

Patchwork Landscape

This art project is inspired by the work of artist Richard Thompson. His work is on display (February-May 2020) at the Hockaday Museum of Art as part of the exhibition "Looking at the Landscape". You can view more images of his work at richardthompsonart.com.

"I drove alone through the vast Midwestern rural landscape, and it seemed that I was driving on a vast tabletop with the distant horizon the far, far edge of a great still life." - Richard Thompson



Image: *Summer Fields*, 2019, Oil on canvas, 48" x 60"

ABOUT THE ART & THE ARTIST:

Oregon artist Richard Thompson's colorful paintings depict rural America. They capture the houses, fields, trees, clouds and other elements that characterize the countryside. Using heavy lines and bold colors, they are very graphic- a look which brings to mind a patchwork quilt.

"I see landscapes and automatically think paintings. In the world around me I may see a flash of color, a particular form of a tree, the sudden movement of a bird, the march of a squadron of clouds, or the pale blue vapor trail of a passing jet, and each moment or event may become the reason for a big brush stroke, the arch of a curve, a shape, a color, a line or the plan for a whole composition."

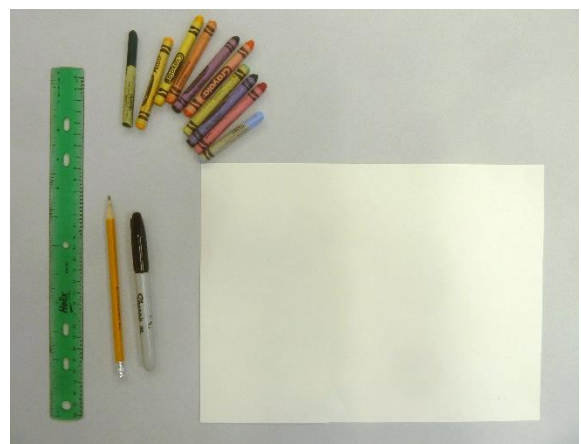
Richard Thompson grew up on a farm in Dayton, Oregon and discovered art while a forestry student at Oregon State University in the 1960's. Today he continues his creative work having returned to live and work on that same farm following a 30-year academic career. He was a Professor of Art at the University of Texas in Austin and he served as Dean of the School of Art and Design at Alfred University in New York.

Thompson's work has been included in many high-profile exhibitions including the 1975 and 1981 Whitney Biennial exhibitions at the Whitney Museum in New York, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Palm Desert Museum in Palm Springs, California, the Portland Art Museum in Portland, Oregon and the Modern Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas among others. His work has also been the subject of several museum solo exhibitions and is in many museum and corporate permanent collections.

Let's make an abstracted landscape drawing! We will use basic shapes to start with and then fill them in with bright colors and patterns for interest.

SUPPLIES:

- 9" x 12" drawing paper (copier paper also works)
- Pencil
- Straight edge or ruler
- Black felt tipped pen (permanent is a must if you add color with markers)
- Crayons (you may substitute colored pencils or colored markers)



VOCABULARY:

landscape – A landscape depicts natural scenery such as mountains, valleys, trees, rivers, and forests.

abstract – Abstraction in art is a non-lifelike portrayal of real world objects, people and scenes. Shape, form, color and line are used to create a composition that is representational rather than realistic.

horizontal line – A straight line that is flat and level with the ground, which runs left to right across the page is a horizontal line.

Horizon – The horizon is where the earth meets the sky.

pattern – A pattern in art is a repeated decorative design. The elements of a pattern repeat in a predictable manner.

unity – Unity in a work of art is when the parts work together through visual relatedness to make it look whole and complete.

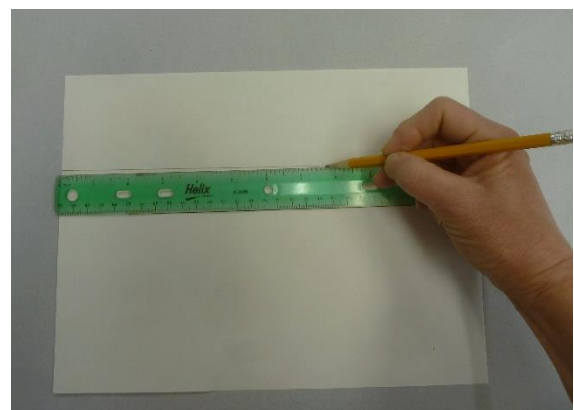
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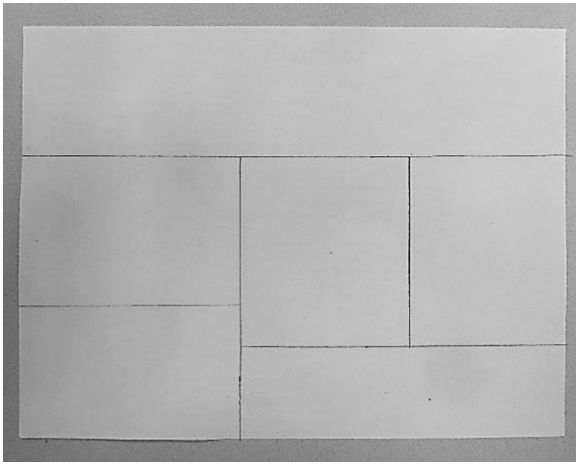
Think about things you might find in a **landscape** picture.

