

Descriptive Audio Guide - *I AM HERE: Home Movies and Everyday Masterpieces*



Figure 1. Jack Chambers. *Diego Reading*, 1976–1977. Oil and synthetic paint in natural resin varnish on plywood, Overall: 93.5 × 93 × 5.7 cm. Purchase with the assistance of the Judith Rachel Harris Foundation and Ethel Harris, 2007. © Estate of Jack Chambers. 2007/92

The title of the work is *Diego Reading (Sunday Morning No.5)*, created in 1976 to 1977 by the artist Jack Chambers. Painted in a hyper-realistic style, this oil on wood painting is square-shaped, measuring 91.4 cm squared.

A child sits reading a book in a living room decorated for Christmas. As viewers, we are in the middle of the room, facing a window that looks out onto a snowy suburban street. The photorealistic painting has the muted warm glow of a faded photograph.

The young white brunette boy sits with his back to the window, facing us. He sits with his left leg crossed over his right on an armchair with plush sea green upholstery as he reads a comic book. He is dressed in a red turtleneck sweater, brown slacks, and matching red socks.

Behind the boy, on the beige wall, two framed images hang on either side of sea green drapes, which are pushed aside to reveal a large, glass-paned window. Neighbouring snow-covered houses, lawns, and the street make up the scene outside. Towering conifers and a large leafless tree reach out of the snow.

Inside, a small television set rests on the floor to the left of the boy. A remote [controller](#) and a small glass of water are placed on top of it. Beside the television, to the far left side of the painting is a full, pear-shaped Christmas tree adorned with a number of red, blue, yellow, and silver ornaments.

A three-tiered red and gold fringed tree topper hangs from the ceiling, resembling a floating birthday hat above the Christmas tree.

A table, covered with a red tablecloth the same shade as the boy's sweater, sits in the foreground of the Christmas tree. Only one corner of the table is shown as the rest is cropped by the left edge of the painting. Nativity scene figurines sit on the table, and directly under the table is a potted bouquet of bulbous marigold-like flowers.

To the right of the boy, there is a large red poinsettia plant on the floor, next to another armchair with light yellow and green vertical-striped upholstery. A white and red floral upholstered piece of furniture is cut off in the right foreground.

An ornate red, yellow, blue and white rug is placed in the middle of the room and foreground. It acts as a bridge leading the viewer into the scene. This painting is part of the *Our House* section of the exhibition, evoking memories of childhood, holiday rituals, and familiar domestic spaces.



Sandra Brewster. Hiking Black Creek, 2018. Gel medium transfer, charcoal, acrylic on wood, Overall (three panels): 335.3 × 406.4 cm. © Sandra Brewster 2020/17

The title of the work is *Hiking Black Creek*, created in 2017 by Sandra Brewster. A gel medium image transfer, charcoal, and acrylic on wood measures 335.3 by 406.4 cm.

This large photographic artwork of a Black couple outside in nature is made up of three large panels, like a triptych.

The two figures fill the left side of the foreground; a woman on the left and a man on the right. Standing in front of a forest scene, the couple is cropped just below the hip.

While the work is mostly black and white, the artist has painted the couple's shirts in colour. The woman's long-sleeved shirt is yellow and the man's long-sleeved shirt is orange. Both figures are looking towards the camera and the viewer.

The woman has short, dark hair and wears a brimmed, polka-dotted hat. Her eyes and most of her face are obscured in shadow. She has a neutral expression, caught in a moment. Both of her arms are down at her side.

The man is slightly taller than the woman. His hairstyle is a short, trimmed afro. He wears thick-rimmed, rectangular glasses and is smiling widely. The man has a white

handkerchief tied around his neck, and dons a collared top, buttoned all the way up. His sleeves are rolled up to the forearm.

Behind the figures, large rocks and a scattering of branches and small twigs make up the mid-ground. Farther behind, the background comprises a forest made up of mostly thin tree trunks, branches, and leaves.

Found in the *We Are Family* section of the exhibition, *Hiking Black Creek* shows the artist's parents hiking during their first year in Canada together. The two are monumentalized as giant figures holding space in the [natural](#) landscape.



