art

FRANZ MARC
Working With Color
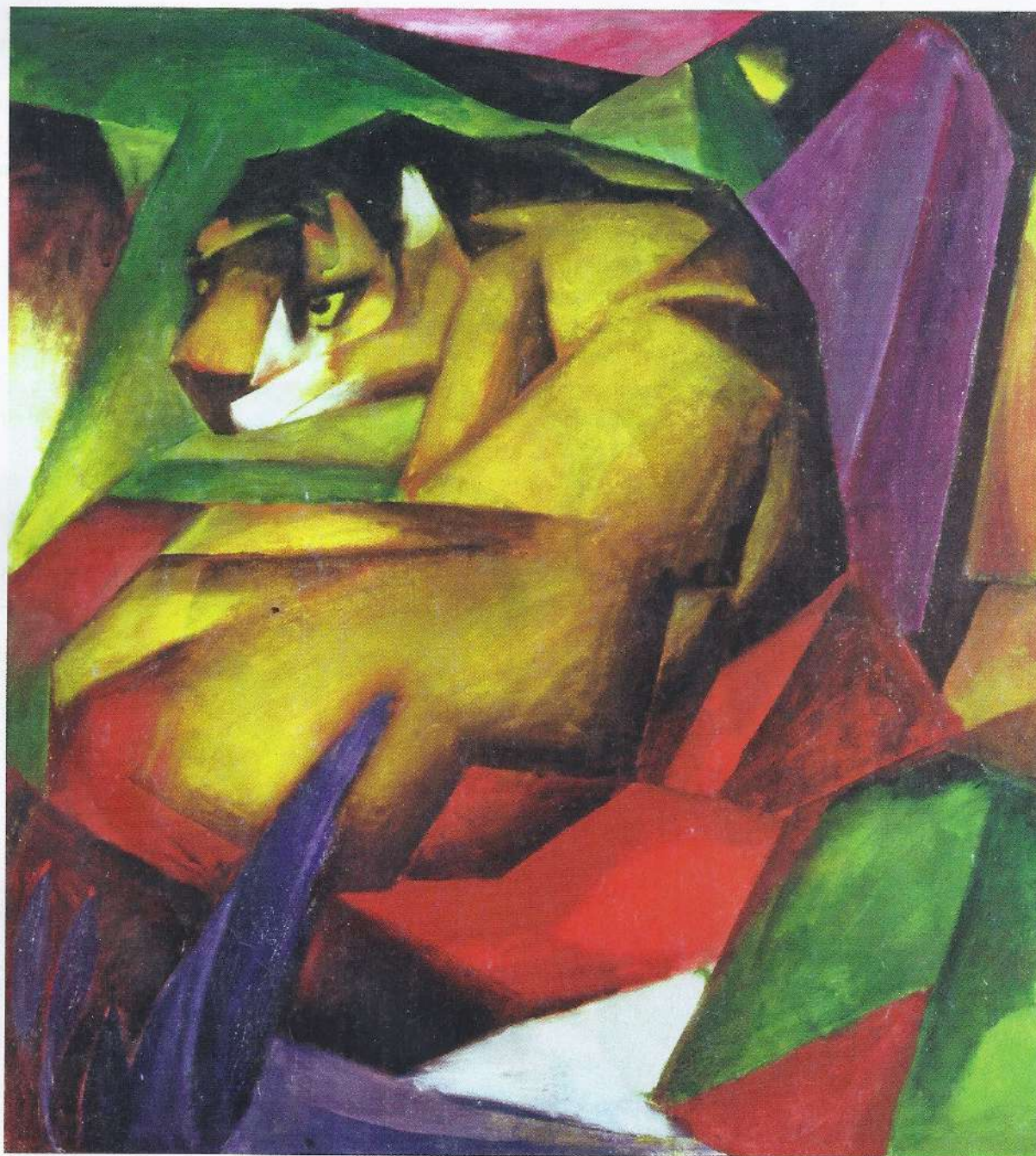
True Colors

"Everything has appearance and essence, mask and truth." –Franz Marc

Can you imagine taking a photograph similar to the landscape below? How about one similar to the landscape on the opposite page? Since its invention in the mid-1800s, the camera has caused painters to question the purpose of art. If the camera can create realistic images, then what is the point of realistic painting? What can a painting show that a photograph can't?

Born in 1880, the German painter Franz Marc (opposite page, top)—who painted both landscapes—came to believe that an artist's insight can capture a deeper truth than a camera's lens. Like other painters of his day, Marc attended an art academy that taught the techniques of traditional realism—

techniques he used to paint the landscape below. But Marc wasn't satisfied with copying what he saw with his eyes. Instead, he longed to find a way to show the unseen world of thoughts and emotions.

While Marc was in Germany completing his traditional training, artists in Paris, France—which was then the center of the art world—were experimenting with revolutionary techniques. Instead of drawing realistically, they **simplified forms**. Instead of using **naturalistic colors**, colors that look like those seen in nature, they used **arbitrary colors**, colors that are limited only by an artist's imagination. When Marc visited Paris a year after leaving the academy, he was inspired to paint in a new way. Instead of painting what he saw, he began painting symbolic images that used the power of

▶ **In this early landscape, the German painter Franz Marc used naturalistic colors—colors that mimic the way colors look in nature.**

Cottages on the Dachau Marsh (Moorhütten im Dachauer Moos), 1902. Oil on canvas, 17.13 x 29 in. Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See, Germany. Photo: Walter Bayer.

color to express ideas and emotions.

In 1913, the year Marc painted the landscape below, a cloud of danger was gathering over Europe. Rival nations were competing for power. Small conflicts grew into larger ones, leading in 1914 to World War I—a war that covered the continent and killed more than 15 million people.

The landscape below depicts the rising tension leading up to the war. It's filled with a chaotic jumble of **diagonal** lines that create a sense of **movement** and unrest. The painting is also packed with war-related imagery. In the **foreground**, two starving horses hang their heads in sorrow next to a border sign that suggests the strained relations between neighboring countries. To the left and in the **background**, fortress-like structures and jagged mountains surround the scene like prison walls.

But the most expressive part of the painting is the artist's use of color. Marc filled the painting with a **dull**, moody purple—a color that for him symbolized tragedy. He mixed black into other colors to make them look dirty. Although dull tones dominate the image, scattered bursts of **bright color** keep the viewer's eye moving nervously around the landscape. In the **middle ground, contrasting complementary colors** (red and green) draw the viewer's eye to a graveyard full of crosses.

This landscape ended up being among the last that Marc painted. When World War I broke out, the artist enlisted in the German Army. In 1916, at the age of 36, he was killed by a grenade explosion. Although his career was short, the artist's contributions to the history of art were enormous. Marc's expressive use of color helped pioneer Expressionism, an artistic movement that made ideas and emotions visible.

