

## Step 4: Interpretation

Interpretation involves bringing your close observation, analysis, and any additional information you have gathered about an art object together to try to understand what a work of art means. There can be multiple meanings of a work of art. The best informed ones are based on visual evidence and outside research.

Some interpretive questions to consider for this painting might be:

**What do you think Kent was trying to say?**

**Why would Kent choose to depict this subject?**

As you consider each of these questions, look to the painting for clues to support your ideas.

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## Step 5: Critical Assessment & Response

This final stage involves a judgment of the success of a work of art. Critical assessment involves questions of value and can include personal and subjective responses to art.

**Do you think this painting is well done?  
Why or Why not?**

**Do you like it? Is it relevant to your life?**

We hope this approach enhanced your exploration and enjoyment of this painting. If you like, you can try this method with other works of art. Simply ask yourself the following questions with each object:

**What do I see?**  
(Close Observation)

**What do I think?**  
(Analysis)

**How can I learn more?**  
(Research)

**What might it mean?**  
(Interpretation)

**How do I feel about it?**  
(Critical Assessment and Response)

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**Rockwell Kent, 1882-1971**  
***Dogs Resting* (1937)**  
**Oil on canvas, 34 x 44"**  
**X1980.1.130**

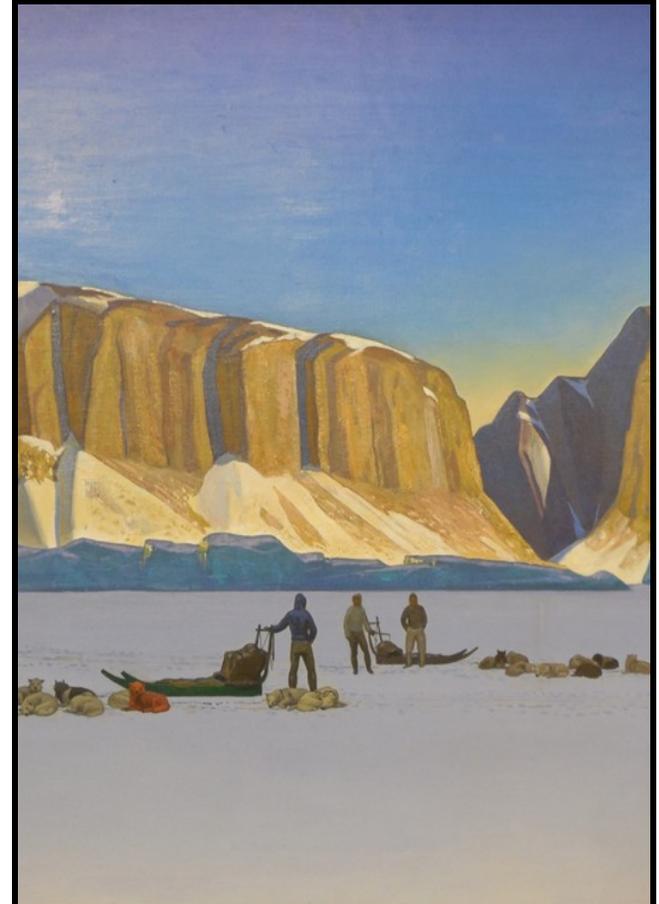
**Gift of Sally Kent Gorton in memory of  
John Gorton**

In his Greenland paintings, Kent illustrated dramatic, stage-like configurations of the arctic by capturing the majesty of the mountains and icebergs. The power of the landscape creates a sense of remoteness that is only intensified by the insignificant role played by the people in the foreground of the composition.

Kent traveled by dog-sled long distances in search of remote subjects. During the season when the sun never sets, Kent would leave the Inuit settlement and camp in complete isolation for several days at a time. He lived without regard to the time or routine.

# Plattsburgh State Art Museum

## *Look Think Learn*



*Interactive Guide*  
part of a series

## Look Think Learn

As a college museum, Plattsburgh State Art Museum is committed to helping visitors develop visual literacy skills – the ability to construct meaning from all that we see. One way it does this is through a method called Learning to Look. This is a five-step approach to exploring works of art that is meant to empower visitors to observe carefully and think critically about any work of art they encounter. Simply follow the steps below.

### Step 1: Close Observation

Look carefully at this painting by Rockwell Kent.



**What do you notice about the figures?  
Their poses?  
Their expressions?**



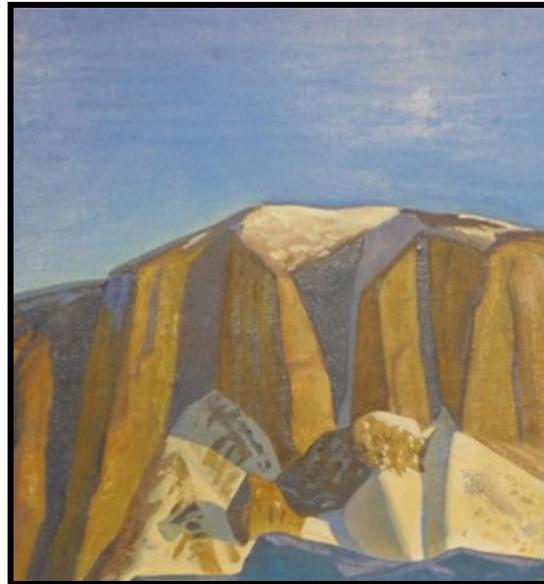
**What do you notice about the dogs?**



**Look closely at the snow in the foreground.  
Can you find the footprints?  
Who and what made them?**



**Observe the background. What do you see?**



Look at the whole painting again.

**Where is the light coming from?  
What does it illuminate?**

**How would you describe Kent's painting style? His colors? Brushstrokes?**

### Step 2: Analysis

Now think about all this visual information.

**Who do you think these people might be?**

**Where do you think they are? Why?**

**What do you think is happening in this scene?**

**Why do you think they are using dog sleds?**

**What were they doing just before the moment captured in this painting?  
How do you know?**

As you consider each of these questions, look to the painting for clues to support your ideas.

### Step 3: Research

Now that you have had a chance to look carefully and begin forming your own ideas about this work of art, feel free to read the text printed on the back of this brochure. It provides some information that you cannot get from simply looking at the object.

When you have finished reading, consider the following questions:

**Does the informational text reinforce what you observed and deduced on your own?**

**Did the text mention anything you did not see or think about previously? If so, what?**

**How would your experience of this painting have been different if you read the text first?**