



# CREATE AN ABSTRACT LANDSCAPE LEARNING RESOURCE



## LESSON GRADE RANGE

Adaptable to all grades

## LESSON OBJECTIVE

Students will discuss both landscape and abstract art, and will experiment with how to take something realistic and transform it into something abstract.

## KEY TERMS

- Abstract art
- Abstraction
- Representational art
- Landscape
- Cool Colors
- Warm colors

## ARTIST REFERENCE

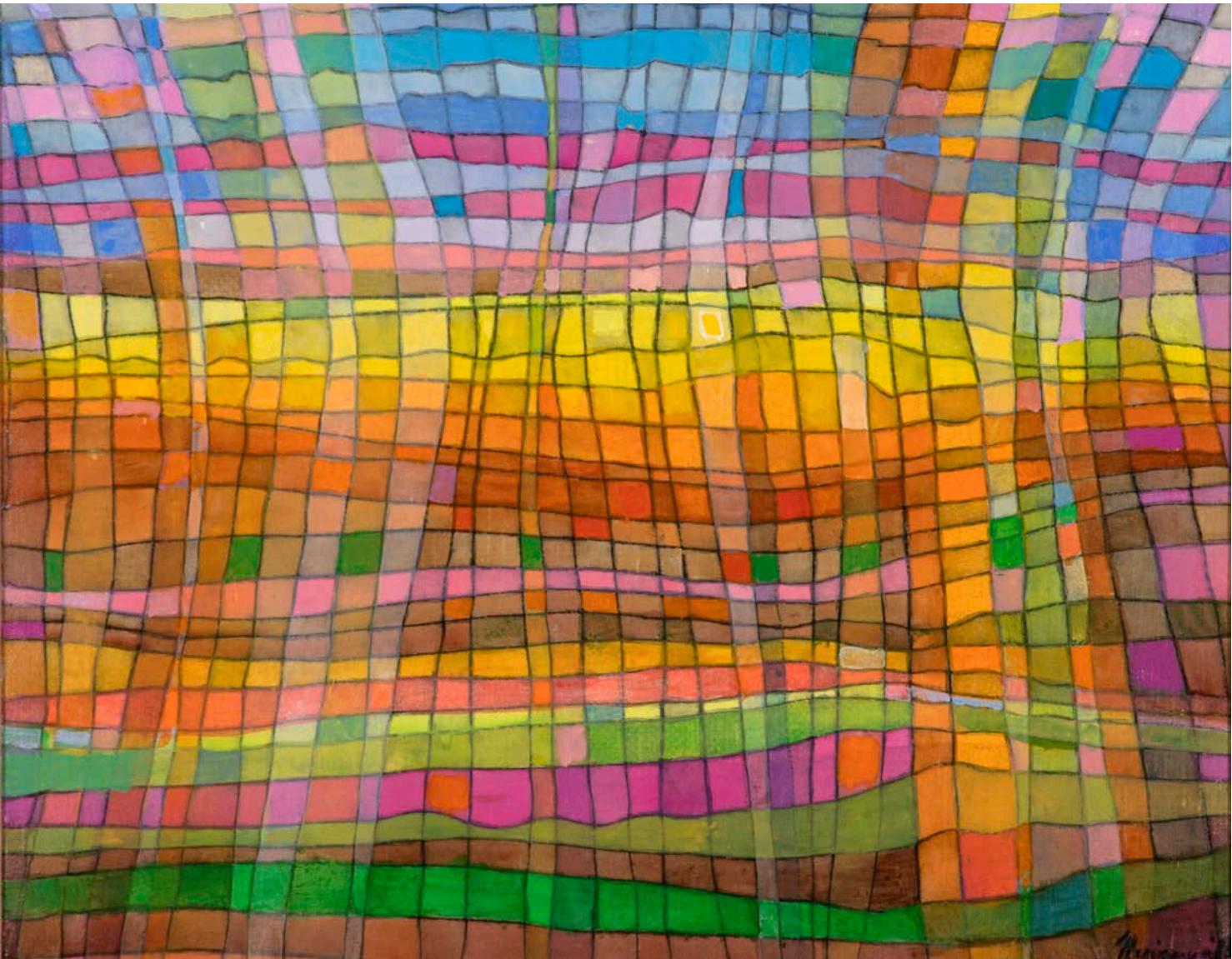
Armand Merizon, *Grid of Color (Abstracted Rainbow)*, acrylic on canvas, 1983, Gift of Bette and Berndon Young, 2013.17.2 (opposite)

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Photos of landscapes\*
- Canvas or paper
- Paint, crayon, marker, or colored pencils

\*For younger students, provide landscape images with larger shapes. If possible, offer older students the option to use an image of a landscape that they have taken.

