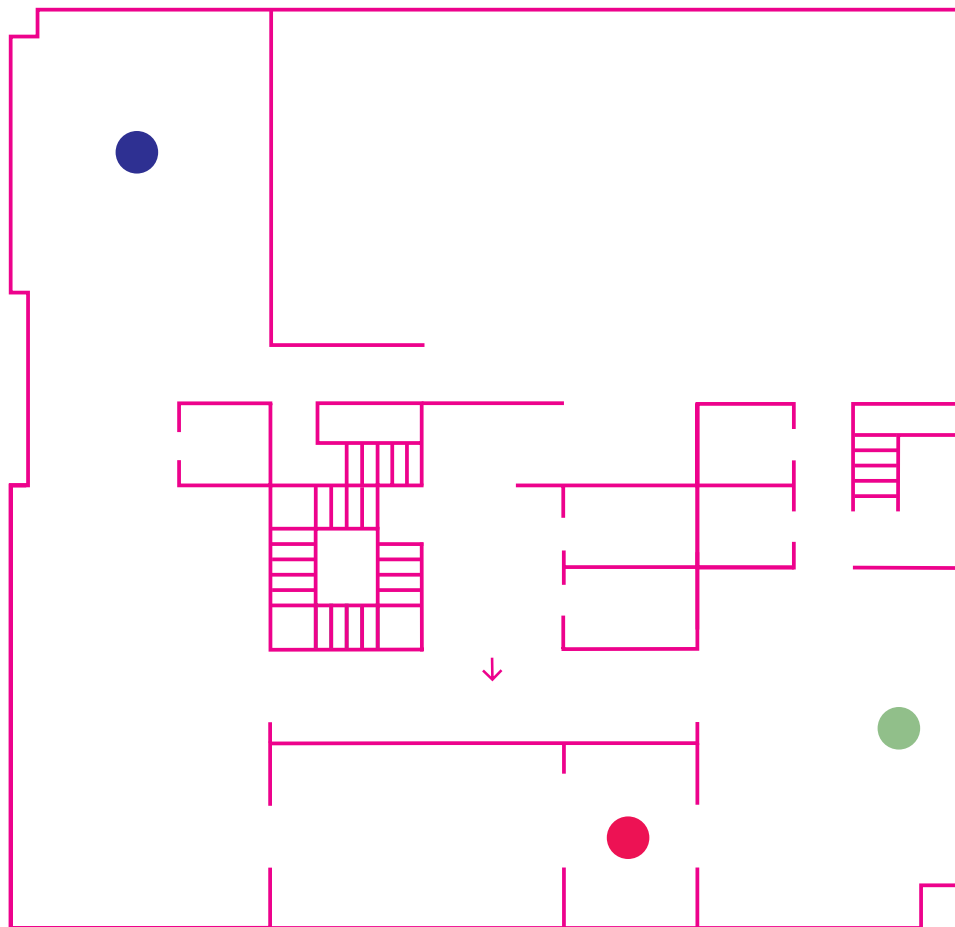


The Book of
Esther in the
Age of Rembrandt

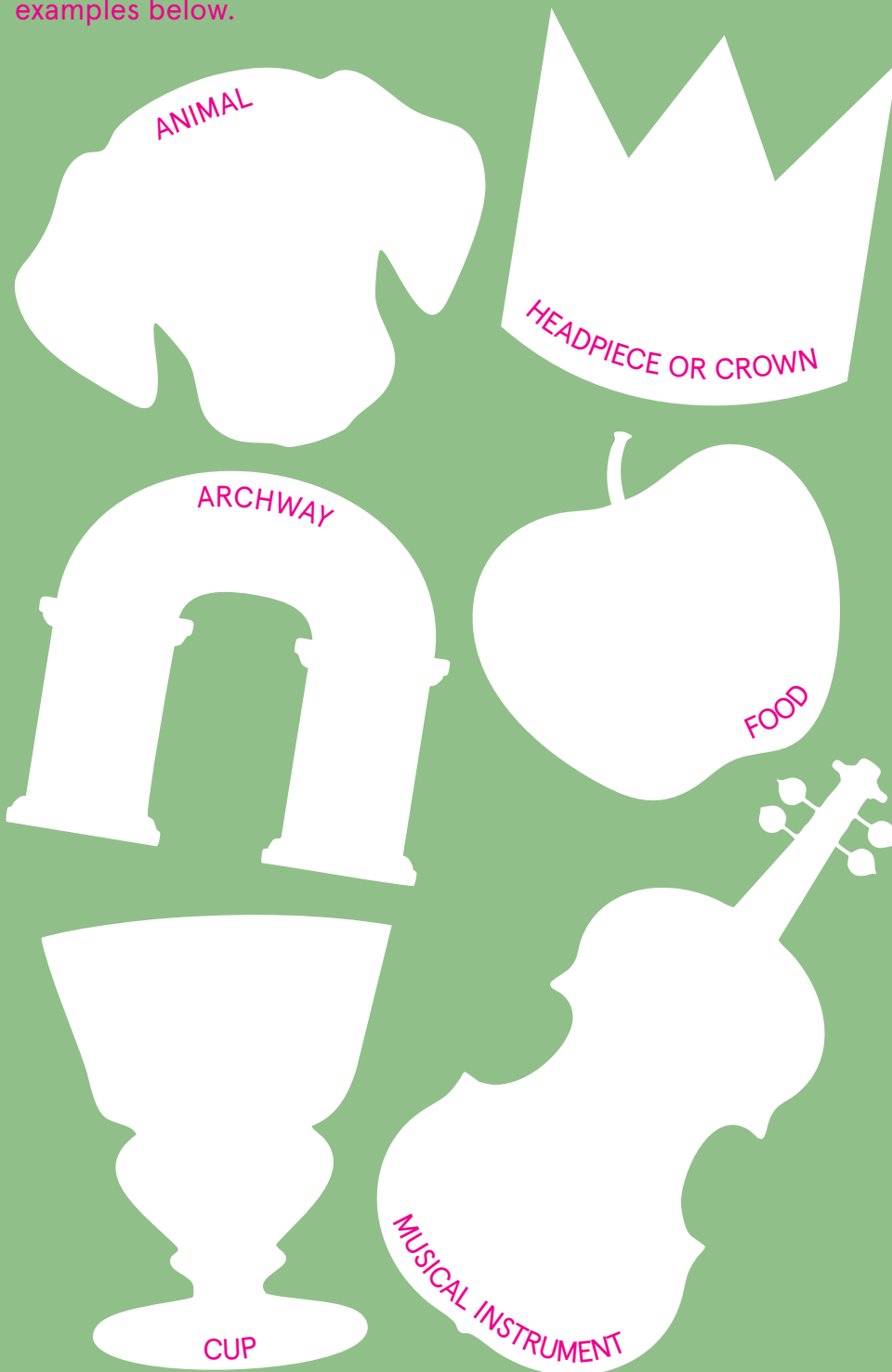


Rembrandt van Rijn was an artist from the Netherlands who lived from 1606 until 1669. He was inspired by the Book of Esther and made numerous paintings and prints of the biblical story.

In the story, Esther, a young Jewish woman living in ancient Persia (present-day Iran), finds favor with the king, Ahasuerus, becomes queen, and risks her life to save the Jewish people. Each year on the holiday of Purim, the queen's heroism is celebrated.

In the following galleries, discover artworks about Queen Esther made by Dutch artists along with Esther scrolls and other Jewish ceremonial objects from the Netherlands.

As you explore the exhibition, look for the following and sketch examples below.

