



SEPTEMBER 2007

The Illusion of Sunlight and Shadow



VISIT THE BMA
and hunt for portraits
of people wearing hats.

Girl with Hat Berthe Morisot

It must have been a sunny day when Berthe Morisot brought out her set of pastels to sketch a portrait of a little girl in a hat, probably her young daughter, Julie.

She chose a stick of yellow to make the sun shine brightly on the top of the straw hat, and then lightly rubbed a stick of brown on the underside of the brim to create the part of the hat where the sun could not reach. Spots of sunlight land on the girl's chin, cheeks, and the tip of her nose, but her eyes remain comfortably shaded. Berthe Morisot did not have to draw the shadow around the little girl's eyes. She merely left the blue paper mostly untouched, adding a few strokes of pink pastel to give the skin a rosy glow.

The Artist

As an Impressionist artist, Berthe Morisot [Bayrt More-ee-so'] was fascinated by the effects of sunlight and sought ways to capture its brilliance. By choosing to work on blue paper, she made her yellow pastel appear far more vivid than it would appear had she chosen to work on white paper.

Challenge for Students

Ask a friend or family member to pose in bright sunlight (or under bright lights) wearing a baseball cap or hat with a wide brim. Use colored paper (or brown paper lunch bag) and color pastels (or colored blackboard chalk) to create a portrait. Use your colors and the color of the untouched paper to create the effects of sunlight and shadow on the face.

Print the image on page 2 for your students.

Please note: Works on paper are fragile and light-sensitive. This work is currently not on view at the BMA.

Berthe Morisot. *Girl with Hat*, 1883. Pastel on blue paper. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland, BMA 1950.266

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