

# How Artists See Animals: Mammals

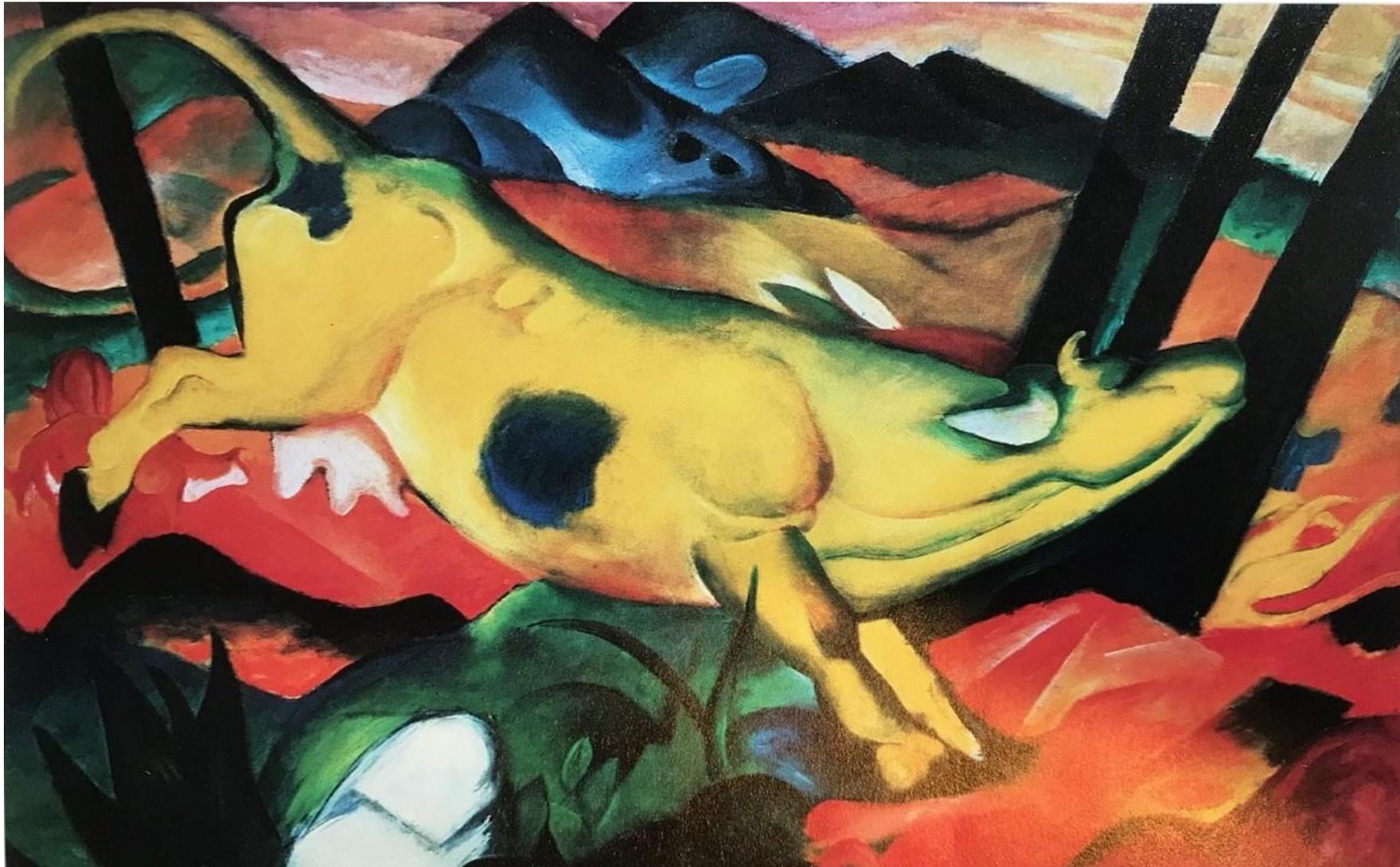
Based on a book by Colleen Carroll

Group of Stags: Cave Painters (15,000—10,000B.C.) Lascaux, France



**Did you know that the very first paintings were pictures of animals?** Thousands of years ago. Prehistoric artists made paintings of bison, lions, horses, and many other kinds of animals on cave walls. Paper and canvas had yet to be invented. You probably recognize the animals in this picture. **What details help you to tell?** The painting is made in a very simple way, with only a few dark lines to show the animals' shapes. The herd seems to be moving across the wall. Maybe they are looking for food, or maybe they are running away from a hunter. **Where do you think they might be going?** If you use your imagination, you might be able to hear their hooves as they move. **What do you think they sound like?** (There are many videos of the Lascaux caves on You Tube)

# The Yellow Cow by Franz Marc (1880-1916)



Chances are you've never seen a cow like this before. Of course, the artist who made this painting hadn't either, except in his imagination. This extraordinary cow leaps through a landscape filled with brilliant colors that seem to come from a dream. **How many colors can you find?**

**What words would you use to describe this cow?**

Everyone knows that real cows are not yellow and blue. But artists sometimes change the way things really look to express a feeling or to look at things in a new way. **Try to imagine this same picture with a black and white cow and a green countryside.**

**How would realistic colors change the feeling of the painting?  
Do you think it would be as much fun to look at?**

**Tiger by a Torrent**  
**By Kishi Ganku ( 1750-1838)**



No one would mistake this tiger, with its deep orange coat, black stripes, and bright green eyes, for any other animal. The artist drew the tiger in action as it gingerly steps down a rocky path along a stream of rushing water. It rests its great weight on a front paw and twists its body toward something on the other side of the stream.

**What do you think it sees?**

**Do you think it will be able to cross the water safely?**

**Look closely at the tigers thick velvety cloak.** The artist drew hundreds of tiny lines to make the texture look so realistic.

**What other realistic details can you find?**

The big cat bares its long, white fangs and glares off into the distance.

**Can you snarl like this beautiful ferocious animal?**

The Water Hole  
by N.C. Wyeth (1882-1945)



When you want a drink at a water fountain, you probably have to stand in line. These buffalo are doing just that as they make their way over hills and down paths to a refreshing water hole.

**Do they seem to be rushing quickly toward the water or moving at a leisurely pace?**

There are many lines of animals in this picture.

**Starting with the biggest buffalo, trace your finger over each of the lines.** You may notice that the animals get smaller and lighter until they become tiny spots of gray paint. Artists do this to create a feeling of wide, open space that reaches far into the distance. The smallest buffalo in the background still has a lot of ground to cover.

**How thirsty would you be if you had to walk this far for a drink of water?**