



1846

Oil on canvas

26 5/8 x 30 3/8 inches (66.8 x 77.2 cm)

**EDWARD HICKS**

American, 1780–1849

## NOAH'S ARK

The biblical story of Noah's ark, depicted here, is found in the book of Genesis (6:9–9:28). To punish people for their wicked and violent ways, God decided to send heavy rains to earth for forty days and forty nights. First, however, he instructed Noah, a righteous man, to build an ark for his family and two of every kind of animal. After the rains stopped, a dove sent out by Noah returned to the ark with an olive branch, proof that the floodwater had receded and plants could grow again. Then God created a beautiful rainbow in the sky as a **symbol** of his promise to never destroy the earth again.

## LOOKING QUESTIONS

What animals do you see?  
Which are closest?  
Farthest away?

Where are they going?

Which one is looking at us?  
Describe his personality.  
How can you tell?

Look closely at the sky.  
What is the weather like?

List the colors. What mood  
do they communicate?

What story do you think the artist, Edward Hicks, is telling?

Where are Noah and his family?  
Why do you think Hicks painted  
only the animals?

This painting by Edward Hicks shows a long, curving line of animals approaching Noah's huge boat. Prancing horses and a serious-looking lion stare out at us, while pairs of elegant, black-and-white-striped zebras, giraffes, camels, tigers, and hippopotamuses stand patiently. What other animals can you find? In the distance, tiny black birds fly down from the dark, rain-filled clouds overhead.

Edward Hicks learned to paint **decorative motifs** when he was **apprenticed** to a coach maker at the age of thirteen. Later he became a successful sign painter and a devout Quaker preacher. Although his business conflicted with Quaker beliefs—that art is a distraction and a needless luxury—Hicks considered his art to be an expression of his faith and created paintings that told religious stories. This is the only painting he made of the story of Noah's ark.

Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Lisa Norris Elkins, 1950-92-7