Family Activity: Looking Glasses
Provided by the Art Institute of Chicago Department of Museum Education

Introduction
John Constable’s *Stoke-by-Nayland* depicts a beautiful day in the English countryside. Many aspects of daily life fill the scene: oxen pull a cart as a woman casually leans against a fence. In the distance, the buildings of a small village are clustered together beneath a sky filled with billowing clouds. Constable created this image based on sketches and memories of visits to his aunt’s home in a small farming village. His painting allows us to peek into this landscape and experience the sights and sounds of life in the English countryside.

Discussion Questions
• How many cows can you find?
• What other types of animals do you see, and what are they doing?
• What smells and sounds do you imagine fill this landscape?
• Can you imagine the conversation between the two people in the foreground? What are they talking about?

Activity
Make a pair of binoculars to discover the details in your town or neighborhood.

Materials Needed:
• 2 empty toilet-paper tubes
• markers and/or crayons
• glitter or sequins
• glue
• double-sided tape
• hole punch
• 2’ piece of yarn

Steps:
1. Decorate the toilet-paper tubes with markers, crayons, glitter, and sequins. Let the tubes dry completely.
2. Using the tape, attach the tubes along the long sides to form a pair of binoculars.
3. Punch a hole at one end of the outside edge of each tube.
4. Feed one end of the yarn through the punched hole and tie to a knot over the edge of the tube. Repeat on the other side of binoculars with the other end of yarn.
5. Use your new binoculars to go on a visual treasure hunt.
6. Can you find any animals?
7. What kind, and what are they doing?
8. Can you find some trees?
9. A tall building?
10. Can you find two people talking?
11. What do you imagine they are talking about?
12. Discover the sights, smells, and sounds of your own neighborhood!