

## EDUCATOR GUIDE

Story Theme: In Respect of Nature  
Subject: Roman Loranc  
Discipline: Visual Art (Photography)

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Still image from SPARK story, May 2006.

## SECTION I - OVERVIEW

### EPISODE THEME

In Respect of Nature

### SUBJECT

Roman Loranc

### GRADE RANGES

K-12 & Post-secondary

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Visual Arts & Language Arts

### OBJECTIVE

To provide a forum for students to explore artwork and its relationship to broader social themes and ideas, abstract concepts, and the history of art, particularly the use of nature as a subject and Romanticism as a creative approach.

### STORY SYNOPSIS

Spark visits photographer Roman Loranc as he captures arresting images of the Central Valley landscape. This Educator Guide is about photography, landscape photography and Romanticism as a creative approach in art making.

### INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- Group oral discussion
- Teacher-guided instruction, including demonstration and guidance
- Hands-on individual projects in which students work independently
- Hands-on group projects in which students assist and support one another

### INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to photography, landscape photography and Romanticism in art
- To provide context for the understanding of landscape imagery
- To inspire students to explore their relationship to the environment and the landscape and to develop unique visual styles and vocabularies

### EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- SPARK story about Roman Loranc on DVD or VHS and related equipment
- Computer with Internet access, navigation software, speakers and a sound card, printer

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Access to libraries with up-to-date collections of periodicals, books, and research papers
- Pencils, pens, and paper
- Construction paper and scissors
- Old magazines, books and other materials for collage, including glue or paste

### INTELLIGENCES ADDRESSED

- Bodily-Kinesthetic - control of one's own body, control in handling objects
- Interpersonal - awareness of others' feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
- Intrapersonal - awareness of one's own feelings, emotions, goals, motivations
- Spatial - ability to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems
- Logical-Mathematical - ability to detect patterns, reason deductively, think logically



See more information on [Multiple Intelligences at www.kqed.org/arts/spark/education](http://www.kqed.org/arts/spark/education).

### MEDIA MATTERS

The following SPARK stories can be used for compare/contrast purposes:

- [Jim Denevan](#) – temporary site specific sand drawings\*
- [Julia Parker](#) – Native American (Pomo) baskets\*
- [Todd Hido](#) – photographer\*
- [Sixth Street Photography Workshop](#)\*
- [Olivier Laude](#) – photographer

(\* denotes story with Educator Guide)

## SECTION II – CONTENT/CONTEXT

### CONTENT/PROFILE

The River Wild - Roman Loranc works in the great tradition of California landscape photography. His art is as much about preservation as it is about beauty. Like Ansel Adams, who is famous for his commitment to Yosemite Valley, Roman has been photographing the restoration of the Cosumnes River Preserve for many years.

The Cosumnes is the only river running from the Sierra to the Delta that is not dammed. It is a small river, but during the winter when it reaches the flat lands south of Sacramento, it runs out of its banks across acres of fields. Since the late 80s, the Nature Conservancy has been buying land and gaining easements in order to restore the natural flood plane and riparian forests of the lower Cosumnes.

Loranc is a patient, thoughtful photographer. He arrives before dawn and waits. There is a brief moment -- some days it's just a minute -- when the combination of the early light before sunrise, mist and stillness, creates the perfect conditions for his images. He captures the reflections off the glass-like surface of the water. Once the sun begins to warm the valley air, breezes come up very quickly and the surface of the water starts to move. Then, Loranc is often finished for the day.

The best time to visit Cosumnes is in the winter when the water has flooded the preserve. In December, the temporary wetlands are filled with migratory birds. There are nature trails for those who simply want to stop by or make deeper excursions into the preserve.

Spark follows Loranc through the flooded Cougar Wetland section. On that day, heavy winter rains along with breached levees had caused flooding all along the lower San Joaquin. The image of water over running its banks across acres of fields gave a clue to how the wetlands might once have looked, and how they may appear again. Loranc was very excited and took quite a few photographs that day.

Loranc and his wife Lillian Vallee, the poet and Czeslaw Milosz scholar, live in Modesto, California. They moved there 20 years ago when they found the Bay Area to expensive. It took them years to begin to appreciate the beauty of the Central Valley; however, now, they have a profound appreciation of place and say that people are surprised to find out where Loranc takes his photos.

Roman Loranc was born in Bielsko-Biala, Poland, in 1956. He immigrated to the United States in 1981. His book, "Two Hearted Oak: The Photography of Roman Loranc" features essays and poetry by Vallee. Over the years, Loranc has also been photographing historic architecture and landscapes in Lithuania.