▲ **This photo of Marc was taken in 1913, the year he painted the landscape below.**

Portrait of Franz Marc, c. 1912.
Photo: akg-images.

▼ **In this later landscape, Marc used arbitrary colors—colors that have no relationship to the way colors look in nature.**

The *Unfortunate Land of Tyrol*
(Das arme Land Tirol), 1913. Oil on canvas, 51 5/8 x 78 3/4 in. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection, 46.1040.

Finding the Right Colors

"Dissatisfaction with my work forces me to think." —Franz Marc

◄ In this early work, Marc painted a group of horses in naturalistic colors.

Large Lengeries Horse Painting, 1908. Oil on canvas, 41 ¾ x 81 1/8 in. Private collection.

After Marc finished the painting above, he was so frustrated that he nearly destroyed it. Three years later, when he painted the similar group of horses on the opposite page, he had finally learned to use color in a powerful way. Why was Marc dissatisfied with his earlier work? Understanding color theory helps answer the question.

In painting, all colors are mixed from three **primary colors**—red, blue, and yellow. Mixing two primaries creates **secondary colors**, and mixing three colors creates **tertiary colors**. The greater the number of colors a color is mixed from, the duller it is. The colors in the earlier work are dull. But Marc limited his later work to primary and secondary colors to keep his colors **bright**.

Analogous colors—colors that sit next to each other on the color wheel (seen on the opposite page)—make the earlier work seem **static**. In the later painting, **contrasting colors** (blue/yellow) and **complementary colors** (red/green)—colors that are opposites on the color wheel—create visual drama by competing for attention.

Cool colors like blue and green tend to look as though they're receding. **Warm colors** like red and orange seem to come forward. In the later work, Marc activated the background by using warm colors to bring it forward.

The **naturalistic** colors Marc used in the earlier work do little to express his ideas about his subjects. In the later work, Marc used each primary color to represent an idea or quality. He saw blue as a soulful color, yellow as a joyful color, and red as the color that symbolizes earth and the material world. *The Red Horses* (pages 8–9) shows three horses gazing toward colors that represent different qualities. Based on Marc's use of color symbolism, how would you interpret that painting?

▶ Three years after Marc painted the image above, he used expressive **arbitrary** colors to paint the almost identical group of horses seen on the opposite page.

The Large Blue Horses (Die grossen blauen Pferde), 1911. Oil on canvas, 41 5/8 x 71 5/16 in. Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Gift of the T.B. Walker Foundation, Gilbert M. Walker Fund, 1942. Accession number: 1942.1.

Some color vocabulary:

PRIMARY COLORS

These colors cannot be mixed from any other colors, but mixing them together can create almost any color. The three primaries are red, blue, and yellow.

SECONDARY COLORS

These colors are created by mixing two primary colors. The three secondary colors are green (blue + yellow), orange (yellow + red), and purple (red + blue).

COMPLEMENTARY COLOR PAIRS

Complementary colors are two colors that are opposite each other on the color wheel. When placed side-by-side, these colors compete for attention, making each color look stronger than it would appear on its own. Some complementary color pairs are red/green, yellow/purple, and blue/orange.
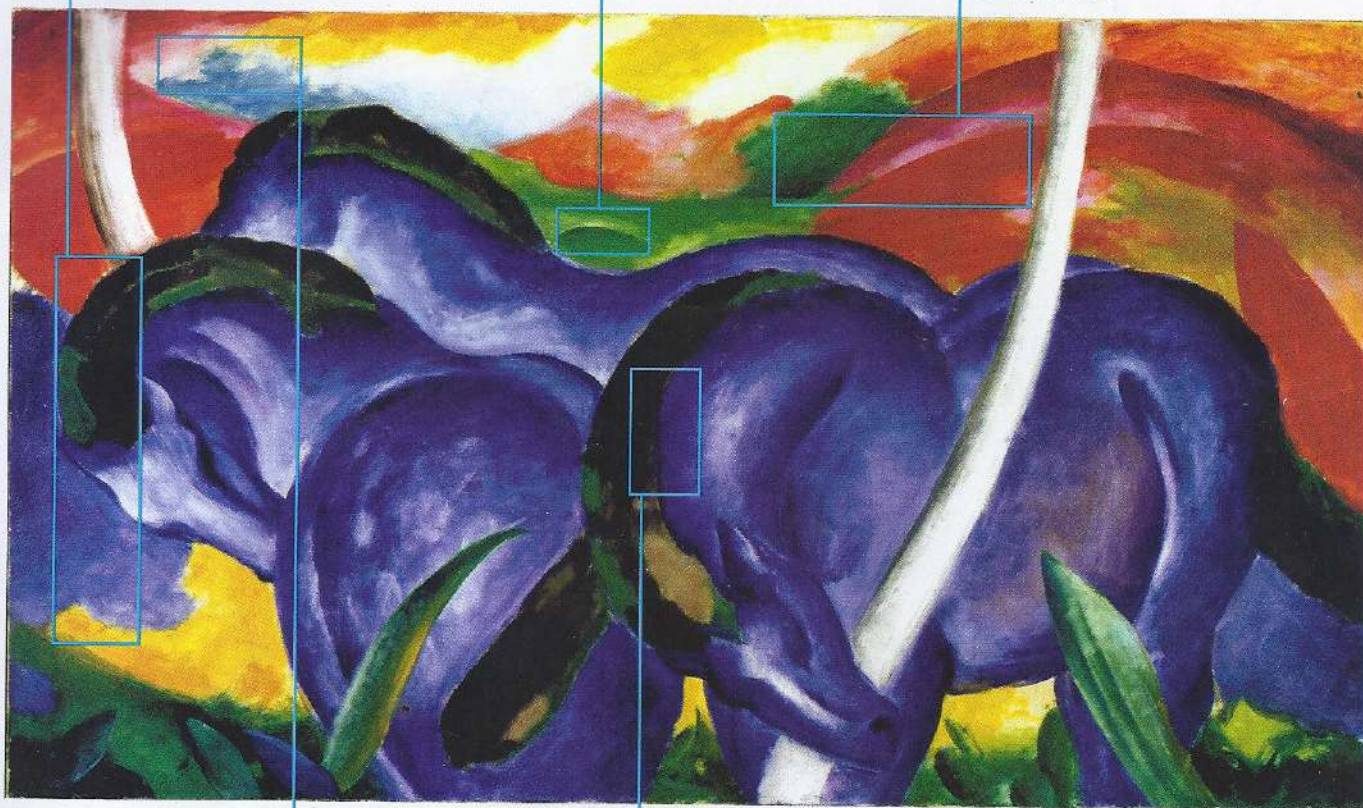
TINTS

Tints are created by adding white to a color to make that color lighter. Examples include pink (red + white), and light blue (blue + white).

