

# READ A WORK OF ART AS YOU WOULD READ A BOOK



## OBSERVE

Look closely and quietly.

## DESCRIBE

What do you see?

## INTERPRET

What do you think this painting is about and what makes you say that?

## CONNECT

What does this remind you of? Why?  
What more do you want to know? Why?

Honolulu  
Museum of Art

Art is a powerful pathway into the Hawai'i Common Core

Learn more at [HawaiiPublicSchools.org](http://HawaiiPublicSchools.org)



Teachers Teaching Teachers  
THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
AT HANALEI HIGH SCHOOL  
Established by the  
Central Office of Education

On the cover:

**Juliette May Fraser,**  
American (1887-1983)  
*Lei Sellers*, ca. 1941  
Oil on canvas  
26 x 18 in. (66 x 45.7 cm)

## The Artist: Juliette May Fraser

Born in Honolulu in 1887, Juliette May Fraser was a painter, muralist and printmaker who went on to become one of Hawai'i's best-loved artists. As a young girl, Fraser watched Queen Lili'uokalani play croquet on the lawn of Iolani Palace. She graduated from Wellesley College, in Massachusetts, in 1909 with degrees in Greek and Latin. With red hair and a warm smile, she was recognizable in a crowd, often wearing slacks and a palaka shirt she sewed herself.

After college, Fraser returned to Hawai'i, where she taught school to earn money to attend art school in New York.

Over her lifetime, Fraser painted many large-scale murals. In 1934, during the Great Depression, she was commissioned by the Federal Works Progress Administration to create ten large murals for the Hawai'i State Library depicting scenes of Hawaiian legends, one of her favorite subjects.

During World War II, Fraser traded painting murals for painting camouflage netting to protect buildings and other structures. With her eye for color, she was the head of the paint division, mixing dyes in 50-gallon drums. She worked closely with lei makers, who wove the netting and determined colors based on where the netting would be used.



© Photo by Francis Haar 1972

## Juliette May Fraser's public artwork:

The artist's murals can still be seen throughout Honolulu.

**Have you seen any of these?**

*Legends of Hawai'i*, on view in the Hawai'i State Library Children's Room

*Makahiki Ho'okupu*, on view in the Hamilton Library Lobby at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

*Cycle of Water*, on view at the Honolulu Board of Water Supply

## Honolulu Museum of Art

The museum offers:

Free guided school tours  
Teacher resources  
Lending Collection  
Outreach programs  
Art School classes

To learn more, go to [honolulumuseum.org](http://honolulumuseum.org) and click on **Learn**

### Observe, Describe, Interpret, Connect Four simple steps to engage with art:

The key to this looking strategy is to prompt students to describe and report as much as they see, with evidence from within the artwork.

You may be surprised by what they come up with given the opportunity to just look. The hardest part is allowing time to look on their own—resist the urge to share what you see or what you think they should see.

**OBSERVE: Start by taking a minute or two to do some silent, close looking.**

**DESCRIBE: Have students describe what they see, using evidence from within the artwork.**

*What is the first thing you notice? Where do you see that? How is the artist showing you that? What more can you find?*

**INTERPRET: Have students interpret what they see, by thinking about the time, place, mood, intention, and content of the painting.**

*What is the story? How do you know that? Who are the main characters? What is the mood of the painting? Where is the story taking place? Could this be taking place today or is it a long time ago? What might be going on just beyond the edge of the frame? Where does the story go next? Are there clues in the painting that make you think that?*

**CONNECT: Have students connect the artwork to their own lives to make it relevant.**

*Does this remind you of something from your own life? Can you relate to what's going on in this picture? What more do you want to know? If you could ask the artist one question about the image, what would it be? If you could change one thing about this work of art, what would it be and why?*

### Connecting to Standards

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Hawai'i Common Core ELA-Literacy Standard (CCRA.R.1)

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Hawai'i Common Core ELA-Literacy Standard (CCRA.R.7)

Understand and apply art materials, techniques, and processes in the creation of works of art and understand how the visual arts communicate a variety of ideas, feelings, and experiences.

Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards III Fine Arts - Standard 1: Visual Arts

### Common Core Teaching Idea

Have students read about Boat Days or read aloud to them. (See below for historical content and reading suggestions.) After students have read or heard information about the historical context of this painting, have them discuss how what they now know impacts their interpretation of *Lei Sellers*, the painting. Discuss or write about what a visual piece emphasizes as compared to what a written piece emphasizes/tells you.

Visit [honolulumuseum.org](http://honolulumuseum.org), click on **Learn** in the menu and go to **Teacher Resources** to find:

- A short history of lei greetings and Boat Days
- A short piece about the end of Boat Days
- A blog that includes a brief history of Aloha Tower
- An oral history of Hawai'i's lei sellers

### Boat Days

In the 1880s, crowds would gather on Honolulu's pier to welcome arriving ships with cheers, lei, hula, and song. When Aloha Tower was built in 1926, the Boat Day custom continued. Travelers were given fragrant lei of every color and lei makers on the pier, like the ones pictured in Fraser's painting and on this poster, were ready to sell them more.

