MOTHER AND DAUGHTER, BOTH WEARING LARGE HATS
Mother and Daughter, Both Wearing Large Hats
Mary Cassatt
1900-1901
Oil on canvas
32 x 26in (81 x 65cm)
Mary Cassatt

- **ARTISTIC MEDIUM:** Painting & Printmaker
- **BIRTH:** 22 May 1844, St. Allegheny City, Pennsylvania
- **DEATH:** 14 June 1926, Le Mesnil-Théribus, France
- **EDUCATION:** Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts
- Though born in America, she was considered a French Impressionist
- Since females were not admitted to Ecole des Beaux-Arts, she studied independently with Academic great Jean-Leon Gerome
- Became French a Impressionist through friendship with Edgar Degas
- Famous for her images of mothers and their children

*Self-portrait: Mary Cassatt*
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Mary Cassatt

• Though women of her day were discouraged from pursuing a career, Cassatt enrolled in Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts at age 16.

• Despite her family's strong objections, Mary left for Paris in 1866. She began her study with private art lessons in the Louvre, where she would study and copy masterpieces.

• Tired of the rules set by the times, she began to experiment artistically. Her new work drew criticism for its bright colors and unflatteringly accurate portrayal of its subjects.

• While many of her fellow Impressionists were focused on landscapes and street scenes, Cassatt often created images of the social and private lives of women, with particular emphasis on the intimate bonds between mothers and children.
1. Where do you think the Mother and Daughter are having their portrait made?
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1. Since impressionists liked to paint *en plein air*, then, by looking at the background, where do you think this portrait was painted?

2. What do you think the tan streak is by the mother’s head?

3. Does the background give you an impression of the time of year?

4. What is the purpose of someone wearing a large hat? To what event or place would the mother and daughter likely wear a hat?
The Impressionists were particularly noted for their focus on color and light, recording what we actually see as opposed to what we think we see.

2. What color do you see when you look at the mother’s skirt?
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1. Look more closely at the skirt.
2. The impressionists would blend multiple colors together to make one color. While her skirt looks pink, what other colors can you discern? Zoom in if needed.
3. The mother’s skirt is actually a mix of many colors! Cassatt used pink, tan, mauve, green, and even blue.
4. What is the effect of using all these different colors together in this fashion?
Choose a quote below by Mary Cassatt and discuss its meaning.

Mary Cassatt, *Mother and Daughter, Both Wearing Large Hats*

**Thoughts to Consider:**

1. I have touched with a sense of art some people - they felt the love and the life. Can you offer me anything to compare to that joy for an artist?
2. There are two ways for a painter: the broad and easy one or the narrow and hard one.
3. If painting is no longer needed, it seems a pity that some of us are born into the world with such a passion for line and color.
Additional ARTy Facts

- smART Works website

- R.W. Norton Art Gallery website information