### THE BIG PICTURE

Roman Loranc's work--with its emphasis on the beauty and majesty of the natural landscape—can be considered to be in the Romantic tradition, an artistic and intellectual movement that dates back to 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Romanticism spanned a wide range of media, including painting, literature, and music. After the social and intellectual reforms brought about by the rationalism of Enlightenment, Romanticism sought a return to an experience of awe and an acknowledgement and reverence for mystery. Traditionally these had been provided by the church, but with Romanticism, these values became the responsibility of the artists.

In all the various forms they produced, artists exploring Romanticism emphasized theatrical emotion often suggesting a sense of terror in the face of overwhelming forces. In music, this is well exemplified by the compositions of Ludwig van Beethoven, whose dramatic, repeating progressions that build emotionally are considered characteristic of the movement. In literature, Romanticism has been characterized by dark, sometimes sinister themes of psychological and emotional torment,

such as E.T.A. Hoffman's novella *The Sandman* or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Similarly, in the visual arts Romanticism often alternated between moody, shadowy scenes suggesting disturbing or supernatural narratives, and images of figures faced with the awesome power of natural forces. This latter category is perhaps best illustrated by the German painter Caspar David Friedrich, whose grand vistas emphasize the relative insignificance of human endeavor in the face of nature through striking proportions and dramatic color. Friedrich's 1809 canvas *Monk by the Sea* illustrates these qualities, depicting a very small, solitary, seemingly insignificant figure dwarfed by a vast dark sea and foreboding sky.



Caspar David Friedrich, *Monk by the Sea*, 1809  
Oil on canvas 110 x 171.5 cm Berlin, Staatliche Schosser und  
Garten Schloss Charlottenburg

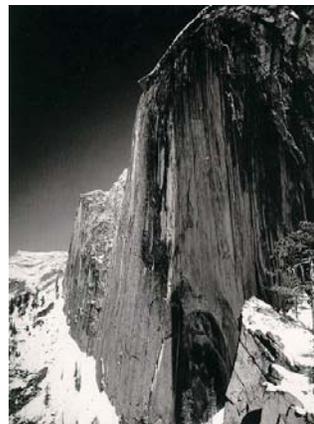
Artists in England also explored a similar Romantic style, including J.M.W. Turner, whose swirling, painterly compositions often emphasized the relative helplessness of humanity in the face of natural phenomena and the power of nature. Turner's *Shipwreck of the Minotaur* (1905), depicts a terrifying shipwreck and its horrified victims. Turner's emotionally charged image goes beyond its putative role as a history painting to suggest broader themes of the Romantic movement: the awesome power of nature, the insignificance of human undertaking and life in the face of it, and an emphasis on loose impression and emotional impact over specific representational renderings.

With the emergence of the European avant-garde movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Romantic tradition fell out of favor. Romanticism's longing for the values of a pre-industrial society, its emphasis on folk and naïve art forms, and its support of



J.M.W. Turner, *Shipwreck of the Minotaur* c. 1805  
Oil on Canvas

nationalist sentiment were considered by progressives to definitively anti-Modern and out of step with Europe's more forward-looking intellectuals and artists. In America, however, the Romantic tradition of fascination with the natural landscape meshed neatly with artists exploring and documenting the West. Artists such as Ansel Adams, Carleton E. Watkins, Timothy O'Sullivan, William Henry Jackson, Imogen Cunningham, Edward Weston, and Sonya Noskowiak were all deeply inspired by the unique features of the Western landscape and developed bodies of images that captured and glorified the immense beauty and drama of the untamed landscape. For some of these artists, the Romantic approach provided strategies by which to help others experience, appreciate and ultimately preserve the natural world.



Ansel Adams, *The Face of Half Dome, Yosemite Valley*, 1927.  
Black and white photograph  
printed from a 6 1/2" x 8 1/2" glass  
negative.

Ansel Adams' images of the Yosemite Valley express this concept clearly. His now renowned photographic print, *The Face of Half Dome, Yosemite Valley* of 1927, gives viewers a sense of the almost unimaginable natural grandeur of this extreme peak, conveying a sense of awe similar to that evoked in the work of Adams's European

antecedents. The composition is cropped tightly on the right, highlighting the dramatic rise of the peak. The intense contrast of the blacks and whites and the moody darkness in the upper right corner intensify the grandeur of the image.

Roman Loranc composes his shots just as carefully, shooting at particular times of day and under specific conditions, adjusting the composition, light

and atmosphere to capture the uniqueness and inherent beauty of his subjects. The photographs are at once painterly and yet undeniably photographic, expressing his deep appreciation for the natural world and his yearning for public concern and preservation, as well as his exceptional technical abilities and personal style.