Mary Pratt. Cod Fillets on Cardboard Cartons, 1975. Oil on panel, Overall (sight): 49.5 × 73 cm. Gift of Norcen Energy Resources Limited, 1986. © Estate of Mary Pratt, 1975. 86/55

This work, entitled *Cod Fillets in Cardboard Cartons*, by artist Mary Pratt is a photorealistic oil painting. It was created in 1975 and measures 49.5 by 73 cm.

Two frozen cod fillets are thawing in their packaging, while light streams across them, casting shadows.

Set upon a bare, beige surface, two light brown cartons of fish fillets sit side by side. The carton on the left is positioned slightly higher than the other. Both cardboard cartons are open, lying flat like plates, and contain paper packaging. The carton on the right is torn on the right edge.

Barely contained by their makeshift plates, the fish fillets and their packaging occupy the whole area of the cartons. The fillets are thawing to be prepared for a home-cooked meal. The large opaque white flakes of the fillets are lit with a warm yellow light created by the afternoon sun cascading over them.

Pratt's attention to precise realism is represented in the stark contrast of light and shadow on the surface of this painting. The light source in this work is set above the subject at the upper border, beyond the bounds of the frame. This creates a hard shadow on the surface, along the lower edge of the cartons.

This work is in the *Food, Glorious Food* section of the exhibition and celebrates our universal impulse to document our food that evokes a sense of nostalgia and warmth.



Pieter Brueghel the Younger, *Country Wedding*, 16th–17th century, oil on wood, Art Gallery of Ontario; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. W. Redelmeier, 1940, 2557.

This is an oil on wood painting, titled *Country Wedding* by artist Pieter Brueghel the Younger. It is from the 1500s or 1600s, and was a gift to the Art Gallery of Ontario by Mr. and Mrs. W. Redelmeier in 1940.

The scene is set in Europe during the 1500s or 1600s and features a country wedding within a wooded glade. About fifty people are shown celebrating [in the rustic setting](#). The people are dancing, eating, drinking, playing musical [instruments](#), and embracing each other. Most of the people are wearing clothes associated with working-class

labourers of the time period, **in** earth-coloured tones, such as browns, greens, **and** grays. Some figures wear garments that stand out in the rustic, forest setting: contrasting fabrics of sharp, bright reds, whites, and piercing yellows. Trees, bushes, and hut-like structures are shown in the background.

In the bottom-left foreground of the painting, a male figure dances alone. Wearing a red hat, red pants, and a white coat, his face and body are visible to us. This male figure is looking to his left, over at a group of other people dancing adjacent to him in the bottom right of the painting. Within that group, another male figure appears prominently, dancing in front of a woman. The man is in a strutting posture, wearing bright yellow and white clothes. The woman is depicted with her back to the viewer, her face out of view. She **stands with** her hands on her hips and **faces** the strutting man.

In the centre of the painting, groups of figures behind the dancers are **partaking** in other activities, like sitting, talking, drinking, and eating. All around the painting, the atmosphere is celebratory, with various scenes of revelry and merriment that boast a melodious quality.

Located in the *Dance to the Music* section, the painting captures the seemingly timeless and universal impulse to move our bodies.



Patti Smith, *Robert's Slippers (B)*, 2003, Gelatin silver print, 20.32 x 25.4 cm (unframed); 53.34 x 40.64 x 2.54 cm (framed), from the collection of James Lahey.

This is a photograph of a pair of slippers taken by Patti Smith. The title is *Robert's Slippers*, and it was photographed in 2003. This photograph is a gelatin silver print, measuring 20.32 by 25.4 cm when unframed, and 53.34 by 40.64 by 2.54 cm when framed. This artwork comes to the AGO from the collection of James Lahey.

Photographed from above, this black-and-white image depicts an empty pair of closed-heel black slippers on the floor. The picture is out of focus, creating a soft, blurred effect. The pair of slippers are oriented with the toes facing towards the bottom of the composition, with the heel portion of the slippers at the top. The slippers are off-centre in the shot, appearing slightly to the right of the centre of the photo. The slippers are slim-shaped, black, with white lining inside, and photographed on what appears to be a white floor. The slippers occupy about 75% of the shot, while the remainder of the frame features the white floor, with shadows cast upon it from unknown sources.