SHADES

Shades are created by adding black to a color to make that color darker. Examples include dark blue (blue + black), and dark green (green + black).

▶ Can you name some analogous colors on this color wheel? How about some complementary colors?
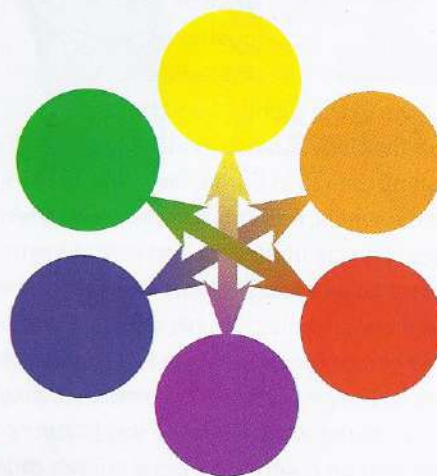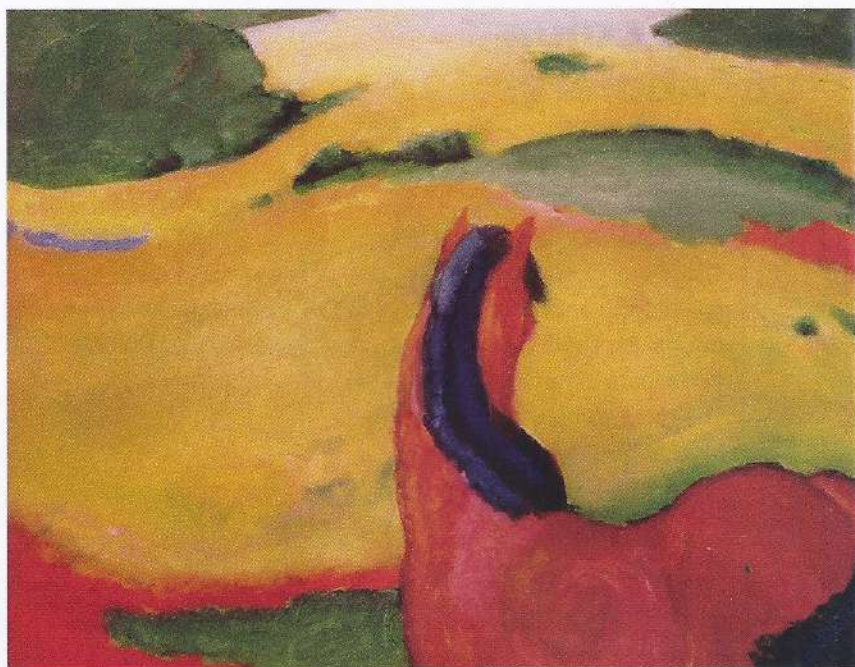
Seeing Through the Eyes of Animals

"Is there a more mysterious thing for an artist than to imagine how nature is reflected in the eyes of an animal?"
—Franz Marc

▲ **The horse in this painting seems to want to run across the field.**

Horse in a landscape, 1910. Oil on canvas. Museum Folkwang. Essen. Germany / The Bridgeman Art Library.

▲ **The blazing, blood-like red and glowing yellow in this painting make the tiger look dangerous.**

Tiger, 1912. Oil on canvas, 43.7 x 43.9 in. Staedtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany / Interfoto / The Bridgeman Art Library.

For Marc, who wanted to create a new kind of art, animals were the perfect subjects. Unlike people, animals were free from customs and traditions. Instead, they seemed to live in the moment and have a direct connection with nature. In 1907, Marc spent the fall in Berlin, Germany, drawing zoo animals, and the summer in the German countryside observing and sketching horses. Marc knew enough about anatomy to be able to draw animals from his imagination. But he wanted to forget what he knew and instead try to imagine the world as animals saw it.