## SECTION III - RESOURCES

### TEXTS

Frost, Lee. The A-Z of Creative Photography, Watson-Guption Publications, 1998

Honor, Hugh. Romanticism, Harper-Collins Publishers, 1979

Loranc, Roman. Two-Hearted Oak: The Photography of Roman Loranc, Heyday Press, 2003.

Newhall, Beaumont. A History of Photography: From 1939 to the Present, Bulfinch Press, 1982.

Peterson, Bryan. Understanding Exposure: How to Shoot Great Photographs with a Film or Digital Camera, Amphoto Books, 2004.

Talmon, J.L., Romanticism and Revolt, New Jersey: W W Norton & Co Inc., 1979.

Vaughn, William. Romanticism and Art, Thames & Hudson, 1994.

### WEBSITES

<http://www.romanloranc.com/>  
Roman Loranc's official site

[http://www.photographywest.com/pages/loranc\\_bio.html](http://www.photographywest.com/pages/loranc_bio.html)  
Gallery site with Roman Loranc bio and images

<http://masters-of-photography.com/>  
site featuring images of photographers from every period

<http://www.photo.net/>  
All inclusive site with resources for amateur and professional photographers

<http://www.ccc.ca.gov/>

The California Conservation Corps website

<http://www.cosumnes.org/>

Consumnes River Preserve website with information on the region and its preservation

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/ansel/>

Ansel Adams – The American Experience – PBS

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/sates/california/preserves/art6318.html>

Web page on the Consumnes River from nature.org

### VIDEO RESOURCES

Ansel Adams – The American Experience – PBS  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/ansel/>

Portrait of Imogen. ©Directed by Meg Partridge. 1988©Imogen Cunningham presents over 250 photographs directly to the viewer, describing her work, her philosophy and her perspective in this Academy Award-nominated documentary by Meg Partridge, Imogen's granddaughter. With a sharp wit, Imogen participates in lively discussions and reflects on her photographic career that spanned 75 years. 30 minutes.© Available From:©Meg Partridge©Formats: DVD, VHS and 16mm film.

Web site: <http://www.megpartridge.com>

Tel: 800/886-3135

Email: [meg@megpartridge.com](mailto:meg@megpartridge.com)

Nanook of the North. Directed by Robert J. Flaherty. A silent film documentary released in 1922 in the Romantic tradition, Flaherty captured the struggles of the Inuit Nanook and his family in the Canadian arctic. 79n minutes, black and white.

Available from Kino Video at

[http://www.kino.com/video/item.php?film\\_id=207](http://www.kino.com/video/item.php?film_id=207)

## **BAY AREA FIELD TRIPS**

SF Camerawork

657 Mission Street

Tel:415. 863-1001

Monday-Saturday

10AM-6PM

<http://www.sfcamerawork.org>

Rayko Photo Center

Exhibits, workshops, darkroom rental

Tuesday–Thursday: 12–10 pm

Friday–Sunday: 12–8 pm

Closed Mondays

428 Third Street

415 495 3773

<http://www.raykophoto.com>

San Francisco Photography Center

Offers classes and darkroom rental

Harvey Milk Recreational Arts Building

50 Scott Street

Call for schedules and fees:

415-554-9522

PhotoAlliance

Offers workshops, lecture series, and exhibitions held  
at venues around San Francisco

Call or email for events and schedules:

415 781 8111

[photo@photoalliance.org](mailto:photo@photoalliance.org)

<http://www.photoalliance.org>

## SECTION IV– VOCABULARY

### DISCIPLINE-BASED VOCABULARY AND WORDS IN THE SPARK STORY

#### **Conservancy**

An organization dedicated to conservation

#### **Conservationist**

A proponent or advocate of conservation, especially those who advocate the conservation of species, environments, and/or ecosystems

#### **Czeslaw Milosz (b. 1911, Seteiniai, Lithuania)**

A son of Aleksander Milosz, a civil engineer, and Weronika, née Kunat, Milosz attended high-school and university studies in Wilno, then belonging to Poland. A co-founder of a literary group "Zagary", he made his literary début in 1930, published in the 1930s two volumes of poetry and worked for the Polish Radio. Most of the war time he spent in Warsaw working there for the underground presses. In the diplomatic service of the People's Poland since 1945, he broke with the government in 1951 and settled in France where he wrote several books in prose. In 1953 he received Prix Littéraire Européen. In 1960, invited by the University of California, he moved to Berkeley where he has been, since 1961, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures. (Reprinted from [Nobel.org](http://Nobel.org))

#### **Derided**

To speak of or treat with a contemptuous attitude

#### **Phantom**

Something apparently seen, heard, or sensed, but having no physical reality; a ghost or an apparition