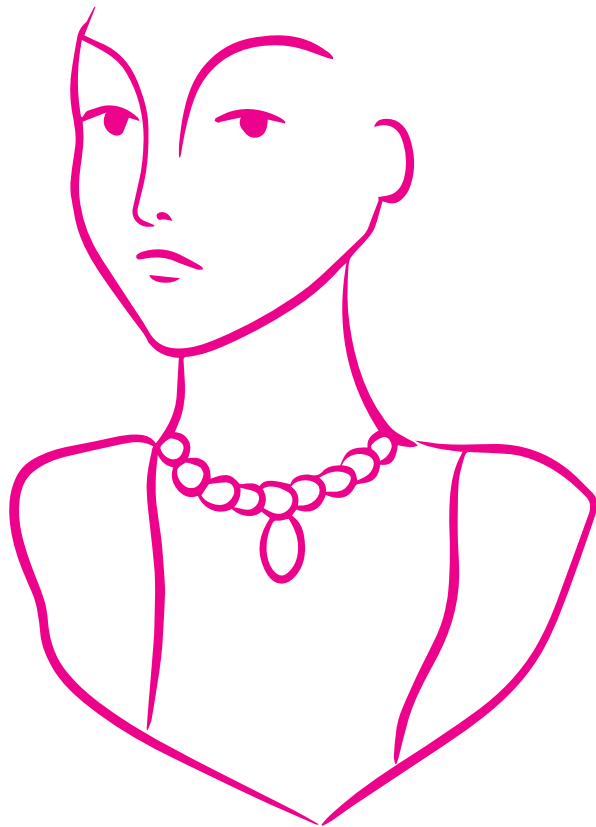


Follow the map to find three portraits of royal women by artist Gerrit van Honthorst titled *Portrait of Elizabeth Stuart as Esther*, *Portrait of a Woman (possibly Amalia van Solms as Esther)*, and *Princess Elizabeth, Princess Royal, Abbess of Hervorden (Herford)* (1618-1680).

In each painting, the artist portrays his subjects with characteristics similar to Queen Esther.

Compare the three portraits. What is the same and what is different?

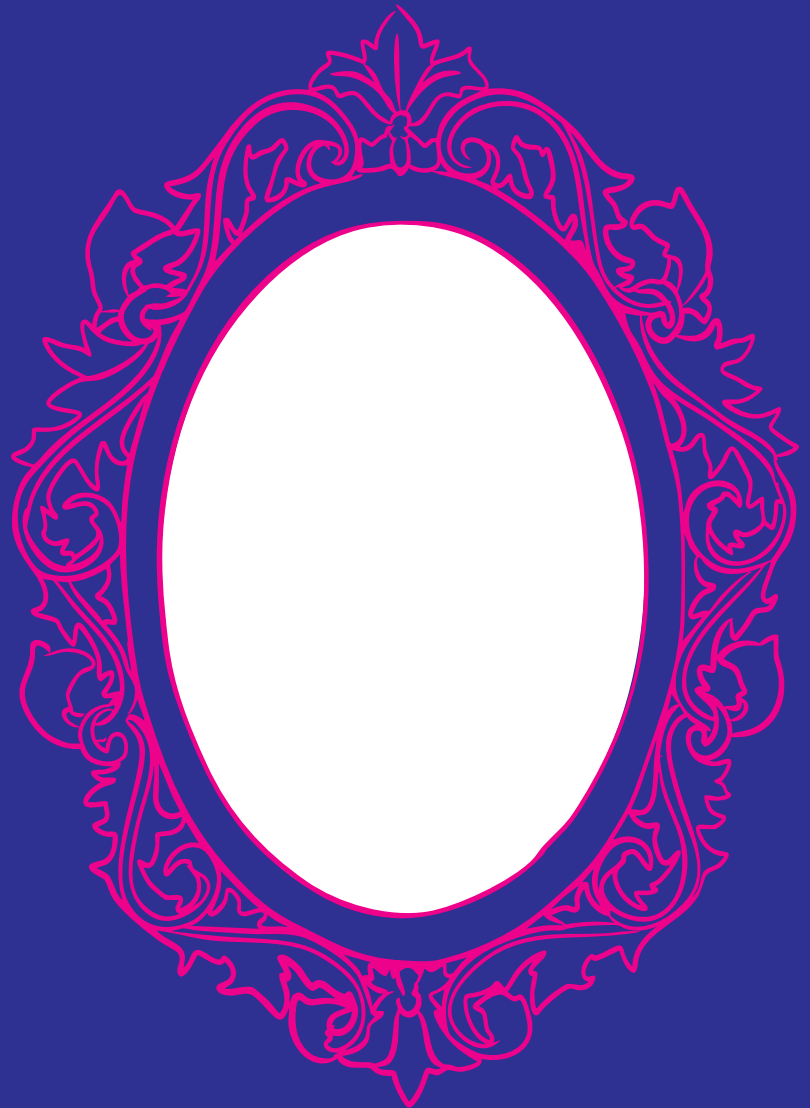
Draw your own playful headpiece or crown for the figure below.



