



new bedford
whaling museum

ART. HISTORY. SCIENCE. CULTURE.

AN ARTISTIC ADVENTURE:

The Grand Panorama

This lesson includes three sections:

1

INVESTIGATE (15 min.)

Click through the following slide deck to learn more about the The Grand Panorama, painted in 1848 by Benjamin Russell, that aimed to recreate the experience of a whaling journey.

2

INQUIRE (15 min.)

Using the provided handout, examine a scene from the panorama, a primary source, to make inferences about sailors' experiences at Cape Horn.

3

IMAGINE (30 min.)

Follow the steps in the Activity Guide to create your moving artwork by constructing your own zoetrope, which is an old-fashioned way to make a short animation.

INVESTIGATE

Can you time travel?

We still don't have time machines, but today's technology can help us feel like we are visiting somewhere else or traveling to another time!

Before we had such technology, people used panoramas to create **immersive** experiences.



IMMERSIVE:
An experience that is absorbing

What does panorama mean?

A **panorama** (panə'ramə) is an unbroken or whole view. Have you ever taken a panoramic photo with a cell phone? It shows a view from left to right, 180 degrees. In the 1800s, the word “panorama” referred to something else.



What was a panorama in the 1800s?

A panorama was a form of entertainment. Imagine a large painting that moved across a stage on scrolls, scene by scene, rolling from one side to the other. Before there were movies, audiences enjoyed watching these huge painted journeys or stories.



What is an example of a panorama from the 1800s?



Caleb P. Purrington (1812–1876)
Sign and carriage painter, artist

What does it depict?

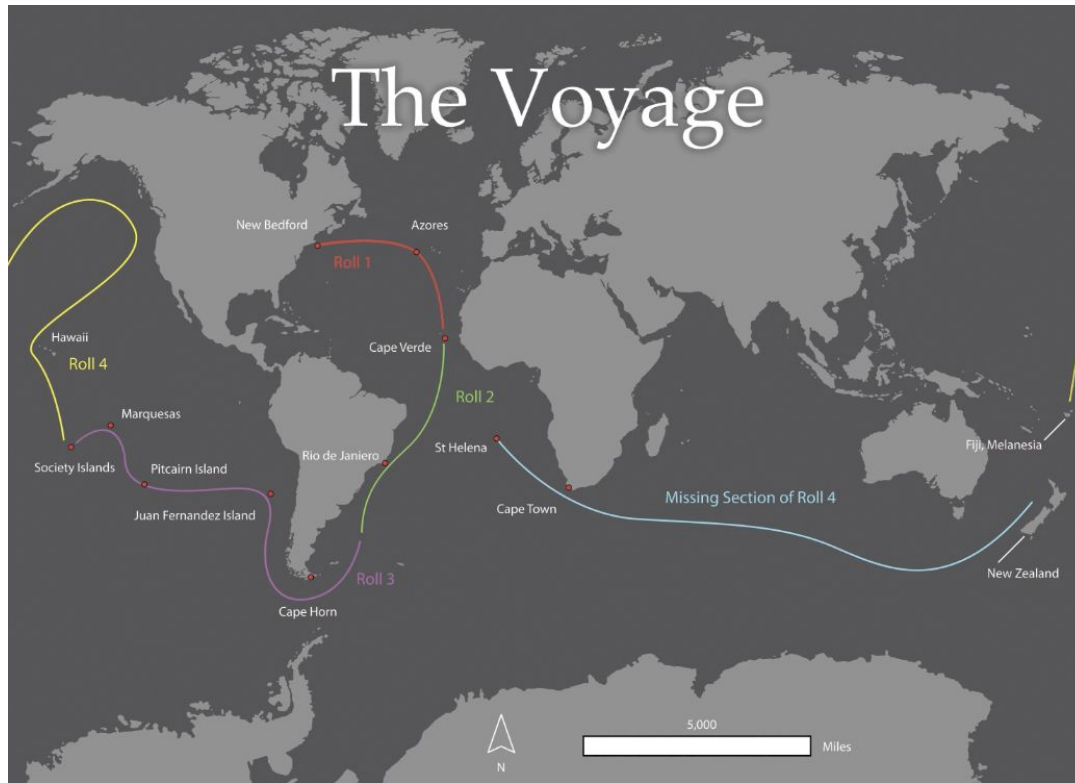
DEPICT:
to represent or
show visually

The Grand Panorama helped viewers feel like they were on a whaling journey in 1848. Over the next 67 years, more than 2,000 real whaling voyages left New Bedford Harbor in Massachusetts.

