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Artist In Overalls: The Life Of Grant Wood



Synopsis

The renowned painting American Gothic is famous around the world, but what do we know about the artist? This lively biography follows Grant Wood as he develops from a shy farm boy into a celebrated artist. This is the first published biography of this American artist specifically geared to young readers. It is complete with an instructional afterword to help young artists learn to draw and a listing of museums where Grant Wood's work can be seen. Awards and honors for Artist in Overalls: Children's Crown ListKirkus Reviews, pointerParents Council, Seal of Approval

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Customer Reviews

A Midwestern plainspokenness shapes this account of the native son's life and work, told here as a sort of farm-bred fairy tale of early hardship and eventual triumph. Wood's monetarily poor but visually rich childhood and determined pursuit of his own artistic vision are described in an unsentimental but lively manner, the scope and tone well suited to the target audience. With its stately layout, handsome full-page color reproductions, monochrome line art, vintage photographs and quick demonstration of the artist's hen-drawing technique, the book itself is inviting. A few inconsistencies-paintings reproduced but not mentioned in the text and others referred to but not shown-and the lack of bibliography are unfortunate oversights, and the absence of detailed captions may cause confusion as readers will not immediately recognize all the illustrations as Wood's works. The treatment of Wood's contacts with the abstract style and impressionism, meanwhile, seems almost xenophobic (a teacher explains impressionism by holding one of Grant's watercolors under a running faucet). Still, Duggleby's homage to his fellow lowan is a quietly inspiring portrait of the hard work, perseverance and down-home quirkiness of a major artist, and a clear exposition of his place

in American culture. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 4 Up?The most famous American painting may be Wood's American Gothic, with its weathered, pitchfork-holding farmer and aproned wife. Readers meet the mid-Western farm boy who studied art in France and Germany, but always returned to America's heartland. His style was clean and photographically precise, his landscapes "...real?and not quite real?at the same time." Critics called his style "Regionalism" and began to notice and celebrate American painters. Duggleby's title is fittingly large and square, with cover and endpapers decorated with cows, chickens, and farm implements. Wood's paintings are beautifully reproduced, most in full color, and the wide margins, decorated chapter headings, and clear typeface make the book a pleasure to read. The author writes with great skill, telling Wood's story not simply with dates and places, but with anecdotes, descriptions, and snatches of conversation. He brings the artist to life?his shyness and stubbornness, his dreams and disappointments, his way of winning friends, and his determination to paint in his own way. He makes Wood out to be a person worth knowing and knowing about. Few books, if any, are available on the subject. This gem of a book is marred only by a lack of documentation. Shirley Wilton, Ocean County College, Toms River, NJ Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Very nice story of Grant Wood's life. The pictures are great. My Grandson's 1st grade class really enjoyed it.

John Duggleby's ARTIST IN OVERALLS is a quick and useful introduction to the life and work of Iowan Grant Wood. Like most people, I was familiar with Wood's most famous painting, American Gothic. Now I know a little about Wood's life and how hard-won the recognition of his painting was. Duggleby's book is presented in the format of a children's book, with many examples of Wood's work in the handsome prints included here (Stone City, Iowa; Parson Weems' Fable; January; Fertility; Arbor Day; etc). And I intend to pass the book along to my grandsons who love to draw. But the book could also be useful to adults, no question, with its concise and informative text about Wood's Iowa farm boyhood, his determination to paint despite many obstacles, trips to Europe to study, all the way to his early death, at fifty-one, of cancer. Chronicle Books is to be commended for publishing this very attractive and readable record of the life of an important American artist. Highly recommended.- Tim Bazzett, author of the memoir, BOOKLOVER

Grant Wood's unique rural/renaissance style paintings inspired an entire new art movement: Regionalism. His most famous piece being American Gothic, featuring a farm couple in front of their home that has a gothic style window at the epicenter. (The farm couple was actually Grant's sister and his dentist.) After reading this small chapter book on Grant I have a deeper appreciation for him and his work, and look forward to seeing more of it.

Artist in Overalls: The Life of Grant Wood is a picturebook biography of renowned painter Grant Wood, perhaps best known for his classic artwork "American Gothic" showing a farm woman and man standing with a pitchfork in front of their farmhouse. Grant Wood was born and raised by a farming family; though his contemporaries were Impressionists, he preferred to paint the people and places around him with a classical feel - a style that would come to be known as Regionalism. Illustrated with colorful reproductions of Grant Wood's timeless art, as well as a few vintage black-and-white photographs depicting his life and family. Artist in Overalls offers enough literary detail into Grant Wood's life story that it is ideal for young readers who are just about ready to graduate to chapter books, and is a highly recommended addition to children's library collections.

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