



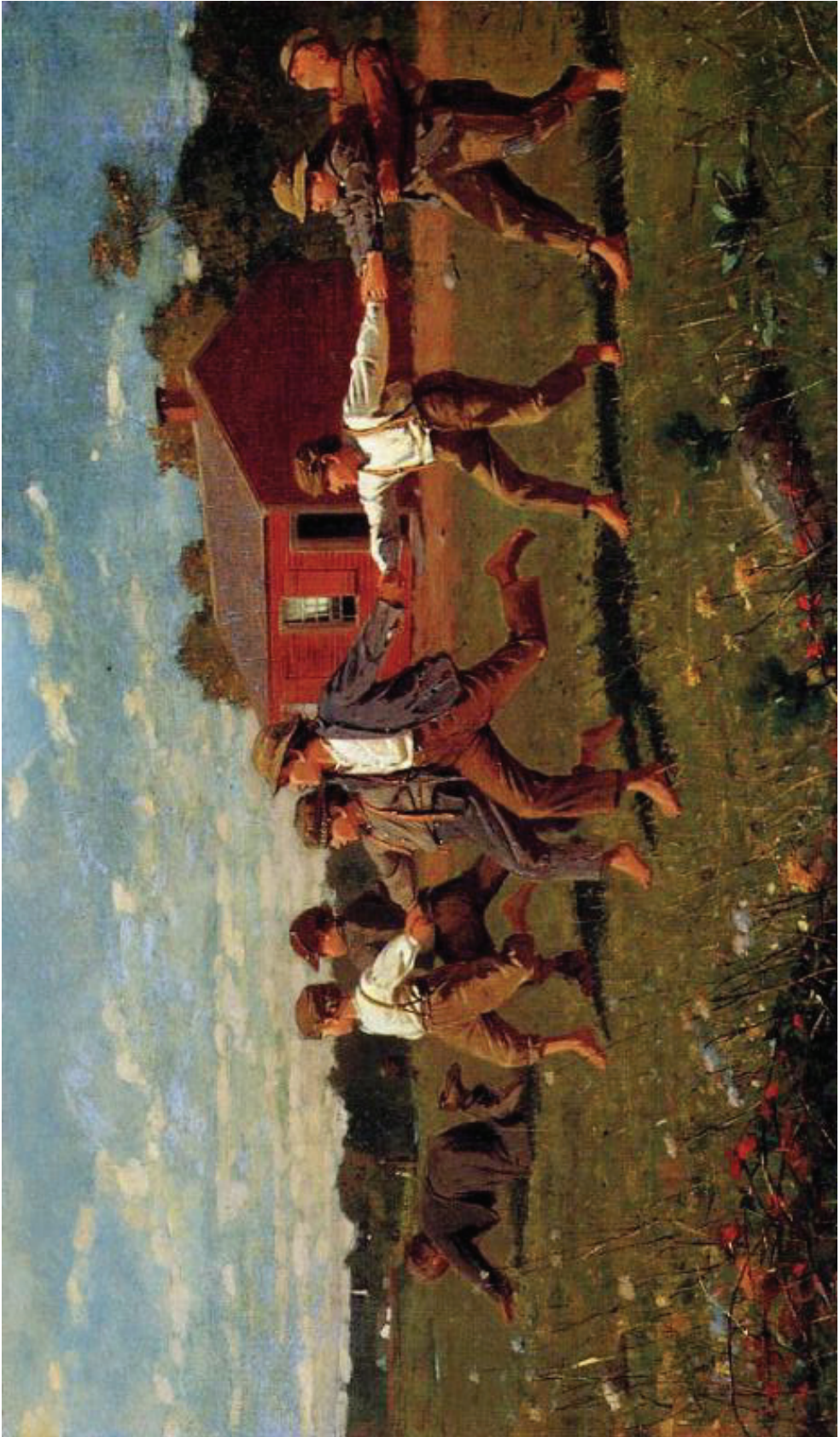
# Winslow Homer

## Picture Study

Kathy Weitz & Emily Cook

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Snap the Whip  
Winslow Homer, 1872



Breezing Up (A Fair Wind)

