



Interpretive Guide & Hands-on Activities
The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Travelling Exhibition Program

From Water into Sky



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

The Interpretive Guide

The Art Gallery of Alberta is pleased to present your community with a selection from its Travelling Exhibition Program. This is one of several exhibitions distributed by The Art Gallery of Alberta as part of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. This Interpretive Guide has been specifically designed to complement the exhibition you are now hosting. The suggested topics for discussion and accompanying activities can act as a guide to increase your viewers' enjoyment and to assist you in developing programs to complement the exhibition. Questions and activities have been included at both elementary and advanced levels for younger and older visitors.

At the Elementary School Level the Alberta Art Curriculum includes four components to provide students with a variety of experiences. These are:

- Reflection:** Responses to visual forms in nature, designed objects and artworks
- Depiction:** Development of imagery based on notions of realism
- Composition:** Organization of images and their qualities in the creation of visual art
- Expression:** Use of art materials as a vehicle for expressing statements

The Secondary Level focuses on three major components of visual learning. These are:

- Drawings:** Examining the ways we record visual information and discoveries
- Encounters:** Meeting and responding to visual imagery
- Composition:** Analyzing the ways images are put together to create meaning

The activities in the Interpretive Guide address one or more of the above components and are generally suited for adaptation to a range of grade levels. As well, this guide contains coloured images of the artworks in the exhibition which can be used for review and discussion at any time. Please be aware that copyright restrictions apply to unauthorized use or reproduction of artists' images.

The Travelling Exhibition Program, funded by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, is designed to bring you closer to Alberta's artists and collections. We welcome your comments and suggestions and invite you to contact:

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The AFA and AGA



Curatorial Statement

From Water into Sky

If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.

Loren Eiseley
American anthropologist
1907-1977

Transparent, tasteless, odorless and nearly colourless, water is the main constituent of Earth's streams, lakes and oceans and the fluids of most living organisms. Listed as one of the four classical elements by the ancient Greek philosopher Empedocles, water covers 71% of the Earth's surface and makes up between 55% to 78% of the human body. Described as 'the solvent of life', water is vital for all known forms of life.

Water is also the solvent for one of the oldest art processes known to humankind: watercolour painting. Watercolour painting is an artistic method where the paints are made of pigments suspended in a water-based solution and bound by a colloid agent, such as gum arabic. Watercolours have been used for manuscript paintings at least since ancient Egyptian times. Watercolours have also been the dominant medium used in Chinese, Korean and Japanese painting for centuries.

The continuous use of watercolours as an art medium in western art began in the Renaissance and by the 18th century had become an important artistic tool, especially in England. The growing importance of this media was closely tied to the acceptance of the landscape as an appropriate subject for painting. By the end of the 19th century 'the LANDSCAPE' had become the main artistic genre in British art and watercolours, due to their fluidity, transparency, luminosity and versatility, became a primary means of expressing this subject. In the later part of the 19th century the influence of watercolour

painting spread from England into North America and watercolours proved to be an excellent medium in capturing the awe-inspiring physicality of this expansive territory.

The travelling exhibition **From Water into Sky**, featuring art works from the collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, explores the use of watercolour painting in expressing the landscape of Alberta and elements of the natural world. Investigating various approaches to watercolour painting and modes of artistic representation from high realism to abstraction, the artworks in this exhibition give voice to the countless marvels and moods of the natural world and the 'magic' that can be found both within and through water.

Earth and sky, woods and fields, lakes and rivers, the mountain and the sea, are excellent schoolmasters, and teach some of us more than we can ever learn from books.

John Lubbock, 1st Baron Avebury
British Statesman
1834-1913

*The exhibition **From Water into Sky** was curated by Shane Golby and organized by the Art Gallery of Alberta for the Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program. The AFA Travelling Exhibition Program is supported by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts.*

Visual Inventory - List of Works

Winnifred Alford

Skyscape, 1985

Watercolour on paper

11 1/4 inches X 15 3/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Brian Atyeo

Tangle Light, 1988

Watercolour on paper

7 3/16 inches X 10 9/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Sylvia Boehrsen

Pale Winter Sky, n.d.

Watercolour on paper

22 1/16 inches X 29 15/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Simon Camping

Listen to the Music, n.d.

Watercolour on paper

10 5/8 inches X 13 3/4 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Simon Camping

Castle Mountain, 1980

Watercolour on paper

15 3/16 inches X 15 3/8 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Carol Clark

Red Deer Autumn, 1985

Watercolour on paper

13 5/8 inches X 19 5/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Arman Earl

Storm over the Ridge, 1993

Watercolour on paper

18 3/8 inches X 29 3/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Sharon Gravelle

Healy Creek #9, 1992

Watercolour on paper

27 inches X 18 1/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Isabel Hamilton

Iceberg #3 Cumberland Sound NWT, 1994

Watercolour on paper

22 9/16 inches X 30 1/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Steven Kiss

Rocky Shallows, 1982

Watercolour on paper

14 15/16 inches X 19 7/8 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Jonathan Knowlton

Dayglow II, 1985

11 15/16 x 15 7/8

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Judith Nickol

Ralph's Rain II, 1989

Watercolour on paper

10 13/16 inches X 29 5/8 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Visual Inventory - List of Works

Ella Richards

Untitled (Bow Falls), 1950

Watercolour on paper

19 1/16 inches X 22 15/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Jean Richards

March 99, 1999

Watercolour on paper

15 1/4 inches X 22 1/8 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Harry Savage

Untitled, 1976

Watercolour on paper

8 1/16 inches X 12 1/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Robert Sinclair

Snowed Glimpse, 1991

Watercolour on paper

22 3/8 inches X 30 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Vivien Thierfelder

We Just Roll, 1976

Watercolour on paper

17 11/16 inches X 16 9/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Keith Thomson

Water's Edge, 1983

Watercolour on paper

19 3/4 inches X 128 1/16 inches

Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Total Works:

18 - 2 Dimensional works

Visual Inventory - Images



Winnifred Alford
Skyscape, 1985
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Brian Atyeo
Tangle Light, 1988
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Sylvia Boehrsen
Pale Winter Sun, n.d.
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Simon Camping
Listen to the Music, n.d.
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Visual Inventory - Images



Simon Camping
Castle Mountain, 1980
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Carol Clark
Red Deer Autumn, 1985
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Arman Earl
Storm over the Ridge, 1993
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Sharon Gravelle
Healy Creek #9, 1992
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Visual Inventory - Images



Isabel Hamilton
Iceberg #3 Cumberland Sound NWT, 1994
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Steven Kiss
Rocky Shallows, 1982
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Jonathan Knowlton
Dayglow II, 1985
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Judith Nickol
Ralph's Rain II, 1989
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Visual Inventory - Images



Ella Richards
Untitled (Bow Falls), 1950
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Jean Richards
March 99, 1999
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
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Harry Savage
Untitled, 1976
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Robert Sinclair
Snowed Glimpse, 1991
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Visual Inventory - Images



Vivien Thierfelder
We Just Roll, 1976
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts



Keith Thomson
Water's Edge, 1983
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

Talking Art

Watercolor is a swim in the metaphysics of life...a mirror of one's own character. Let it be unpredictable and colorful.

Anonymous



Steven Kiss
Rocky Shallows, 1982
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

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Artist Biographies/Statements

Winnifred Alford

Winnifred Alford was born in 1907 and passed away in 2009. From 1982 to 1985 she attended a number of artist workshops at Red Deer College and participated in a number of local exhibitions in the Red Deer area.

Brian Atyeo

Brian Atyeo began working as a freelance artist while he was in high school. Born in Toronto, he moved to Alberta in the 1970s after spending a year studying architectural design at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute. In Calgary, he worked as an illustrator and an architectural renderer and soon opened his own business, B.A. Architectural Rendering Services. Since 1980, Atyeo has focused on painting full-time, as he creates his own work and also teaches painting workshops across the country, including at the River Rock Studio in Cochrane, Alberta. He describes himself as a self-taught artist having learned his technique through creative painting, through his background in illustration and design, and from having watched other artists work. Brian Atyeo often paints jazz figures and landscapes, and his work is known for its vibrant exploration of colour and the spirit and energy that it conveys. In 2011 Atyeo completed a twenty-year project to paint Canada's landscapes from coast-to-coast-to-coast. His work shows regularly in Edmonton, Calgary and various cities in Ontario, and is represented in many public and corporate collections. Atyeo is a member of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour and of the Ontario Society of Artists.

Sylvia Boehrsen

Born in Estonia, Sylvia Boehrsen spent several years as a refugee in Germany before immigrating to Canada in 1951. She began her formal painting studies in the extension program of the University of Alberta, continuing her education through the Coste House of the Calgary Allied Arts Centre and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, before completing her BFA at the University of Calgary (1972), where she also earned her MA in German Literature (1974). Self-employed as a professional artist specializing in watercolours since 1976, Boehrsen draws inspiration from the Canadian Arctic and the foothills and mountains of Alberta. Summarizing her personal career and aesthetic philosophy, she writes,

Naturally, I do from time to time question the validity of what I do and for now I have come to this conclusion: despite the help or hindrance of art critics, art history, or any form of censorship, the judgment of value in all art is left to the individual artist and observer.... There are indeed no foolproof formulas or scales of measurement of artistic value, other than one's own integrity, an open mind and heart, and truthfulness and sincerity to one's own sensibilities.

