



## The Lenfest Exhibition of Pennsylvania Impressionism

### POST-TOUR ACTIVITY: CREATE AN IMPRESSIONIST LANDSCAPE!

The style and the technique of the Impressionists were very unique. If you examine an impressionist painting, the brush strokes are separate, strokes of color. Impressionist artists often did not mix their colors on their palette before they applied it on their canvas. These artists worked outdoors or "en plein air", and created an image that was an "impression" of what they saw, and not a realistic image.

Some impressionist artists like Edward Redfield also used their palette knives to apply paint along with their brushes to create a very thick texture with their paints. This resulted in a very thick, or **impasto** texture on their canvases. When you visit the Michener Art Museum, you can see this **impasto** texture in Redfield's paintings.

Edward Redfield created his landscapes "at one go", which meant he created his paintings in one sitting. Look outside your window, or go outside to create your landscape "at one go". Use tempera paint mixed with flour to create an **impasto** texture.

#### Materials Needed:

Tempera paint  
Palette knives  
Flour  
Poster board or matte board, 9x12  
Small containers for mixed paint  
Smaller boards for mixing colors  
Pencil, erasers  
Shellac, or polymer medium

#### Procedure:

1. Prepare your paints. Mix flour into the tempera paint, getting close to a thick, yogurt consistency. The mixture should remain smooth. Be careful not to mix too much flour; it will become dry, and too clumpy to work with.
2. Find an area outside where you can set up your materials. (If you cannot work outside, choose photograph or an image from a magazine of a landscape that you would like to paint.)

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3. Create a simple sketch of your landscape using pencil. Try not to add too much detail.
4. Using your palette knife, scoop out some of your mixed paint onto a small board and start applying it onto your surface. Work quickly, and try not to blend, leaving individual strokes. (Try to apply individual colors next to each other, and see what affect you get.)
5. When you are finished your painting, let it dry. After it is dry, to preserve the paints, you can spray it with a shellac coat it with a polymer medium to prevent the paint from chipping off your board.

## Further ideas to explore:

- See if you can find other impressionist artists that used this **impasto** texture.
- *Abstract Expressionist* painters (c. 1940-70) sometimes created an **impasto** texture in their work. Explore the work of some of these painters like Willem DeKooning, Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, and Franz Kline.
- Explore other methods of building *texture* in an artwork using paints, clay, wax, or collage materials, such as tissue paper. For example, try combining sand, glitter, salt, or other materials with paint. See what you can come up with!
- **Actual texture** is what you feel when you touch an object. **Impasto** texture is an example of an *actual texture* in art. This is a texture that can be felt as well as seen. **Visual texture** is texture created by patterns of lines and shapes on the surface of an object. That is, visual texture looks a though it would feel a certain way, such as bumpy or rough, but it is an illusion. Find a painting at the Michener Art Museum that contains a *visual texture*.
- Choose an object that has a texture. This can be a texture that is: slick, smooth, rough, velvety, satiny, bumpy, etc. Draw your object on a piece of paper. How will you use your lines and pencil marks to create the illusion of texture on your paper?

The National Art Standard addressed in this activity is: **Content Standard 1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes. The Pennsylvania Arts and Humanities Standard addressed in this activity is: **9.1 Production, Performance and Exhibition.**

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