Winslow Homer, 1876



Home Sweet Home

Winslow Homer, 1863



Boys in a Pasture  
Winslow Homer, 1874



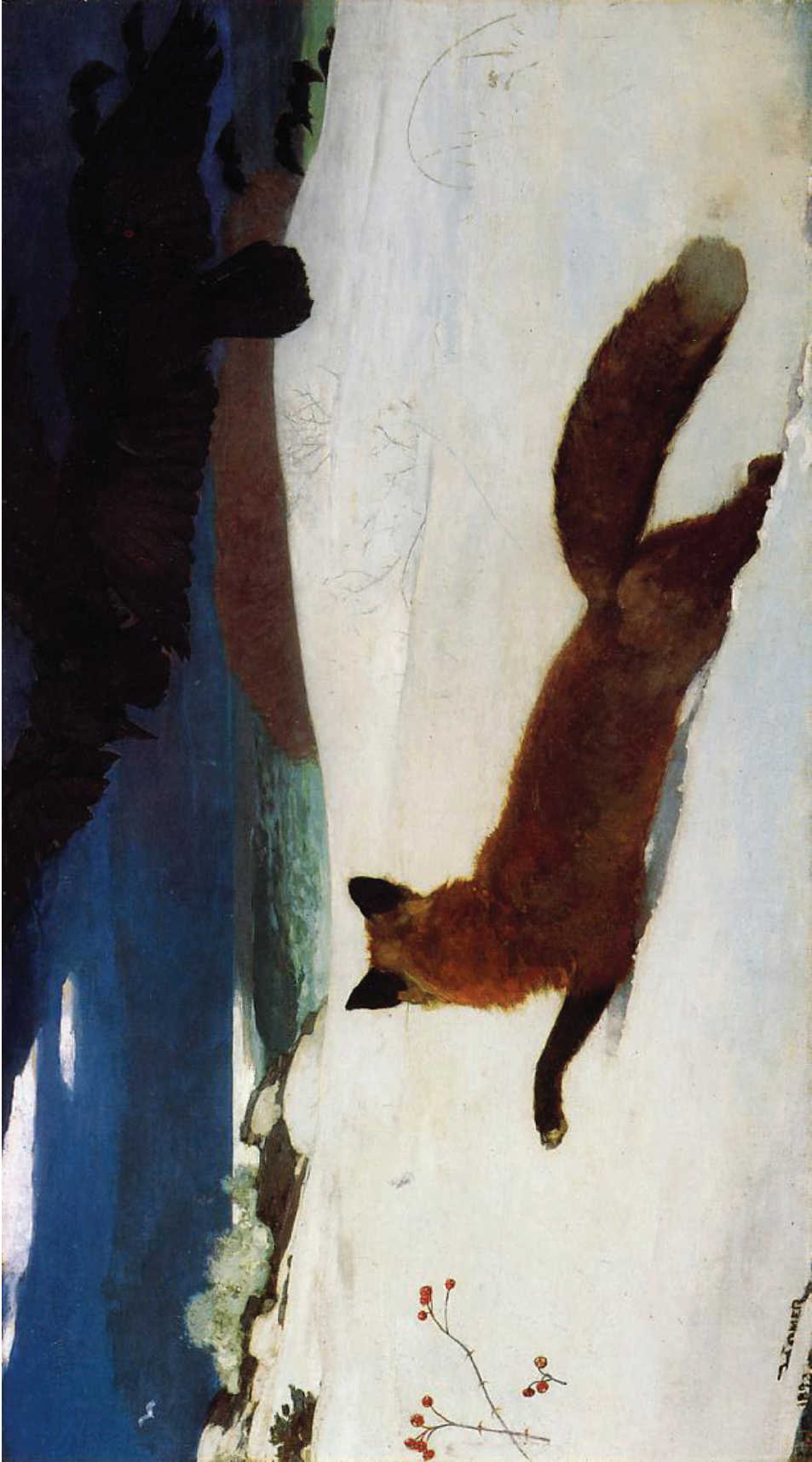


# Hudson River, Logging

Winslow Homer, 1897



The Fox Hunt  
Winslow Homer, 1893



# Winslow Homer

Winslow Homer (1836-1910) was an American landscape painter. Born in Boston to middle-class parents, Winslow Homer's love for art and was inherited from his mother, a talented watercolor artist. She was also his first art teacher. When Homer graduated from high school, his father arranged an apprenticeship for him with a lithographer. This arrangement lasted for two years, and was all the formal training in art he ever received. Soon, Homer was making a name for himself as a freelance illustrator for popular magazines like Harper's Weekly and Ballou's Pictorial. Homer was a unique artist in that he was able to work in many mediums, including oil painting, watercolor painting, engraving, and etching. He particularly loved painting the sea, and especially stormy seas.

## ARTIST BIO NOTES

*These notes are provided to aid the teacher's own background research on the artist and his or her works. This is not meant to be presented to students as a list of facts and dates. When you first introduce the artist, tell students where the artist fits into the timeline of history, and where the artist lived and worked. Add a few more details with each new picture, but the information you share should be short and simple unless your students ask questions or wish to know more. Keep the main focus of your Picture Study time on observation and narration of the details of the picture.*

*Note: if a footnote appears with a fact that is not a direct quote, the fact comes from ONE source only.*

## LIFE AND CHARACTER

- ◆ 1836, born in Boston, Massachusetts to middle-class parents.
- ◆ At age 6, moved to Cambridge, MA. Grew up as a country boy.
- ◆ Educated through high school.
- ◆ 1855-57, apprenticed at a lithography firm in Boston.
- ◆ 1859, moved to New York City.
- ◆ 1861-64, worked as an illustrator-reporter on the Civil War battlefield.

