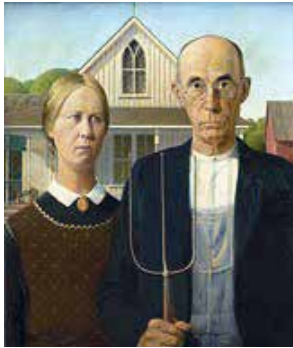


'American Gothic' by Grant Wood



American Gothic – Grant Wood

One of the most famous American paintings of the 20th century was *American Gothic* by Grant Wood. The Gothic farmhouses that were found in Iowa fascinated Wood. He asked the owners of one of them for permission to paint a portrait of their house. The models were Wood's sister and a local dentist, who were to represent father and daughter. However, most individuals see a husband and a wife.

The Gothic window in the house and the pitchfork along with the somber faces give one a feeling of a hard life. The painting was entered in an art contest and was criticized by one critic as being comical. The artwork did win a bronze medal and \$300 cash.

There are a variety of opinions on the painting. One group sees the painting as old-fashioned, with a view of a rural America that was changing into a modern urban world—a past world filled with individuals with grim, pinched faces that resisted change from a past of puritanical values and strict Bible thumpers.

Another group that views the painting with an idea of the Great Depression sees it as an example of the steadfast American spirit that built the West—solid individuals who went about their lives trying to make a better life through work.

Art is what one sees, and that might be different from what the artist intended. So, enjoy the artwork for yourself!

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