Boehrsen's artistic concerns were with light, space, colour and form: to observe and interpret mood and structure in a landscape, atmospheric conditions, rock formations, light and colour vibrations, and extreme contrast and subtle gradations.

Boehrsen staged solo exhibitions in Calgary including *Arctic – Baffin Island* at Mt. Royal

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Artist Biographies/Statements continued

College and *Over the Purcell Mountains* at the Gulf Oil Gallery, as well as a solo show at the Canadian High Commission in Singapore. Boehrsen also participated in numerous group exhibitions including Five Watercolour Artists at the Johnson Gallery in Edmonton, the Federation of Canadian Artists annual at the Federation Gallery in Vancouver, and the *As I See It* exhibition that toured New Zealand, Australia, and Hawaii. Sixteen public and corporate collections house Boehrsen's work, including those of the University of Calgary, Esso Resources Limited, and the law firm Cook, Duke, Cox, Tod & Kenny.

Simon Camping - no biography available

Carol Clark

Carol Clark was born in Toronto, Ontario, and moved to Alberta in 1980. While living in Ontario she studied illustration, painting, design, life drawing, pottery, sculpture and art history for three years at Central Technical School in Toronto.

Clark enjoys depicting nature with a realistic style and vibrant colours. She is intrigued by light and shadow and how they can make everyday subjects interesting to the viewer.

Her work can be found in the permanent collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and has been included in the annual juried show of the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour. Save the Children has also used one of her images for their annual Christmas Card campaign.

Arman Earl

Arman Earl was born and raised in Alberta. Having lived in several small communities in southern Alberta during his youth, he is well acquainted with many areas of the province. He also lived in both Edmonton and Calgary before moving to Lethbridge in 1976.

Arman has been drawing and painting since his youth. Until about 1974 he worked mainly in oils and acrylics. Since then he has painted primarily in watercolours.

The subtle variations of southern Alberta's prairie, foothills and mountain scapes attract his attention. He often likes to paint on location where he can react personally to contrasting values and forms as they reflect changing light and climactic conditions. This closeness to the environment is often evident in his work. One constant he has found and that he tries to depict in his work, is the feeling that, irrespective of environmental conditions, there is in nature a sense of calmness, self-assurance and endurance.

Earl has participated in numerous shows since 1978 and his work can be found in the collections of the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Medicine Hat Regional Hospital, the City of Medicine Hat, and in private collections across Canada, western United States and England.

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Artist Biographies/Statements continued

Sharon Gravelle

Artist's Statement

I was born in Kamloops, British Columbia, in the late 1950s. All of my formative years were spent in the interior of British Columbia as my family followed my father's career in the lumber industry. This is where I developed a strong love of nature and wild places and my inspiration is strongly rooted in these experiences. I am particularly interested in patterns of natural objects which have a strong underlying abstract design. Having explored oil and acrylic painting, my medium of choice is now watercolour.

My many outdoors experiences continue to provide material to paint and these include kayaking, hiking, back-packing, and skiing in such places as the Baja Peninsula in Mexico, the American Southwest, the Rocky Mountains, Alaska, the Yukon, and the British Columbia coast.

My art training includes summer sessions at the Banff Centre and three years in the painting program at the Alberta College of Art in Calgary. I also hold a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of British Columbia.

Isabel Hamilton

Isabel Hamilton was born in the Nakusp, B.C. and lived in Alberta from 1966 to 1994. She attended the University of Saskatchewan (1957-1960) and the University of Lethbridge (1966-1973). She began exhibiting her art work in 1971 and her work can be found in the collections of the University of Lethbridge, the Lethbridge Public Library, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and the Cross Cancer Institute in Edmonton as well as in private collections throughout Canada and the United States.

Steven Kiss

Steven Kiss draws his main inspiration from landscapes and prefers abstract and semi-abstract works. Born in Calgary, Alberta, he studied at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art, Calgary, (now the Alberta College of Art and Design) from 1950 to 1954. He also studied at the Central Technical School, Toronto, and the Art Center School in Los Angeles, California. As a painter, artists such as Maxwell Bates and Ronald Spickett have influenced his work in oils, watercolour and tempera.

Jonathan Knowlton

Jonathan Knowlton was born in New York in 1937. A painter and printmaker, he received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Yale University in 1960 and his Master's degree from the University of California, Berkeley in 1961. After graduating, he was awarded a Fullbright grant to study printmaking in Paris, where he also studied at Atelier 17 with the British printmaker Stanley William Hayter. In 1966 he established the printmaking department at the University of Alberta in Edmonton and went on to teach there until his retirement in 2002. From 1970-72 he studied

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Artist Biographies/Statements continued

sculpture in Florence, Italy, under a Canada Council grant.

As an educator, Jonathan Knowlton was very highly regarded by his students and his peers at the University of Alberta. He was also well-known as an artist, primarily for his oil and watercolor paintings – although he worked in other media as well – and he explored a variety of styles, from photographic representation to hard-edged abstraction. His artworks were included in a great number of exhibitions and he is represented in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the University of California Berkeley Art Museum, the University of Alberta Art Gallery, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Petro-Canada, Syncrude and Imperial Oil collections.

Judith Nickol

Born in Conrad, Montana, Judith Nickol has lived and worked on the family ranch near Coaldale, Alberta, since 1967. She holds a B.A. in Fine Arts from the University of Montana, culminating years of instruction which began with private lessons at age nine.

She works in oil, watercolour and pen and ink, choosing the medium she feels best suited to the subject. For many years she has concentrated on watercolour, feeling that this challenging medium best captures the mood she wishes to convey.

Nickol has held frequent exhibitions over the years and is represented in numerous collections, both public and private. She has also executed several major commissions for the Government of Alberta and other institutions including Head-Smashed-in Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre, Dry Island Buffalo Jump Interpretive Centre and the Alberta Birds of Prey Centre.

Judith Nickol exhibits through the Gainsborough Arts Galleries Ltd. in Calgary as well as in Montana. Her work is in the collections of the Royal Bank of Canada, the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, the Alberta Department of Federal and Intergovernmental Affairs and others.

Ella Richards 1886-1975

Ella Richards was born in England and moved to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 1913. She started to study art in 1940 and took studies in silkscreen, etching and watercolours. She received a degree in drawing in England and exhibited in Toronto, England and Sweden. She became a full member of the Edmonton Art Club in 1947 and a full member of the Federation of Canadian Artists in 1948.

Jean Richards

Jean Richards was born in Edmonton and educated at a private school, Llanarthney School for girls. From there she embarked on many years of university courses in both art and writing. She graduated with honours from the Lorne Greene Radio Academy and went from there to work as a radio time buyer in Toronto. She returned to Edmonton and became the only woman radio and

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Artist Biographies/Statements continued

television executive at the James Lovick Advertising agency, where she stayed for seven years. She later resigned and free-lanced for a series of magazines, wrote and edited *Downtown Edmonton*, and was a morning commentator at CKUA, radio series on CBC Trans Canada, and the morning show at CBC.

From 1960 on Richards became a full-time artist and writer. She wrote only on art subjects and painted full time. She was a permanent free-lance art critic for the *Edmonton Journal* (1960-1981) and was a correspondent for *Arts West* (1961-1980). During this time she also had a one woman show every one or two years displaying her work locally and had her work exhibited in many group shows both nationally and internationally.

Artist's Statement:

The Alberta landscape has enriched my life in so many ways, with its constant change of light, form and space. My purpose as an artist has always been to try to capture this in my work; to seek the beauty and try to communicate it to the viewer. In reality, everyone can see the living things in our environment, but few really understand what they are seeing. Whether I paint an abstract of a canola field or paint it in a traditional manner, the idea is the same; a need to find the living essence of things.

To help me show what I see I use many different tools besides a brush and watercolour paints. I often use crayons, pastels, inks, acrylics and even ground up rock! I might even paint an entire work with a sponge dipped in colours, whatever helps to give my personal mark a voice. I like to think of my work as visual poetry.

Harry Savage

Harry Savage studied at the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art (now the Alberta College of Art and Design) in Calgary and received his diploma in 1961. For a six-month period in 1962, he attended the Brooks School of Photography in Santa Barbara, California. Mr. Savage's work has been shown extensively throughout Canada, and he is represented in a number of public collections including the Art Gallery of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the Burnaby Art Gallery, the Alberta College of Art, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Since 1965 Savage has undertaken a variety of both public and private commissions, ranging from designs for stained glass windows to painted murals, to book illustrations and photographs. He has also co-authored a book with Tom Radford entitled [The Best of Alberta](#).

Robert Sinclair

Robert Sinclair was born in 1939 in Saltcoats, Saskatchewan. He received a B.F.A. from the University of Manitoba in 1961, an M.A. from the University of Iowa in 1965, and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa in 1967. From 1965 to 1997 he taught in the Department of Art and Design at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. He is a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of the Arts and the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions since 1965 and his work can be found in the collections

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Artist Biographies/Statements continued

of the Art Gallery of Alberta, the Art Gallery of Windsor, the Royal Collection of of Her Majesty the Queen in Windsor Castle, the Canada Council Art Bank in Ottawa, the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, and numerous corporate and private collections.

