

Out of “focus”...?



Activity page for:

Image 28: Lovis Corinth, *Gerhart Hauptmann/Portrait of Gerhart Hauptmann*, 1917

Think about it:

Discuss the following questions with a partner. Refer to gallery notes for more information.

1. Do you notice that this drawing looks clearer and more “finished” in some places, and less so in others? Pinpoint the spots.
2. Think about photographs you have seen in which a similar effect has been achieved. Why do you think an artist might choose to focus clearly on some places while others are captured in a “blur”?
3. Why do you think Lovis Corinth has chosen to take this kind of approach for his *Portrait of Gerhart Hauptmann*?

Try this:

Start by creating a small drawing of a person (front view, 2/3 body) on 8 x 11” paper. To get the full effect of the comparison, you might ask your model to pose in the position of Lovis Corinth’s *Gerhart Hauptmann*. Use pencil and don’t get too attached to your drawing! If you have a photocopier or scanner ready, you might want to make a copy of your drawing before you move on to the next step. Now, pick up a good quality eraser and use it to blur or even erase certain parts of your drawing. You might try to “focus” and “blur” different features or parts than Corinth has done in his work. When you are finished, think about how these changes have changed the impact and/or expressive qualities of the piece.

If you are less artistically inclined, you might try using a piece of clear acetate and a non-permanent overhead pen to trace the image of *Gerhart Hauptmann*. Dip your finger in water and use it to smudge or blur portions of the drawing.