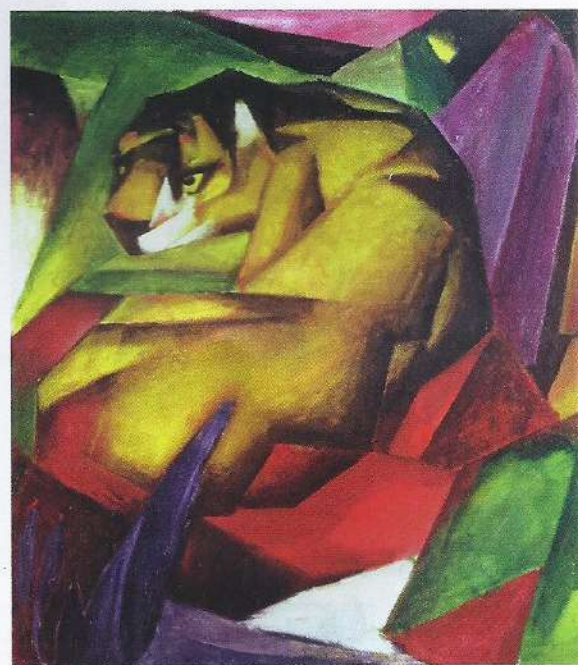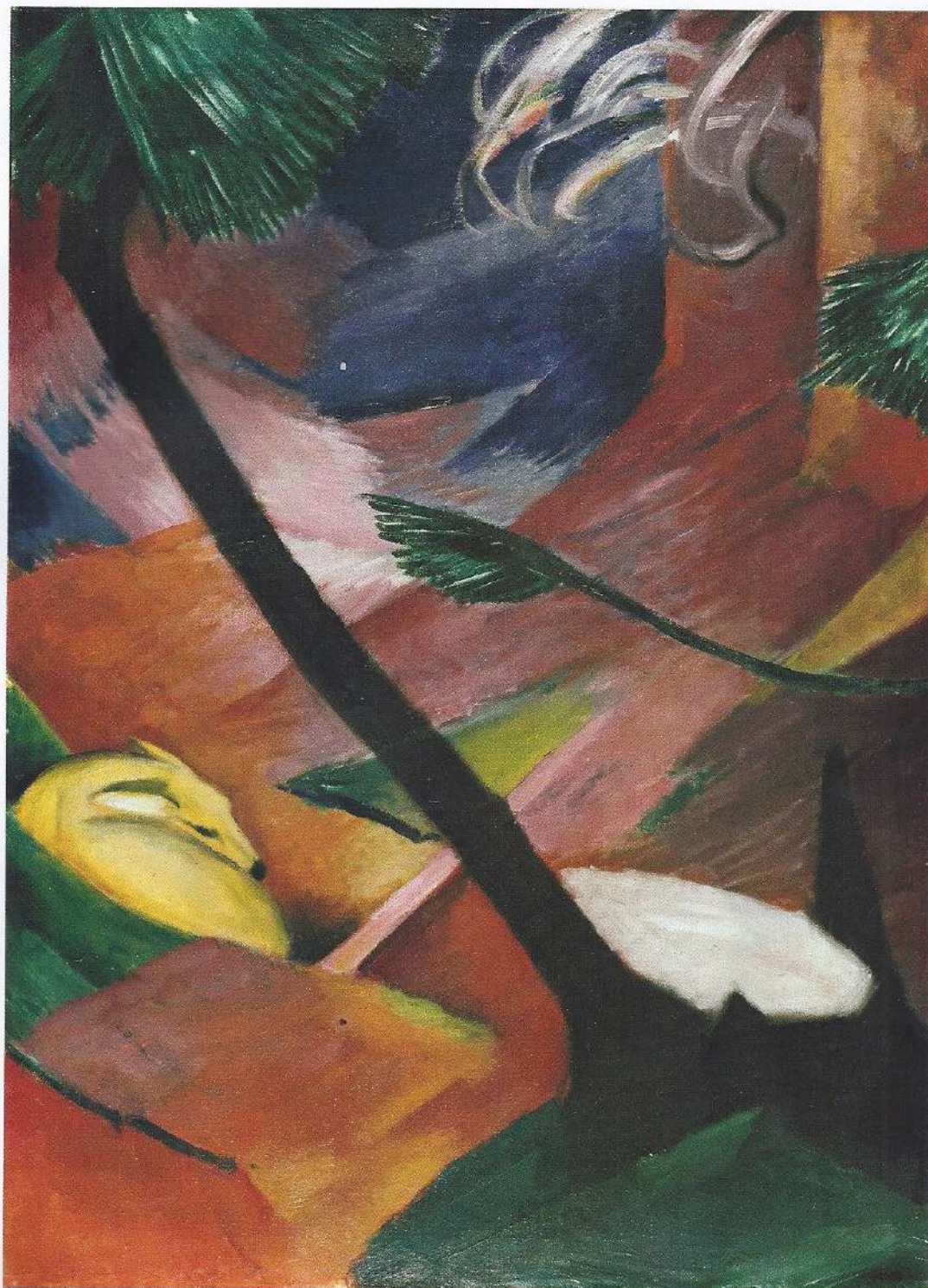In *Horse in a Landscape* (top), Marc painted an open field from a horse's **point of view**. As the horse gazes out over the field, the viewer looks out from behind its shoulder and sees what it sees. Marc **simplified** the form of the horse into **organic curves** and echoed those curves in the shapes of the landscape. He painted most of the field in soothing **analogous colors** (green/yellow), but painted the **foreground** in **clashing complementary colors** (red/green) that create a sense of tension and unrest. He repeated the red and green pairing to draw the viewer's eye toward the **background** and create the sense that the horse wants to run across the field.

Tiger (above, center), is full of **angular,**

geometric shapes that seem sharp and dangerous. The **warm** colors (yellow and red) that Marc used to paint the tiger and the patch of ground it rests on seem to glow with power. Close cropping and shallow space make the tiger dominate the **diagonal composition**.

In *Deer in the Woods II* (above), it is the landscape that dominates. A terrified-looking yellow deer trapped in a frightening forest curls itself into a tight ball. The deer looks helpless because it's made up of **soft, organic shapes**. In contrast, the forest is composed of harsh, **clashing color opposites** and **sharp angles** that point, like knives, in the direction of the deer.

The Red Horses
by Franz Marc

▶ "Animals, with their sense of life, awakened all that is good in me."
–Franz Marc

