

EXPLORE The Ringling!

MUSEUM OF ART

GRADES 9-12



Giuseppe Ghezzi (Italian, 1634-1721),
Judgment of Paris, c. 1690s. Oil on canvas,
68 × 96 1/2 in. Museum purchase, 1998.
SN11033

MUSEUM OF ART

LITERARY LOOKING

Visual artists often draw inspiration from other genres of art. Literature is frequently referenced in the visual arts. At The Ringling, there are many examples of literary stories depicted in artworks like painting and sculpture. Find *Judgement of Paris* in Gallery 10. Painted in the 1690s, artist Giuseppe Ghezzi was inspired by Homer's *The Illiad*. This scene depicts the origins of the Trojan War when the goddess of discord, Eris, tossed a golden apple to the gods as a gift for the fairest of them all, three goddesses claimed the prize.

The gods could not decide which goddess was most lovely, so they asked Paris, a Trojan prince raised by shepherds, to judge the beauty competition—an impossible task. Each goddess attempted to bribe Paris into choosing her: Aphrodite offered Paris the love of Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world, Athena promised Paris valor, fame, and the ability win every war he waged, while Hera the queen of the gods offered Paris riches and kingdoms. Paris chose Aphrodite and the love of Helen and it was his conquest of Helen (who was married to the Greek king Menelaos) that sparked the war between the Greeks and the Trojans.

Based on the story, can you identify the characters in this painting?

If you were Paris, who would you choose? Which gift sounds the most enticing to you?

Paris was asked to make an impossible decision. Think about a time when you couldn't make up your mind. How might Paris be feeling in this moment? What evidence can you find in the painting to support your claim?

MUSEUM OF ART

EXPLORE AND ANALYZE

Artists often use color to symbolize different emotions or character traits in their subjects. We can learn a lot about a subject by analyzing the colors in a work of art. Find *The Sirens* by Edward Burne-Jones in Gallery 21. This painting depicts an ancient Greek myth, but was painted much later in 1891. Below, you will explore and analyze the colors and story shown in this painting.



Edward Burne-Jones (British, 1833 - 1898), *The Sirens (Les femmes chasseresses)*, c. 1891/1898. Oil on canvas, 84 x 120 7/16 in. Bequest of John Ringling, 1936. SN422

COLOR AND MOOD

Take a moment to look at this work of art quietly. Consider these questions:

- 1. What is going on in this image?
- 2. Who or what am I seeing?
- 3. Does this remind you of any stories or art you have seen before?
- 4. How does this painting make you feel?

What colors are you seeing in this image?

What emotions or moods do you think the artist is trying to show us in *The Sirens*?

What are you seeing that makes you think of those emotions or feelings?

POETRY IN THE SIRENS

This painting depicts a story from Homer’s epic poem *The Odyssey*. An epic poem depicts a story of a heroic individual’s exploits in a way that aggrandizes the beliefs of their culture. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* by Homer are two works that narrate stories of the Trojan War. These texts were central to the Greek cultural ideals of unity among city-states and perseverance through trials. *The Sirens* illustrates a scene from *The Odyssey* in which sirens are summoning a ship into their grasp.

Why do you think these stories would be relevant to subsequent, non-Greek societies?

Create your own! Write your own outline below for an epic poem that utilizes characters or figures of today.