An additional option is to give them the opportunity to take a landscape painting by another artist and abstract it, as in example 4 (end of document).



## OPENING DISCUSSION

Open class by showing students *Grid of Color (Abstracted Rainbow)* by Armand Merizon. Ask students what they notice, how it makes them feel, and what they think this artwork might represent.

Guide them into a conversation about landscape and abstract art, with questions and conversation points depending on previous classroom knowledge.

Questions might include:

- What is landscape art?
- What can be included?
- What is typically not seen in landscape art?
- What is abstract art?
- What does it mean to abstract an object, a scene, or an idea in art?
- What might you see in an abstract artwork?

Return to the artwork by Merizon. Let students know that it is an abstracted rainbow landscape. If using this guide as part of the *Michigan Reimagined* exhibition, let them know this artwork is part of that exhibition.

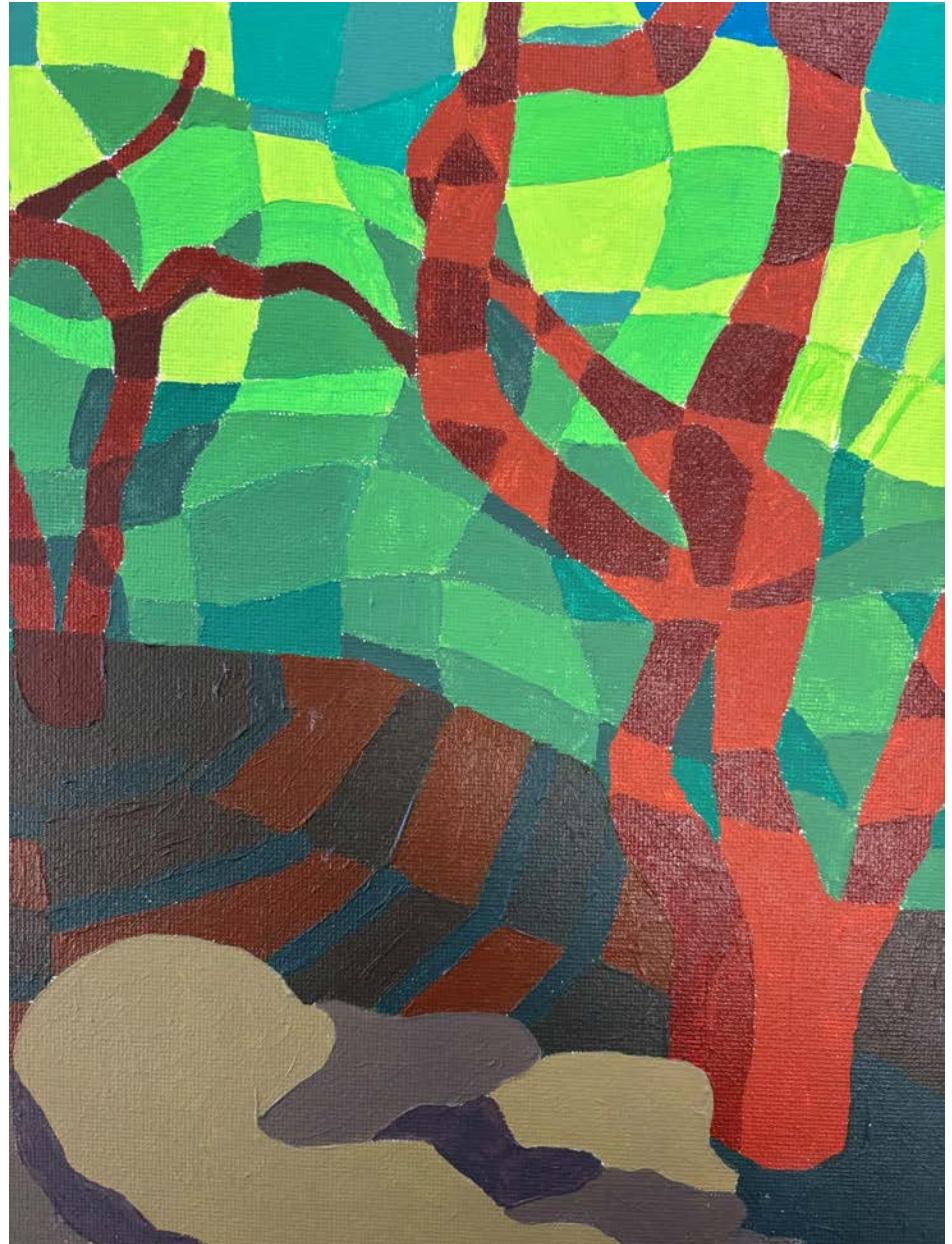
Ask students if they can see the landscape in Merizon's abstract grid, and why or why not.