Faint writing can be seen in the inner heel [area](#) of each slipper as well. The picture is out of focus, making the emblem and writing indiscernible. Other photographs of these slippers have revealed that the slippers are custom-made, likely [from](#) high-quality materials. There is also a logo or emblem design [of the initials “RM”](#) embroidered on the top face of each slipper. These slippers belonged [to](#) Patti Smith’s longtime friend Robert Mapplethorpe, an iconic New York photographer famous for his subversive black-and-white photographs of the gay community in New York from the 1960s to 1980s. Robert Mapplethorpe died from AIDS-related complications in 1989.

This ghostly photograph of an empty but intimate domestic garment reminds us of the pain and loss of losing someone you love dearly.

Found in the *My Favourite Things* section, the slippers represent how the objects we collect reveal volumes about our personal psychology.



David Hockney, Santa Monica Boulevard, 1978–1980, Acrylic on canvas, 218.44 x 609.6 cm, The David Hockney Foundation.

This is an acrylic on canvas painting by artist David Hockney. It was created between 1978 and 1980. Its dimensions are 218.44 by 609.6 cm. Hockney captures the sun-drenched vista of an iconic Los Angeles street from the perspective of [someone](#) looking out the window of a car driving down the boulevard. He seeks to represent the city in the point of view from which it is most often experienced.

The [rectangular-shaped canvas](#) depicts a boulevard. Looking at the painting from left to right, there are five people and several buildings represented on the length of the street. Farthest to the left is a person with a trolley facing left, almost out of frame. They are standing in front of a car dealership lot, with a soft pink wall behind. A palm tree is [depicted](#) in front of the dealership, but elements of the palm tree appear missing or

incomplete. The palm's trunk is complete but no leaves sprout from it. There are palm tree leaves peaking out from behind the pink wall, with shadows reflected upon it. Below, the shadow of the palm tree shows leaves, while the painted tree itself does not.

Red, white, and blue pennants hang in lines above [the dealership lot](#). A red muscle car sits [in the lot](#), with [the number 2499 painted in yellow on the front window](#). To the right of the dealership lot, occupying the centre of the painting, is a single-story bright yellow building with teal-coloured [shutters pulled](#) all the way down, obscuring the three large windows. There are also colourful triangular pennants strung across the top left side of the trio of windows. On the right side of the building is an open entrance without a door, leading into a dark, shadowed interior with speckled red and black flooring.

There are three different people standing in front of the yellow building. One person, furthest to the left, leans against a light pole and faces to the right. [The figure](#) has long hair that goes down past their shoulders, and they are wearing a white visor and a blue short-sleeved shirt with red and white stripes. They are also wearing mid-thigh blue shorts with red trim, and bright white over the calf high-top socks with two red stripes near the top. The outfit is completed with simple gray shoes with white laces. [Directly to the right of this person](#) is another figure, [with thick black hair in a shiny bowl haircut](#), walking down the street in the direction of the dealership lot. They are mid-stride, wearing a flared purple suit and thick-framed white glasses, and carrying a blue handbag in their left hand. The last person is standing near the entrance [of the yellow building](#), facing to the right. They [are wearing a white ball cap](#) with red trim, [a white tee-shirt, and blue jeans](#). They have short black and gray hair. Their left arm is gestured up with their thumb pointing backwards to the left.

Further along the boulevard, on the right of the painting, is a soft pink building with two low façades: one brick and the other stonework. Like the others, the front of this building is strung with colourful [triangular](#) pennants. Looking closely, several of the pennants are traced but not coloured in, giving an unfinished or incomplete impression. These low façades are separated by an open doorway, with the brick façade [to the left of the entrance](#), and the stone façade to the right. In the middle of the pink building, a person leans on the left side of the door frame. This person has black and gray hair, and is wearing a white [tank top](#) and blue jeans [as well as](#) white sneakers with three blue stripes.

[Further to the right of the pink building](#), we see the front of a 1970s camper style van [parked on the road](#). The van is facing to the left. The bottom half of the van is gray and the top half is white, with long yellow, white, and blue stripes [between the two halves](#). There are three palm [tree](#) shadows cast across the [full length](#) of road.

On the Street Where You Live is the section in which we find this artwork. The street is a prevalent subject [in our everyday lives and personal documentation](#) that can be both mundane and exciting.