



Art Through the Year

with Sharon Jeffus

Lesson 4: Shape with Winter Birds

In the last three lessons, we learned about line, shape, value, and texture. In Lesson 4, we'll expand more on the element of art, shape. Any piece of artwork must start with basic shapes and build from there by adding shading, texture, and color. We'll get started by taking a look at sample masterpieces where basic shapes are used as the foundation of the work. In the first lesson, we'll create a still life by starting with basic shapes and transforming them into other objects, such as a beautiful Christmas scene. Then we'll move to the second lesson and create birds in the snow from these basic shapes we've practiced in the first lesson.

Masterpieces Referenced:



Basket of Fruit, by Caravaggio, c1595
[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Basket_of_Fruit-Caravaggio_\(c.1595\).jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Basket_of_Fruit-Caravaggio_(c.1595).jpg)

Still Life with a Curtain, by Paul Cézanne, c1898
<http://www.zucapaca.com/best-of-cezanne/paul-cezanne-biography/>



Hard times: Partridges and a Hare by Archibald Thorburn, 1892
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Archibald_Thorburn_Hard_times_-_partridges_and_a_hare_1892.jpg



Still Life with Pottery Jars, by Zurbarán, c1650
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zurbaran_-_Bodegon.jpg



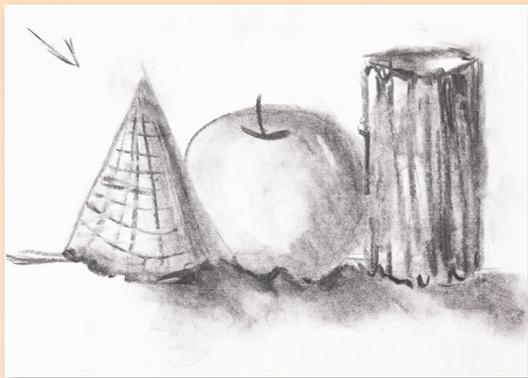
Golden Eagle, by Audubon, 1827-1838
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:181_Goldon_Eagle.jpg



Black Vulture or Carrion Crow, by Audubon, 1827-1838
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:106_Black_Vulture_or_Carrion_Crow.jpg

“All works, no matter what or by whom painted, are nothing but bagatelles and childish trifles... unless they are made and painted from life, and there can be nothing... better than to follow nature.”

—Caravaggio



Project 1: Transforming Simple Shapes

In this project, you'll create a still life out of basic shapes: a cone, a sphere, and a cylinder. Remember composition is very important in still lifes and using an odd number of objects is the rule. Once you have your basic shapes under way, the fun begins by transforming them into anything you want, like food or a Christmas scene.

Materials List:

- White Paper (12" x 9")
- Willow Charcoal
- Kneaded Eraser
- Chalk Pastels (24 set)
- Krylon Spray Fixative



Let's get started...

1. With your paper placed horizontally, draw your horizon line 1/3 of the way up your paper. Then draw in your three basic 2-D shapes: triangle, circle, and rectangle. (See page 5 as a reference.)
2. Shade in your triangle with the light source coming in from the upper left, turning it into a 3-D cone. If you want, use an eraser to remove your horizon line. Take your finger and smudge or "pull" the charcoal across your shape to soften your shading and add depth.
3. Continue adding shading and pulling the charcoal across your shapes with your fingers to turn the circle into a sphere and the rectangle into a cylinder.
4. Now you can transform your 3-D shapes into whatever you want, like food or Christmas objects, by adding lines, details, and textures.
5. Once you have your three shapes transformed into various objects, go back in and add the shadows cast from each. Remember to keep the direction of your light source in mind and where these shadows would fall.
6. To create additional interest in your still life, you can add color and shading with chalk pastels.
7. Spray your final artwork with a fixative to help preserve your color chalk and charcoal drawing. This will prevent unwanted smudging and transferring of pigment.

