

The Highland Raid



The Highland Raid, 1860

Grazed and Confused

Acclaimed for her sympathetic renderings of fauna, French painter **Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899)** led an unconventional life. The bold Bonheur smoked, rode astride, and collected an animal menagerie. She even obtained legal permission to wear trousers, allowing her easier access to her subjects.

Take a closer look

Bonheur's attention to details reinforces the overall mood of this painting. Glazed eyes, gaping mouths, and striding legs imply distress and haste. Ominous gray clouds compete with the sun while oblique rain showers, blowing grass, and windswept spittle underscore blustery conditions.

In her own words

"I care nothing for the fashionable. A portrait painter has need of these things, but not I, who find all that is wanted in my dogs, my horses, my hinds, and my stags of the forest."

Who knew?

The artist sketched her subjects from life before composing paintings in the studio. Her subject matter was an unusual choice since 19th-century female painters typically rendered portraits and domestic subjects.

Rosa Bonheur, *The Highland Raid*, 1860; Oil on canvas, 51 x 84 inches; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Gift of Wallace and Wilhelmina Holladay; Photograph by Lee Stalworth

