

2. WANDERER ABOVE THE SEA OF FOG

**Caspar David Friedrich
(1774-1840)**



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- **Lesson 2**
- **Wanderer above the Sea of Fog**
by Caspar David Friedrich



GROUP WORK – LESSON 2 – DISCUSSION TASK

- **Discuss in your group:**
- **1. Look at the painting:** What was the first thing you noticed about the painting?
- **2. Use your imagination and senses:**
 - What can you see?
 - What can you feel?
 - What can you hear?
 - What can you smell?
- **3. What do you think:** Who is the person standing in the middle of the painting?
 - What is the expression of his face?
 - Can you guess his feelings?
- **4. Do you think the painting is old or modern? Why do you think so?**
- **5. Choose a spokesperson** (or some of you/ all of you can contribute) **for your group who will report the main points from your discussion to the whole class.**



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Wanderer above the Sea of Fog

**c.1818,
oil on canvas,
98 x 75cm,
Kunsthalle,
Hamburg,
Germany**



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THE PAINTER



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CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH 1774-1840

- a 19th-century German Romantic artist;
- painted intense landscapes of haunting beauty - captured the power of nature and gave it a religious quality;
- born in Greifswald, on the Baltic coast of Pomerania;
- had a strict Protestant upbringing;
- his mother and brother both died when he was young – affected him greatly;
- studied in Copenhagen - settled in Dresden, where he learnt the ideas about Romantic literature and philosophy;

CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH 1774-1840

- took up oil painting in 1807, depicting striking landscapes full of strong spiritual or allegorical overtones.
- his paintings, *The Cross in the Mountains* (1806), caused controversy because he filled the landscapes with religious significance.



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ANALYSIS



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Description

- a lone figure stands on a pinnacle of rock, contemplating an awe-inspiring Alpine landscape;
- rocky peaks loom up out of the dissolving sea of mist;
- a distant mountain rises majestically above the scene against a luminous sky.



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Inspiration

- based on sketches of mountains that Friedrich made while staying in Switzerland,
- the dense fog obscures what lies between the mountains, creating a sense of mystery.



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Who is the man?

- may have been a posthumous tribute to a colonel in the Saxon infantry;
- the central figure stands upright and heroic as he contemplates the scene before him;
- it can be interpreted in many ways: as a symbol of man's yearning for the unattainable /or as an allegory of the journey through life.



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Romanticism

- it encapsulates **Romantic ideas about man's place in the world:**
 - the isolation of the individual when facing the sublime forces of nature.
- has become **an iconic image of the Romantic individual.**



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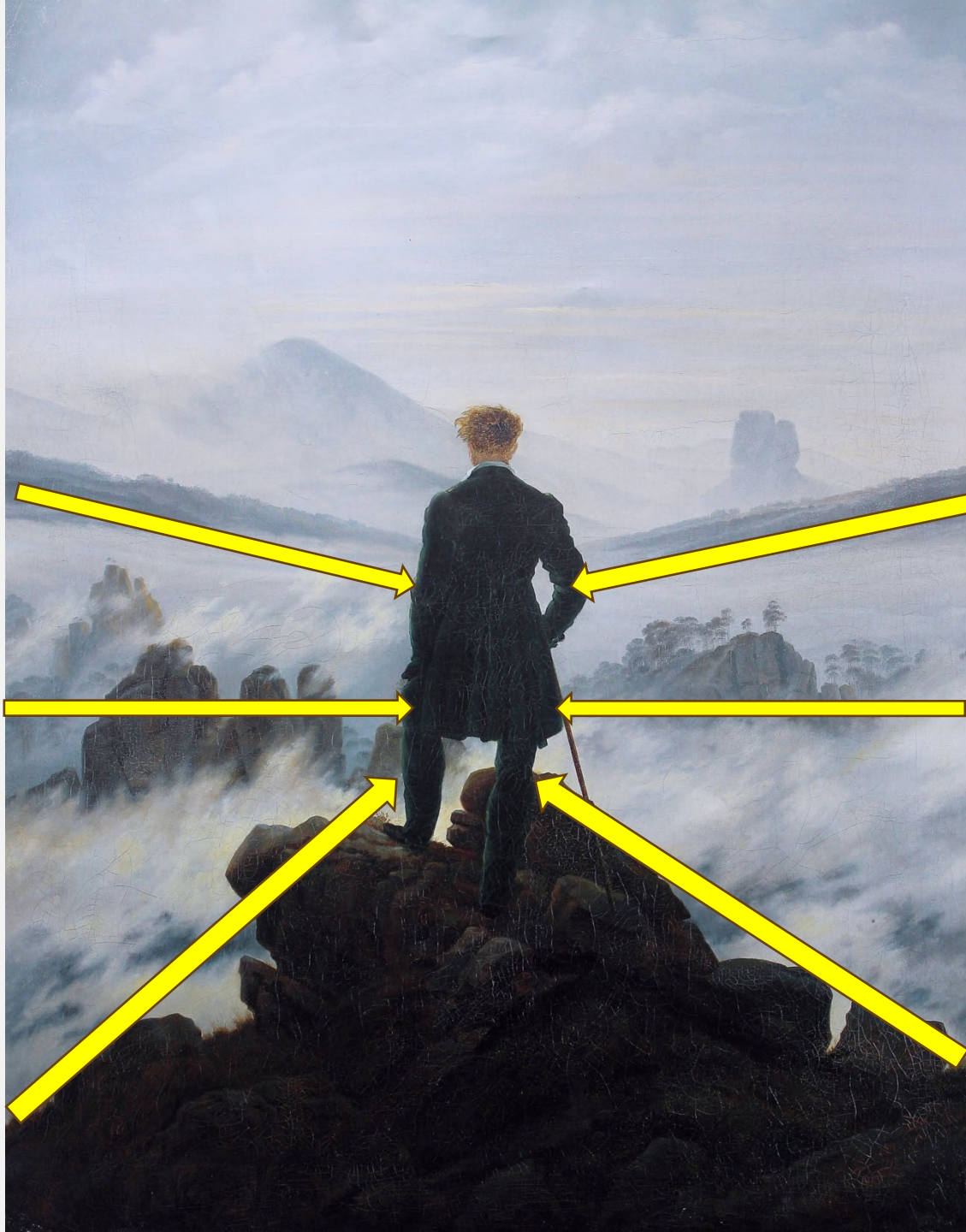
ROMANTICISM

