



RALPH CONNER

Image
Ralph Conner (Canadian, b. England 1895-1951).
Village Street, 1951. Watercolour and charcoal on paper, 41.8cm x 33.5cm.
Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery Collection.
Gift of Donna and William Klopp, 1982. Photo: KWAG.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

What are the first three words that come to your mind when you look at the painting?

1) _____

2) _____

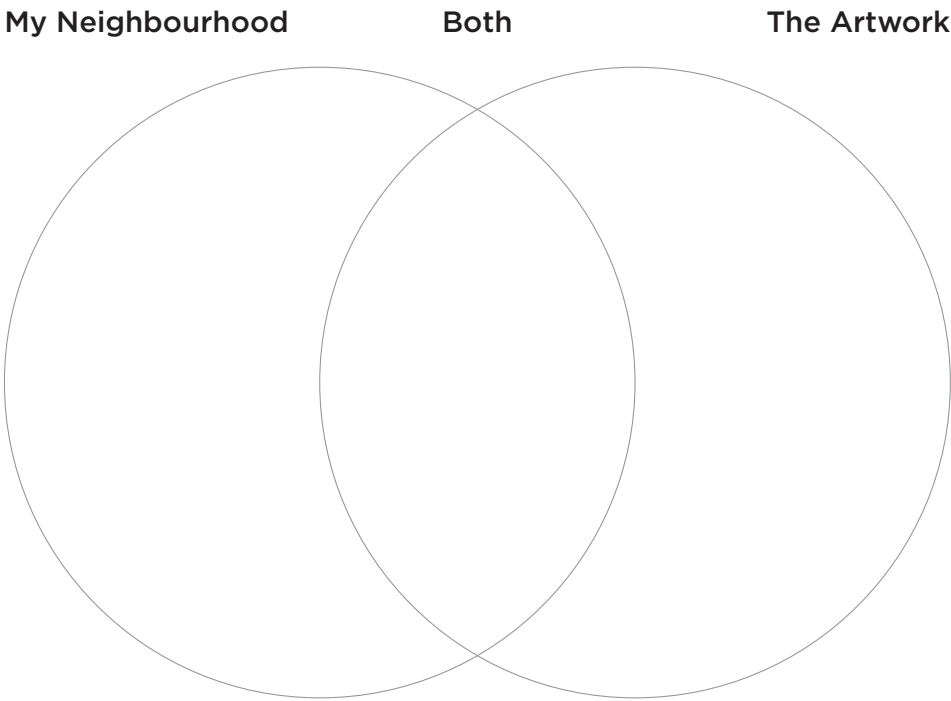
3) _____

Write 1-2 sentences explaining what you think the painting is about.
Include the three words you came up with in your explanation.

LOOKING CLOSER

Study this scene and then reflect on your own neighbourhood.

What does your neighbourhood look like during the wintertime?
 What does the neighbourhood in the painting look like? How are they similar?
 Show your thinking using the Venn diagram.



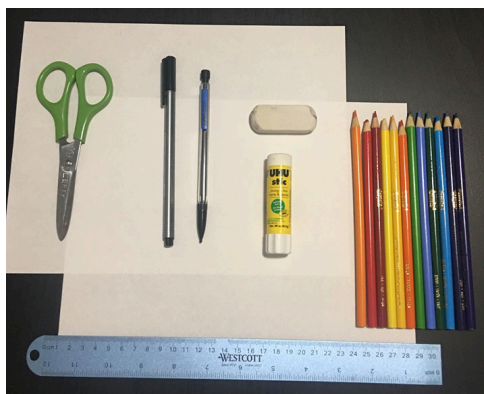
LOOKING INWARD

Think about why people might choose to create artworks about their communities.
 If you were to create an artwork about your community or neighbourhood,
 what would you include?

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

GET CREATIVE

In his painting, *Village Street*, Ralph Conner has used both warm and cool tones. Think about how these tones can create two different impressions of your own street and home in this drawing activity.



MATERIALS

- **Two pieces of paper** (white or coloured paper will work)
- **A pencil and eraser**
- **A black marker**
- **Pencil crayons** (crayons or markers will work too)
- **Scissors**
- **Ruler**
- **Glue**

PREPARATION

- Collect all of your materials and have them nearby.

PROCESS

1) Turn one piece of paper horizontally, and use your ruler and pencil to mark the halfway point. Use the scissors to cut your paper in half.

