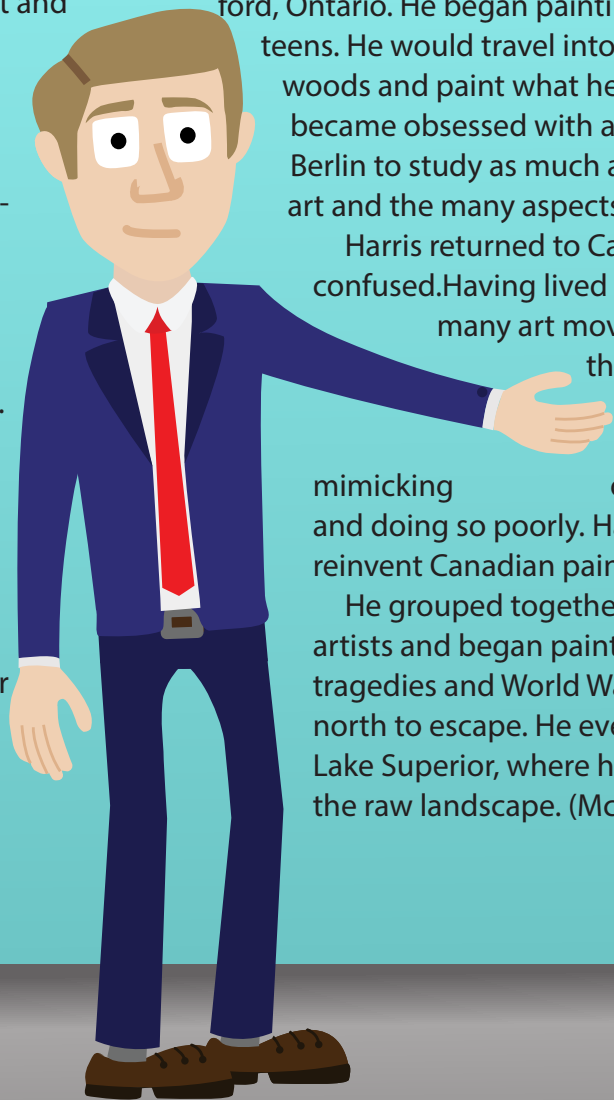
"It is overwhelming, magnificent and horrifying"

Our Wonderful Artist

Our artist that we'll be looking at is Lawren Harris. Harris is an esteemed Canadian painter, and leader of the Group of Seven. Lawren was born into a wealthy family in Brantford, Ontario. He began painting early in his teens. He would travel into the nearby woods and paint what he saw. Soon, he became obsessed with art. He moved to Berlin to study as much as he could about art and the many aspects of it.

Harris returned to Canada and was confused. Having lived in the heart of many art movements Harris felt that Canada was lackluster. The painters were mimicking out of date styles and doing so poorly. Harris wanted to reinvent Canadian painting.

He grouped together seven Canadian artists and began painting. After several tragedies and World War I, Lawren went north to escape. He eventually found Lake Superior, where he was inspired by the raw landscape. (McBride)



Lake Superior

Lake Superior is an art piece that we label as sublime. It is a scene of a shore of Lake Superior, one of the great lakes of Canada. By the way the look of the sky, it seems to be a sunny day with some mild overhead clouds. It seems to be early morning or in the evening by the way the sun is facing. There seems to be a tall house and a boathouse on a dock that leads into the lake, with some trees and mountains surrounding it.

This scene in itself would be beautiful, as it captures a part of nature that is alluring. However, Harris' style of painting helps highlight this beauty and pushes it to more. The way everything seems so smooth is strange, but not uncomfortable. The exaggeration in the leaning of the tall building helps make the whole world seem exaggerated. The clouds are rolling in a mesmerizing way, and the waves seem to pull the eyes out into the water. The light shining on to this scene is like the cherry on top, making it all seem like it was meant to be. As if everything done was part of some divine plan.

This brings in a whole rush of feelings when looked at. The viewer is able to understand the scene being looked at, but the abstract nature of the painting removes most of the details. This brings about a familiarity to the view, while keeping it mysterious.

Why Lawren Harris?

This painting captures the sublime in a way that most artists do not capture. Most artists tip towards photorealism or abstract, with a range of some artists in between. Harris was able to



Harris was the first Canadian to be honoured at the Art Gallery of Toronto

find a sweet spot of abstract and mimicry. Not only that, but he found scenes that inspired him in magnificent ways. This combination of art style and beautiful scenes allowed Harris to create art-

works that are sublime. They bring about a wonder to the viewer and have the ability to strike them with awe.

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