Artist Statement

The more I paint the more it seems that I am at the beginning again.

Painting exists and begins in my mind, but I rely on my body to know when a painting is resolved. Each painting while being painted is comprised of continuous moments of 'not knowing-ness'. Insight (intuition) is stimulated by this process. Often during these moments something new arises, a kind of receiving as a gift rather than a getting. It is like a door opening, leading to new insights and connections.

Watercolour painting offers me the opportunity to express and compress the complexity of our world within my artistic interest in the simplicity of the reductive or minimal statement. It is an attempt to touch the beginnings of forms. To this end, I explore the endless variations of themes found in the fundamentals of art and our perceptions of art and reality.

Vivien Thierfelder

Vivian Thierfelder was born in Edmonton and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Alberta in 1970. Before turning to fine art as a full time pursuit in 1983, Vivian worked in the area of foreground preparation for the Natural History diorama program and in exhibit design and construction at the Provincial Museum of Alberta, as well as the graphics department of a major telecommunications firm. Since beginning to paint more than 30 years ago, Thierfelder has worked in oils, acrylics and now exclusively in watercolour. Her subject matter has ranged from various natural materials to elaborate still life and into exotic tropical flowers whose riotous colours first had an impact on her during a year-long stay in Hawaii. Her works often utilize diagonals to lead the eye into the heart of the painting, encouraging the visual exploration of perceived three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional surface. Vivian's work celebrates the lushness of the natural world using colour and detail revealed by strong natural light.

Vivian Thierfelder has participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions since the 1980s and is a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, and is a Signature Member of the Federation of Canadian Artists. She has received numerous awards for her work and is in the collections of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Glenbow Museum, the collection of HRH Queen Elizabeth II Collection of Drawings and Watercolours, Royal Library, Windsor Castle, the University of Alberta, and numerous corporate and private collections.

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Artist Biographies/Statements continued

Artist's Statement

In the private and intuitive selection of subject matter, composition and style, I attempt to mirror my experience and personal reverence for the rich and varied world around me. My recent works are a blending of the sensual and the spiritual. They prove to be a microcosm of detailed chaos composed of light, shadow, densities, texture and colour which, through the 'focusing-lens' of a human mind and hand, emerge ordered and defined on a two-dimensional plane....Through the 'magic' ritual of this translation, I incorporate a sense of spirituality that leads me to regard the resulting painted images as personal visual hymns.

Keith Thomson - no biography available



Harry Savage
Untitled, 1976
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation
for the Arts

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Art History: A Brief History of Watercolour Painting

Watercolour painting is a painting method where the paints are made of pigments suspended in a water-based solution and bound by a colloid agent, such as gum arabic.

The traditional and most common support for watercolour paintings is paper. Other supports include papyrus, bark papers, vellum leather, fabric, wood and canvas. Watercolours are usually translucent and appear luminous because the pigments are laid down in a pure form with few fillers obscuring the pigment colours and the resulting marks are transparent, allowing light to reflect from the supporting surface.



Albrecht Dürer
Hare, 1502

Watercolour painting has an extremely long history. Watercolours have been used for manuscript paintings at least since ancient Egyptian times. Watercolours have also been the dominant medium used in Chinese, Korean and Japanese painting for centuries.

The continuous use of watercolours as an art medium in European and western art began in the Renaissance. The German Northern Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) is generally considered among the earliest practitioners of watercolours in western art. While watercolours came to be used for botanical and wildlife illustrations, however, it was not until the 18th century that watercolours became an acceptable medium for other genres in painting.

The rise of watercolour painting as a serious artistic endeavour is a result of several factors which came together during the 18th century, particularly in England. One of these was the improvement and commercial development of the materials used. At first, artists ground their own colours from natural pigments. In the last two decades of the 18th century, however, artists were able to purchase small, hard cakes of soluble watercolour which were invented by William Reeves in 1780. In the 1830s artists could buy moist watercolours in porcelain pans and in 1846 Winsor & Newton introduced moist watercolours in metal tubes.

Improvements were also seen in the type of paper used for watercolour paintings. The late

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Art History: A Brief History of Watercolour

Painting continued

18th century saw the introduction of wove paper. Compared to earlier papers, wove papers exhibited virtually no impression of their fine, wire-mesh molds. This allowed painters to apply smooth, precise washes of watercolour without interruption. Introduced as early as 1767, wove paper was eagerly sought out by artists and over the course of the 19th century a huge array of watercolour papers of various sizes, textures and surfaces were developed to meet the needs of the medium. By 1850 three distinct paper surfaces were introduced: hot pressed or least textured, suitable for detailed subjects; not pressed, suited to less precise work; and cold pressed or rough, suited to sketchy effects.



William Gilpin
Penrith Castle, 18th Century

Other factors which influenced the rise of watercolour painting were that, among the elite and aristocratic classes, watercolour painting was seen as one of the adornments of a good education. During the 18th and 19th centuries the Grand Tour to Italy was undertaken by every fashionable young man of the time and topographical painters, who churned out memento paintings of famous sights in watercolour, came to be much in demand. The creation of such 'tourist' images by professionals also became a personal endeavor.

In the late 18th century the English cleric and art critic William Gilpin wrote a series of popular books describing his journeys throughout rural England. Gilpin illustrated his journey's with self-made, picturesque monochrome watercolours of river valleys, ancient castles and abandoned churches and his example popularized watercolours as a form of personal tourist journal.

At the same time, mapmakers, military officers and engineers used watercolours for depicting properties, terrain, fortifications, field geology and for illustrating public works or commissioned projects. Watercolour artists were also part of the geological or archaeological expeditions of the time to document discoveries in the Mediterranean, Asia and the New World.

During the 18th century the combination of these cultural, engineering, scientific, tourist and amateur interests resulted in the celebration and promotion of watercolour as a distinctly English 'national art'.

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Art History: A Brief History of Watercolour Painting continued

The rise of watercolour painting in Britain was closely tied to a growing acceptance in the 18th century of 'landscape' as an appropriate subject for painting. In the early years of watercolour landscape development, the art of the landscape grew out of the tradition of topography or 'the portrait of a place'. For early practitioners such as Paul Sandby, creating records of specific places was a major source of employment. From the 1750s drawing increasingly formed part of the education of both gentlemen and ladies and many watercolour painters, who were also drawing masters, encouraged students towards landscape painting.



Paul Sandby (1730-1809)
Music by Moonlight



J.M.W. Turner
Nant Peris, Looking towards Snowdon, 1799
Tate Museum, London

As the landscape as a subject gained in importance in watercolour painting, artists such as Alexander Cozens divided the subject into three categories: 'composition', 'objects' and 'circumstance'. 'Circumstance' included such 'themes' as the seasons, times of the day, and atmospheric elements such as fog, rain or clouds with the landscape. 'Circumstance' was further divided into objective studies of weather, as seen in the work of John Constable, or more emotive concerns with atmosphere and light, seen in the work of artists such as JMW Turner.

Amateur activity, publishing markets, middle class art collection and 19th century techniques led to the formation of numerous English watercolour painting societies. These societies provided annual exhibitions, buyer markets, and watercolour tutorials which stimulated stylistic advances.

Throughout the 19th century and into the 20th the influence of watercolour painting spread throughout Europe and into North America. In Europe watercolour was important in the work of such artists as Wassily Kandinsky, Emil Nolde, Paul Klee and others. In North America important practitioners included John James Audubon, Charles Demuth, Edward Hopper and Georgia O'Keeffe in the United States and Alfred C. Leighton in what is now Alberta.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Art History: The Landscape Tradition: Realism and Romanticism in the Visual Arts

The focus of most of the watercolour paintings in the exhibition *From Water into Sky* is on landscapes and skyscapes. The following pages provide a summary of the landscape genre in both European and Albertan art.

Academic painting in the 19th century was dominated by two styles, Realism or Naturalism, and Romanticism. The differences between these two styles is clearly expressed through an examination of the genre of landscape painting of the time.

In the 16th century landscapes were not particularly realistic in nature but by the 17th century this had changed and 'real' Dutch landscapes became prevalent. Drawings were made on site and horizons were lowered in order to emphasize the impressive cloud formations of the region and to capture the quality of light.

The paintings of the French painter Claude Lorrain and Dutch artists such as Jacob van Ruisdael found a ready market in England and had a profound influence on English painters of the 1700s. One of the most important British painters influenced by these artists was **John Constable** (1776-1837). Constable combined objective studies of nature with a deeply personal vision of the countryside around him. He rejected the accepted hierarchy of art genres, which ranked idealized landscapes that told historical or mythological tales above views observed in nature, and sought recognition for humbler scenes of cultivated land and agricultural labour.



John Constable
The Hay Wain, 1821
Oil on canvas
National Gallery of London, U.K.

In 1824 Constable exhibited *The Hay Wain* at the Paris Salon. His strikingly fresh, apparently spontaneous transcription of the landscape, caused a sensation among French painters and influenced some of the younger artists of the time to abandon formalism and to draw inspiration directly from nature.