2) On one half of the paper, draw a picture of where you live. Using a black marker, outline your drawing. Next, place the other halved piece of paper on top and trace the drawing onto it. Holding it up to a window will help make the image underneath easier to trace. You will have two pieces of paper with the same drawing.



GET CREATIVE



- 3)** Divide your pencil crayons so that you have a group of warm tones and a group of cool tones. Colour one of your drawings using only warm tones, and colour your second drawing using only cool tones.
- 4)** Flip both pieces of paper over. On the back of your drawings, use your ruler to measure 6 equal vertical strips and mark them with your pencil. If you are using standard printer paper, your strips will be approximately 2.3 cm wide.
- 5)** On the back of one of your drawings, label each strip from 1 to 6. For your other drawing, label each strip from A to F. Cut both drawings into strips along your ruled lines.
- 6)** Take your second piece of paper that you have not cut or drawn on. Using your ruler and pencil, draw out vertical strips that are the same size as your cut strips of paper. In total, you should mark twelve vertical strips. Label these strips BACKWARDS so it looks like this: 6 F 5 E 4 D 3 C 2 B 1 A
- 7)** Using some glue, match up the numbered and lettered strips and glue them onto your paper.
- 8)** Fold your assembled drawing accordion style along the edges between your glued strips. You can open it up to reveal your drawings. If you look at it from one side, you will see your warm toned drawing. If you look at it from the other side, you will see your cool toned drawing.

LEARN

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ralph Conner was born in 1895 in Birkenhead, England and arrived in Canada with his parents at the age of 18. As he explored Canadian landscapes, he began using oil paints instead of watercolours to demonstrate the rich and vivid colours of his new surroundings.

In 1931, Conner founded the Art Society of Kitchener and played an integral role in securing its first shared studio space. As the Society gained members and began organizing exhibitions, local newspapers showed their support praising the works of Conner and his peers. In 1986, *Waterloo County Landscapes 1930–1960: A Sense of Place* was published, which featured works of local artists including Ralph Conner, Peter Goetz, John Schlacter, Ralph Bechtel, George Eitel, and Ralph Hodgson.

Ralph Conner passed away in Toronto at the age of 55. His contributions to the Region of Waterloo are evident, as the Art Society, now known as the Kitchener-Waterloo Society of Artists, lives on today.

ART TERMS

BALANCE

Refers to the way elements of art (such as colour, line, texture, etc.) relate to each other within an artwork to create visual weight.

COOL TONES/COLOURS

Cool tones are colours that we associate with colder temperatures: for example, blues, greens and purples. Cool tones tend to recede in compositions and are therefore often used in shadows.

WARM TONES/COLOURS

Warm tones are colours that we associate with warmer or hot temperatures: for example, reds, oranges and yellows. Warm tones tend to stand out and come to the foreground in an artwork and therefore are often used in highlights.

COMPOSITION

The arrangement of objects or figures within a space, or the artist's decision to capture a specific spatial arrangement.

MEDIUM

Refers to the material used to create an artwork. Combining or using multiple materials may be referred to as *media*.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Google Maps:

Begin by opening Google Maps in your web browser. Use the search bar to find a location: this could be somewhere in your own community or someplace new. Once you have chosen a location to explore, look to the bottom right hand corner and click, drag, and drop the yellow person onto the map to enter Google Street View. Use the arrows to view various streets.

Choose a street to explore and begin by sketching it. You can fill in your drawing using coloured pencils, paint, watercolour, oil pastels, or collage. Explore different angles of the street on Google Street View. What is interesting about this street? What captures your attention? If you have chosen to explore a street in another country, what similarities and differences do you see when comparing it to your own neighbourhood?

GROUP DISCUSSION

In your classroom or a small group, consider the questions below to generate conversation. Try having students take a minute to think the questions over and share them with a partner to help them articulate their ideas before discussing the topics as a whole group.

- Ralph Conner spent a lot of time exploring Waterloo Region. Why do you think he chose to paint this scene? What could have inspired him?

- Knowing that Ralph Conner was a local artist who represented different Kitchener-Waterloo landscapes in his artworks, do you feel differently when looking at this painting? Do you think this painting represents a real place or an imaginary place?

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

Social Studies, Geography, analysis and critical thinking, Language
- Creative Writing

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

<http://ralphconner.blogspot.com>

<https://www.kwsa.ca/the-legacies-of-homer-watson-and-ralph-connor.html>

<https://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/news/original-watercolours-donated-grebel>