



Gilbert Stuart

Picture Study

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George Washington (Landsdowne Portrait)

Gilbert Stuart, 1796



Abigail Adams (Mrs. John Adams)

Gilbert Stuart, c. 1800-1815



Portrait of George Washington's Cook
Gilbert Stuart, 1797



Anna Dorothea Foster and Charlotte Anna Dick
Gilbert Stuart, 1790-1791



Joseph Brandt
Gilbert Stuart, 1786



The Skater
Gilbert Stuart, 1782



Gilbert Stuart

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

- ◆ 1755-1828
- ◆ Born in Rhode Island
- ◆ After trip with tutor to Scotland, returned home. Finding patrons was difficult during the troublesome times of the American Revolution, so went to London 1775.
- ◆ 1786, married Charlotte Coates and had 12 children.
- ◆ Though popular in England, left for Ireland in 1787 to escape financial trouble from his lavish living.
- ◆ In debt in Ireland, went back to America 1793.
- ◆ Started in New York. Moved to Philadelphia (the capital) with the ambition of painting a portrait of George Washington.
- ◆ Moved to Washington three years after it became the capital. His studio was located near where the National Portrait Gallery is now.*
- ◆ Moved and settled in Boston in 1805.

- ◆ Died in Boston, leaving his family in debt.
- ◆ Stuart was well-liked by his sitters, who, despite having to sit uncomfortably still while being painted, found enjoyment in his company.

TRAINING AND CAREER

- ◆ As a young child, around age seven, showed signs of artistic talent
- ◆ In his early teens, Stuart began tutoring with Cosmo Alexander, a Scottish portrait painter working in Rhode Island.
- ◆ Travelled with Alexander to study in Scotland in 1771. Alexander died next year, Stuart returned to America.
- ◆ Painted a few portraits upon return for wealthy citizens
- ◆ Struggled in London. Wrote Benjamin West, an American who worked as a history painter for King George III. West took him under his wing. Studied with West for six years.
- ◆ Established self as sought-after portraitist in London after the wonderful reception of his work *The Skater* in 1782.
- ◆ Well received in homeland. Especially established self in Philadelphia where he painted his portraits of Washington – his most famous works.
- ◆ Kept painting just a few weeks before his death. Buried in Boston.

ART STYLE AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Subjects: prominent figures in Britain, Ireland, and America across his career
- ◆ Attributed with forming an American style of portrait painting
- ◆ Worked hard to capture the likeness and character of his sitters. Succeeded in this and highly praised for this.
- ◆ Noted for his elegant brushwork and rich colors

- ◆ Later in life, focused more on heads, less on bodies.
- ◆ Painted over 1000 portraits
- ◆ Recognized as best painter in America since Copley.

ARTIST BIO LINKS

http://www.worcesterart.org/Collection/Early_American/Artists/stuart/biography/ (very detailed, long)

<http://www.anb.org/articles/17/17-00839.html> (detailed – good art detail, long)

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/stua/hd_stua.htm (informative, medium length)

<http://www.gilbert-stuart.org/biography.html> (informative, medium length)

PICTURE SOURCES

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/12/Gilbert_Stuart%2C_George_Washington_%28Lansdowne_portrait%2C_1796%29.jpg

http://www.isthisjefferson.org/images/abigail_adams.jpg

<http://siftingthepast.com/2013/02/19/portrait-of-george-washingtons-cook-by-gilbert-stuart-1797/>

<http://gilbertstuart.somachimelfarb.com/webphotos/147.jpg>

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1f/Joseph_Brant_by_Gilbert_Stuart_1786.jpg

<http://historicartgallery.com/store/media/catalog/product/cache/1/image/9df78eab33525d08d6e5fb8d27136e95/S/t/Stuart-000080.jpg.jpg>