One artist inspired by Constable's work was Jean-Francois Millet, who extended Constable's focus on nature to include peasant figures, scenes of peasant life and work in the fields. Millet settled in the Barbizon region of France in 1849 and his new works marked a transition from the depiction of symbolic imagery of peasant life to a depiction of contemporary social conditions.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Art History: Landscape Painting continued



Jean-Francois Millet
The Gleaners, 1857
Oil on canvas
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

One of the most famous of Millet's works was *The Gleaners*, submitted to the Salon in 1857. This painting portrays the ancient right of poor women and children to remove the bits of grain left in the fields following the harvest. The work was received with hostility as the middle and upper classes viewed it as an unpleasant reminder that French society was built on the labor of the working classes. Despite initial rejection, however, Millet later achieved financial success, was even elected to the Salon jury, and was an important source of inspiration for other artists such as Vincent van Gogh.

The second major trend in the visual arts (and also in architecture, literature and music) during the 18th and 19th centuries was that of Romanticism. Romanticism refers not to a specific style but to an attitude of mind. The declared aim of the Romantics was to tear down the artifices barring the way to a 'return to nature' - nature the unbounded, wild and ever-changing; nature the sublime and picturesque.

Romanticism in the visual arts incorporated both the imaginative and the ideal, rather than the real, and embraced concepts of nobility, grandeur, virtue and superiority. In British painting of the late 18th and 19th centuries, Romanticism was most clearly expressed in landscape gardening and in the development and elevation of **landscape painting** where artists came to emphasize the **sublime or the picturesque** in their rendering of the landscape. To achieve these ends artists used vibrant colours and loose, gestural brushstrokes and often sacrificed reality for the sake of emotion.



J.M.W. Turner
Rain, Steam and Speed - The Great Western Railway, 1844.
Oil on canvas

Art History: Landscape Painting continued

Realism and Romanticism in landscape painting came together in the 18th century in the development of concepts of the sublime and the picturesque in landscape painting.



Homer Watson
Meadow Stream, Doon, n.d.
Oil on linen
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

As described by John Ruskin, **THE LANDSCAPE** was the 'chief artistic creation of the nineteenth century', with the result that in the following period people were 'apt to assume that the appreciation of natural beauty and the painting of landscape is a normal and enduring part of our spiritual activity'.

With the development of the landscape as a legitimate subject for artists to pursue came a theoretical discussion concerning what constituted or made a 'good' landscape painting. From the late 18th century through to the early 20th century art critics and theorists devised a set of 'rules' which artists were required to follow if their work was to be accepted by the art institutions of the day.

The Landscape in Alberta Art: A Brief Survey

The landscape has been a prime subject for Alberta artists since Euro-North American artists first entered what became the province of Alberta in the 1800s. While on the national and international art stage landscape painting has come to be viewed as a passive art form and ‘....an irrelevant purely descriptive activity with... overtones of conventionalism and nostalgia’ (Mary-Beth Laviolette, *An Alberta Art Chronicle*, pg. 20), there is a continuing tradition of landscape painting in Alberta and it is a practice which embraces a variety of 20th century artistic styles.

Early practitioners of landscape painting in Alberta generated a diverse legacy of landscape art. **One avenue of exploration was the English landscape tradition**, expressed in the work of A.C. Leighton (1901-1965) and W.J. Phillips (1884-1963). Influenced by the works of John Constable, J.M.W. Turner and the great British watercolourists, this tradition emphasized naturalism, the pastoral and romantic views of the landscape. This approach dominated prairie painting before World War II.

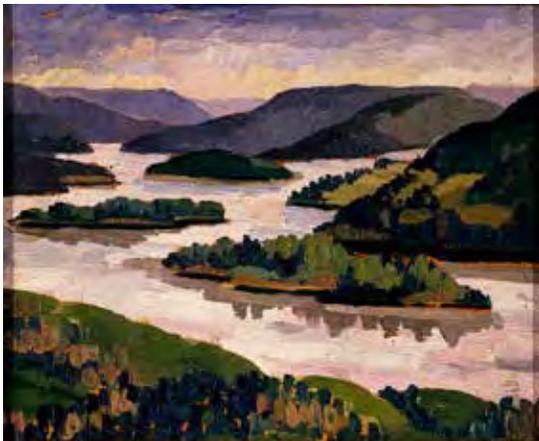


A.C. Leighton
Kananaskis Valley, n.d.
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta



Left: W.J. Phillips
Morraine Lake, 1928
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

Bottom: Euphemia McNaught
Junction of the Peace and Smoky Rivers, 1949
Oil on board
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta



A second vein of exploration in landscape painting was work which was inspired by the **Impressionistic-influenced paintings of the Group of Seven**. Such a direction was expressed in the works of Euphemia McNaught (1902-2002) in the Peace River area and Calgary artist Illingworth Kerr (1905-1989).

A third and final approach to the landscape developed before WW II was the **darker, more European expressionist landscapes** of W.L. Stevenson (1905-1966) and Maxwell Bates (1906-1980).

The Landscape in Alberta Art: A Survey



Illingworth Kerr
O'Hara Night, n.d.
Silkscreen
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta



Top Right: Maxwell Bates
Eroded Land, n.d.
Oil on canvas
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta



Bottom Right: W.L. Stevenson
Autumn Bushes, n.d.
Oil on masonite
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

By the 1960s and 1970s American influenced Abstraction was added to the Alberta landscape traditions and a second generation of landscape painters came to the fore. Whether influenced by Abstract Expressionism or modernist theories such as Colour Field Painting, **the emphasis for this generation is on the expression of the artist's ideas about the subject, rather than the subject itself.** As described by curator Kate Davis in speaking about the work of artist Ken Christopher:

*The real challenge is when we begin to appreciate the picture beyond illustration. We can experience the pleasure not only of recognition, but of discovery: the discovery that the canvas is not a window but a flat, two-dimensional surface....the discovery that the manipulation of paint upon that flat surface is the 'stuff' of art; the discovery of not only what is told, but **how** it is told.*

(Mary-Beth Laviolette, [An Alberta Art Chronicle](#), pg. 29)



Ken Christopher
Reclining Field, 1983
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

The Landscape in Alberta Art: A Survey



Les Graff
Untitled, n.d.
Acrylic on masonite
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

The **how** of what is being told became the major preoccupation of many second-generation landscape artists, some of the most notable being the prairie modernists influenced by New York abstraction and colour-field painting. The main characteristics of this landscape are:

- 1/ the surface is flat and there is little or no illusion of depth in the work
- 2/ the surface is composed of uninterrupted fields of paint
- 3/ colour is of primary importance

Modernist approaches to the landscape held sway throughout the 1960s and 1970s but in the 1980s a new generation of landscape painters began to emerge and post-modern attitudes towards the role of art began to overtake the goals of modernism. No longer preoccupied with the 'how' of art making, this third generation began to examine more closely the content of their subject matter and what they wanted to say about it. Some of these artists concentrate on the symbolic or emotional content of the land; others react to 19th century romantic traditions; while others are concerned with ecological issues.



Jim Davies
The Broken Bridge, 1988
Acrylic on canvas
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta



Peter von Tiesenhausen
Icefield, 1994
Oil on canvas
Collection of the Art Gallery of Alberta

Art Processes - Watercolour

The exhibition **From Water into Sky** focuses on the use of watercolours in the creation of landscape paintings. What follows is a general list of watercolour terms and techniques for use with beginner watercolourists.

Techniques:

Washes

The most basic watercolour technique is the flat wash. It is produced by first wetting the area of paper to be covered by the wash, then mixing sufficient pigment to easily fill the entire area. Once complete the wash should be left to dry and even itself out. A variation on the basic wash is the graded wash. This technique requires the pigment to be diluted lightly with more water for each horizontal stroke. The result is a wash that fades out gradually and evenly.



graded wash

Wet in Wet

Wet in wet is simply the process of applying pigment to wet paper. The results vary from soft undefined shapes to slightly blurred marks, depending on how wet the paper is. The wet in wet technique can be applied over existing washes provided the area is thoroughly dry. Simply wet the paper with a large brush and paint into the dampness. The soft marks made by wet in wet painting are great for subtle background regions of the painting such as skies.



wet in wet

Watercolour continued

Dry Brush

Dry brush is almost opposite to wet in wet techniques. Here a brush loaded with pigment (and not too much water) is dragged over completely dry paper. The marks produced by this technique are very crisp and hard edged. They will tend to come forward in your painting and so are best applied around the centre of interest.



Dry Brush

Lifting off

Most watercolour pigment can be dissolved and lifted off after it has dried. The process involves wetting the area to be removed with a brush and clean water and then blotting the pigment away with a tissue. Using strips of paper to mask areas of pigment will produce interesting hard edged lines and shapes.



lifting off

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Watercolour continued

Dropping in Colour

This technique is simply the process of introducing a colour to a wet region of the painting and allowing it to blend, bleed and feather without interruption. The result is sometimes unpredictable but yields interesting and vibrant colour gradations that can't be achieved by mixing the pigment on the palette.



dropping in

Tips when painting:

- Always mix more paint than you need.
- Normally, the lighter tones are painted first and the dark tones last.
- When applying washes have all your colours ready mixed and keep the brush full and watery.
- Work with the largest brush that is practical for each part of the painting.
- When working wet in wet, don't have the brush wetter than the paper or ugly "runbacks" will result.
- Have tissue handy to lift off wrongly placed colour.
- Test for tone and colour on a scrap piece of paper before committing it to your painting. If things go wrong and colour can't be mopped straight with a tissue, it's usually better to let the work dry before attempting a rescue.
- When lifting off a colour, gently wet the area and immediately dab with a tissue. Do this four or five times then let the area dry again before lifting off any more.
- Do lots of doodles—simple watercolour sketches such as trees, skies and rocks. This will build up confidence and get you looking at subjects to study their form.
- Copy parts of a painting that appeal to you until you can get the effect.
- When practicing a passage for a painting, use the same paper that the finished work will be painted on.