Grazing Horses IV (The Red Horses). 1911. Oil on canvas. 47 5/8 x 72 1/16 in. Promised Gift from an Anonymous Donor, 21.1991. Photo: Rick Stafford. Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Photo Credit: ©Harvard Art Museum / Art Resource, NY.
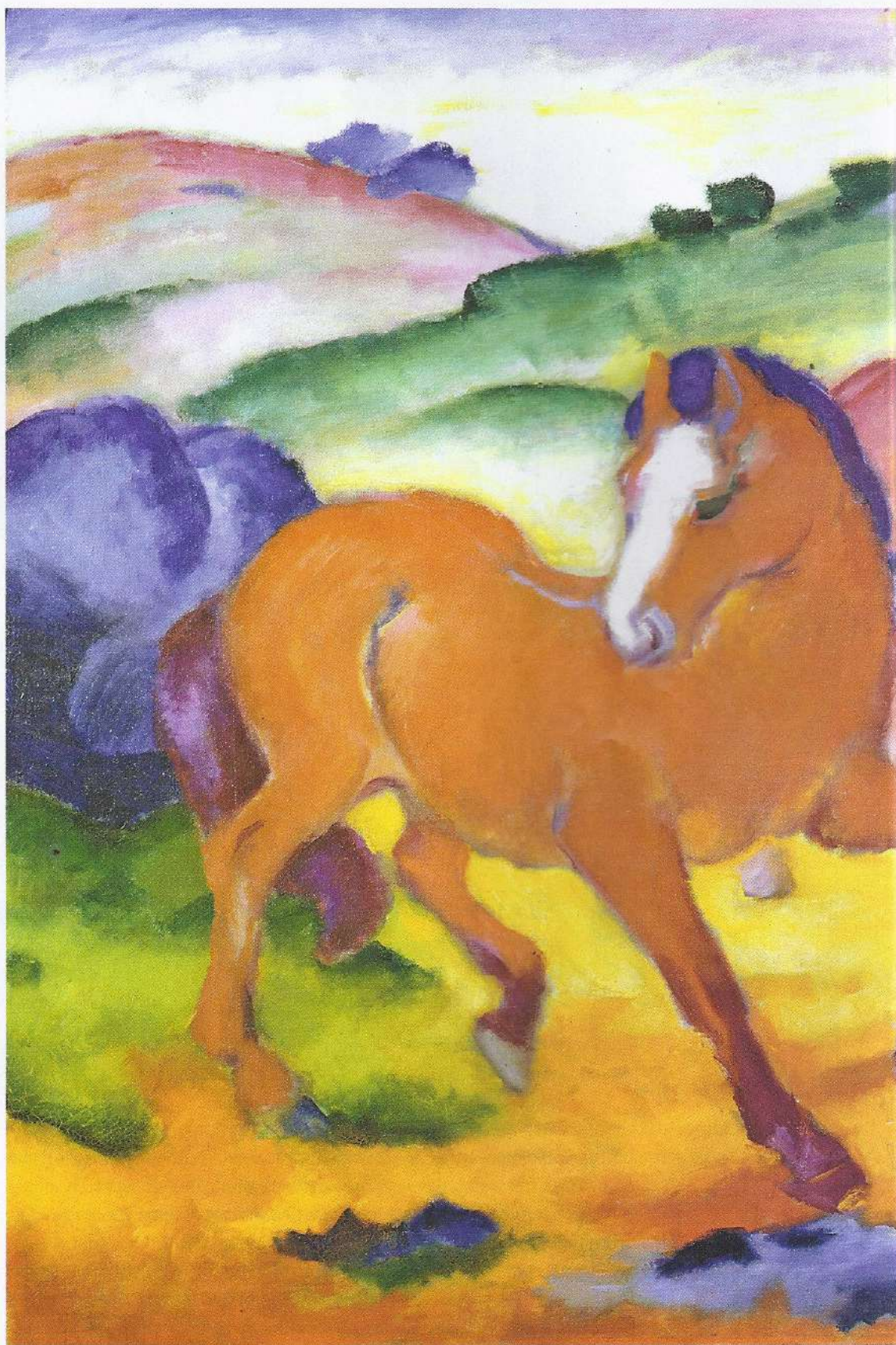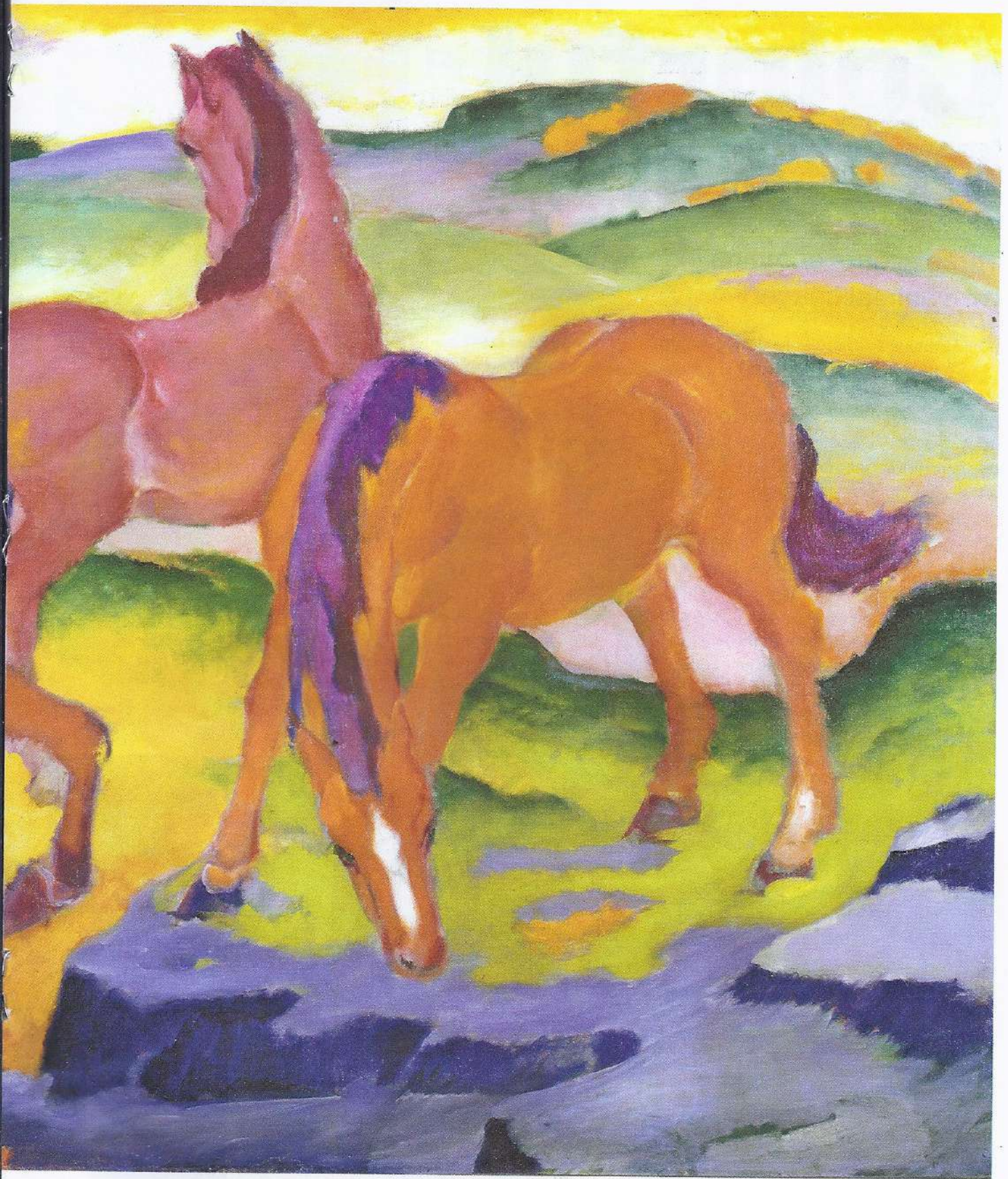
Colorful Creatures

Three artists combine expressive color with animal imagery

Dana Schutz

Some painters paint what they see. Others paint what they imagine. Contemporary American artist Dana Schutz has a talent for making her imagination visible. In one group of paintings, she imagined—then painted—a girlfriend or boyfriend for each of her single friends. In another group of paintings, she painted imaginary scenes from the life of the last person left on Earth. Her colors also come from her imagination and help her express the powerful emotions just under the surface of her fantastical images.