Show students a landscape image (either a photo or an artwork) and talk about breaking the artwork down into grids of color. Explain the process and objective of the lesson.

**Optional:** Share information with students about the artist. GVAM has a short artist profile on Merizon and his Catalogue Raisonné contains many short essays on Merizon throughout his life.

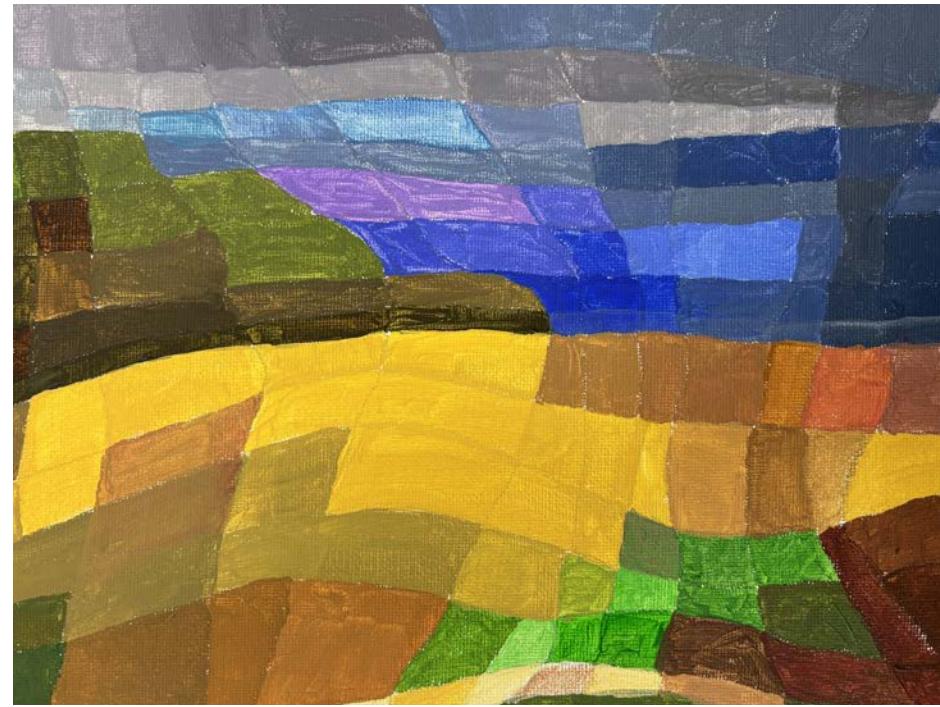
These resources can be found at:

<https://merizon.gvsuartgallery.org/catalogue-raisonne>



## STEPS

1. Provide images of landscapes for students and have them select the image that they would like to use.
2. Students will observe the overall shapes and colors in the landscape. Ask students to think about the kind of abstract landscape they will create.
  - a. Will they create a grid?
  - b. Will they translate a large tree into a rectangle, oval, or triangle?
  - c. Will their abstracted landscape still be recognizable (*ie*, representational) of a landscape?
3. Next ask students to think about the colors they will use:
  - a. True to the image?
  - b. Colors of their choice?
  - c. Cool colors?
  - d. Warm Colors?
4. **Optional:** To encourage students to use non-realistic colors, have them create a color key. As they fill in their grid, they can follow their color key to create a non-realistic color palette on their abstract landscape.  
For example:
  - a. Red = Purple
  - b. Green = Teal
  - c. Yellow = Bright Green