*credit: theresacerceo.wordpress.com/2009/03

Visual Learning and Hands-On Activities

Watercolor is like life. Better get it right the first time - you don't get a second chance!

Sergei Bongart, American painter, 1918-1985



Vivien Thierfelder
We Just Roll, 1976
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

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- Exhibition Related Art Projects	Pages 40-53

What is Visual Learning?

All art has many sides to it. The artist makes the works for people to experience. They in turn can make discoveries about both the work and the artist that help them learn and give them pleasure for a long time.

How we look at an object determines what we come to know about it. We remember information about an object far better when we are able to see (and handle) objects rather than by only reading about them. This investigation through observation (looking) is very important to understanding how objects fit into our world in the past and in the present and will help viewers reach a **considered response** to what they see. The following is a six-step method to looking at, and understanding, a work of art.

STEP 1: INITIAL, INTUITIVE RESPONSE The first 'gut level' response to a visual presentation. What do you see and what do you think of it?

STEP 2: DESCRIPTION Naming facts - a visual inventory of the elements of design.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

What colours do you see? What shapes are most noticeable?

What objects are most apparent? Describe the lines in the work.

STEP 3: ANALYSIS Exploring how the parts relate to each other.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

What proportions can you see? eg. What percentage of the work is background? Foreground?

Land? Sky? Why are there these differences? What effect do these differences create?

What parts seem closest to you? Farthest away? How does the artist give this impression?

STEP 4: INTERPRETATION Exploring what the work might mean or be about

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

How does this work make you feel? Why?

What word would best describe the mood of this work?

What is this painting/photograph/sculpture about?

Is the artist trying to tell a story? What might be the story in this work?

STEP 5: INFORMATION Looking beyond the work for information that may further understanding.

Questions to Guide Inquiry:

What is the artist's name? When did he/she live?

What art style and medium does the artist use?

What artist's work is this artist interested in?

What art was being made at the same time as this artist was working?

What was happening in history at the time this artist was working?

What social/political/economic/cultural issues is this artist interested in?

STEP 6: PERSONALIZATION What do I think about this work? (Reaching a considered response).

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Elements of Design Tour

The following pages provide definitions and examples of the elements and principles of art that are used in the images found in the exhibition **From Water into Sky**. Teacher/facilitator questions for inquiry are in **bold** while possible answers are in regular type.

The elements of art are components of a work of art that can be isolated and defined. They are the building blocks used to create a work of art.



LINE !



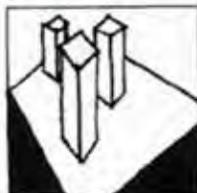
SHAPE!



COLOUR!



TEXTURE!



SPACE!

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Elements and Principles of Design Tour

LINE: An element of art that is used to define shape, contours and outlines. It is also used to suggest mass and volume.

See: *Tangle Light* by Brian Atyeo



What types of lines are there? How can you describe a line? What are some of the characteristics of a line?

Width: thick, thin, tapering, uneven

Length: long, short, continuous, broken

Feeling: sharp, jagged, graceful, smooth

Focus: sharp, blurry, fuzzy, choppy

Direction: horizontal, vertical, diagonal, curving, perpendicular, oblique, parallel, radial, zigzag

Now, describe the lines you see in this image. Follow the lines in the air with your finger. What quality do the lines have? Are they thick or thin?

A variety of lines are used in this work. There are thick and thin vertical lines used to represent tree trunks and thin curving lines used to represent branches.

What direction do lines appear to be going? How are the lines similar and different from each other? How does line in this image help your eye travel within the composition?

Vertical lines, representing tree trunks and their reflections in water, move across the picture plane from left to right while curving lines, representing branches, curve from both the left and the right side of the painting in towards the centre of the work. The vertical lines move the viewer's eye from the bottom (foreground) of the work to the top of the work and across the picture plane while the curving lines create energy and direct the eye within the work.

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Elements of Composition Tour continued

SHAPE: When a line crosses itself or intersects with another line to enclose a space it creates a shape. Shape is two-dimensional. It has height and width but no depth.

See: *Healy Creek #9* by Sharon Gravelle



What kind of shapes can you think of?

Geometric: circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. We see them in architecture and manufactured items.

Organic shapes: a leaf, seashell, flower. We see them in nature with characteristics that are freeflowing, informal and irregular.

Static shapes: shapes that appear stable and resting.

Dynamic shapes: Shapes that appear moving and active.

What shapes do you see in this image? How would you describe them?

This image is composed of geometric shapes that are both organic in nature and rather static.

What quality do the shapes have? Are they active/energetic or static? If they are active, how is this created?

While the shapes may appear rather static they are activated due to colour variations among the stones which move the eye around the work and also the colour and linear variations within individual rocks which move the eye within each form and direct the viewer's eye from stone to stone. Besides their irregular shapes, the stones also vary in size. This also has the effect of directing the viewer's eye from the bottom of the painting towards the top. As can be seen, there is a line of stones in the center of the work where the stones become smaller as they lead up towards the top left side of the image.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Elements and Principles of Design Tour

COLOUR: Colour comes from light that is reflected off objects. Colour has three main characteristics: Hue, or its name (red, blue, etc.) Value: (how light or dark the colour is) and Intensity (how bright or dull the colour is)

See: *Water's Edge* by Keith Thomson



What are primary colours? Do you see any? Point to them in the painting. What secondary colours do you see? Do you see any white added to colour to form a tint or black to form a shade?

Colour is made of primary colours, red, blue and yellow. Secondary colours are created from primary colours and include green, orange and purple. We see both primary and secondary colours in this painting.

Where is your eye directed to first? Why? Are there any colours that stand out more than others?

Warm colours tend to stand out more than cool colours and therefore, within this work, the viewer's eye may be directed to the orange and red rocks on the left side of the painting and then travel to the small area of these colours on the mid ground island area and finally to the pale yellowish band in the background. The various blues in the water and the sky, the large area of cool blues and purples on the centre island and the large green trees, however, are so dominant and such a contrast to the warm colour scheme, that the viewer may be drawn to these areas first.

How does colour move the eye throughout the composition?

This is a very vibrant work and its structure makes the eye 'jump' around the composition. The placement of warm tints and tones of orange and red draw the eye from the right side of the composition towards the mid ground and then the background of the work. The use of contrasting blue strips in both the water and sky cause the eye to 'jump' between these two areas. Finally, the pale yellows and tan area in the mid ground pulls the eye back to this area and then to the contrasting green hills and sky.

What do the colours used in the artwork remind you of? How might these ideas create meaning?

Based on individual responses, everyone will connect to the work in different ways 'opening the doors' to create meaning.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Elements of Composition Tour continued

TEXTURE: Texture is the surface quality of an object that can be seen or felt. Texture can also be implied on a two-dimensional surface.

See: *We Just Roll* by Vivian Thierfelder



What is texture? How do you describe how something feels? What are the two kinds of texture you can think of in artwork?

Texture can be real, like the actual texture of an object. Texture can be rough, smooth, hard, soft, glossy, etc. Texture can also be implied. This happens when a two-dimensional piece of art is made to look like a certain texture.

Allow your eyes to “feel” the different areas within the work and explain the textures.

This work was created using implied texture but, due to the method of painting, differences in texture between the elements is barely noticeable. There are some ‘raggedy’ edges on the grass strips of the ball-like object, which would imply that the grass is coarse and would be rougher to the touch than the stones but, generally speaking, all elements are treated the same.

What do you think this work is about?

Answers will vary.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Elements and Principles of Design Tour

SPACE: The area between and around objects. It can also refer to the feeling of depth in a two-dimensional artwork.

See: *Listen to the Music* by Simon Camping



What is space? What dimensions does it have?

Space includes the background, middle ground and foreground. It can refer to the distances or areas around, between or within components of a piece. It may have two dimensions (length and width) or three dimensions including height or depth.

What may be represented in this work? How do you know this?

What is being represented is a 'mountainous' landscape. Though elements are slightly simplified, we can make out a 'grassy' foreground, cliff rocks and scrubby pine trees in the mid ground, and faint tree covered hills in the back.

Space can be positive or negative. What would you say is the positive space in this work? What is the negative space and why?

The positive space represents the physical elements of trees and rocks in the image while the negative space represents the open space of grassy land and sky which are on either 'side' of the trees and rocks. The positive elements in the work divide the space in a roughly equal diagonal manner. Areas of a picture that contain "nothing" are important visual elements that provide balance in the work and should always be considered as important as the positive elements.

Do you think there is space in this work? If so, how has the artist created a sense of space?

Space may be created by the dividing diagonal line of rocks and trees that divide the composition between the land in the foreground and the sky in the background.

