

# Portrait in a Scene

**Ages:** 8+ (Grades 3–12)

**Duration:** 20 minutes

**Materials needed:**

- Paper
- Pencil, marker, crayon, or pen
- Coloring materials (optional)

**Introduction:**

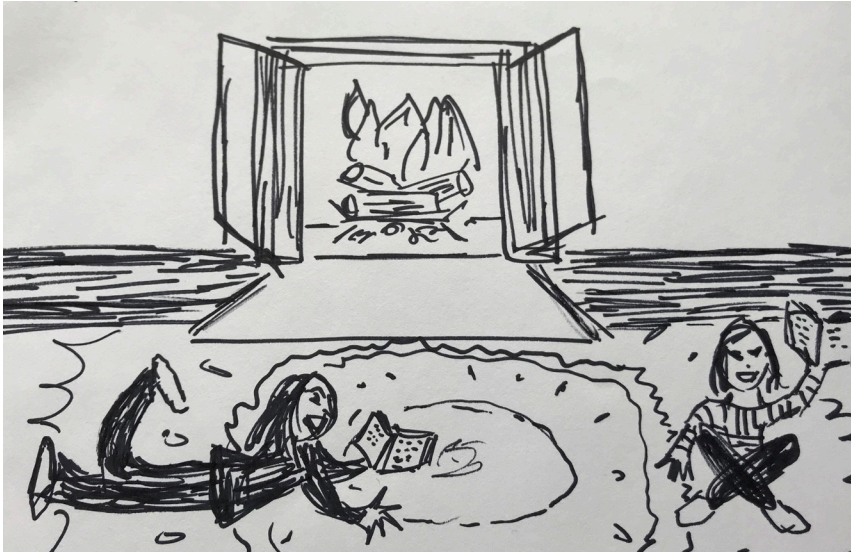
Although many portraits or self-portraits focus on the subject only, other artworks that feature human subjects include people within a more detailed scene. In this activity, you will think about a place where you like to spend time, either alone or with others, and you will create a work of **genre art** that highlights the details of this scene, activity, and/or the objects that are found in this specific place.

**Procedure:**

1. Start by looking for examples of portraiture in your home, like a family photograph or digital photo album.
  - What medium was used to create these portraits?
  - Who are the subjects of the portraits?
  - What about the portraits can give you a clue about when they were created and why they were created?
2. Brainstorm about a portrait that is missing from those around you.
  - What is a place and/or everyday activity that is important to you that needs to be represented? Is this a place inside your home and an activity that you do during this era of social distancing? Is it something that you usually do outside your home and want to celebrate and share?
  - What are details about the setting you can consider incorporating into your work? Do you need to include specific items or accessories to help your viewer truly understand the context of your portrait, or represent what is important to you?
  - Are you the only person, or are others part of the visual story?
  - If a viewer were to look at this drawing 100 years from now, what clues would you include so they could understand the full story of the year 2020?
3. Using the medium of your choice, sketch your scene. You can experiment by starting with the figure(s) involved, or by drawing the setting itself first. Add as much detail as possible. If you like, add color to increase detail for your viewer.

## Share your work:

Take a photo of your finished portrait and post to IG using the hashtags #MuseumFromHome and #GenreArt, and tag @HudsonRiverMuseum.



*Reading by the Fireplace* by Bridget McCormick



William McCloskey (American, 1859–1941). *Feeding Dolly (If You Don't Eat it, I'll Give it to Doggie)*, 1890. Oil on canvas. Gift of Mrs. Lillie H. Seaman, 1925 (25.97).