## SECTION V – ENGAGING WITH SPARK

### STANDARDS-BASED ACTIVITIES & DISCUSSION POINTS

#### Discussing Landscape Art

After viewing the SPARK segment about Roman Loranc, initiate a conversation landscape art. In addition to Loranc’s photographs, view samples of artwork created by other artists and painters, such as SPARK subjects Li Huayi and Nathan Oliveira, and Trevor Paglen as well as Ansel Adams, Timothy O’Sullivan and Imogen Cunningham. Have students discuss the following questions:

*How do artists interpret a landscape for their viewers?*

*How does a painter represent a landscape differently than a photographer?*

*Which is more appealing to you – a landscape photograph or a landscape painting?*

*Do you respond differently to different visual features?*

*Which types of landscape art seem more literal? Which seem more abstract?*

#### Photo Poem

After watching the SPARK segment featuring Roman Loranc, pause the video during a screen shot of one of his photographs. Ask students to do a “Free Write” where they will quickly jot down a list of words that come to mind when viewing the photo (still, quiet, blurred, etc.) Have students share their words lists to pinpoint commonalities. Then ask students to look back at their Free Writing piece and create a short poem that includes some of the words they wrote down to describe Loranc’s work. Students may choose to present their poems to another class alongside the photograph they focused on in order to share and illustrate their inspiration.

#### RELATED STANDARDS

##### Writing

Grade 1

Organization and Focus

1.1 Select a focus when writing.

1.2 Use descriptive words when writing.

Grade 2

Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development  
Vocabulary and Concept Development

#### Landscape Collage

In the SPARK segment about Roman Loranc, he talks about capturing the essence of nature and glorifying it. After pausing the video on his photographs, ask students to focus on the essential elements of the photograph. Supply construction paper and scissors for students and ask them to create the essence of a landscape using only solid shapes. Encourage students to use contrasting colors to make the images stand out. Paper can be cut in the shapes of trees, mountains, plants, etc. and glued onto a background. Alternatively, photographs from magazines could be cut into silhouette shapes of objects in nature to create a more dynamic visual landscape.

#### Discovering Your School Landscape

Have students get into groups of 3 or 4 and spend time coming up with ideas of how to represent their school in a landscape art piece. Using photography, drawing, or collage, students should plan and fabricate an art piece that captures the essence of their school climate and glorifies it, in the way that Roman Loranc glorifies the landscape of California’s central valley.

#### Reporting on Reporters

Photographers can also be called reporters, since they are capturing a scene that took place in reality, rather than from imagination. Have students choose a well-known photographer and use the library and Internet to research the artist’s work, then write a 500-page essay about the artist. Some examples of subjects could be Dorothea Lange, Ansel Adams, Todd Hido, Diane Arbus, Cindy Sherman, and Man Ray. In writing the essays, students can think about the following questions:

*What seems to be the preferred subject for this photographer?*

*How does the artist interpret their subject? Do their photographs make the subject seem positive, or negative?*

*What elements are used in their photographs to enhance or decrease focus on certain parts of the scene?*

*How is lighting used in the artist's work? How is negative space used in the artist's work?*

As a visual supplement to their essays, students should create a photograph in the style of the artist they researched.

### **Ansel Adams: Location Revealed**

The new field of forensic astronomy uses science and data to uncover the exact location from which an artist created a work of art. In 2005, astronomers pinpointed the date and location of Ansel Adams' black & white landscape photograph [Autumn Moon, the High Sierra from Glacier Point](#) (see below). Invite students to research forensic science and this process. Provide articles and Web sites for students, or challenge them to research forensic astronomy on the Internet and in the library. (This activity can also be used as a process through which students learn about the veracity and reliability of information on the Internet.)



Ansel Adams, [Autumn Moon, the High Sierra from Glacier](#)

Resource articles: Forensic astronomy-  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/life/science/story/0,12996,1554478,00.html> and dating Ansel Adams's photograph:  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4848982>.

Initiate a conversation about the implications of knowing exactly where and when an artist created a work of art? Does the identification of an artists' location with an accuracy of 10 feet, 70 years after the work was created impact upon how we see the work? How reliable is this information? Why do we need to know this? Does this information change the work as an artistic experience? Examine the photograph Ansel Adams took and invite students to openly discuss these ideas. Then compare this idea to the work of Roman Loranc by watching the SPARK story and articulating the similarities and differences. How does knowing exactly how Loranc composes and takes his images impact upon how they are seen and understood? How is this similar or different to the work of Ansel Adams?

For more information about SPARK and its educational content, including the Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the Web site at <http://www.kqed.org/spark/education>.  
For more information about the California Visual & Performing Arts Standards, visit the CA Dept. of Education at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/vpa>.