Sample Christmas Transformations:





Project 2: Birds in the Snow

In this project, you'll create various birds in the snow, starting with your basic 2-D shapes and expanding them into 3-D birds by incorporating shading and texture. We'll also copy a masterpiece, *Hard Times: Partridges and a Hare* by Archibald Thorburn, to further develop our skills.

Materials List:

- Pastel Colored Paper (12" x 9")
- Willow Charcoal
- Kneaded Eraser
- Chalk Pastels (24 set)
- White Acrylic Paint
- Sponge and Q-Tips
- White Glitter (optional)
- Krylon Spray Fixative



Let's get started...

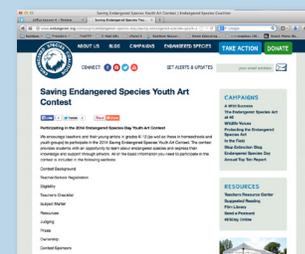
1. On your pastel paper, draw the basic shapes (oval, circle, triangle, and cylinders) with charcoal to make your bird. Add a diagonal branch. See page 6 for a reference sketch.
2. Fill in the background around your bird with a white pastel. Add dark and light blue pastels for the sky and blend until they look solid. Have the top of your picture darker and progress to lighter tones as you work down to the horizon line. You could also add some mountains behind your bird in dark blue. Remember to make one side of each mountain darker giving them depth.
3. Add the outlines of your bird in charcoal and color in the beak and eyes.
4. Fill in the branch with brown chalk. Make the branch dark on the bottom and add texture with your charcoal. A gold color is great for adding texture and highlights to the branch.
5. Add snow throughout your picture—to the sky, branch, and the bird—with white chalk.



6. Spray your final artwork with a fixative to help preserve your chalk pastel drawing and prevent unwanted smudging.

A Variation...

1. On a warm colored paper, draw a red Cardinal on a branch using the above techniques. Make the sky grey with white blurry areas to represent a blizzard.
2. For depth and charm, add snow by using white tempera or acrylic paint with a sponge, Q-Tip, or pencil eraser. Sprinkle white glitter onto your wet paint for extra fun sparkles.
3. Once the paint is dry, spray your final artwork with a fixative.



BONUS:

Apply the art skills you're learning and enter a drawing in the 2014 Saving Endangered Species Youth Art Contest for grades K-12. For guidelines: <http://www.endangered.org/campaigns/endangered-species-day/saving-endangered-species-youth-art-contest/>



Project 2: Birds in the Snow

To further develop drawing skills for your more advanced or older students, let's copy a masterpiece, *Hard Times: Partridges and a Hare* by Archibald Thorburn. You can learn a lot by studying and working through the process of copying masters.

Materials List:

- Pastel Colored Paper (12" x 9")
- Willow Charcoal
- Kneaded Eraser
- Chalk Pastels (24 set)
- Krylon Spray Fixative



Copy a Master...

1. Print a copy of *Hard Times: Partridges and a Hare* by Archibald Thorburn (Page 8) to use as a reference. Start with a horizontally placed paper and draw lightly with charcoal. Start with your horizon line and the basic shapes that compose your picture.
2. As you look at Thorburn's masterpiece work on your city and sky in the distance. Next, work on your snowy hills, adding subtle shading.
3. Add texture, shading, and details to your birds and the plant in the foreground of your picture, making them 3-D. Experiment and have fun with this process of copying a masterpiece—this is your interpretation!
4. For a final detail, add white dots to the eyes of your birds to bring light to them as Thorburn did to his birds.
5. Spray your final artwork with a fixative.