To create the self-portrait above, Schutz imagined herself as an elephant, then painted her face in a grayish purple that suggests elephant skin. **Warm, bright** colors seem to pop forward more than **cool, dull** colors. In this self-portrait, Schutz's bright red hair attracts the viewer's attention while her face seems to recede into the background, making the artist look as though she wants to disappear. The flaming red color of her hair suggests the heat of deep embarrassment. Have you ever felt awkward and uncomfortable in your own skin? What colors would you use to express that feeling?
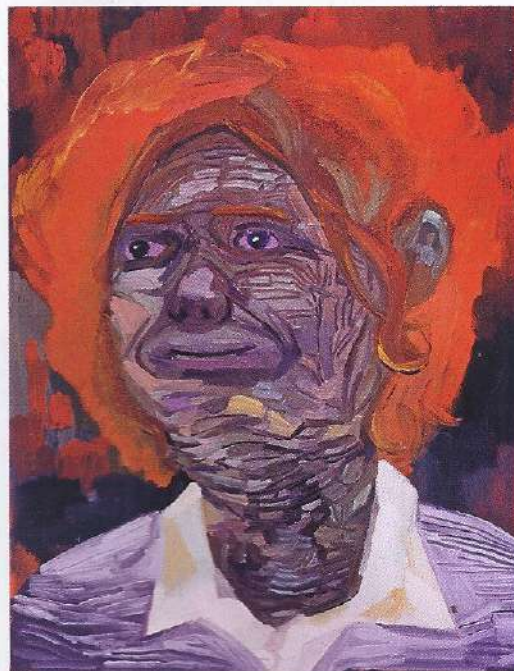
▲ **Dana Schutz in a pose similar to that in her self-portrait.**

Yang Maoyuan

As a boy, contemporary Chinese artist Yang Maoyuan (MA-oh-you-en) went hunting with his father and saw animals in the moments before and after their deaths. Now, the artist uses **symbolic** shapes and colors to transform dead animals into art.

The circle is a universal symbol. Because it has no beginning and no end, it has been used by many cultures to represent eternity. It has also been seen as a symbol of the cycle of life. To make the sculpture on the right, Yang bought patches of goat skin, sewed them together, and inflated his creation into a circle. He dyed the goat's fur bright yellow to suggest humor. Like life, Yang's inflated animals inspire mixed emotions. At first glance, the round yellow goat seems funny. But after a second look, the fact that it was once alive makes it seem scary and sad.

▶ **Yang Maoyuan assembling a sculpture.**

Ashley Prine

▲ Ashley Prine in front of one of her paintings.

Contemporary American artist Ashley Prine lives and works in New York City, but her paintings are all about nature. Like Franz Marc, she likes to paint **stylized** animals in landscapes. But while the animals in Marc's paintings are often in conflict with their surroundings, the animals in Prine's paintings are in harmony with the landscapes they inhabit.

In the painting below, Prine used blue and orange, **complementary colors** that would normally **clash** and compete for attention. But Prine made the colors look **harmonious** by using white to soften them into **tints**. She united the deer and landscape by painting them in **analogous colors**—colors that sit next to each other on the color wheel (see page 5). To make the deer seem even more a part of nature, she used subtle **shades** to make the trees to the right appear to be passing through the body of the deer. In the area above the deer's head, it's hard to tell the branches apart from the antlers.

"It is this feeling of observing nature that I try to capture in my painting."
—Ashley Prine
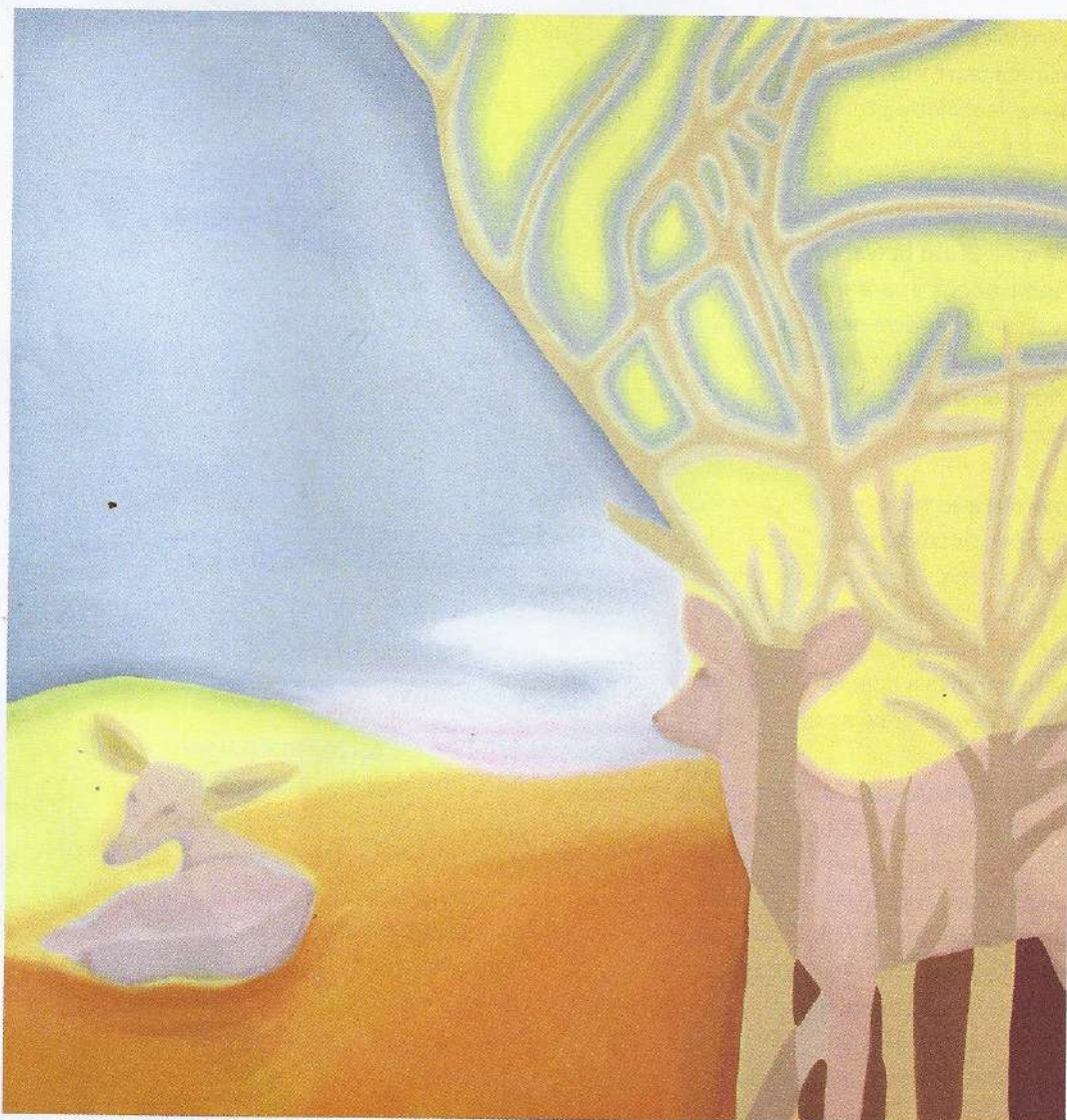
Dana Schutz: (b. 1976), *Self Portrait as a Pachyderm*, 2005. Oil on canvas, 23 x 18 ¼ x 1 ⅜ in. Courtesy of Zach Feuer Gallery, New York. Portrait of Dana Schutz, Courtesy of Zach Feuer Gallery, New York.

