

# Clothing and Storytelling

*Kindergarten Activity Guide*

*Inspired by artworks from the RMG's Permanent Collection*



Gathie Falk, *Agnes*, 2000-2002, varnish and acrylic on papier-mâché. Purchased with the assistance of a Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance Grant, 2002.



Tom Hodgson, *Portrait of a Shirt*, 1957, oil on canvas. Purchase 1971.



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### Gathie Falk

Gathie Falk was born in Saskatchewan, her parents came to Canada from Russia shortly before Gathie was born. Growing up she loved music, singing and drawing. She worked various factory jobs before she eventually became an elementary teacher. As a teacher, she continued to study, painting, drawing and design. Gathie Falk became known for her sculptures about everyday objects including fruits and shoes.

### Tom Hodgson

Tom Hodgson was born in 1924 and grew up in Toronto. He was an active child, he loved sports and art. Hodgson was a Canadian Olympic canoeist as well as a famous Canadian artist! He started his arts practice by painting the outdoors before moving on to abstractions. Hodgson became known for his abstract artworks. Tom Hodgson was one of the members of the abstract painting group, Painters Eleven.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORKS

Although Gathie Falk's sculptures were often made out of clay, this dress (as part of a series of dresses called *Traces*) is made out of papier mache. Gathie would paint and glaze the surface (to make it look shiny) which made her sculptures look extra special. She said that each of the dresses she created had a story. She imagined that each dress was found in a closet in different parts of the country, left behind by its owner. Gathie Falk called this dress, *Agnes*.

This painting, *Portrait of a Shirt* by Tom Hodgson was painted after Hodgson went to a party. Apparently, Hodgson found himself in a bathroom that had bright pink walls. When he looked at his reflection in the mirror he thought the colours of that bright background did not match with his yellow, red and black striped shirt. After returning home, Hodgson thought some more about the image he saw in the mirror and decided to try to paint it. Instead of painting it exactly how he remembered it, Hodgson made

some changes to make it look more interesting. What do you think, do you like his “new” shirt?

## DISCUSSION PROMPTS/ACTIVITY

Ask students to consider the images without telling them the titles or what they could be. What do they notice?

- What is similar?
- What is different?
- What materials did the artists use to make their artworks?

One of the artworks is a sculpture. What is a sculpture?

Sculpture is an artwork that is three dimensional (height, width and depth).

Agnes is a free standing sculpture where all sides are shown, we call this type of sculpture, in the round.

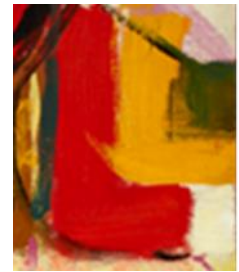
Did the students notice the object at the bottom of the dress? What is that?

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What is abstraction?

Can you see the red, yellow and black stripes of Hodgson’s shirt in the painting?

Ask students to consider lines, shapes, patterns and textures they see in *Portrait of a Shirt*. Can they find these smaller images in the painting?



## **DRAWING CHALLENGE**

Ask students to draw a picture of Agnes in the dress. What about the background? Where could she be?

Next, encourage students to draw themselves in their favourite outfit. If they were to add their favourite object what would it be?

## **MATERIALS NEEDED**

1. Paper
2. Pencils
3. Markers/ pencil crayons or other colouring materials

## **EXTENDED LEARNING IDEAS**

Ask the students to help build a story about Agnes.

- Where does she live?
- How old is she?
- Why are is she wearing the dress? Could the dress be for a party?
- What food would be served?
- What might her friends be wearing?

Give *Agnes* other sculptural (in the round) accessories, use various materials.

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Who might wear Tom Hodgson's shirt? Can you tell their story? Could they know Agnes?

Encourage students to pick a section of the artwork, chose the colours, lines and shapes they see to create their own shirt like Tom Hodgson did in his artwork.



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