

[학생 중심 수업 활동]-본문 따라잡기		♥ 함열여자고등학교 ♥	
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A Sunday Painter Chasing His Dream

A full moon shines brightly in the sky. A river flows peacefully in the desert. A gypsy woman, having no worries, falls asleep in the desert. A lion sniffs at the woman but does not seem to attack her. What do you think of this painting?

The Sleeping Gypsy is considered a fantastic and mysterious work. The rich and sharp colors of the painting fascinate us and its stillness makes us feel like we are actually there.

However, if we study the painting carefully, we can see that it does not make sense. How can the beast not attack its prey?

How come a river is in the desert? Jean Cocteau, a French poet and film director, said, "Perhaps she's dreaming of the lion and the river."

Indeed, it looks like a painting of a woman who is dreaming. Now you might understand what brings a strange and mysterious atmosphere to this painting. It is the unfamiliar combination of things that exist in two different worlds, reality and fantasy. And that is why many people are attracted to this painting.



Take notes

The Sleeping Gypsy is one of the most representative works of Henri Rousseau (1844–1910). In fact, he was not a recognized artist from the beginning.

He led a mostly unremarkable life, working as a Paris customs service officer until his late forties.

When Rousseau first showed four paintings at the Salon exhibition in 1886, people did not respond favorably to them. The public and critics laughed at Rousseau's flat, seemingly childish style of portraying human figures. This was because the paintings did not look real.

Rousseau's style was markedly different from the contemporary mainstream. One critic even said, "Monsieur Rousseau paints with his feet with a blindfold over his eyes."

In spite of such harsh criticism, Rousseau never gave up his style. He continued to draw his paintings and submit them to the Salon.

It was around the turn of the 20th century that Rousseau's paintings began to attract some young artists.

They were bored with existing painting styles and Rousseau's paintings met their desire for a new trend.

Especially, Pablo Picasso admired the strange energy of Rousseau's paintings because they looked unfamiliar and mysterious.



Take notes

Some of the most well-known of Rousseau's paintings are a series of jungle paintings. Rousseau produced twenty-six jungle paintings in the final six years of his life.

In fact, he had never traveled outside of France or seen a jungle. Then how did he create his jungle scenes? It was from illustrated books and botanical gardens that he received inspiration.

He frequently visited the Jardin des Plantes (Garden of Plants), a combined zoo and botanical garden in Paris.

Whenever he went there, he observed a lot of exotic animals and plants. Rousseau said of his visits, "When I am in these hothouses and see the strange plants from exotic lands, it seems to me that I am entering a dream."

In this way, he created his own mysterious jungle paintings where reality and fantasy coexist.

Did you enjoy Rousseau's paintings? He was one of the painters who received harsh criticism during their lifetime.

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However, he never stopped painting and developing his unique style. He chased his dream to become an artist while living as a customs officer, and he created many dreamlike works that went beyond custom and tradition.

The mix of fantasy and reality in his paintings inspired later artists and, thus, he became known as "The Grandfather of Naive Painting and Surrealism." Why don't you pursue your dream as Rousseau did?



Take notes



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