5. After planning out their work, students will draw the shapes they identified to start their abstract landscape.
6. Draw a grid overtop. The lines do not have to be straight, but can be wavy, or a combination of wavy and straight.
7. Start filling in the color until the entire surface is covered. Depending on the medium used, students may need to do more than one layer.
8. **Optional:** Go over the original grid lines with paint, or another medium, to emphasize the grid of your artwork.

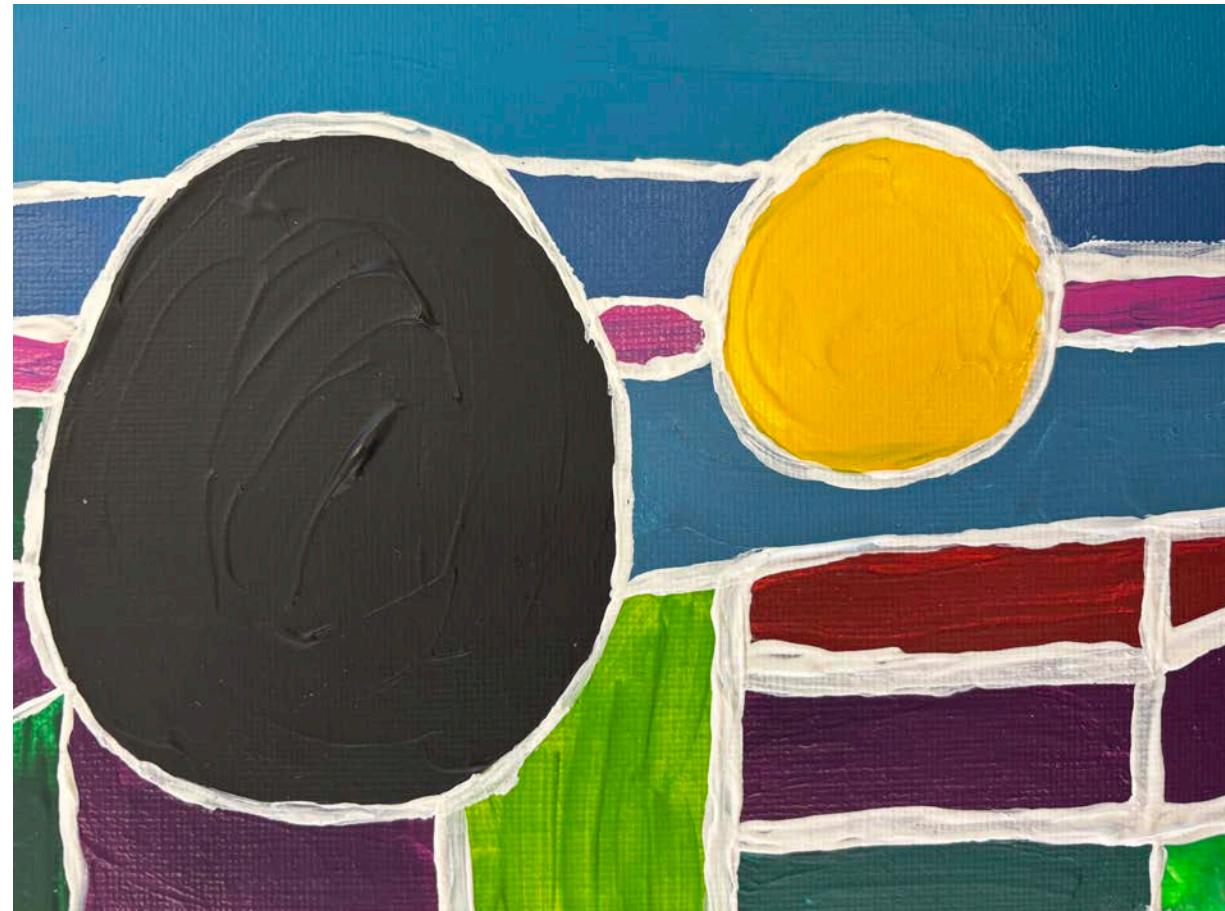
## ARTWORK LINK

<https://artgallery.gvsu.edu/Detail/objects/10034>

Need a higher-resolution for your class? Email [artmuseum@gvsu.edu](mailto:artmuseum@gvsu.edu) and we will provide one.

