

# Intricate Flower Compositions

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*Grades 5-8*

## Overview

Students will create a painting using an intricate mark making technique. They will explore the concept of composition as they consider size, placement and cropping of objects to create visual interest and produce a unique image from an ordinary object. Students will use small repeated brushstrokes when painting their artwork to allow them to consider the importance of every aspect of their composition, including the background. Students will focus on how to present something, rather than what to present

## What you will need:

- watercolour/painting paper
- pencil
- eraser
- any kind of paint
- brushes

## What you can also use:

- black markers
- real flowers to draw from or pictures of flowers



## What is a Composition?

In art, a composition is all the parts and elements that make up your artwork. Composition also refers to how the objects and elements are put together in an artwork. When we think about the composition of an artwork, we think not only about the objects we see, but where the objects are and how they are depicted.

This painting is part of the Helson Gallery's exhibition, The Collector's Eye. The exhibition features artwork by Canadian artists. This flower composition is titled Copper Pot and was painted by Beatrice Dumbreck. We will be creating our own flower compositions.



How are the flowers arranged in the composition? Consider placement, size and cropping.

What elements throughout the composition create unity between the background and foreground?

How did the artist consider all the space within the composition?

## Step 1: Plan out your composition

Take some time to think about and plan out your composition. Decide what type of flowers you want to draw. Your artwork can consist of a single type of flower, or it can be made up of a variety of different flowers. Think about where you want to place the flowers on the page, how many flowers you want to include, and what size the flowers will be. Will your composition be more abstract with flowers placed throughout the page, or will it be more traditional with a vase of flowers on a table? Create a few different sketches of possible arrangements. Choose the composition you like best and draw your flowers using pencil.

## Step 2: Paint your composition

Now we are going to paint our compositions, but we are not going to just fill them in with colour. We are going to use small repeated brushstrokes where the individual brush marks are visible. The technique looks something like this:



Paint your flowers and the background using this technique. Since we are painting with individual brushstrokes, instead of mixing colours by blending paints on your paper, you can visually mix colours by layering your brushstrokes or placing them next to each other. You can use one colour in an area, such as green in the leaves and red in the petals. You can also use more than one colour, such as light green and dark green in the leaves, and red and purple in the petals. Your background can be all one colour, or it can be a combination of colours. It should be painted using the same small brushstroke technique.

### Step 3: Outline your drawing

Some of your outlines may have gotten lost in all of the intricate brushwork. If you like, you can use a black marker once the paint has dried to go over the outlines of your original drawing. This will help separate the flowers and objects in your composition from the background.

