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

Introduction
In the 1700s, Rococo artists like Giovanni Battista Tiepolo sometimes looked to poems and stories for inspiration. In his paintings of Rinaldo and Armida, Tiepolo illustrates different moments in Jerusalem Liberated, a fictitious tale by Tasso about the First Crusade.

Together, four paintings tell the story of the knight Rinaldo, who is tricked by a beautiful sorceress, Armida, on his way to combat in the Holy Land. At the Art Institute, the paintings are hung so that they read from left to right, like a book. Tiepolo chose to illustrate scenes that he believed were important for telling the story. In the first painting, Armida finds Rinaldo sleeping by a pond. Unseen by the knight, she hovers on a cloud above him, admiring his beauty. The next three scenes tell of their relationship.

Discussion Questions
• Can you guess what is happening in the next three scenes?
• Can you find colors or other features that are the same or similar in two or more of the scenes?
• Can you find features that are different?

Look closely:
Tiepolo uses certain colors and a landscape setting to connect the scenes together.

Activity
Create your own series of paintings based on your favorite story.

Materials Needed:
• 8 1/2” x 11” sheet of drawing paper, cut into quarters
• 8 1/2” x 11” sheet of construction paper
• colored pencils, crayons, and/or markers
• tape or glue
• scissors
Steps:

1. Choose a poem or story you would like to illustrate.
2. Discuss the most important parts of the story and choose four scenes to draw.
3. Draw one scene on each quarter of drawing paper.
4. Cut the piece of construction paper in half lengthwise. Tape or glue the two pieces end to end to form one long rectangle.
5. Tape or glue your scenes to the construction paper to tell your story.
6. Have a family member or friend do the activity based on the same story you used. Compare your stories. Did you pick the same scenes to illustrate? How did you each choose to tell the story?

Glossary

First Crusade *(n)*
first of a series of wars waged by European Christians between 1096 and 1099 to wrest control of the city of Jerusalem and specific sites of importance in the life of Christ from Muslim powers. During the First Crusade, Jerusalem was captured and a government ruled by a religious authority was installed.

Holy Land *(n)*
in the Bible, area of the eastern Mediterranean, including Jordan and Israel, held sacred by Jews, Christians, and Muslims

Rococo *(adj or n)*
of or relating to a period that emerged at the end of the Baroque characterized in art by decoration; lightness in tone, in both color and mood; and the use of organic forms and asymmetry in design. Centered in France, the Rococo style was international, flourishing especially in Austria, Germany, and Italy.