- a movement in the visual arts, music, and literature;
- the late 18th and early 19th centuries;
- artists reacted against the reason and intellectual discipline of Neoclassicism and the Enlightenment;
- celebrated individual experience and expression;
- inspiration in nature and landscape.



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Composition

- the man is standing **right in the middle** of the painting,
- the horizontal lines of rocks and distant mountain slopes **all lead towards him.**



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Contrast

- the striking **contrast in tone between** the dark silhouette of the man on the rock and the pallor of the **fog and sky** - adds to the impact of the image.



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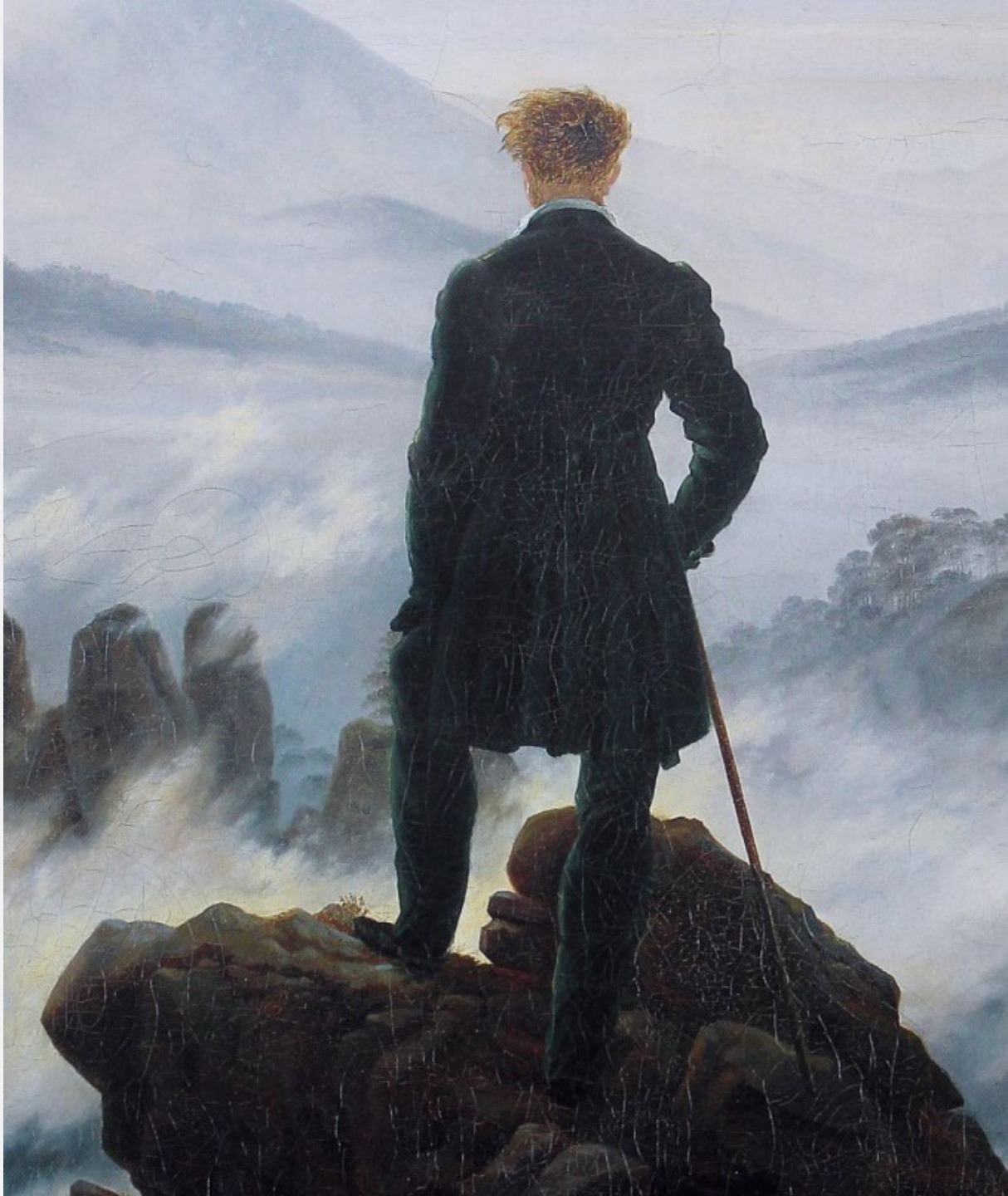
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MORE DETAIL