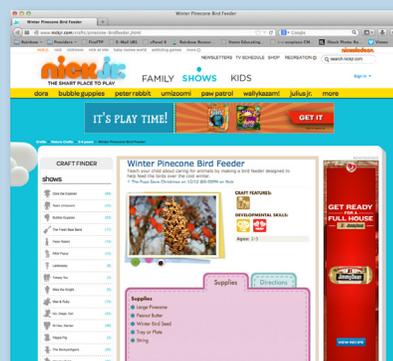


BONUS:

Take your bird drawing skills to the next level and enter to win the 2014 Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest. For guidelines: <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck/>

BONUS:

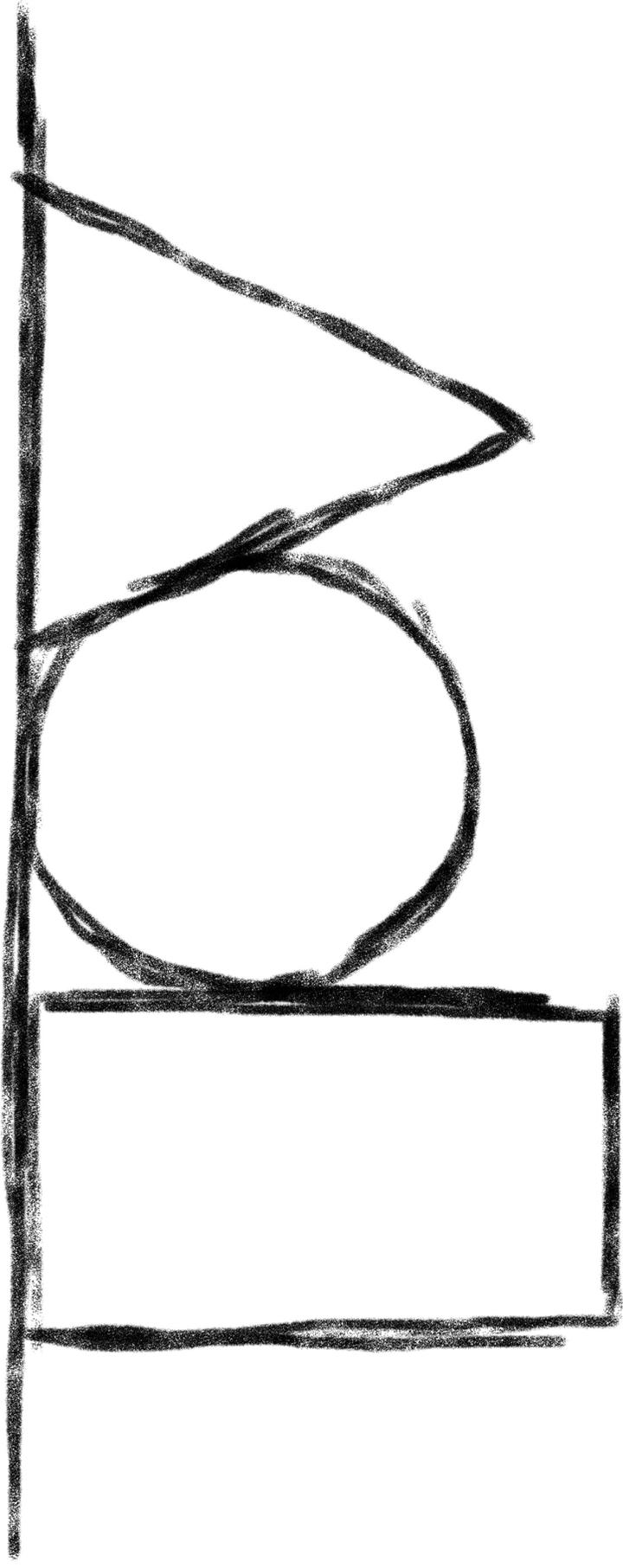
This project has a dual purpose. Have fun making a winter pinecone bird feeder and teach your kids the joy of caring for animals: <http://www.nickjr.com/crafts/pinecone-birdfeeder.jhtml>