Follow the map into the next gallery, where you will find the painting by Rembrandt called *A Jewish Heroine from the Hebrew Bible*. The heroine is likely Queen Esther.

Look at the clothing that the seated woman is wearing. How would you describe her outfit?

If you were to pose for a portrait, what would you wear?



Sketch a detail from the clothing or the figure's pose in the blank space above.

Follow the map until you find three paintings in the last gallery that are all made by Jan Steen, two of which are called *The Wrath of Ahasuerus* and the third being *Esther, Ahasuerus, and Haman*.

Describe what you notice in one of the paintings to your grownup.

Compare the three paintings. What is similar and what is different?

In these scenes, King Ahasuerus has just learned of Esther's Jewish identity. He is angry because this means that his adviser Haman has been plotting against his wife and her people.

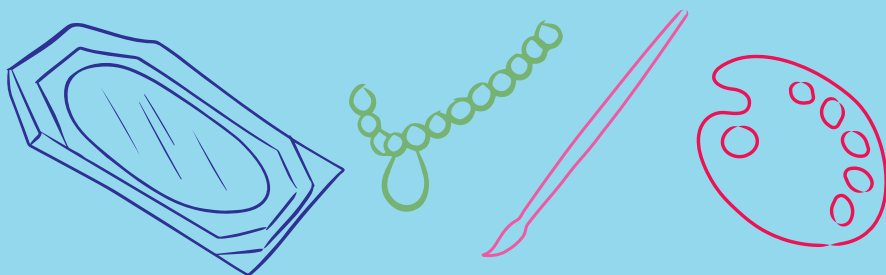
Using the speech and thought bubbles below, write what you think each character might be saying or thinking at this moment.



At Home

How might you create a portrait of yourself or a family member?

- ① Set up a mirror or have a family member hold a pose. Incorporate a playful hat or clothing item.
- ② On a thick piece of paper, use crayons or colored pencils to draw an outline of your portrait.
- ③ Create washes of color over the drawing using watercolor paint. Add details to the clothing, hair, and face to complete your striking portrait.



Thank you for visiting the exhibition. For information on Family Programs at the Jewish Museum, visit TheJewishMuseum.org/Families.

The Family Guide for *The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt* is supported, in part, by the Estate of Benine Jo Adolf, an anonymous donor, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Kathy Hochul and the New York State Legislature.



The Book of Esther in the Age of Rembrandt is made possible by the Jerome L. Greene Foundation.



Major support at the Jewish Museum is also provided by the Leon Levy Foundation and Denise Littlefield Sobel, together with Achelis and Bodman Foundation, Alfred J. Grunebaum & Ruth Grunebaum Sondheimer Memorial Fund, The Jamnik Family, David L. Klein Jr Foundation, Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Robert Lehman Foundation, Reuben and Jane Leibowitz Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, Joan Rosenbaum Exhibition Endowment, Sudarsky Family Foundation, and other generous donors. This exhibition is also supported as a part of the Dutch Culture USA FUTURE 400 program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York.



Robert Lehman
Foundation



Bloomberg
Philanthropies

Illustrations by Claire Zhang.



5th Ave at 92nd St, NYC
TheJewishMuseum.org
Under the auspices of the
Jewish Theological Seminary