1. Look at an example of a Richard Thompson landscape. What landscape features does he include in his work? (*sky, prairie, farm fields, mountains, hills, roads, buildings, trees, flowers...*)
2. Did he make them look as real as a photograph? (*no, they are simpler, he used **abstracted** shapes and colors, etc....*)
3. What shapes do you see? (*rectangles, circles, triangles*) Notice that these are simplified versions representing things found in a landscape.
4. What did Richard Thompson use to create places of interest in his picture? (*bright colors, lines, patterns, shapes...*) Notice that he used each pattern, shape, or color in several locations around the picture. This helps to create a **unified composition**.

ART MAKING:

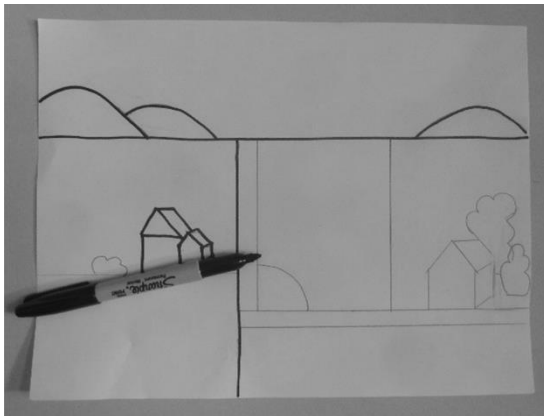
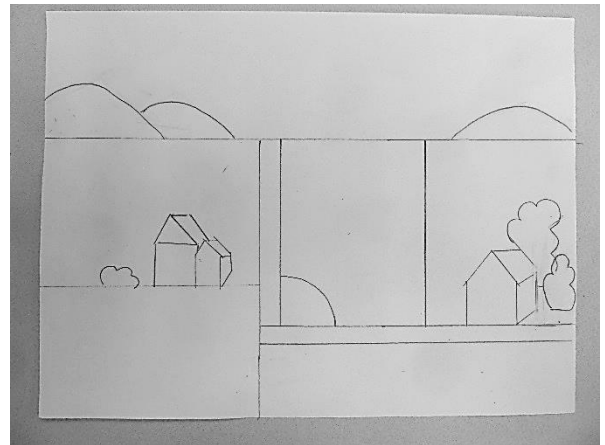
1. Decide how much of your picture will be sky. Using a pencil, draw a **horizontal** line across the paper using a ruler as a straight edge. This is the **horizon** of the picture. Above the line will be the sky and below it will be land.



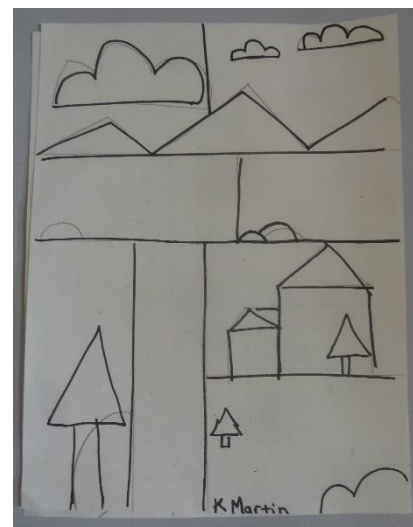


2. We will be creating an abstracted landscape by using basic shapes and simplifying the details. Divide the land section of your landscape into from 5 to 7 rectangular sections using ruler to keep edges straight. These will be fields.

3. Add simple shapes for two or three buildings. Don't add extra details at this stage of the picture – that will come when we get to the coloring part of the project. Add a road or two if desired. If you wish you may add a few shapes on the horizon line for mountains or hills. Add a few large tree shapes if needed.



4. Look at your sky. If it needs cloud shapes add them now.



5. Using a black felt tipped pen, trace over the lines. Your drawing should look like a coloring book page when you are finished. Add your name to the bottom of the picture for your artist signature.



6. Use crayons to fill in some of the field rectangles and building shapes with solid colors. Leave some of the shapes empty for now.

7. Color in your sky shapes.

8. Add patterns to some of your shapes to represent farm fields, plants, etc. Patterns can be as simple as repeated diagonal lines or dots of color. Make sure that your patterns are repeated in several places.

9. Continue to fill in your shapes with color and patterns.



10. Check for completeness... When you think you are finished, look at your drawing to make sure you have colored in all the shapes right up to the edges. Do the colors show up from a distance? If not add another layer of crayon to make the colors more intense. Now look to see if you have unified your composition by using repeated colors and patterns. Add more details if needed.

11. Evaluation...

If the viewers eye travels around the landscape then you have created an interesting piece that will invite repeated looking. Ask yourself if there is something you would change to make your picture better. Artists practice a lot when creating a finished piece of art and sometimes make several versions before they are satisfied.