Yang Maoyuan: (b. 1966), *Goat No.9*, 2001. Sculpture, Dyed and Inflated Goat Fur, 39.8 x 39.38 x 23 ¾ in. Courtesy White Space Beijing. Portrait of Yang Maoyuan. Courtesy White Space Beijing.

Ashley Prine: *Deer Pink*, 2005. Oil and alkyd on canvas, 56 x 54 in. Courtesy Ashley Prine.

Expressive Color

Brittany paints animals with colorful personalities

As a child, Brittany Clark used to draw stick-figure versions of her pets. Over time, the stick figures became cartoons and more-realistic animal drawings. By her junior year at Detroit High School for the Arts, Brittany felt right at home drawing animals like the wolf in her award-winning piece on the opposite page. "Animals can't talk, which is why I guess they're fascinating to me as a subject," Brittany says.

Now a high school senior, 18-year-old Brittany hopes to pursue an art degree at Wayne State University in Detroit. She dreams about a career in video game design developing her own animal and human characters. "It's thrilling to be able to put an idea on paper and see it become real," Brittany says.

How did you first get involved in art?
I've been doodling since I was in kindergarten. The more I practiced, the better I got. In seventh grade, some teachers saw my drawings and encouraged me to enroll in a special high school for the arts so I could grow as an artist.

Where did the idea for your piece come from? It was an assignment for art class. We had to create a painting by using a toothbrush to splatter on the paint. I had found a picture of a wolf in a magazine. Wolves are elegant creatures, which is why this picture attracted my attention. But I didn't like the way this wolf was posed. I borrowed from the picture, but changed it to express how I saw the wolf.

How did you compose your painting?
I wanted the wolf to dominate the picture, so I made him large enough to fill the frame. I showed his head from a side angle to draw attention to his sharp teeth and panting tongue, and had him look off the page to make viewers wonder what he's looking at. I made his feet extra big and emphasized his toes and claws to give the feeling that he's confident—perhaps even a pack leader. I placed the trees behind him to balance the composition.

How did you choose your colors? I chose my colors to set the mood. Wolves can be dark, mysterious creatures, so I painted the sky with dull tones of orange, yellow, and blue to suggest a sunset and coming darkness. I also chose contrasting colors to draw attention to certain features. I used a deep orange around the wolf's jaw and paws to contrast the black of his fur and draw viewers to the wolf's face. I used bright red and yellow to call attention to his paws.

Were you satisfied when you were done? Yes. People told me they thought the wolf looked fierce. I like hearing that. It made me feel that I had conveyed the wolf's qualities well.

Do you have any advice for aspiring artists like yourself?
All I can say is just keep trying. Painting can be frustrating, but the results are worth the effort. Whatever the challenge, stick with it. You'll be pleasantly surprised.

"I wanted to create a sense of mystery, since wolves can be mysterious creatures."
—Brittany Clark

↓ Brittany holding her Scholastic Art & Writing Regional Gold Award.

Brittany Clark (b. 1991), Spatter Wolf, 2007. Brick acrylic, 13 x 24 in.

Create an Expressionist Painting

Paint an animal in a landscape with colors that express emotion

You've seen in this issue how Franz Marc used arbitrary and symbolic color to create expressive animal images. For this workshop, you'll create your own expressionist animal painting.

MATERIALS

- Internet access and printer, and/or nature magazines
- Ebony or No. 2 school pencils
- 18"x24" 30lb. newsprint
- 18"x24" 150lb. tagboard
- Tempera paint (primary, secondary, black & white)
- Palettes
- Plastic wrap (to cover palettes)
- Paper toweling
- Water containers
- Variety of round and flat brushes
- Covered containers (to hold mixed paint)

STEP 1 Select an Animal Image

Research an animal in books, magazines, or online. Gather images of the animal in different poses. Then, find images of environments for the animal to inhabit.

TIP: **Make sure that you select an animal and landscape that work well together.**

STEP 2 Draw the Image

Use your reference images to make some contour drawings of your animal. Try simplifying the animal into its most basic shapes. To check if your proportions are correct, use your pencil to compare the size of the animal's head with that of its other body parts.

Next, use your reference images to draw landscapes for two of your favorite animal sketches. Keep erasing, rearranging, and redrawing elements until your animal and background work together. Try repeating the shapes used in your animal drawing in your landscape drawing (see Mercedes's and Erica's paintings).

Finally, use a window or lightbox to transfer your favorite composition or favorite elements from different compositions onto a piece of tagboard. TIP: **You can change compositional elements during the transfer process by moving, flipping, rotating, and repeating your original drawing (see Molly's painting).**

STEP 3 Paint the Image

Take a moment to consider what qualities you associate with each of the primary colors. (For example, yellow might represent joy or humor.) With your ideas about color in mind, start assigning colors to each part of your drawing. Consider using secondary colors, shades (see Molly's painting), tints, and gradations (see Erica's painting) to