## EXAMPLES

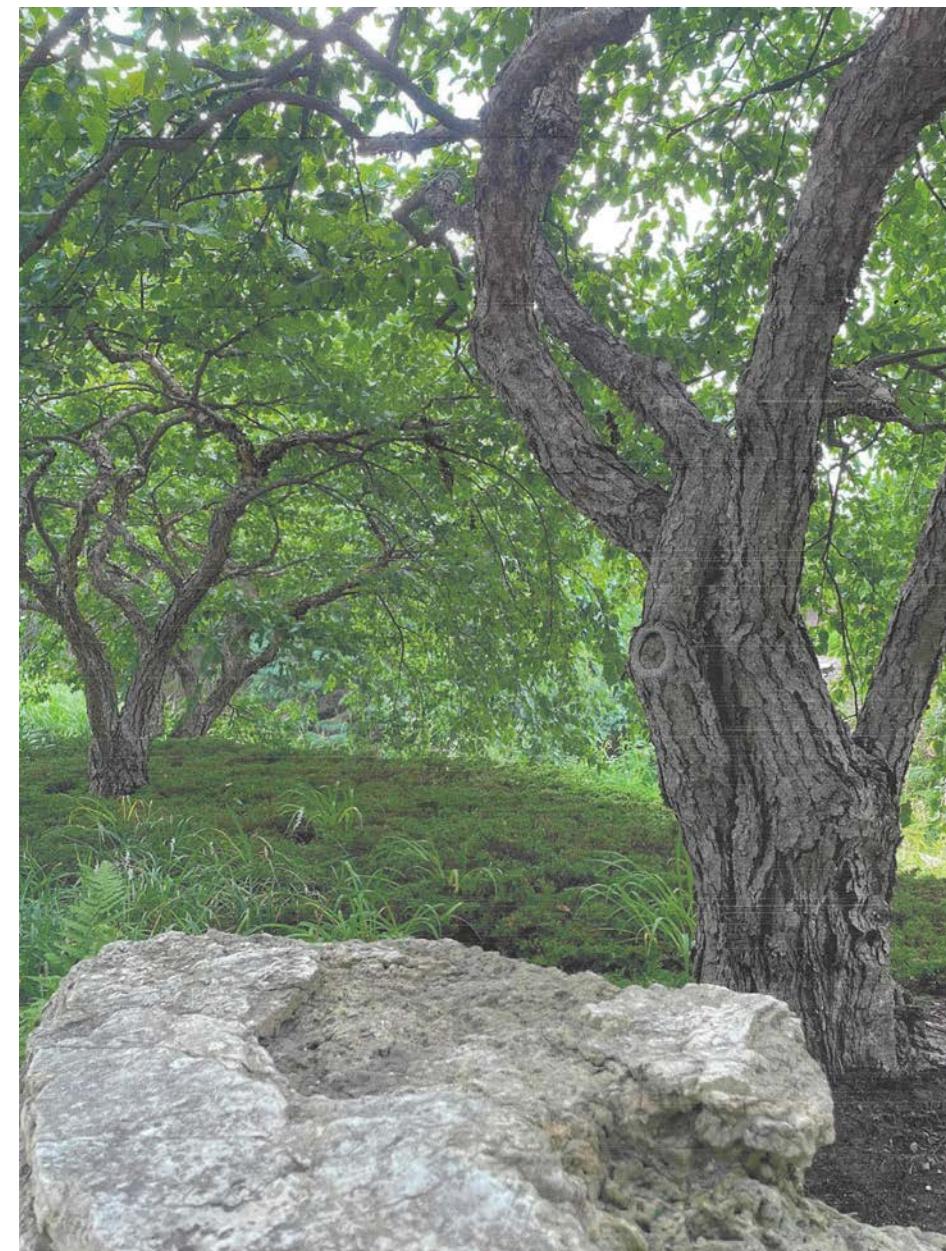
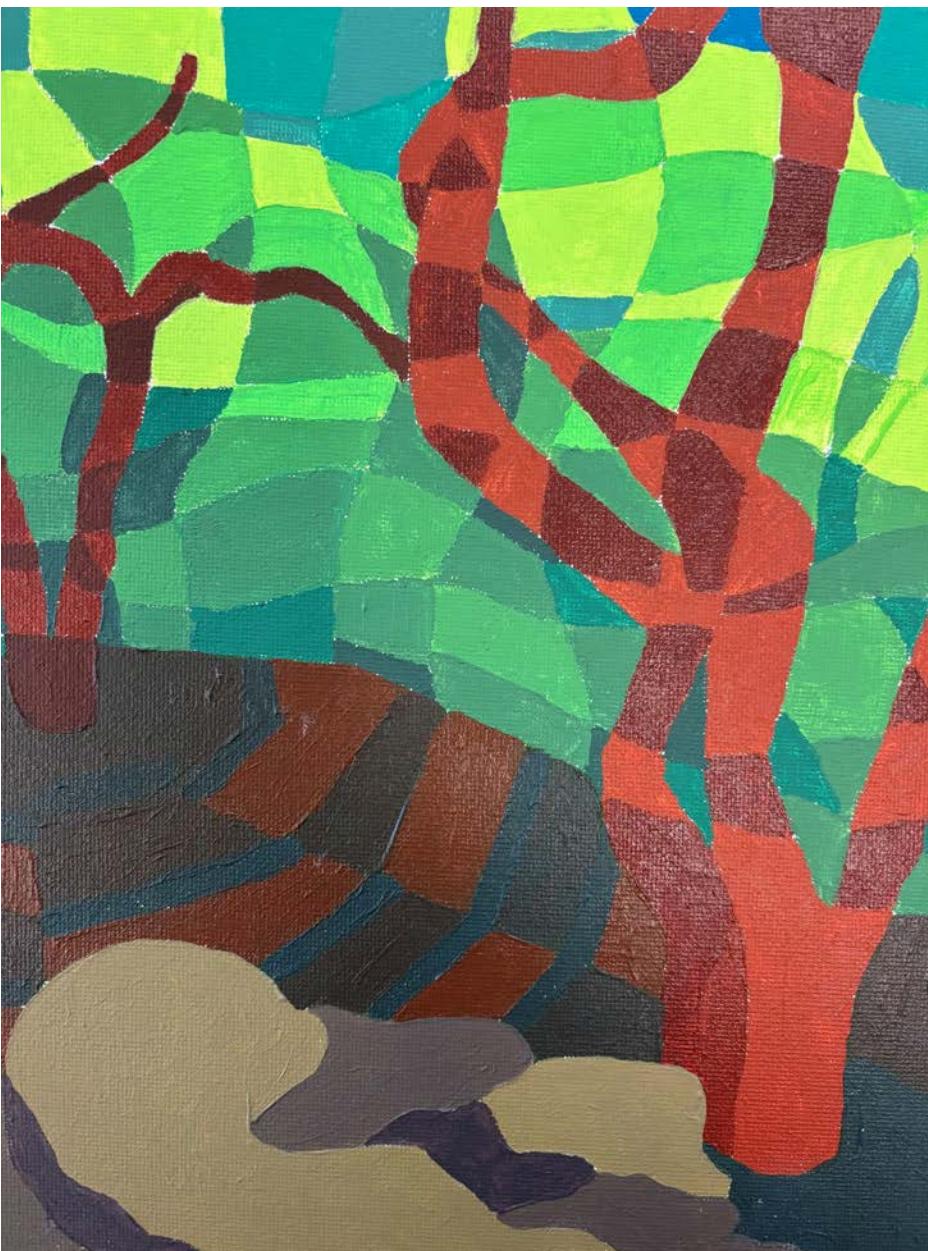
1. Simple Landscape (inspired by an image from WikiCommons)



