

Ta Matete

by Paul Gauguin

Print Facts

- Medium: Oil on canvas
- Date: 1892
- Size: 73.2 x 91.5 cm
- Location: Kunstmuseum Basel
- Period: 1st Tahiti period
- Style: Post-Impressionism
- Genre: Rural scene or genre painting
- Pronounced ta-ma-tee-ta
- This painting is also called "We Shall Not Go to Market Today" or "The Market"
- Gauguin painted this after his first visit to Tahiti in 1891.
- Five women are portrayed in missionary dresses, sitting on a bench. Their upper bodies are facing forward, but their heads and legs are in profile. They are using graceful hand gestures to talk.
- Another woman in traditional dress is walking out of the picture, but looking back at the bench.
- Fishermen are carrying their catch in the back. The sea and the bow of the ship can be seen between the trees.
- Gauguin represented the women who frequented the public square and market of Papeete.
- The bodies resemble Egyptian art with the seated figures, all aligned and hardly overlapping, the rigid gestures, and long robes.
- Gauguin may have based this painting on a photograph he had brought with him of a Theban tomb painting in the British Museum.
- Notice the name of the painting is on the bottom left.

Artist Facts

- Pronounced: (goh-GAN)
- Born in 1848 in Paris, France
- Died in 1903 in Tahiti (age 55)
- Spent most of his childhood in Peru.
- At the age of seventeen he enlisted in the merchant marine (people who work on commercial ships) in order to fulfill France's military service requirement. After three years he joined the Navy, spending two more years there.
- In 1870 Gauguin began a career as a stockbroker (a person who buys and sells shares of companies) and remained in this profession for twelve years. He married a Danish girl, Mette Sophia Gad, and seemed destined for a comfortable middle-class existence. Gauguin was living a very traditional life as a Parisian stockbroker, family man and weekend painter.
- Gauguin at age 35 decided to give up his business after the stock market crashed and devote himself entirely to painting (with encouragement from Camille Pissaro). His wife took their five children back to live with her parents. In Paris, Gauguin supported himself by pasting advertisements on walls.

- Gauguin had an original style that included broad strokes of unmixed paint, bright colors and simplified designs.
- In 1891 Gauguin moved to the French colony of Tahiti. Most of his most famous paintings were painted here.
- In Tahiti he lived a life of poverty and his health deteriorated.
- Spent time in 1888 at the Yellow House in Arles staying with Van Gogh. The two did not get along over the course of their friendship.
- Some believe Gauguin was the one who actually cut off van Gogh's ear.
See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/may/04/vincent-van-gogh-ear>

Key Element of Design to Teach

- **Color** is a reflection of light. Color may be described in many ways. Primary colors are red, yellow and blue. Secondary colors are orange, green and violet. Tertiary colors are red-violet, blue-violet, blue-green, yellow-green, yellow-orange, and red-orange. Color can be described as being warm (in the red-yellow range) or cool (in the blue-green range). There are also various color schemes that the artist may use to emphasize certain parts of their work.

Possible Questions and Suggestions to Teach Color

- What are the primary colors? (Use the color wheel to help teach students.)
- Can you see primary colors in this painting? Where?
- What are the secondary colors?
- Do you see any secondary colors in this painting?
- How would you describe the colors in this painting? Bright, dull, playful, boring?
- What colors do you see the most in this painting?
- Does the artist always use color accurately? (Notice the blue tree trunks, yellow sky.)
- Show the other painting in the packet. Teach about complementary colors. (purple & yellow)

Keywords

- Color, Primary Color, Secondary Color, Line, Complementary Colors

Other Possible Questions

- What are the women doing in this painting?
- Do you see dark values in this painting? Where? (Shadows) Do you see light values? Where?
- Where do you see patterns in this painting? (The woman's dress)
- Where do you think these women lived? (Tahiti)
- Would you say this painting is abstract or realistic? Why?
- Are the people in this painting wearing shoes? Why do you think this is?
- What are the women doing with their hands?
- What kinds of lines do you see in this painting? Straight, curvilinear, both?
- Are any of the women looking at you? (No, but their bodies are facing forward.) Do you see any faces in profile?