Each scene of the Grand Panorama shows different examples of daily life, busy businesses, and different locations around the world.



The Voyage



The Grand Panorama shows a whaling voyage that leaves New Bedford, Massachusetts, and ends in St. Helena, a volcanic island off of Africa. The final section of the panorama, from New Zealand to St. Helena, is missing.

What journey does it show?

FIND:

- Cape Horn
- Azores
- Fiji
- Cabo Verde
- Hawai'i
- Where you live ...

How big is it?



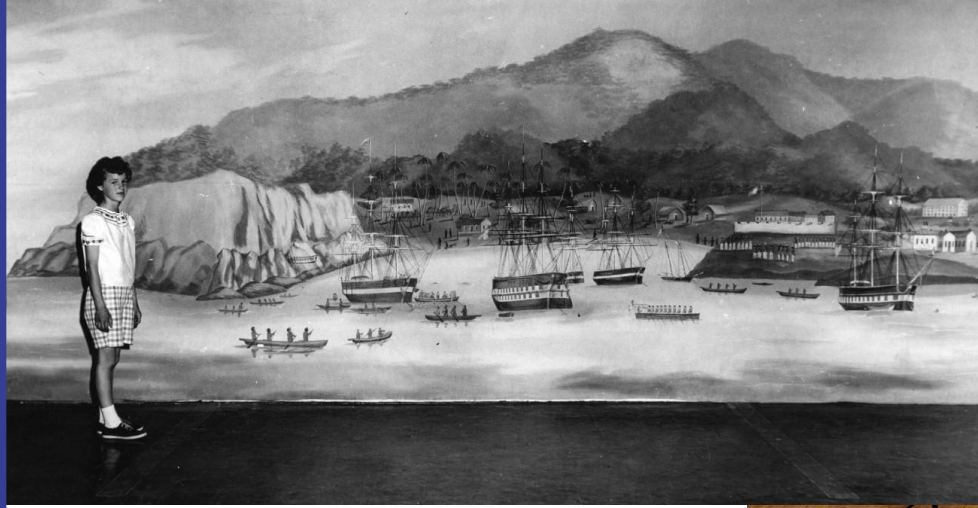
The Grand Panorama is America's longest painting!

The length of the Grand Panorama =

- 14 blue whales
- 28 school buses

← Compare all 1,275 feet of the Grand Panorama to the Statue of Liberty, the Eiffel Tower, and the Empire State Building! Now do you get a sense of just how BIG it is?

Where
is it
now?



On display in
the 1960s

In 2018, the panorama was conserved and exhibited in an old mill building in New Bedford. Since then, the panorama has traveled to museums around the country.



How can I see the whole panorama?

Watch this 34-minute video, *Spectacle in Motion*, to see the whole moving panorama. The narrator explains what the artists painted in the many scenes.

Try watching it on fast speed without the sound. Do you feel like you traveled far and wide on a whaling ship?



INQUIRE

Time to question!

The artists tried to bring drama to the panorama. Take a look at the following scene from Roll 3, showing the ships rounding Cape Horn.

How can you tell that this spot where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans meet is quite rough? How did the artists depict this difficult part of the journey?

AN ARTISTIC ADVENTURE

Directions: Investigate the Cape Horn scene from the Grand Panorama. What inferences can you make about this region?

NAME: _____

Take a look at a map. How would you describe to someone where Cape Horn is located?

Can you list ten words that describe what the scene looks like?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

