This work can be used to demonstrate: Weather, Flooding, and/or Erosion.



Thomas Hart Benton (American, 1889 - 1975)  
*Spring on the Missouri*, 1945  
Oil on Masonite  
2ft 6in x 3ft 4in (76.2cm x 1m 1.6cm)  
Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina, 1977 (77.1.3)  
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In February 1937 Thomas Hart Benton was sent by the Kansas City Star to sketch the flood-devastated region of southeastern Missouri. The artist reported that "the roads of the flood country were full of movers . . . Every once in a while seepage from under the levee would [force](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2217%22)) evacuation of a house and you would see a great struggle to get animals and goods out of the rising water."  
  
Benton's quick, vivid sketches later led to *Spring on the Missouri*. However, in translating the drawings into a painting, the artist reimagined the scene as [symbolic](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22146%22)) of mankind's valiant and unrelenting struggle with the forces of nature.

This work can be used to demonstrate: Reflection and Refraction.



Chris Drury (British, 1948 - )  
*Cloud Chamber for the Trees and Sky*, 2003  
Stone, wood, turf  
0in x 0in x 12ft 0in (0cm x 0cm x 3m 65.8cm)  
Commissioned by the North Carolina Museum of Art with funds from the North Carolina Art Society (Robert F. Phifer Bequest), 2003

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| [View Larger Image](JavaScript:OpenLargeWindow('pictures/artifact/altOne/8.jpg')) |  | [View Larger Image](JavaScript:OpenLargeWindow('pictures/artifact/altTwo/8.jpg')) |

Drury chose a wooded area of the Museum Park as the site for one of his cloud chambers. This permanent structure is approximately twelve feet in diameter and is built of dry stone. Notched logs make up an octagonal roof that is covered with turf and groundcover. The walls of the building are white cement. The structure has a wooden door and three benches that are attached to the interior walls. There is a small [aperture](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2222%22)) about the size of a quarter in the middle of the roof. The width of this [aperture](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2222%22)) can be changed to allow more or less light to pass through. When the door is closed, only [scattered light](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2275%22)) from the sky and [reflected light](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2273%22)) from the trees travels through the [aperture](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2222%22)) into the chamber. The reflection of these rays off the white surface forms a clear, inverted image. Clouds and sky appear on the floor of the room and trees appear upside down on the walls.

This work can be used to demonstrate: Volcanoes.



Jean-Baptiste Louis Gros (French, 1793 - 1870)  
*Crater of Popocatépetl*, 1833  
Oil on paper laid down on canvas  
1ft 0in x 1ft 5in (30.5cm x 43.2cm)  
Purchased with funds given in memory of Harlan Craig Brown, 1983 (83.7)

Although a gifted painter, Gros' primary career was as a diplomat. This spectacular view of the volcano of Popocatépetl in Mexico is one of several views of this famous natural wonder Gros painted during his term as First Secretary of the French delegation to Mexico (1832–1836).

This work can be used to demonstrate: Landforms and/or Vertical Climate.



Louis Rémy Mignot (American, 1831 - 1870)  
*Landscape in Ecuador*, 1859  
Oil on canvas  
2ft 0in x 3ft 3in (61cm x 99.1cm)  
Purchased with funds from gifts by the American Credit Corporation, in memory of Guy T. Carswell; and various donors, by exchange, 1991 (91.2)

Although American [landscape](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22223%22)) painting began in the [mountains](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22344%22)), woods, and rocky shore of the Northeast, by the mid-nineteenth century, artists ventured farther afield, seeking wilder or more exotic nature.   
  
A native of Charleston, South Carolina, Louis Mignot enjoyed brief but illustrious recognition as the only Southerner among the so-called [Hudson River school](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22262%22)) of [landscape](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22223%22)) painters. The turning point in Mignot's career came in 1857, when he accompanied the painter Frederic E. Church on an arduous expedition to Ecuador. From his travel sketches, he composed many of his most powerful paintings, among them [Landscape](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22223%22)) in Ecuador. Here the artist invites the viewer on a journey both adventurous and spiritual: the eye roving through dense and humid jungle across viaduct and rolling grasslands toward a distant town, and upward over ascending ridges to the snowcapped summit of a volcano. Presiding over all is the newly risen sun, an [emblem](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22302%22)) of transcendent [divinity](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2297%22)). To an untraveled American in 1859, the picture must have seemed the very image of [Eden](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22257%22)).

