

Draw from the Collection—at home! March Theme: Composition



Alexander Helwig Wyant (American, 1836-1892,) *Derbyshire Landscape*, 1871, oil on canvas, 22 x 36 inches. Museum purchase with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Rietveld, the NCR Corporation, and Monsanto Research Corporation. 1985.6

When thinking about composition, consider how all of the objects within the painting work together as a unified whole, rather than focusing on one particular object, but rather on how all the objects inside a painting work together as a unified whole.

Find an area inside this painting that interests you. Once you find that area, imagine that you are going to place a frame around just that space. How will you place the frame over that area in order to best activate the space that surrounds the focus of your drawing? Compose all your elements in such a way to draw attention to all areas of your drawing from edge to edge and top to bottom.

Care to share? Show off your finished drawings in the comments section of our Virtual Draw Facebook post!

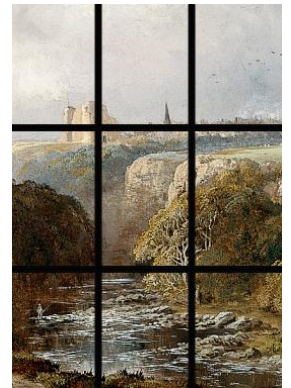
Helpful Hints!

1. Offset the main focus of your drawing away from the direct center of your frame. This will help activate the negative space (the area around an object such as the sky around the tree) and make your whole composition more interesting as a result.



2. Use the rule of thirds. First, divide your page into 3 equal planes horizontally. Then, divide your page into 3 equal planes vertically. Use the areas where lines intersect to draw important objects or areas of focus. Helpful video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQyquPmATww>



3. If you are drawing in pencil, you can use your phone or computer to convert the artwork to black and white mode to better see the values and shades.



Extra Challenge: Use an unusual frame shape (ex: circle, triangle, etc.) to compose your elements. You can even allow certain parts to extend past the frame if you wish!



Happy drawing!