



## Artist & Composer Study

This session's featured artist is Mary Vaux Walcott. We've included four art selections for your kids and teens to use for picture study. They are:

- *Balsamroot (Balsamorhiza sagittata)*
- *Eustoma russelianum*
- *Common Pitcherplant (Sarracenia purpurea venosa)*
- *California Rose-Bay (Rhododendron californicum)*

Instead of a featured composer, we have included four wildflower-themed pieces from various composers, as well as a bonus opera, (with links to each) to listen to. They are:

- Symphony No. 3, 2nd Movement: What the Wildflowers in the Meadow Tell Me
- Waltz of the Flowers
- Crisantemi (Chrysanthemums)
- Bruyères (Heather) Prelude
- BONUS OPERA: Duo des fleurs (Flower Duet)

Artist & Composer Study



## Mary Vaux Walcott

July 31, 1860 – August 22, 1940

In the world of art, there exists a delicate balance between conveying beauty and capturing reality. Mary Vaux Walcott, an artist known for her botanical illustrations, mastered this balance with finesse.

Born in 1860 in Pennsylvania, Mary developed a passion for nature early in life, spending countless hours exploring the wilderness surrounding her family home. She took several trips throughout the years to the Rocky Mountains in Canada with her family. Together, her family climbed mountains, capturing detailed photographs of the landscapes around them, and then recorded their own scientific notes to accompany these pictures.

This sparked a deep interest in botany, photography, and the outdoors for Mary, and these passions remained with her throughout her lifetime.

Mary's artistic journey began with her love for nature, starting with simple watercolor paints and a curiosity for the world around her. Inspired by the intricate patterns and vibrant colors of the flora she encountered, she began to document her findings with paintings. Her keen eye for detail and dedication to accuracy soon caught the attention of renowned botanists, who recognized the scientific value of her work. They asked her to paint a rare arnica bloom and were so pleased with her work that they encouraged her to go into professional botanical illustration. For many years following, Mary traveled throughout the wilds of the Canadian Rockies, documenting all the wildflowers she could with a precise hand.

One of Mary's most notable contributions to the world of botanical illustration is her series of watercolors depicting the wildflowers of North America. These stunning paintings not only captured the beauty of each flower but also provided valuable insights into their morphology and habitat. Mary's meticulous approach to her craft ensured that every petal, leaf, and stem was rendered with precision and care. She would stay for hours at a time to observe a particular flower in its natural habitat, painstakingly capturing its color and form by the light of the sun before it withered away.

Mary eventually published this series of watercolors along with her botanical observations through the Smithsonian as the five-volume book series *North American Wild Flowers*. This series had a large impact on the world of botany, and it has been republished many times and displayed in various art galleries throughout the years.

Beyond her artistic talents, Mary was also an avid outdoorswoman and continued to climb mountains and explore the natural beauty of the world around her throughout her life. She was the first woman to climb Mt. Stephen in 1900, which is a 10,000-foot peak! In 1908, a childhood friend of Mary's even named a mountain after her, the "Mount Mary Vaux" in British Columbia. The mountain remains a memento to this day of Mary's deep love for nature and her dedication to documenting it.

Mary died in 1940, but her legacy continues to inspire artists and nature lovers alike. Her work serves as a reminder of the intrinsic connection between art and science and the profound impact that one individual can have on our understanding of the natural world. In a society often driven by progress and innovation, Mary's timeless creations remind us to pause and appreciate the beauty of nature surrounding us.

# Artist Study

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

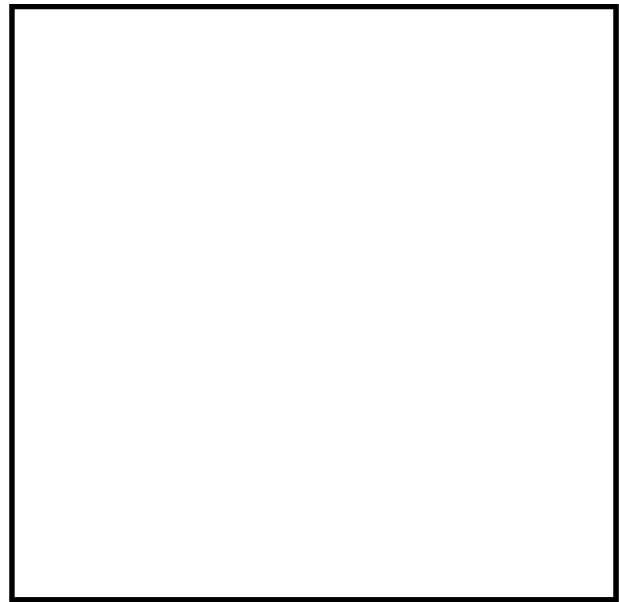
**Artist Fun Facts:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Art Mediums Used:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Famous Artworks:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Further Study:**

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Sinclair Canon  
2. 6. 10. 1923

Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*), 1923



*Eustoma russelianum*, c. 1930



*Common Pitcherplant (Sarracenia purpurea venosa), 1931*



California Rose-Bay (*Rhododendron californicum*), 1933

# Picture Study

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Created: \_\_\_\_\_

Art Mediums Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Further Study: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Use the box to draw a picture inspired by this artwork.**