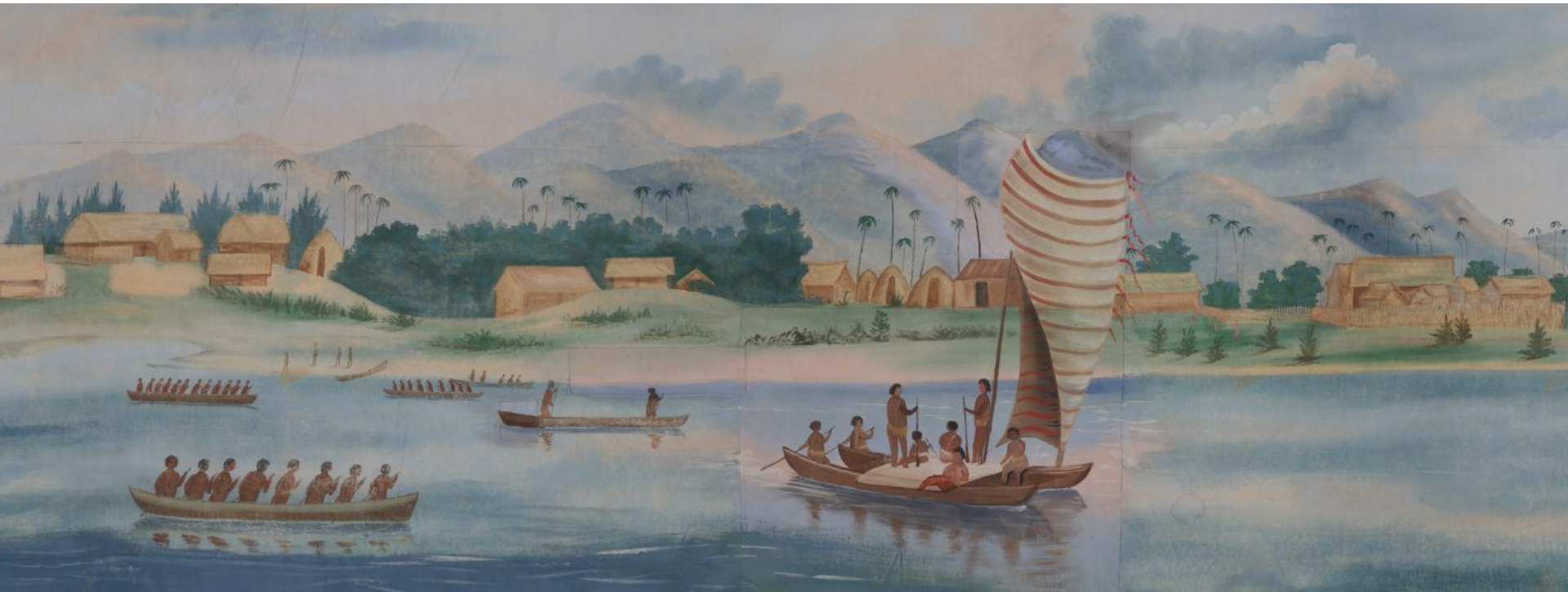
10. _____

How can you tell that the seas are rough?

What is your lingering question about this area?



Explore more of Roll 3, Section 1 the Grand Panorama [HERE](#).



Explore ALL sections of the Grand Panorama [HERE](#).

IMAGINE

Time to create!

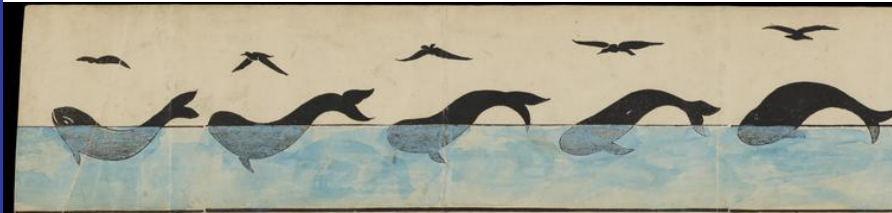
You may not be able to create a painting that is 1,275 feet long, but you can create one that moves! Before films, people used **zoetropes** (zo·e·tropes) to animate their pictures.

A zoetrope creates an optical illusion. Our brains fill in the spots between the images. The name comes from the Greek words meaning “wheel of life.”



Follow the steps in the Activity Guide to create a mini panorama-like experience by building a zoetrope.

You may want to work on your own or find a partner or small group and each tackle different parts of the project.



Activity Guide: Zoetrope

Your Challenge

It's time to create a seascape that you can animate by spinning it in a zoetrope. First, you need to build a zoetrope, which is a cylinder with vertical slits. Inside, you will place a cartoon, a sequence of images, that will then appear to move as you spin the zoetrope. Look through the slits to see your very own animation come to life!

Materials

- Printed pieces: A, B
- Scissors
- Tape
- Drawing utensils
- Pencil/dowel/chopstick
- Paper plate/pie tin

Time to Create

STEP 1:

1. Using a pair of scissors, cut out PART A – the blank comic strips.
2. Sketch, draw, or paint an adventure at sea on your comic strip. Pick an item (a person, a boat, an animal) and draw a series of that item moving (swimming, sailing, jumping). Put each movement in a square. Try to evenly space the comic, starting from the left and ending at the right.
3. Cut out PART B – the zoetrope's sides. Attach the two pieces together, like a crown, using tape.
4. Use tape to attach the base of PART B to a paper plate or pie tin base.
5. With adult's help, make a handle by securing a pencil, dowel, or chopstick through the center of the base using tape.
6. Place your comic strip inside the zoetrope with the images facing in towards the center.
7. Bring the zoetrope to eye level and look through the slits. Spin the handle. Did you create a mini animation?