Space is also created by colour variations and detail in the work. The pale/cream grassy areas in the foreground contrast the brighter oranges in this area and create a sense of distance, pushing the eye back to the trees in the midground.

How does the way the composition is divided create tension or visual interest in this work?

The jagged diagonal line creating the rocks/hills is very active and dynamic. This line, which draws the viewer's eye 'up' to the right of the composition creates a lot of visual interest and energy in the work.

Perusing Paintings: An Art-full Scavenger Hunt

In teaching art, game-playing can enhance learning. If students are engaged in learning, through a variety of methods, then it goes beyond game-playing. Through game-playing we are trying to get students to use higher-order thinking skills by getting them to be active participants in learning. *Blooms's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, which follows, is as applicable to teaching art as any other discipline.

1. *knowledge*: recall of facts
2. *comprehension*: participation in a discussion
3. *application*: applying abstract information in practical situations
4. *analysis*: separating an entity into its parts
5. *synthesis*: creating a new whole from many parts, as in developing a complex work of art
6. *evaluation*: making judgements on criteria

A scavenger hunt based on art works is a fun and engaging way to get students of any age to really look at the art works and begin to discern what the artist(s) is/are doing in the works. **The simple template provided, however, would be most suitable for grade 1-3 students.**

Instruction:

Using the exhibition works provided, give students a list of things they should search for that are in the particular works of art. The students could work with a partner or in teams. Include a blank for the name of the artwork, the name of the artist, and the year the work was created. Following the hunt, gather students together in the exhibition area and check the answers and discuss the particular works in more detail.

Sample List:

Scavenger Hunt Item	Title of Artwork	Name of Artist	Year Work Created
someone wearing a hat			
a specific animal			
landscape			
a bright red object			
a night scene			
a house			

*This activity was adapted from *A Survival Kit for the Elementary/Middle School Art Teacher* by Helen D. Hume.

20 *Watercolor Techniques*

Observing and Thinking Creatively

Have you noticed how the colors in a sunset seem to spill over into one another, mixing and merging together? The same thing happens in a rainbow, a reflection in a lake, and in the delicate colors of blossoms. **Watercolor** paints blend well, are **transparent**, allowing light to pass through them, and produce a soft effect. They are particularly well-suited to painting these kinds of scenes. Unlike oil or acrylic paints, watercolors are used to achieve a looser, freer, less detailed method of painting.

Many interesting effects can be achieved with watercolors. Examine the watercolor of a

red canna lily by Georgia O'Keeffe on this page. Observe how the artist has achieved a depth of color while maintaining a softness of lines and details. O'Keeffe is known for painting images from nature with precision and clarity. Notice the way John Singer Sargent used color to create texture in his painting, *Muddy Alligators*.

In this lesson, you will experiment with and practice a variety of watercolor techniques to create different kinds of lines, textures, and mood. Then you will use your favorite techniques to paint one or more flowers.



Georgia O'Keeffe, Red Canna, 1920, watercolor. Yale University Art Gallery. Gift of George Hopper Fitch, BA 1932, and Mrs. Fitch



John Singer Sargent, 1856-1925, American, 20th century. Muddy Alligators. Water color on paper, 13 1/2" x 20 1/2". Worcester Art Museum.

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program
Watercolour Painting Part 2 continued



Instructions for Creating Art

1. Using round and flat brushes of varying widths and sizes, experiment with several kinds of strokes. A quick tapered stroke is made by pressing the brush down on the paper, then lifting and turning it slightly. Alternate thick and thin wavy lines by varying pressure on the brush. Be sure to rinse out your brush when you change colors.
2. Make a **wash**—a transparent, even sweep of color. A **gradated wash** has more pigment, or color, at the bottom, creating a gradated effect of light at the top which gradually becomes dark.
3. With a **flat brush**, stroke one color across the page. Then, when the first color has dried, stroke on another color that overlaps the first. The two hues will blend together and make a third color.
4. To achieve texture, dip a brush in paint and then remove most of the moisture by pressing it between paper towels. Brushstrokes made with this almost dry brush will leave a strip of broken color.
5. Use a sponge dipped in paint to add color. Use a clean, damp sponge or brush to lift off or lighten color.
6. Dip an old, dry toothbrush in thick watercolor. Rub your thumb across the bristles to splatter paint on your paper.
7. Now, paint a picture of a flower. Use a pencil to very lightly sketch the contours and details of a single flower or a simple arrangement of flowers. Then add color and details.

Art Materials

18" × 24" white construction paper	Round and flat brushes
Pencil and eraser	Small sponge, old toothbrush
Watercolor paper	Paper towels
Watercolor paints	Newspaper (to cover work area)
Container of water	

Learning Outcomes

1. Name two characteristics of watercolors.
2. Describe the techniques you used to paint your flower.
3. Tell which watercolor technique you like most and which you like least, and why.

Techniques for water

On the next four pages you will find different techniques for drawing and painting water. There are ideas for waves, rippling water and reflections of moonlight on water.

This photograph of a crashing wave shows different shapes, patterns and colors which can be found in water.



Soapy painting

Use a brush with stiff bristles.



1. Dip a brush into some blue watercolor paint. Then, move the bristles around on an old bar of soap.



2. Paint the soapy paint straight onto a piece of watercolor paper, moving the brush in a wavy pattern.



3. Dip the brush into a different shade of blue paint and then on the soap again. Paint more waves, overlapping them.



4. Paint a boat with thick red and blue watercolor paint. Add an outline with a fine felt-tip pen.

The soap helps to show the marks made by the paintbrush.



Watercolour Painting continued

Oil pastel squiggles



1. Use a brown oil pastel to draw some rounded rocks on a piece of Bristol paper. Shade them in, like this.



2. Then, draw squiggles around the rocks with a turquoise oil pastel. Leave some spaces between them.



3. Add a dark blue pastel shadow beneath each rock and add more squiggles. Draw a turquoise reflection on each rock.

Painted ripples



1. Dampen a piece of watercolor paper with clean water. Then, paint it with blue watercolor paint, leaving some gaps.



2. When the paint is dry, paint wavy lines with a darker blue paint. Add some even darker ones with the tip of a brush.



Techniques for skies

On the next four pages you will find different techniques and tips for drawing and painting skies and clouds. Watercolor paints are very good for creating atmospheric skies.

This picture, called *Rain, Steam and Speed*, was painted in oil paints by J.M.W. Turner in 1844. The sky is stormy, but Turner painted bright areas on some of the clouds, which makes it look as if the sun is about to break through.



Watery clouds



1. Brush clean water onto a piece of watercolor paper. Then, use the tip of a brush to blob on patches of blue watercolor paint.



2. The paint will run. Then, press the brush a little bit more firmly in some places to make darker patches of sky.



Watercolour Painting continued

Summer sky



1. Mix enough cobalt blue watercolor paint to cover a piece of watercolor paper. Paint a stripe across the top.

2. Paint another stripe below the first one before it has had a chance to dry. Paint quickly and make the stripes overlap.

3. Continue painting overlapping stripes all the way down the paper. This technique is known as 'painting a wash'.



4. Before the paint has dried, scrunch up a paper towel and dab it in several areas on the paper to lift some paint off.



5. When the paint has dried, mix some darker blue. Paint it along the bottom of each cloud to make shadows.

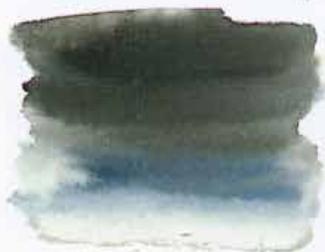
More techniques for skies



Rainy sky



1. Wet some watercolor paper with clean water. Then, mix Prussian blue watercolor paint with brown to make dark gray.



4. Before the paint has dried, swipe a cotton swab across the paint so that the bottom is almost white. Leave it to dry.



2. Paint overlapping stripes across the top of the paper. They don't need to be even or to start in the same place.



5. While it is drying, practice painting some fine lines for the rain, using gray paint on a piece of scrap paper.



3. While the paint is still quite wet, add blue stripes across the middle, then gray ones at the bottom of the paper.



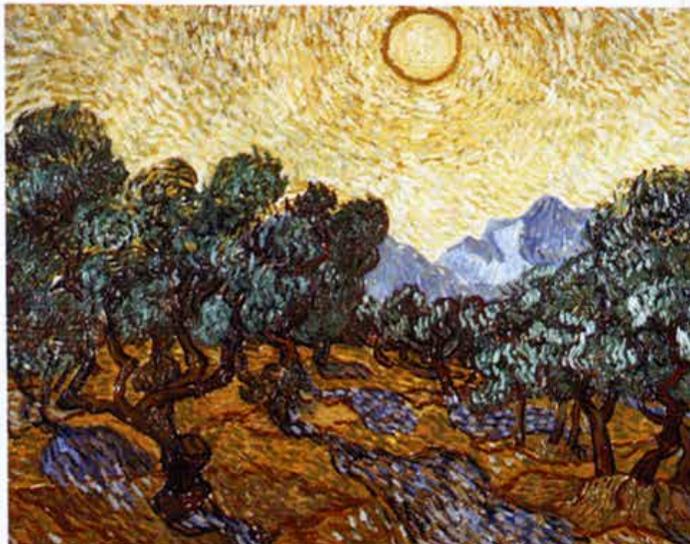
6. When your painting is completely dry, paint fine lines for the rain, coming from the gray area near the top of the paper.