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I. The wanderer

- a solitary figure has **his back to us, giving him complete anonymity;**
- gazes down at the scene before him;
- from his stance, he appears calm and self-possessed;
- **but it is left to us to imagine his expression** or his attitude to the dramatic landscape before him.



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2. Sea of Fog

- **the fog conceals much of the landscape;**
- stimulates the viewer's imagination, and blurs our view of the distant mountains;
- **creates a sense of infinity;**
- it also reflects the pearly light from the sky, which gives the painting **an eerie feeling of otherworldliness.**



3. Rocky Peaks

- the mountain tops break out of the fog like jagged rocks emerging from the sea;
- because the fog obscures the lower-lying landscape - **no sense of how near or far away the mountains really are;**
- **the only thing to provide a true sense of scale** - the tiny trees hardly visible on some of the peaks are.



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FUN/ INSPIRATION



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Wanderer above the Sea of Fog

**- still popular as a
source of
inspiration**



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Image from:
Britt, R. (2013, January 7). *The 19th Century Painting That Most Blockbuster Movie Posters Are Based On*.
<https://reactormag.com/the-19th-century-painting-that-most-blockbuster-movie-posters-are-based-on/>



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Image from:
Poster Foundry,
*Selfie Taking Wanderer Above the Sea
of Fog Friedrich Art Humor Cool Wall
Art Print Poster 24x36*
<https://posterfoundry.com/selfie-taking-wanderer-above-the-sea-of-fog-friedrich-art-humor-poster-24x36-inch/>



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On January 8th, 2013, Tumblr user Repulsed posted an edit of the wanderer looking over Paris.

<https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/wanderer-above-the-sea-of-fog>

OTHER PAINTINGS



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The Lonely tree (Der einsame Baum), 1822

Friedrich, C. (1822). *The Lonely Tree* [Painting].
Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lonely_Tree#/media/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Der_einsame_Baum_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg



Cairn in Snow 1807

Friedrich, C. (1807). *Cairn in Snow* [Painting]. Galerie Neue Meister, Dresden, Germany.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairn_in_Snow#/media/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Cairn_in_Snow_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg



The Sea of Ice 1823-24

Friedrich, C. D. (1823-24). *The Sea of Ice*[Painting]. Kunsthalle Hamburg, Germany.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sea_of_Ice#/media/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Das_Eismeer_-_Hamburger_Kunsthalle_-_02.jpg



The Abbey in the Oakwood 1809-1810

Friedrich, C. (1809-10). *The Abbey in the Oakwood* [Painting]. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Abbey_in_the_Oakwood#/media/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Abtei_im_Eichwald_Google_Art_Project.jpg

VIDEOS:

- **Wanderer above the Sea of Fog - Caspar David Friedrich**
(video 2:25 + eng subtitles)
- Two Minute Museum. (2022, January 18). *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog – Caspar David Friedrich* [Video]. YouTube. <https://youtu.be/TfIWb2AXJyQ?si=uAJd8ozZ6N5rg4II>
- **ART/ARCHITECTURE - Caspar David Friedrich (6:02 + eng subtitles)**

The School of Life. (2015, April 3). *Art/Architecture – Caspar David Friedrich* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/go87azXN5Ms?si=GqDvVe_1xXKXhkJC



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THE END
**Thank you for your
attention!!!!**



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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross_in_the_Mountains#/media/File:Caspar_David_Friedrich_-_Cross_in_the_Mountains_-_WGA08296.jpg

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Friedrich, C. (1822). *The Lonely Tree* [Painting]. Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin Germany

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