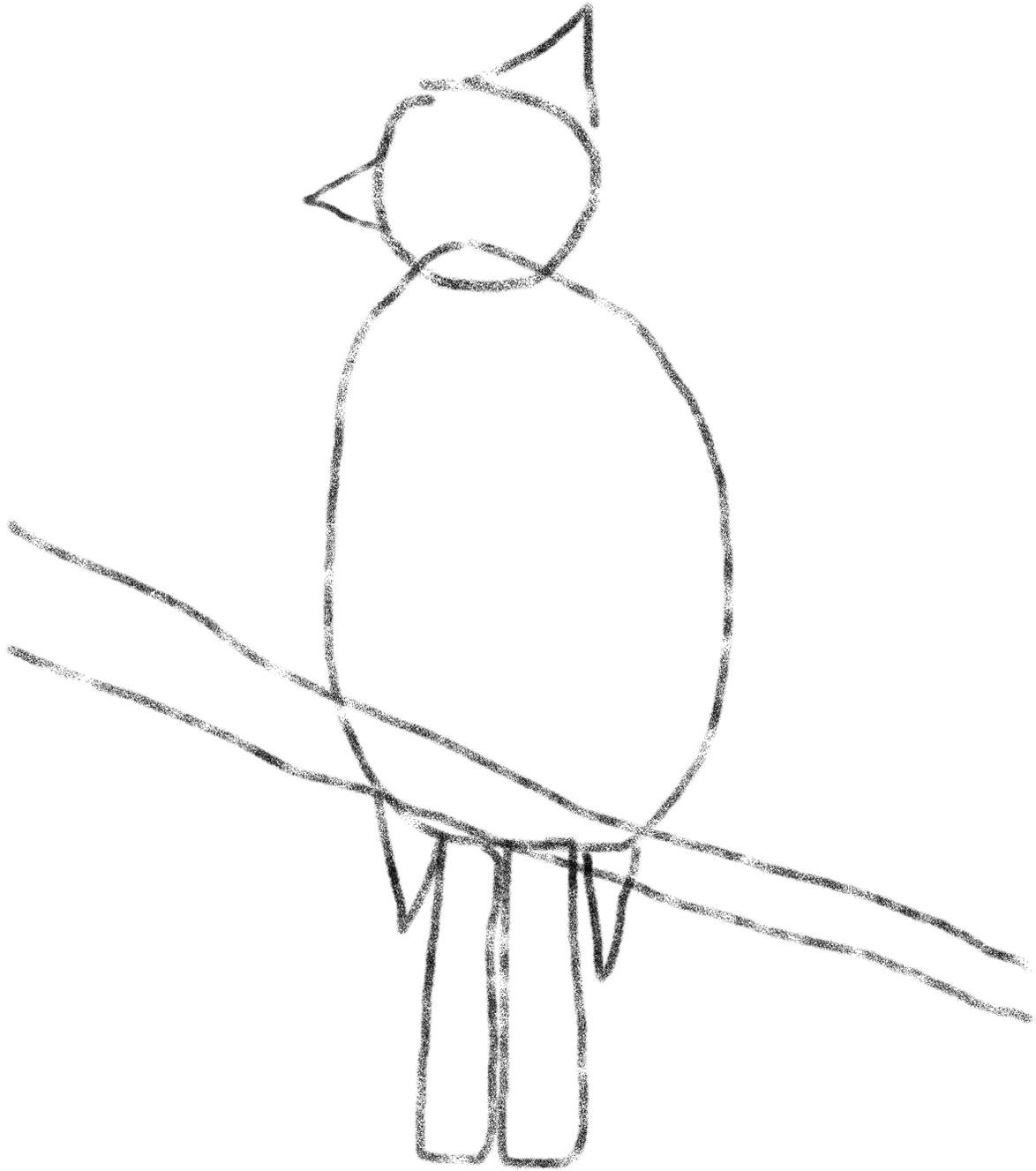
BONUS:

Make a whimsical little birdhouse out of wooden craft sticks with these step-by-step instructions: <http://www.craftprojectideas.com/index.php/how-to/seasonal-projects/spring/160-bird-house-made-of-wood-craft-sticks>

Project 1: Basic Shapes



Project 2: Basic Shapes for Bird



Project 2: Birds in the Snow



Project 2: Copy a Master



Hard Times: Partridges and a Hare by Archibald Thorburn

Project 2: Sharon's Copy of the Master