Concerning Trees

Techniques for trees

The next four pages show you lots of different ways of drawing, painting and printing trees. When you try any of these techniques, you will get a better result if you make your tree bigger than the ones shown.

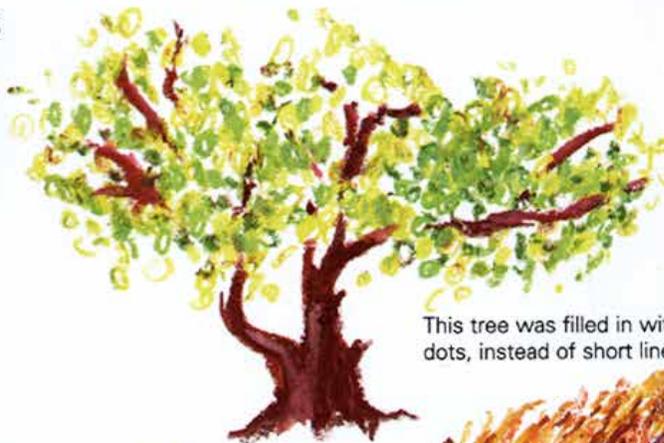
This oil painting of olive trees, by Vincent van Gogh, was painted in 1889. Van Gogh used lots of short lines to build up the shape and color of the trees and the sky.



Oil pastel trees



1. Draw a twisted tree trunk using dark brown oil pastels. Add several short branches.



This tree was filled in with dots, instead of short lines.



2. Draw lots of short diagonal lines with a green oil pastel, overlapping the branches.



3. Add more diagonal lines for the leaves, using a lighter green and a lime green pastel.



Use orange, brown and rusty pastels for fall leaves on a tree.

Concerning Trees continued

Pen and ink



1. Use brown ink to paint a very simple trunk with three thick branches coming from it.



2. Use green ink to paint a wavy line for the top of the tree. Then fill it in, leaving some small gaps.



3. Use a felt-tip or an ink pen to draw loopy lines around the edge of the tree and around the gaps.

Brushed branches



1. Paint a patch of green and brown watercolor paint. Splatter it by flicking the bristles of your brush.



2. Leave it to dry, then use different shades of brown watercolor paint to paint the trunk.



3. While the trunk is still wet, paint the branches by brushing the paint up onto the leaves.

Chalk pastel leaves



1. Paint a trunk with yellowish-brown watercolor paint. Add some branches, too.



2. Draw lines using a light green chalk pastel. Add some darker green lines on top.



3. Gently rub the tip of your little finger down the lines to smudge the chalks together.

Concerning Trees continued

More techniques for trees

Sponged leaves



1. Use the tip of a brush to paint the trunk and twisted branches of a tree, using watercolor paint or ink.

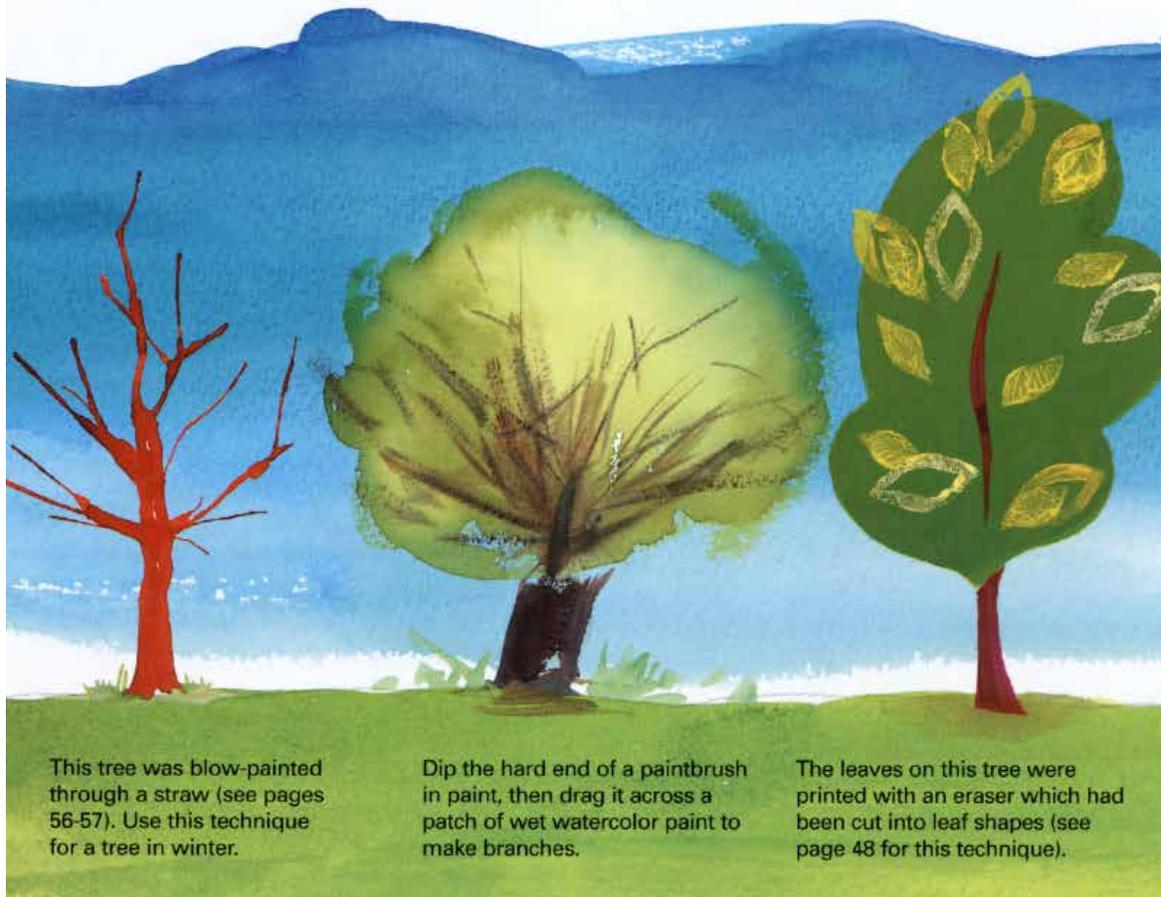


Use a natural sponge if you have one.

2. Dampen a piece of sponge, then dip it into some red paint. Dab it gently around the tops of the branches.



3. Wash the sponge, then squeeze as much water out as you can. Dip it into purple paint, then dab it around the branches.



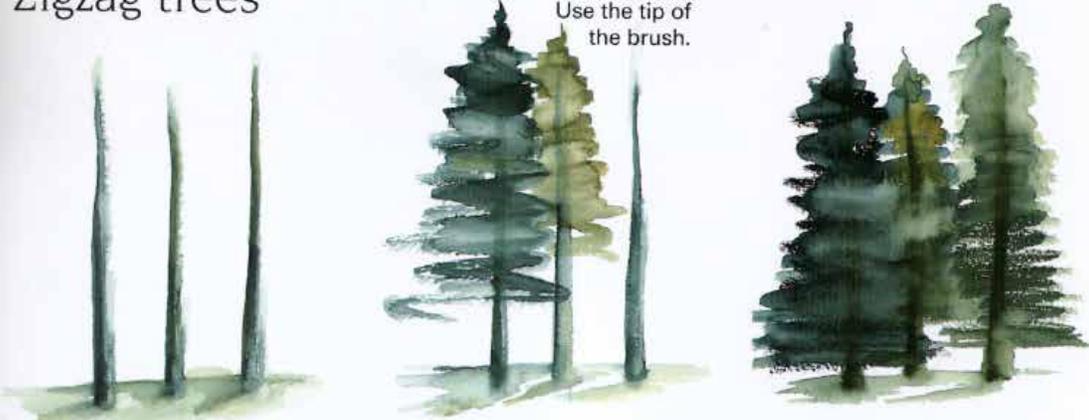
This tree was blow-painted through a straw (see pages 56-57). Use this technique for a tree in winter.

Dip the hard end of a paintbrush in paint, then drag it across a patch of wet watercolor paint to make branches.

The leaves on this tree were printed with an eraser which had been cut into leaf shapes (see page 48 for this technique).

Concerning Trees continued

Zigzag trees



Use the tip of the brush.

1. Paint three tree trunks using green watercolor paint. Make them get thinner toward the top. Add some ground.
2. Put the tip of your brush at the top of a tree and paint a zigzag down the trunk. Make it get wider as you paint.
3. Continue painting, but leave part of the trunk showing at the bottom. Then, zigzag some clean water over the top.



1. Draw a trunk with brown chalk pastels. Scribble pastels for the leaves. Smudge them in a few places.
2. This stylized tree was drawn with chalk pastels. The leaves were drawn first then the trunk was added.
3. These leaves were painted first in dark green acrylic, then lighter green was added on top.

