

# Landmarks Guide for Adolescents



**David Hare**

American, 1917-1992

***The Swan's Dream of Leda***

1962

Bronze with stone base

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**Subject:** Myth

**Activity:** Reimagining a myth

**Materials:** Paper and pencil

**Vocabulary:** Abstract, dynamic, mythology

## **i** Introduction

David Hare's sculpture, *The Swan's Dream of Leda*, references the myth of the god Zeus becoming a swan so he can seduce the beautiful Leda. There are many works of art that depict Zeus and Leda, but Hare's is unusual in that it shows how the swan sees Leda in his dreams. By choosing this unconventional point of view, Hare personalizes the myth. Because we all have dreams, we can imagine why the artist's dream is suggestive and not specific. The gentle curves and delicate composition of the sculpture give it a feeling of lightness, as if it could lift off of the ground and float away. Notice the contrast between the delicately sculpted bronze and the heavy base made of rock materials. Hare worked to make this sculpture dynamic and evocative.

## **?** Questions

The artist chose to depict this subject matter abstractly. How is this choice more or less effective than depicting this subject matter realistically?

How might dreams be more difficult to depict than reality? How might they be easier to depict?

Can you think of other modern art works that reference classical myths?

Why do you think ancient classical myths are still relevant to us today?

## David Hare, continued

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### Activity

Brainstorm a myth or legend that you are familiar with, for example, Cinderella or George Washington and the cherry tree. Make a drawing depicting this type of story from a different or unexpected point of view, for example, from the perspective of the fairy godmother or the cherry tree. It may help to write down the story you want to tell first, so that you can be sure to include all of the important points in your drawing.



### BTW

Before David Hare became a sculptor, he earned undergraduate degrees in chemistry and biology. He later became interested in experimental photography, which led him to become an artist.



### Vocabulary

**Abstract** - Expressing a quality apart from the way an object appears to the eye; the opposite of realistic

**Dynamic** - Characterized by action, the opposite of static

**Mythology** - Stories dealing with the gods and legendary heroes of a particular people