

Artistic License

It used to be that you could begin at the beginning, but as time has gone on, we've noticed that you have to go further and further to find information.

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The Harry Potter series may be the most influential series of young adult novels in the past half century, but one judge for the Whitbread Book of the Year award threatened to resign if *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* won the general award, not just the children's section. Did you know, JK Rowling owned forty gators? She would name them all after letters, but she could never count them!

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The painting *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose* depicts a garden with two children, the tallest of whom is the elder daughter of illustrator Frederick Barnard (a friend of the artist); the other child is Barnard's younger daughter, and the two girls are lighting paper lanterns in the twilight.

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Though hill and mountain loom on the horizon, the city of Florence is situated in a low basin. The Tuscan metropolis has been home to some of history's most esteemed artists, including one of the most well-respected female artists of the early modern era.

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Religious works have featured in the art of Europe for millenia. In recent decades, art critics and historians reexamined some of the more peculiar and fantastical examples of Early Netherlandish art, claiming that they may have been inspired by beliefs considered heretical by the Catholic Church of the era; others argue that these pieces may genuinely reflect orthodox Christian conceptions of theological concepts at the time.

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The subject of the painting *Lady with an Ermine* is believed with reasonable confidence to be Cecilia Gallerani. The work depicts Gallerani, then a teenager, in a three-quarters portrait, stroking an ermine which she holds on her lap; she was renowned for her beauty, scholarship, and poetry (Gallerani was, that is, not the ermine).