

# The Natural World

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## Theme 10: The Natural World

### Introduction

From the earliest times, people have found sustenance and solace, challenge and mystery in the natural world. From representations of animal and vegetable life to landscapes and earthworks, art has been a means by which humans have expressed their awe of, communion with, dependence on, and isolation from nature. Of course, art is never a mere transcription of reality. Every rendering of the natural world is, ultimately, a construction, in which nature is translated through the filter of our own interests, values, and desires.

## Session

### Review:

1. Share your responses to the comparison questions for Portraits.
2. Share any other questions or ideas prompted by the previous assignment.

**Watch The Natural World video (30 minutes).**

### Consider/discuss the following:

1. How have representations of nature in art been associated with spiritual beliefs? What do artistic renderings of the natural world tell us about a culture or society and its geographic locale?
2. How has the relationship between humans and the natural world traditionally been portrayed in the art of Asia? How does this type of art reflect Asian philosophies? To what extent is it similar to or different from the depiction of this relationship in Western art and the art from Oceania?
3. How have artists incorporated plant and animal motifs into their works? What materials from the natural world have they used?
4. How do paintings of nature express pride and a sense of nationalism?
5. How do artistic changes to the physical environment alter the way the viewer sees the natural landscape? How does architecture relate to the natural environment?

### Between Sessions:

Go to the Web site at [www.learner.org/courses/globalart](http://www.learner.org/courses/globalart) and:

1. Explore featured artworks from this program, including the descriptive text and the expert perspective commentary.
2. Read the chapter about The Natural World in the downloadable text.
3. On the Web, compare selected artworks by considering the questions posed. Prepare to share your responses by taking notes. Bring your notes to the next session.