

White-Headed Eagle With Yellow Catfish

The image is provided by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The text is adapted by ReadWorks.



1828

Plate: 25 x 38 inches (64.8 x 97.8 cm)

Original watercolor by JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

American, 1785-1851

Hand-colored etching and aquatint by ROBERT HAVELL, JR.

British (active United States), 1793-1878

Printed and colored by ROBERT HAVELL, SR.

British, 1769-1832

Published by JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Gift of Caleb W. Hornor and Peter T. Hornor, 1968-120-1

This painting shows a white-headed eagle, also known as a bald eagle. This bird is easy to recognize because of its white head and tail, which stand out against its dark brown body. The bald eagle is a symbol of the United States of America. It stands for majesty and courage.

This painting was created by John James Audubon. He carefully observed birds and recorded information about them through drawing, painting, and writing. He painted the birds in their natural habitats. He showed them doing typical activities, like hunting or feeding. His paintings also came with a written description.

In the written description for this painting, Audubon described the bald eagle's "strength, daring, and cool courage." He also noted its "ferocious... temper."

Reeds and Geese

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c. 1925

Ink and color on silk; mounted as a twelve-fold screen

Six panels of a twelve-fold screen: 6 feet, 4 inches x 6 feet, 4 inches (193 x 193 cm)

Each end panel: 6 feet, 4 inches x 16 inches (193 x 41 cm)

Each inner panel: 6 feet, 4 inches x 12 inches (193 x 30.5 cm)

KIM JIN-WOO

Korean, 1883-1950

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Purchased with the Hollis Family Foundation Fund and the Henry B. Keep Fund, 2001-86-1

Seven lively geese can be seen in this painting. Four of them are flying. They spread their wings in different ways and angle their necks in different directions. Their orange webbed feet poke out from under their gray feathered bodies. Below them is a grassy shore, a body of water, and long, thin reeds at the water's edge. One goose dives for food. His feet and tail stick humorously out of the water.

This painting was created by Kim Jin-Woo in 1925. It is a kind of painting called a Korean screen painting. The artist painted it on silk. The silk was then attached to a wooden frame so it could stand up.

The theme of reeds and geese has a special meaning in Korean culture. Traditional Korean paintings of reeds and geese represent a wish for a peaceful life in a person's later years. The artist who painted this screen gave this painting to an elderly friend as a gift.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Use the article "Reeds and Geese" to answer questions 1 to 2.

1. What does the scene in this painting show?
2. What special meaning do Korean paintings of reeds and geese have?

Use the article "White-Headed Eagle With Yellow Catfish" to answer questions 3 to 5.

3. What did John James Audubon's paintings of birds usually show the birds doing?
4. What does this painting show?
5. Why might John James Audubon have chosen to show the white-headed eagle in this way?

Use the articles "Reeds and Geese" and "White-Headed Eagle With Yellow Catfish" to answer questions 6 to 7.

6. What do these two paintings have in common?
7. Which painting seems more active or exciting? Support your answer with evidence from both paintings and texts.