

# INSIDE | OUT 2026 SELF GUIDE

We are lucky to have six artworks from the DIA's collection on view in Northville!  
Use this guide to explore and learn more about the paintings.



## Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Solitude*, 1890

As you look at this painting, what words would you use to describe this scene?

We see a lion resting next to the sea—he's lounging fully in the sun, just like a giant cat. Jean-Léon Gérôme was fascinated by animals and would often visit zoos and menageries to sketch the animals directly from life. Notice his sharp, exact depiction of the lion, compared with the loose, relaxed brushstrokes that we can make out in the sea and sky.

This painting was completed at a time when Gérôme had lost many friends and family members to a flu epidemic. He was working to forget his own sorrow and sadness—his art became his therapy.

Where do you go, or what do you do, when you need a moment of stillness and contemplation?

1 Northville Community Center  
303 W Main St  
*Solitude*, Jean-Leon Gerome

## Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Wedding Dance*, 1566

Imagine that you're stepping into the world of this painting. What would you experience with your five senses?

This is a lively scene, as a group comes together to celebrate a wedding. The bride is the woman dressed in black, near the center of the canvas. It wasn't until the 1840s, when Queen Victoria wore a white lace gown to marry Prince Albert, that white became a popular color for brides. Large community celebrations were a popular subject for Pieter Bruegel, and a 16th century Flemish audience likely would have been able to identify each of the 125 guests at this wedding.

If Pieter Bruegel were to visit Northville to paint one of our community celebrations, what event would you recommend? What details might that painting contain?



2 Lucy & the Wolf  
102 E Main St  
*The Wedding Dance*, Pieter Bruegel



## Winslow Homer, *Girl and Laurel* 1879

What do you think this young woman is thinking while she poses for this portrait?

Winslow Homer did not consider himself a portrait artist; in fact, he's best known for his maritime scenes. But he spent most of the 1870s painting rural and idyllic scenes, such as farmers at work, young couples courting, and children at play.

The flowers behind the young woman are mountain laurel, a plant naturally found on rocky slopes and in mountainous forest areas. Because it thrives in these harsh conditions, mountain laurel is often viewed as a symbol of perseverance and endurance.

This painting was completed in 1879, right around the time that many of the buildings here in Mill Race Village were completed. **Take a few minutes to cross the bridge and explore. What connections can you discover between the painting and the buildings in Mill Race?**

3 Mill Race Historical Village  
215 Griswold St  
*Girl and Laurel*, Winslow Homer

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**4 River Park Overlook**  
River St near Johnson Ave  
*On the Nile, Sanford Robinson Clifford*

## Sanford Robinson Gifford, *On the Nile, 1872*

**What details has this artist included to let us know that the setting for this painting is the Nile River in Egypt?**

Sanford Robinson Gifford was an American landscape painter who traveled extensively to find new landscapes to paint. Not only did he explore New England, but he traveled overseas, as well. This painting was inspired by a trip he took to Egypt in 1869. He boarded a boat and sailed up and down the Nile. He began by making sketches on small notecards, which he turned into small oil painting studies when he returned to his studio. Once he was satisfied with his composition, he would transform his studies into finished paintings like the one we see here today.

**If you could travel anywhere in the world to find inspiration for an artwork, where would you want to go? Why?**

## Mary Cassatt, *In the Garden, 1903 or 1904*

**Imagine a conversation between these two figures. What do you think they're talking about?**

Mary Cassatt was an American painter who lived and worked in France. In Paris, she met Edgar Degas who invited her to exhibit her work alongside the Impressionists—she was the only American to be included!

Like her fellow Impressionists, Cassatt painted scenes of everyday life. But instead of street scenes and Parisian nightlife, she focused on quiet, intimate scenes between mothers and children. She was able to elevate women and domestic life to be on par with the scenes captured by her male counterparts.

**What are some of your favorite memories of time spent with important female figures in your life?**



**5 River Park Log Cabin**  
Corner of River St. and 7 Mile  
*In the Garden, Mary Cassatt*



**6 American Legion Northville**  
100 W Dunlap St  
*Still Life: A Letter Rack, Edwart Collyer*

## Edwart Collyer, *Still Life: A Letter Rack, 1692*

**Make a list of the items that you see in this still life.**

You might feel like you can reach out and remove each item from the rack. That's because this artist used a special painting technique called *trompe l'oeil*, which means "to fool the eye." Edwart Collyer is so skilled at using paint to create reflections and shadows that he tricks into believing that these objects are three dimensional and real.

Collier often reuses the same objects in his still life paintings, which leads us to think that perhaps they were special to him in some way. **Do you have a collection of items that are precious to you? How do you display them or keep them safe?**

This self guide was created as a collaboration between the Northville Art House and the Northville DDA.



**DOWNTOWN**  
*Northville*  
Timeless with a twist