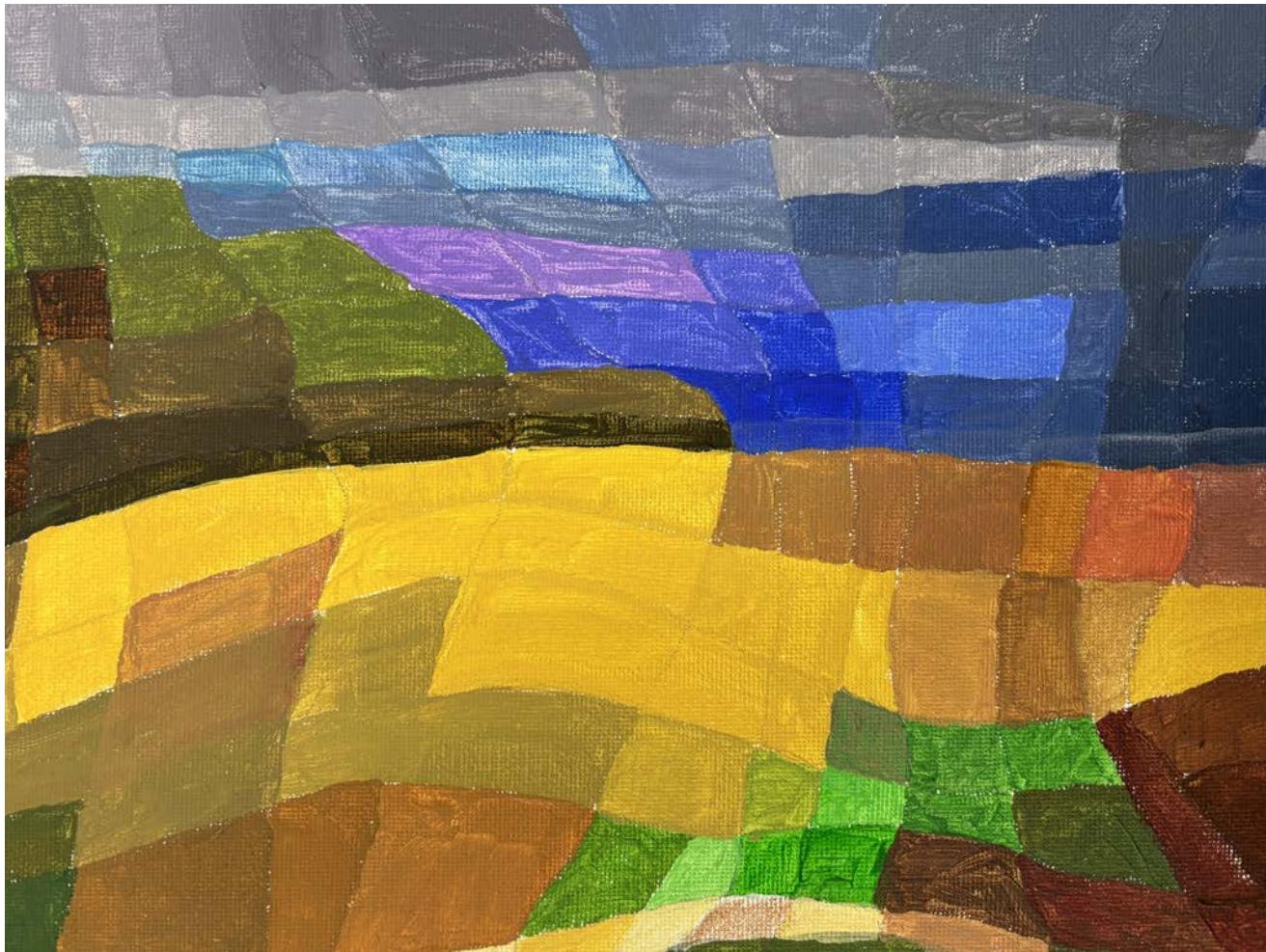
2. Beachscape



3. Treescape



4. Inspired by another artwork



Inspiration artwork: Mathias J. Alten, *Late Summer Fields*, oil on canvas laid on board, 1919, Gift of George H. and Barbara Gordon, 2021.86.16

4. Created from the artist's imagination