Expressing Nature Grades 3-12

Many of the watercolour landscapes found in the exhibition *From Water into Sky* are based on direct observation of nature/natural objects and an intuitive rendering of this visual stimuli. In the following activity students will create a work of art based on a similar process. If weather permits, this activity can be done out of doors directly from nature. If this is not possible, a still-life arrangement in the classroom can be substituted. **PLEASE NOTE: *Use the preceding activities as motivation for this lesson.**

Materials

White paper/drawing boards or prepared stretched canvas
tempera or oil paints
paint cups and water (for tempera paints)
paint pallets (for oil paints)
assorted brushes - 2 or 3 per student
viewfinders



Ella Richards
Untitled (Bow Falls), 1950
Watercolour on paper
Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

Process

1. Using artworks from the exhibition for inspiration, discuss with students the use of **complementary colours** and black and white to create various values in colours.
2. Distribute viewfinders (for young children these can be prepared before hand using the supplied template whereas older students can prepare their own using white cardstock/bristol board) to students and instruct concerning their use.
3. Distribute painting surface - either prepared stretched canvases or heavy white paper taped to drawing boards can be used - one per student
4. Distribute paint supplies - oil or tempera paints, brushes, water, paint pallets
5. Instruct students that they are to go outside and, using viewfinders, focus on a patch of yard/nature. In their search they should consider overall composition, emphasis/focus, and movement within the picture plane.

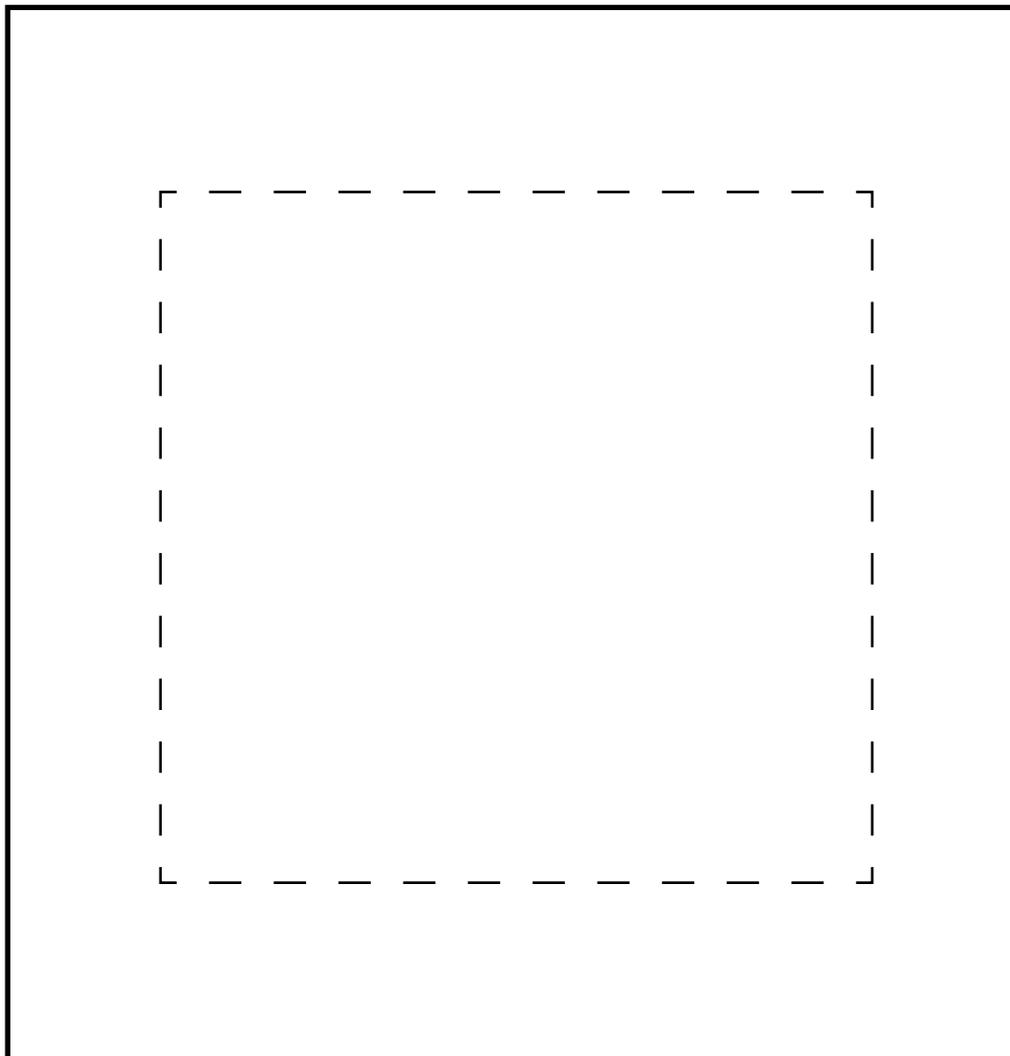
Expressing Nature continued

6. Without sketching before hand students to paint the scene before them. *If a still life setting is used in the classroom have students use viewfinders to focus in on a section of the setting. Students are to paint only what they see within the viewfinder.

* Have students limit their paint choices to **two complementary colours** (example: red and green; blue and orange; purple and yellow; and white and black and, through colour mixing of complements and the addition of white/black, create various hues of their primary choices.

Viewfinder Template

*Cut along the inside dotted line to create a open center area in the form below.



The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Sometimes that 'final touch' is better left on the end of your brush.

Vivian Sathre

American painter and author



Robert Sinclair

Snowed Glimpse, 1991

Watercolour on paper

Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

GLOSSARY

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts Travelling Exhibition Program

Glossary

Abstract art: Abstract art is defined as art that has no reference to any figurative reality. In its wider definition, the term describes art that depicts real forms in a simplified or rather reduced way— keeping only an illusion of the original natural subject.

Abstract Expressionism: First used to describe some of Kandinsky's early abstract paintings but the phrase is more usually associated with painters working in New York in the 1940s and 1950s such as Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko. Its distinguishing features are (a) self expression on a grand scale and (b) using the language of abstraction.

Action painting: Involves dripping, dribbling or throwing paint onto the surface of the canvas, as a way of mediating the workings of the unconscious mind in an unplanned way. Jackson Pollock is the best-known example.

Complementary colour: Colours that are directly opposite each other on the colour wheel (for example, blue and orange. These colours when placed next to each other produce the highest contrast.

Composition: The arrangement of lines, colours and form so as to achieve a unified whole; the resulting state or product is referred to as a composition.

Contemporary artists: Those whose peak of activity can be situated somewhere between the 1970s (the advent of postmodernism) and the present day.

Cool colours: Blues, greens, and purples are considered cool colours. In aerial perspective cool colours are said to move away from you, or appear more distant.

Elements of Design: The basic components which make up any visual image. These are line, shape, colour, texture, and space.

Exhibition: A public display of art objects including painting, sculpture, prints, installation, etc.

Fauvism: An art movement launched in 1905 whose work is characterized by bright and non-natural colours and simple forms.

Formalism: In art theory, formalism is the concept that a work's artistic value is entirely determined by its form—the way it is made, its purely visual aspects, and its medium. Formalism emphasizes compositional elements such as colour, line, shape and texture rather than realism, context, and content.

Geometric shapes: Any shape or form having more mathematical than organic design. Examples of geometric shapes include: spheres, cones, cubes, squares, circles, triangles.

Hard-edge painting: American painting of the late 1950s and 60s, with surfaces treated as a single flat unit of colour with hard or sharp edges: as distinct from the lumpy, asymmetrical, random gestures of Abstract Expressionists. Best-known practitioners Ellsworth Kelly and Kenneth Noland.

Glossary, continued

Impressionism: An art movement of the 19th century and is about capturing fast, fleeting moments with colour, light and surface.

Medium: The material or technique used by an artist to produce a work of art.

Non-objective art: Artworks having no recognizable subject matter (not recognizable as such things as houses, trees, people, etc.) Also known as **non-representational art**.

Organic shapes: An irregular shape; refers to shapes or forms having irregular edges or objects resembling things existing in nature.

Pattern: A principle of art, a pattern means the repetition of an element in a work. An artist achieves a pattern through the use of colour, line, shape or texture.

Positive shapes: Are the objects themselves. They are surrounded in a painting by what are called the negative shapes.

Primary colours: The three colours from which all other colours are derived - red, yellow and blue.

Realism: Realism in the visual arts and literature is the depiction of subjects as they appear in everyday life, without embellishment or interpretation.

Representational art: Art with an immediately recognisable subject, depicted (or 'represented') in ways which seek to resemble a figure, landscape or object; also called 'figurative' art and contrasted with Abstraction.

Rhythm: A principle of art indicating movement by the repetition of elements. Rhythm can make an artwork seem active.

Rule of Thirds: The basic principle that the key elements or objects in a composition should fall on one of 2 lines that divide the composition in thirds. The viewers' eye should fall on one of these lines where both a horizontal and a vertical line come to rest.

Value: The range of lightness or darkness in a colour; the relationships of tone in a painting.

Warm colours: Yellows and reds of the colour spectrum, associated with fire, heat and sun.

Credits

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

The artists

**The Alberta Foundation for the Arts
Art Gallery of Alberta**

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Credits continued

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AFA Travelling Exhibition Program, TREX Region 2
Elicia Weaver –TREX Technician

Front Cover Image:

Keith Thomson, *Water's Edge* (detail), 1983, Watercolour on paper, Collection of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts

