



JUNE 2010

Bumpy Lumpy Lines

Antoine-Louis Barye | *Tiger Rolling on its Back*



VISIT THE BMA
and look for Barye's
bronze animal sculptures. You might find
a lion, serpent, crocodile,
antelope, panther, and stag!

Antoine-Louis Barye (French, 1796-1875).
Detail, *Tiger Rolling on its Back*. 19th century.
Transparent and opaque watercolor with
scraping, heightened with gum. 9 5/16 x 11 1/2
inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art:
The George A. Lucas Collection, purchased
with funds from the State of Maryland,
Laurence and Stella Bendann Fund, and
contributions from individuals, foundations,
and corporations throughout the Baltimore
community, BMA 1996.48.18811

Here's a playful tiger scratching his back and rolling around on the ground among the bushes and boulders of a hilly landscape. In reality, tigers and hills have little in common. But in this watercolor painting, they are a good match. Trace your finger along the upper side of the tiger, starting at his mouth, then up and over his shoulder, past his front paw and over his haunch to the tip of his curling tail. Then use your finger to follow the ups and downs of the rugged hill that rises behind him. You'll see that Barye used a bumpy lumpy outline for both so that his tiger seems to fit right into the landscape.

Antoine-Louis Barye (pronounced Bare-EE) never actually observed a tiger in these hills. The only tigers he ever saw were at the Paris Zoo. Barye visited the zoo nearly every day with sketchpad in hand to record lions and leopards striding about, heavy rhinos resting, vultures perched in trees, and pythons coiled around their branches. In 1830, a Bengal tiger arrived at the Paris Zoo all the way from India. Determined to represent the new tiger correctly in his watercolor paintings, Barye attended lectures about tigers and read all the books he could find. He studied the animals' anatomy inside and out. Since he could never safely examine a living tiger, he inspected skeletons in the zoo's museum.

Even though Barye aimed for perfect accuracy, he never portrayed the zoo animals in their cages. Instead, he created imaginary natural habitats for them, inspired by the forests, flatlands, rocky ravines, and hills outside of Paris where he liked to hike.

CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Observe an animal closely either at home, around your neighborhood, or at the zoo. Watch how it moves. Sketch your animal in various positions, and then use your sketches to help you make a final drawing or painting. Try creating a setting that makes your animal fit right into the background. You might do this with line, as Barye did, or perhaps with colors or patterns that link the animal and the background together.

PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.



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Antoine-Louis Barye. Tiger Rolling on its Back.

(French, 1796-1875). 19th century. Transparent and opaque watercolor with scraping, heightened with gum. 9 5/16 x 11 1/2 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The George A. Lucas Collection, purchased with funds from the State of Maryland, Laurence and Stella Bendann Fund, and contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations throughout the Baltimore community, BMA 1996.48.18811