This work can be used to demonstrate: Erosion and/or Sunset



Claude Monet (French, 1840 - 1926)  
*The Cliff, Etretat, Sunset*, 1883  
Oil on canvas  
1ft 11in x 2ft 8in (58.4cm x 81.3cm)  
Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina

*The Cliff, Etretat, Sunset* is a typical example of the impressionist [style](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2280%22)), demonstrating an interest in atmospheric conditions and the effects of light as the day progresses. Colors are vibrant and applied to the [canvas](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22153%22)) in separated brushstrokes that create the illusion of motion on the water’s surface. Close examination of the setting sun reveals Monet’s technique of applying one color of paint over another that is still wet. He thus achieved a partial mixture, not a thorough blending of the colors as traditional painters had done on their palettes.  
  
The monumentality of the famous cliffs at the resort of Etretat in Monet’s native Normandy distinguishes them from most of his other subjects. The rock formations are known as the Elephant and the Needle because of their shapes.

This work of art can be used to demonstrate: Volcanoes



Pierre-Jacques Volaire (French, 1729 - before 1802)  
*The Eruption of Mt. Vesuvius*, 1777  
Oil on canvas  
4ft 5in x 7ft 5in (1m 34.6cm x 2m 26.1cm)  
Purchased with funds from the Alcy C. Kendrick Bequest and from the State of North Carolina, by exchange, 1982 (82.1)

During the eighteenth-century wealthy Englishmen often went on the Grand Tour, an extended trip through Europe to admire Classical ruins, [picturesque](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22277%22)) landscapes, and artistic masterpieces. Painters Pompeo Batoni, Canaletto, and the French Chevalier Volaire made careers in Italy creating souvenir pictures for these English travelers. Volaire painted more than thirty scenes of Mt. Vesuvius, one of the most popular natural attractions of the continent because it erupted periodically throughout the century.  
  
Volaire contrasts the moods of nature; the cool, calm water reflecting moonlight and fire is juxtaposed to the violent, fiery explosion of the volcano. Along the bridge he includes references to St. Januarius, protector of Naples from volcanic destruction: from left to right are a statue of the saint, a fleeing townsman holding an image of the saint toward the mountain, and people praying before a drawing of the holy figure posted to a stone pier.

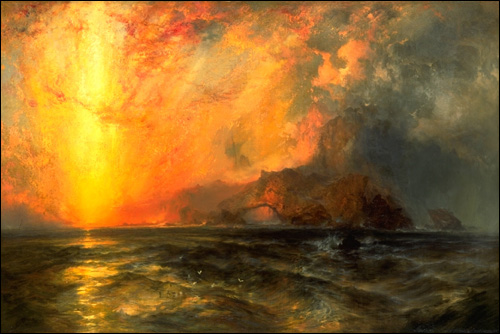
This work of art can be used to demonstrate: Light and/or Shadow



Robert Vonnoh (American, 1858 - 1933)  
*Winter Sun and Shadow*, 1890  
Oil on canvas  
1ft 6in x 2ft 0in (45.7cm x 61cm)  
Purchased with funds from the State of North Carolina

Robert Vonnoh’s best pictures have that feeling of a first impression, faithfully jotted down in quick strokes of color. *Winter Sun and Shadow* was painted while Vonnoh was living in France at an artist colony near the Forest of Fontainebleau. The [composition](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%2235%22)) is simple enough—lines receding to the [horizon](JavaScript:OpenGlossaryWindow(%22373%22)). It is the artist’s treatment of light that makes the picture memorable: the raw brilliance of sunlight contrasted with pale, icy shadows.

This work of art can be used to demonstrate: Sunset and/or Erosion



**Thomas Moran** (American, 1837-1926)  
  
*Fiercely the red sun descending/Burned his way along the heavens,* 1875-76  
Oil on canvas, 33 3/8 x 50 1/16 in. (84.8 x 127.1 cm.)  
Purchased with funds from the North Carolina Art Society (Robert F. Phifer Bequest), 52.9.34

This work can be used to demonstrate: Population Dynamics



**Pieter Aertsen** (Netherlandish, active in Antwerp, 1508-1575)  
  
*A Meat Stall with the Holy Family Giving Alms*, 1551  
Oil on panel, 45 1/2 x 66 1/2 in. (115.5 x 169.0 cm.)  
Purchased with funds from Wendell and Linda Murphy and various donors, by exchange, 93.2