- ◆ 1866, spent 10 months in Paris.
- ◆ 1875, quit freelance illustrating.
- ◆ Late 1870s, his actions strongly showed he desired to be left in solitude.
- ◆ 1881, stayed in a small seaside town in England for 20 months.
- ◆ 1883, moved to another seaside town in Maine where he lived the rest of his life. Spent the winter months in warmer climates, such as the Bahamas and Florida.
- ◆ 1910, died at his home in Maine. Never married.

#### TRAINING AND CAREER

- ◆ Homer's mother, an amateur water colorist, was his first art teacher.
- ◆ Age 19-21, apprenticed as a lithographer (print maker) in Boston.
- ◆ 1857-59, worked as a freelance illustrator, producing several illustrations for magazines and story books.
- ◆ 1859, moved to New York City and continued illustrating, mainly for the journal *Harper's Weekly*.
- ◆ Briefly studied drawing at the National Academy of Design in New York.
- ◆ 1861-64, Homer made several visits to the Virginia battlefield as an illustrator-reporter for *Harper's Weekly*. Instead of painting battle scenes from the Civil War, Homer chose to depict everyday camp life. His work is noted for its realism.
- ◆ 1863, debuted his first painting at the National Academy of Design's exhibition.
- ◆ 1865, given the honor of being elected a full member of the National Academy of Design.
- ◆ 1866, spent ten months in Paris. Unlike other artists, Homer hardly changed his painting style after traveling to Paris.
- ◆ 1873, Homer began working with watercolor—the medium his mother used.

- ◆ 1875, was able to quit working as a freelance illustrator due to the success of his watercolor paintings.
- ◆ 1881, traveled to England, staying in a remote fishing village on the north coast for twenty months. This trip inspired the important shift in his career: began painting with the theme of the sea—his most famous pieces of art.
- ◆ 1883, moved to a seaside town in Maine. Continued observing and painting dramatic scenes at sea.
- ◆ Homer was a man focused on his art. As a young man, he dreamed of becoming a stand-alone artist. He challenged himself to use different mediums, discovering that he was talented in using watercolor. Early in his career, he enjoyed observing and painting women and children going about their daily work and play. Later, he fell in love with observing and painting the sea, living his last years in a seaside town.

#### ART STYLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Types of art: drawings, wood engravings, oil paintings, watercolor paintings
- ◆ Most famous themes: the struggle between man and the sea; the raw power and beauty of nature.
- ◆ An observer: traveled to rural areas and painted scenes from country life; traveled to seaside towns and painted dramatic seascapes.
- ◆ No notable artistic influences. Mainly influenced by the people and nature he observed.
- ◆ His work is known for its realism.
- ◆ Late 1860s into 1870s, the main subjects in Homer's paintings were rural American women and children playing, working, and going about their daily lives.
- ◆ 1880s, Homer's subjects were the hardworking inhabitants of the fishing village in England. Again, he favored painting scenes of the women working and waiting for the men to return from sea.



- ◆ Unlike other artists such as van Gogh, Homer achieved fame during his lifetime, selling several paintings and winning several awards for his paintings.

### ARTWORKS

- ◆ *Home Sweet Home*: young Homer won the respect of many for his artistic talents with this painting of two Union soldiers. Therefore it is one of the paintings that help establish Homer as renowned artist.
- ◆ *Breezing Up*: one of Homer's most famous pieces of art.

### HOW CAN I BE A PAINTER LIKE HOMER?

- ◆ Use different types of paints and drawing materials like watercolor, oil, and charcoal.
- ◆ Paint with realism: try to paint exactly what you observe.
- ◆ Travel to spots where you can observe people playing or working, like a park or a playground.
- ◆ Go to a place with running water, like a creek or if possible the ocean. Try floating things in the water and watching how the water moves it. Try to capture the energy of the water.

### ARTIST BIO LINKS

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/homr/hd\\_homr.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/homr/hd_homr.htm) (medium, good detail)

<http://www.winslowhomer.org/> (medium, good detail)

[http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Winslow\\_Homer.aspx](http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Winslow_Homer.aspx) (long, good detail)

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USACWhomer.htm> (short, overview)

### PICTURE SOURCES

<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/winslow-homer/snap-the-whip>

<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/winslow-homer/breezing-up-a-fair-wind-1876>

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winslow\\_Homer\\_-\\_Home,\\_Sweet\\_Home\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winslow_Homer_-_Home,_Sweet_Home_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winslow\\_Homer\\_-\\_Boys\\_in\\_a\\_Pasture.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Winslow_Homer_-_Boys_in_a_Pasture.jpg)

<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/winslow-homer/hudson-river-logging>

<http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/winslow-homer/fox-hunt>