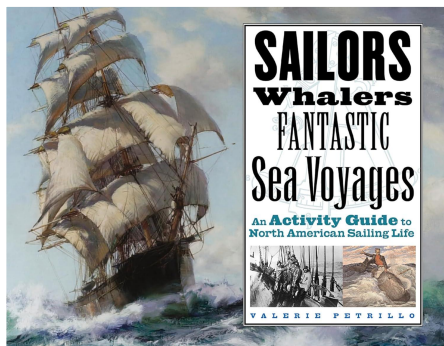
Watch a video of a zoetrope in action.

Additional resources

Digital Grand Panorama : an interactive site

A Spectacle in Motion: a 7-minute video

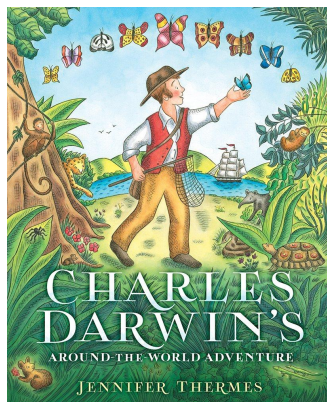
Zoetrope & Praxinoscope Toys: zoetrope history



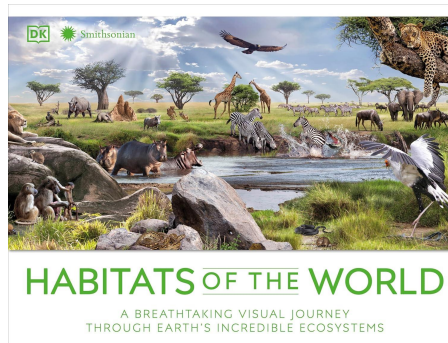
***Sailors, Whalers, Fantastic
Sea Voyages***
by Valerie Petrillo



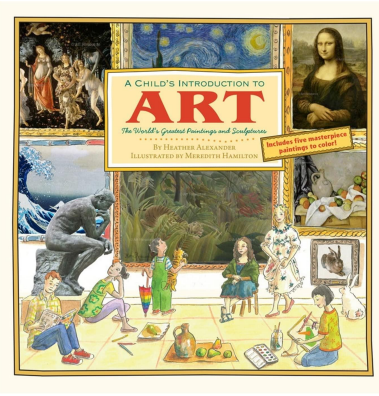
Everything & Everywhere
by Marc Martin



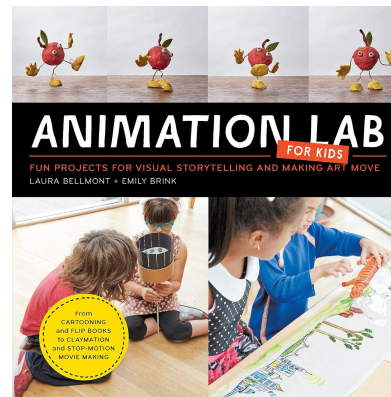
***Charles Darwin's Around-
the-World Adventure***
by Jennifer Thermes



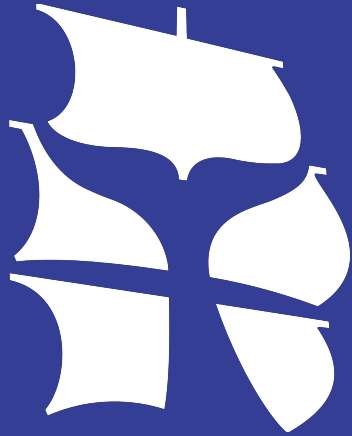
Habitats of the World
by DK



A Child's Introduction to Art
by Heather Alexander



Animation Lab for Kids
by Laura Bellmont



For more
classroom activities,
visit the
New Bedford Whaling
Museum website:

www.whalingmuseum.org

Media citations

Slides 5–11 images: [The New Bedford Whaling Museum](#)

Slide 12 video: *The Grand Panorama of a Whaling Voyage 'Round the World*; [The New Bedford Whaling Museum](#)

Slide 15–16 images: [The New Bedford Whaling Museum](#)

Slide 18 image: [COLLECTIONS – Museum of the Moving Image](#)

Slide 19 image:

<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co8427855/zoetrope-strip-no-1-1-fish-and-fowl>

Slide 20 video: [Zoetrope Praxinoscope Animations](#);
<https://youtu.be/XmZbYgLSALk?feature=shared>