Pieter Aertsen was one of the first artists to paint "inverted still lifes," works in which the still-life elements are placed prominently in the foreground, while the narrative elements are relegated to the background. *A Meat Stall* is Aertsen's masterpiece in this genre. A feast for the mind as well as the eyes, this remarkably executed painting abounds with rich symbolism. The juxtaposition of the precisely rendered meats and other foods with the Holy Family in the background symbolically links food for the body with the spiritual "bread of life"- food for the soul, represented by the Christ child and the bread, offered by Mary to the poor family. In presenting a visual metaphor that encourages the viewer to consider his spiritual life, this work also anticipates the symbolic religious meanings present in seventeenth-century Dutch *vanitas* still lifes. Aertsen's *Meat Stall* was clearly a famous work in its own day, judging from the number of contemporary versions that exist. This painting is probably the earliest version since it includes preparatory underdrawing that is visible in the pig's head and in the slab of fat hanging from the pole in the upper part of the composition. In both style and subject matter, the Meat Stall is the direct antecedent of the Museum's impressive [*Market Scene on a Quay by Frans Snyders.*](http://www.ncartmuseum.org/collections/highlights/european/flemish/025_lrg.shtml)

This work can be used to demonstrate: Rocks & Minerals (Diorite)



**Mexico, Veracruz state, about 250-900**  
  
*Ceremonial Ballgame Yoke*  
Diorite, 4 1/2 x 14 1/4 x 16 in. (11.4 x 36.2 x 40.7 cm.)  
Gift of Mrs. Ann G. Nisenson, 71.46.1

Players of the Mesoamerican ballgame wore a wide, belt-like yoke. (Compare the ballcourt marker, which depicts a Maya ballplayer wearing a yoke.) Because the ballgame was played with a heavy rubber ball approximately ten inches in diameter, players had to pad their bodies to prevent injury. The game is still played among indigenous peoples in Mexico, the object being to keep the ball in the air by striking it with any part of the body except the hands. Players often hit the ball with their hips, which are protected by a wide rubber belt cut from truck tire inner tubes. In ancient times, players probably used yokes of wood, leather, or rubber. Such heavy stone yokes probably were ceremonial items that bestowed status on their owners. Some have been found in burials. This yoke is carved to represent a toad or frog that may have had symbolic meaning associated with the ballgame.

This work can be used to demonstrate: Rocks & Minerals (Limestone)



**Mexico, Chiapas state, Maya culture, about 550-850**  
  
*Ballcourt Marker*  
Limestone, 23 1/8 x 24 in. (58.7 x 61 cm.)  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hanes, 82.14

This sculpture may have been placed into the playing alley of a ballcourt to function as a marker, important to the rules of the Mesoamerican ballgame. A Maya ballplayer squats in the center, wearing a wide belt-like yoke (see the Veracruz-style stone yoke) and holding what appears to be the game ball next to his body. Although no ball has survived from the Maya culture, this depiction suggests the ball was composed of tightly wrapped strings of natural rubber. The ballplayer's solar headdress identifies him as one of the Hero Twins from the Maya epic the Popol Vuh, in his aspect as the sun god. The Popul Vuh is a tale about vanquishing death, represented by the Lords of the Underworld, and how to achieve everlasting life. The Hero Twin's appearance as the sun god indicates that the marker represents a cosmological opening into a supernatural realm.

This work can be used to demonstrate: Rocks & Minerals (Granite)



**Egyptian, New Kingdom, Dynasty XVIII**   
  
*Bust of the Goddess Sekhmet*, about 1570-1340 B.C.  
Granite, H. 23 in. (58.5 cm.)  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hanes, 82.11

This work can be used to demonstrate: Rocks & Minerals (Marble)



**Roman**   
  
*Portrait of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, Late 2nd Century  
Marble, H. 26 5/16 in. (66.8 cm.)  
Purchased with funds from gifts by Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hanes, Mrs. Chaucey McCormick and various donors, by exchange, 92.1  
Marcus Aurelius ruled the Roman Empire from 161-180, the last of the five "good emperors" of the second century after Christ. His successful career as a soldier and an emperor are attested in historical accounts. We learn of his adherence to the principles of Greek stoic philosophy from his devotional diary that has survived in a collection of twelve books, given the modern name Meditations. Written in Greek, rather than in Latin, they reveal the Emperor's thoughtful consideration of the burden of power, while he tried to pursue an active life in harmony with nature.

In this mature portrait, Marcus Aurelius wears a beard, recalling the tradition of the bearded Greek philosopher. The richly carved surface of the hair and beard contrast with the smooth planes of the face. The eyes are lightly incised, creating a forceful expression enhanced by the luminous quality of Marble.