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# Lives Of The Artists: Masterpieces, Messes (and What The Neighbors Thought)



## Synopsis

Most people can name some famous artists and recognize their best-known works. But what's behind all that painting, drawing, and sculpting? What was Leonardo da Vinci's snack of choice while he painted Mona Lisa's mysterious smile? Why did Georgia O'Keeffe find bones so appealing? Who called Diego Rivera "Frog-Face"? And what is it about artists that makes both their work and their lives so fascinating—to themselves, to their curious neighbors, and to all of us? This book presents the humor and the tragedy in twenty artists' lives as no biography has done before.

## Book Information

Series: Lives of . . .

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (July 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544252233

ISBN-13: 978-0544252233

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.3 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.7 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 38 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #111,542 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #49 in Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > History #78 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art #223 in Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Historical

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grade 6 Up-Judging from the popularity of television talk shows and supermarket tabloids, Americans love gossip. As the title suggests, this collection of anecdotes about 15 famous artists of European heritage (and Hokusai) is gossipy. Tidbits flood the brief biographies: Leonardo's and Michelangelo's homosexuality, Van Gogh's "ear episode," Bruegel's fondness for practical jokes, Cassatt's support of women's suffrage, etc. These morsels are integrated into chapters with an easy-flowing sequence of short paragraphs, and supplemented with an "Artworks" section that adds a few pithy comments about several specific pieces, such as O'Keeffe's bone paintings or Kollowitz's large granite memorial for her son Peter. Hewitt supplies a full-page watercolor and

colored-pencil portrait and vignette for each artist. These are friendly representations that also include personal objects like Matisse's fiddle, Chagall's village, Duchamp's snow shovel, etc. They add pleasant visual attractions to the lighthearted approach in this inviting introduction to a few of the Big Names in our artworld. A page of artistic terms is also included. Kenneth Marantz, Art Education Department, Ohio State University, Columbus Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 4<sup>^</sup>-6. From the eclectic series that began with *Lives of the Musicians: Good Times, Bad Times (and What the Neighbors Thought)* (1993) comes a volume devoted to visual artists. The subject seems well suited to Krull's format: informative short biographies that focus on the subjects' personal lives and eccentricities rather than chronologies of their masterpieces. A few notes on major artworks follow each biography. Among the 19 artists discussed are Leonardo, Bruegel, Cassatt, Van Gogh, Picasso, O'Keefe, Dali, Noguchi, Rivera, Kahlo, and Warhol. Each chapter begins with one of Hewitt's distinctive portrait paintings, handsome caricatures of the artists and a few significant or distinctive objects indicating their interests and individual traits. A lively, entertaining presentation. Carolyn Phelan --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I bought this series for my elementary library for fourth grade students to do research using. I had to move it into our professional collection because although it appears to be meant for this age group, some of the details of their personal lives are too much for the age range my library serves. The teachers providing content in this area may need to edit it for age appropriateness.

Great for students. Gives tidbits of info the kids don't really know.

I teach Art Appreciation at a high school and love this book! It's an easy, fun read and chalk full of fun, gossipy facts about many famous artists. In a generation that eats and breathes Twitter, FB and other social medias to get the latest scoop on everyone and everything, this book is really appealing. And while they are listening to stories of all the "shocking" things about artists, you can even sneak in some "boring" art terms and iconic paintings.

"It's not what an artist does that counts, but what he is" - Picasso, p. 56  
The book contains 16 Chapters on the following 17 artists in birth year order: Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519),

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564), Peter Bruegel (1525?-1569), Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625), Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), Mary Cassatt (1845-1926), Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945), Henri Matisse (1869-1954), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), Marc Chagall (1887-1985), Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986), William H. Johnson (1901-1970), Salvador Dali (1904-1989), Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988), Diego Rivera (1886-1957) & Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), Andy Warhol (1928-1987). It contains a variety of gossip tidbits about the artists' lives. The cross selection of artists is an interesting combination. Krull introduced me to three artists of which I was not familiar (Anguissola, Kollwitz and Johnson). As a result Krull has whet my appetite and I will now seek out further information. Hewett's illustrations are entertainingly and cleverly done. I am especially particular to her rendition of Hokusai (he is wearing a kimono with both "The Wave" and "Mt. Fuji" on it). I'm not convinced that the book is intended for young readers (ages 9-12). The gossip is on occasion adult in content. No actual prints of any of the artist's paintings are included, which was a surprise given the high cost of the book. This proves cruelly aggravating given that Krull references select paintings with accompanying notes. Additional tidbits missing from the book: Dali did the dream sequence in Alfred Hitchcock's "Spellbound" starring Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman. Chagall's "The Dead Man" was the inspiration for the title of the Broadway play "Fiddler on the roof." Rivera caused a scandal when he painted the portrait of Lenin in a Rockefeller Center mural in '33. In addition, he used his clout to enable Leon Trotsky to live in Mexico. Two years later Kahlo introduced Trotsky to her friend, a Stalinist agent, who killed him with an ice-axe.

great book!!!! actually a rebuy--lost my original in hurricane sandy.....use it often in my teaching. gives a great human twist to art history which usually turns what should be fascinating reading into a dull, dry, boring exercise at best:(. (and of course we all know that if you're interesting enough to make history you're anything but boring).can't recommend it enough!!!!!!!!!!

Interesting and amusing for both children and parents.

I loved the concise nature of the book. It gives enough information to let you know more than dates about the artist but doesn't bog a younger reader down in details like, "during their 32 year of life....". It is fast paced and interesting enough to want to sit down and read the whole thing through during the first reading. I got this for my dd, 10, and she loved that it was good compliment of male and female artists. They even mentioned a female Renaissance female artist I had never heard of and

was able to teach my art students about.

I thought this would be appropriate for young readers to get interested in the artists. It is clearly meant for an older group of readers than 8 year olds.

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