→ Erica's Painting
Erica created three penguins by tracing one penguin drawing three times, then **echoed** the penguins' curved bodies and angular beaks in the shapes of her landscape. She contrasted **flat** areas of bold **primary colors** (yellow, red, and blue) with soft **secondary colors** (purple and green), and **gradations** made with **tints** (pink and light blue).
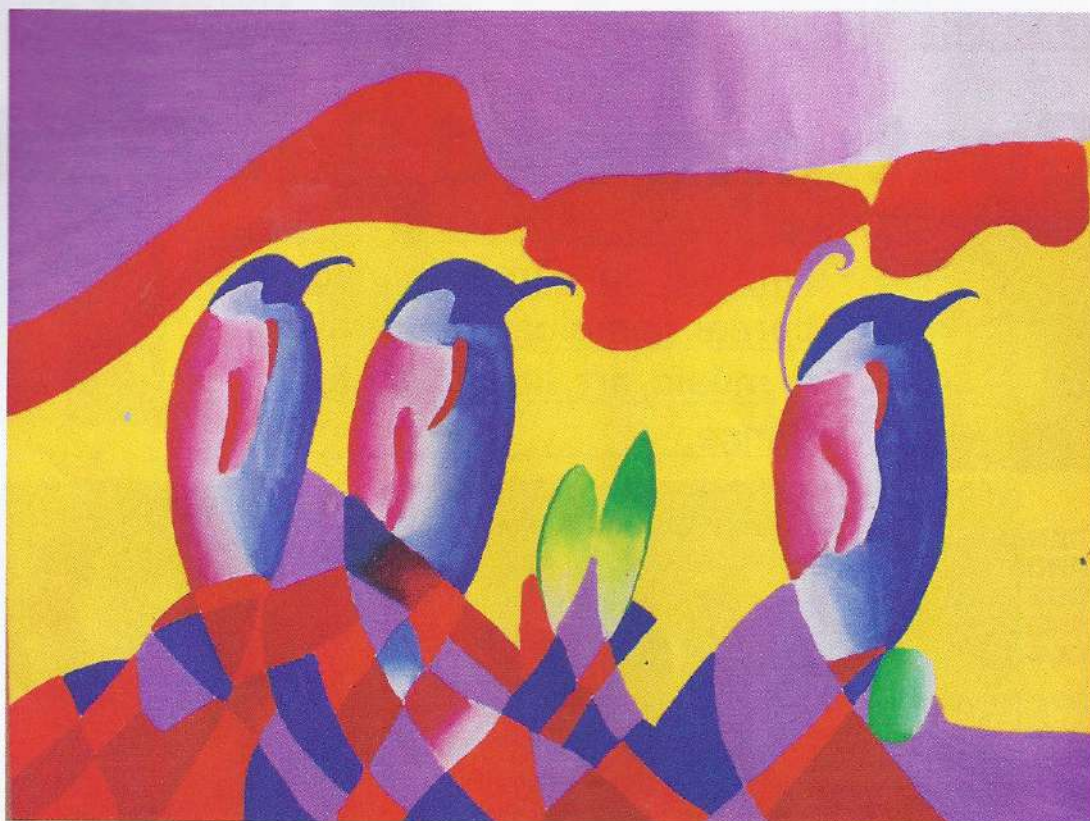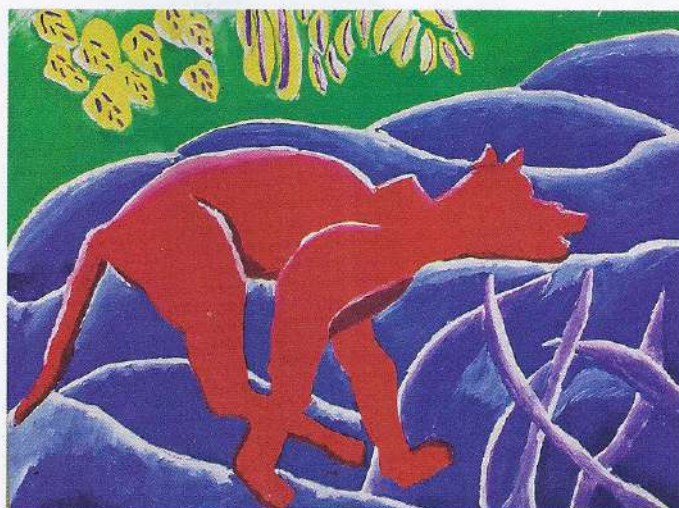
↘ Luke's Painting
Luke placed his animal, a cheetah, in the center of his composition. He used radiating strips of **contrasting** (blue and red) and **complementary** (green and red) colors to make the composition seem more **dynamic.**
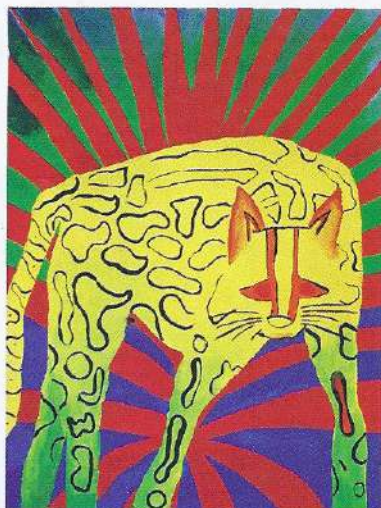
→ Mercedes's Painting (far right) Mercedes used curved shapes to draw a running wolf, then **repeated** those shapes in the hills of her landscape to create a sense of **movement.** The **warm colors** of the red wolf and yellow leaves pop forward, while the **cool colors** of the hills and sky seem to recede into the background.

create variety and contrast. Consider using clashing and complementary colors (see Luke's painting) to create a dynamic composition. Use a pencil to lightly write your color choices on your drawing, then begin painting. **TIP: To keep your colors clean, use light colors first and darker colors last; rinse your brushes often (or use different brushes for different colors); and use black sparingly.**

→ Molly's Painting
While transferring her drawing to tagboard, Molly **repeated** the frogs' legs by rotating, flipping, and retracing them. She used a hint of black paint to create **shades** that make the frogs look dark and mysterious.

Costume and Set Designer

Find out how Anya Klepikov's career combines her interest in music, art, literature, and dance.

↓ (Top) Costume designs for *Iphigenia at Aulis*. (Bottom) Costume designs for *Babbel Project*.

CAREER PROFILE: COSTUME AND SET DESIGNER

Salary: Costume and set designers typically make $30,000 to $45,000 a year. Designers working on big projects or films can make more than $60,000 a year.

Education: Most designers have an MFA (Master of Fine Arts) degree.

Getting Started Now:
▶ Take lots of drawing classes. "You communicate ideas through sketches," Anya explains. "Drawing trains you to express what you imagine."
▶ Learn about other things too. "People in theater come from diverse backgrounds," Anya says. "The more you experience in life, the more you have to offer your art because theater is about life."

* (KLEP-ee-kov)

ART MAGAZINE: What is your job?
ANYA KLEPIKOV*: I'm a costume and set designer for live theater. That includes plays, operas, musicals, and dance shows. Someday, I hope to branch out into film.

AM: Why did you choose this career?
AK: I had a really hard time figuring out what to choose as a career. After college, I worked as a secretary for three years. But I was always interested in the arts. I drew, even though I hadn't trained as an artist. I loved music, literature, and dance. I finally realized that theater would be a place where I could hold on to all of my interests.

AM: How did you get started?
AK: I decided to study theater design, so I researched graduate schools. They all required a portfolio for admission, so I took drawing classes. I worked during the day, and I drew every night. Finally, I had a portfolio, and I got into Yale. After I graduated, a director I worked with at school recommended me for my first design job.

AM: What is your design process?
AK: I start by really studying the piece I'm designing for. Then, I spend a lot of time collecting visual information. For example, if a play was written around the time of WWI, I research photographs and paintings from that time period. Research is the bridge to the next step, which is sketching costume ideas or building a set model.

All photos and artwork on this page courtesy of Anya Klepikov.

AM: How do you use color?
AK: Sometimes I use color to suggest the time period of the piece I'm working on. I also use it to create a mood. For example, bright colors can convey joy. But used in an exaggerated way in a dark comedy, they can create a sense of irony.

AM: What's the best part of your job?
AK: I love when everything comes together onstage, when you see the actors in the costumes on the set with the lighting and music. That's very exciting.