

A Drone's Eye View

A whole new perspective on the landscape

In the centuries before the development of aircraft, map-makers relied on a largely imagined aerial perspective to depict their surroundings. Imagine what it would have been like to be some of the early air travelers and see the Earth from a perspective no one had ever seen it from before! To 20th century artists, being able to fly in a plane or view aerial photos opened up a whole new way to create landscape art. These artists coined the term "aeropainting," and it appealed to realist and abstract painters alike.

Looking down at one's environment from the sky, even tall buildings appear flattened and two-dimensional. Streets and highways form lines, and there's texture and a wide variety of color in fields, trees, and water. There's no horizon line, background, or foreground. The world becomes very abstract.

Using readily available satellite imagery from an online mapping source, students can find an overhead view of their own community and turn it into map-like art. Trace the main lines and features, color realistically or use your imagination to turn it into a fantasy world or complete abstraction.

GRADES 3-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Use an online mapping source with satellite images (such as Google Maps). Select a view and print it on letter-size paper in landscape format, so the image is as large as possible. It is not necessary to print the image in color unless it is needed for a reference; a black-and-white image will be sufficient.
2. Cut drawing paper into 9" x 12" pieces.

Process

1. Tape the satellite image onto a piece of black drawing paper using removable masking tape or artist tape. Place newspaper, magazines, or a sheet of WonderFoam beneath to provide a softer surface.
2. Using a ballpoint pen and heavy pressure, trace the main features of the satellite image: roads, bodies of water, groves of trees, etc. A ruler may be useful to make straight lines.
3. When the main lines have been traced, remove the satellite image and tape.
4. Using the long, flat side of a white compressed charcoal stick, color lightly over the entire

Materials (required)

Strathmore Artagain Drawing Paper, pad of 24 sheets, Black, 9" x 12" (10344-2003); share one pad across class

Artist Tape, 1/2" x 60 yd (24124-1012); share two rolls across class

Bic Velocity Bold Ball Pen, set of 8, assorted colors (22518-1008); need one per student

General's White Charcoal, pkg of 12 (22921-1021); share one stick between two students

Blick Scholastic Golden Taklon Brushes, Round, size 4 (05858-1002); need one per student

Media for adding color, recommend:

Prang Colored Pencils, 3.3 mm, set of 36 (22088-1036)

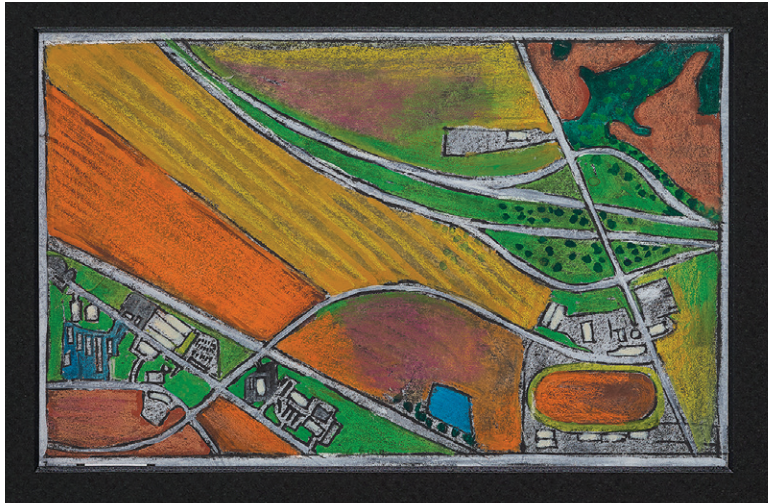
Prang Semi-Moist Watercolor Pans, 16-color set (00305-1008)

Prang Dry Tempera Cakes, set of 9 (00008-0099)

Optional materials:

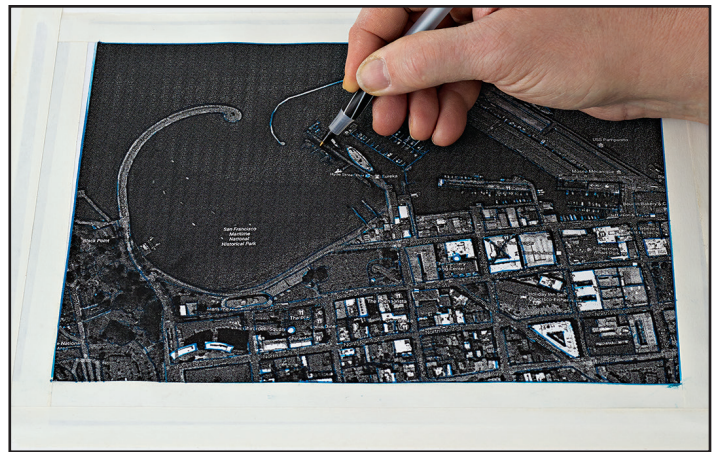
Creativity Street WonderFoam Sheets, assorted colors, pkg of 10 sheets, 9" x 12" (60947-1023)

Blick Plastic Ruler, 12" (55403-1012)

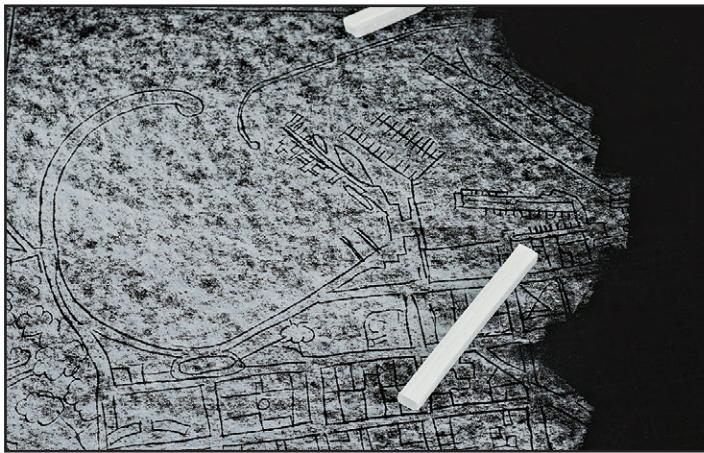




Step 1: Choose a view from a satellite image, print it, and tape it to a piece of black drawing paper.



Step 2: With a ballpoint pen, trace the main lines and shapes within the satellite image.



Step 3: Lightly run a piece of white compressed charcoal across the page to reveal the debossed lines.



Step 4: Add color and details with colored pencils, tempera and watercolors.

Process, continued

surface. The paper will hold the white pigment, but the lines that have been debossed into the paper will remain black.

5. The details of the landscape can be drawn directly over the white with colored pencil or painted with watercolor and a small brush.
6. Watercolor will blend with the white charcoal and take on the qualities of an opaque tempera. For best results, use watercolor just slightly dampened with a wet brush and paint between the black lines, not over them.

Options

1. This process can be adapted for white paper or other colors as well.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas.

