

## A Feminine Perspective

**ARTIST:** Florence Ellen Ware (1891-1971) Salt Lake City, Utah

**TITLE:** *Suey Sin Fah (Two Chinese Lilies)* 1935

**MEDIA:** Oil on canvas

**SIZE:** 30" x 20"

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Born May 6, 1891, in Salt Lake City, Florence Ware was the only child of a successful architect. She was provided with the finest education then available, learning music, art, and ballet from private tutors. From a very early age she exhibited exceptional artistic skill.

Florence Ware's entire adult life was consumed with art training, producing, teaching, and exhibiting. At age 22, she graduated from the University of Utah. She then studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, graduating with high honors and first in her art class.

From there, she moved to California where she studied and painted. Her most celebrated artistic excursion was her 18-month tour of Europe and the Near East in 1928. While there, she completed several small paintings that fit into her box of oil paints. Her instructors included J.T. Harwood, Edwin Evans, Charles Hawthorne, and Anna Hills.

Upon her return to Utah, she again resided in Salt Lake City, where she taught at the University of Utah. She was the first President of the Association of Utah Artists in 1940. Furthermore, she began Ogden's palette club and Utah's "Pageant of the Arts" in American Fork.

Florence Ware was a painter, illustrator, costume designer, interior designer, and muralist. She had numerous commissions from all these sources and was constantly busy, working for her eager clientele. She is probably best remembered for her murals at

Kingsbury Hall, on the University of Utah campus, which depict the history of the arts in the Western world.

Ware was especially intrigued by the principles of color, as well as by natural and reflected light. She stated,

Probably the most interesting phase of art to me is the subtle beauty of color as it is shown and developed in picture, interiors, fabrics, gardens, and nature. I should like to arrange so far as I am able the perfect setting for a work of art.

Ware enjoyed painting nature, especially flowers, as well as painting human subjects. Never married, she died in Salt Lake City on November 11, 1972, at the age of 81. In her wake, Florence Ware left hundreds of paintings, dozens of murals, and hundreds of successful students.

One of her students, Ted Wassmer, would later, with his wife Judy Lund, donate a large collection of works to the Springville Museum of Art along with repeated, substantial financial contributions. The Museum also owns a Ted Wassmer painting of Florence Ware, seated on a swing in her garden, *An Afternoon With Florence Ware*.

Anderson, Carma Rose de Jong, "Florence Ellen Ware." Unpublished manuscript on file at the Springville Museum of Art

Swanson, Vern G., Robert S. Olpin, and William C. Seifrit. Utah Art 1991, Gibbs Smith

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## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

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## QUESTIONS FOR LOOKING (History, Aesthetics, Criticism)

What country do you think the woman in this painting comes from? Look closely at her clothing and the furniture. Is this a wealthy woman? Why or why not?

Why do you think Florence Ware painted this picture? (To look like Lily--it is a portrait.) What if the painting didn't really look like this woman when it was finished? Would it still be art? Why or why not? What would interest viewers who don't know Lily?

Florence Ware was interested in the effects of light. How did she use light in this piece to attract the viewer's attention to the two lilies? What word best describes this painting to you?

## ACTIVITIES

**1. Visual Arts-perceiving Objective:** Students will demonstrate their understanding and skill by creating a center of interest in a drawing or painting through the use of contrast.

Assign or let the students choose something to draw or paint, and provide them with the necessary materials. Instruct them to create a center of interest in their art work by using contrast. Discuss with the students ways to create contrast. Some ways are as follows:

1. Wide range of value (i.e. lightest area next to darkest area). Other areas are middle values.
2. Complimentary colors (i.e. colors opposite each other on the color wheel).
3. Range of intensity (i.e. background is dull while main area of emphasis is bright).
4. Detail (i.e. center of interest should have more detail than other areas).

Florence Ware made the center and upper region in the *Two Lilies* lighter than the surrounding areas to draw our attention to the flowers, face, and hands. Have students try to do the same in their artwork. Note--a center of interest can be anywhere, it does not need to be in the center of the page. The center of interest can be created in other ways besides light, too.

**Assessment question:** Did the student successfully create a center of interest in his/her drawing or painting?

**2. Social Studies Objective:** Students will demonstrate their knowledge of geography and time period by documenting the authentic clothing of a person from a certain time period.

Using *Two Lilies*, have the students guess the nationality of the woman featured. Tell the students that when we look at art that contains realistic people we can sometimes learn what time period and what geographic location the people were from. To stimulate interest in the activity, you can cut out some pages from magazines featuring people from different geographic locations. Display them and have the students guess where the people are from.

**3. Mathematics Objective:** Students will demonstrate their knowledge of proportion by comparing the size of two objects in *Two Lilies*.

Introduce the students to the principle of proportion: the size of things in relation to other things or of parts to the whole. When studying proportion, one compares the size of one item with something else. Use *Two Lilies* to show the proportional relationship between the objects in the painting. Using a ruler place it on an object in the painting, measure how long it is. Then, compare that length to the length of something else in the picture.

You can demonstrate, for instance, that the woman is roughly two and one-half times the length of the flowers. Have the students submit a piece of paper with the following (completed) information on it:

\_\_\_\_\_ is/are \_\_\_\_\_ the size of \_\_\_\_\_.

For example, the woman is two and one-half times the size of the flowers.

You can also have the students practice by comparing the size of various objects to their parts, either in the classroom, around the school building, or outside. Let the students get as complicated as they have interest and ability. For example, they can measure parts of the blackboard to each other and to the whole, or parts and the whole of desks, windows, walls, etc.

**Assessment question:** Did the student correctly compare the size of two objects in the *Two Lilies* as indicated by the fill-in-the-blank response? If you have had the students measure other items, you may need to evaluate by watching the accuracy of measurements or by comparing various students' measurements.

**4. Language Arts-writing Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to compare by writing an essay (or a list) comparing the two lilies.

Using *Two Lilies* ask the students to list the ways the two lilies in the painting are similar. Responses may include that they both have the same name, are pretty, are sitting on furniture, have rigid postures, have flowers on them, etc. If desired, have the students use their lists to write a short essay comparing the two lilies.

**Assessment question:** Did the student accurately compare two or more ways the lilies are similar?