

See and Do Introduction.

WELCOME TO PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM

Welcome to Palm Springs Art Museum!

We are excited to share with you works of art and architecture from our collection and hope you enjoy creating your own pieces inspired by what you learn.

Each Art Portfolio is divided into two lessons. In the first lesson, you will be introduced to an artwork from the collection and the artist who created it. This is followed by questions where you can share your ideas about what you have learned.

In the second lesson, you will create a work of art using similar processes and supplies as the artist.

We hope you have fun exploring the museum's collection and would like to encourage you to get creative! Then come visit us at the museum where you can see these works in person and share what you learned with friends and family.

Land Acknowledgement.

Every community in the United States owes its existence and vitality to people from around the world. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn here in hope of a better life, and some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Recognition of the many layers of our history is critical to building mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and differences.

Palm Springs Art Museum respectfully acknowledges the ancestral homelands of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the other sovereign Indian Nations of Southern California. We recognize their ongoing cultural and spiritual connection to this land—past, present, and future.

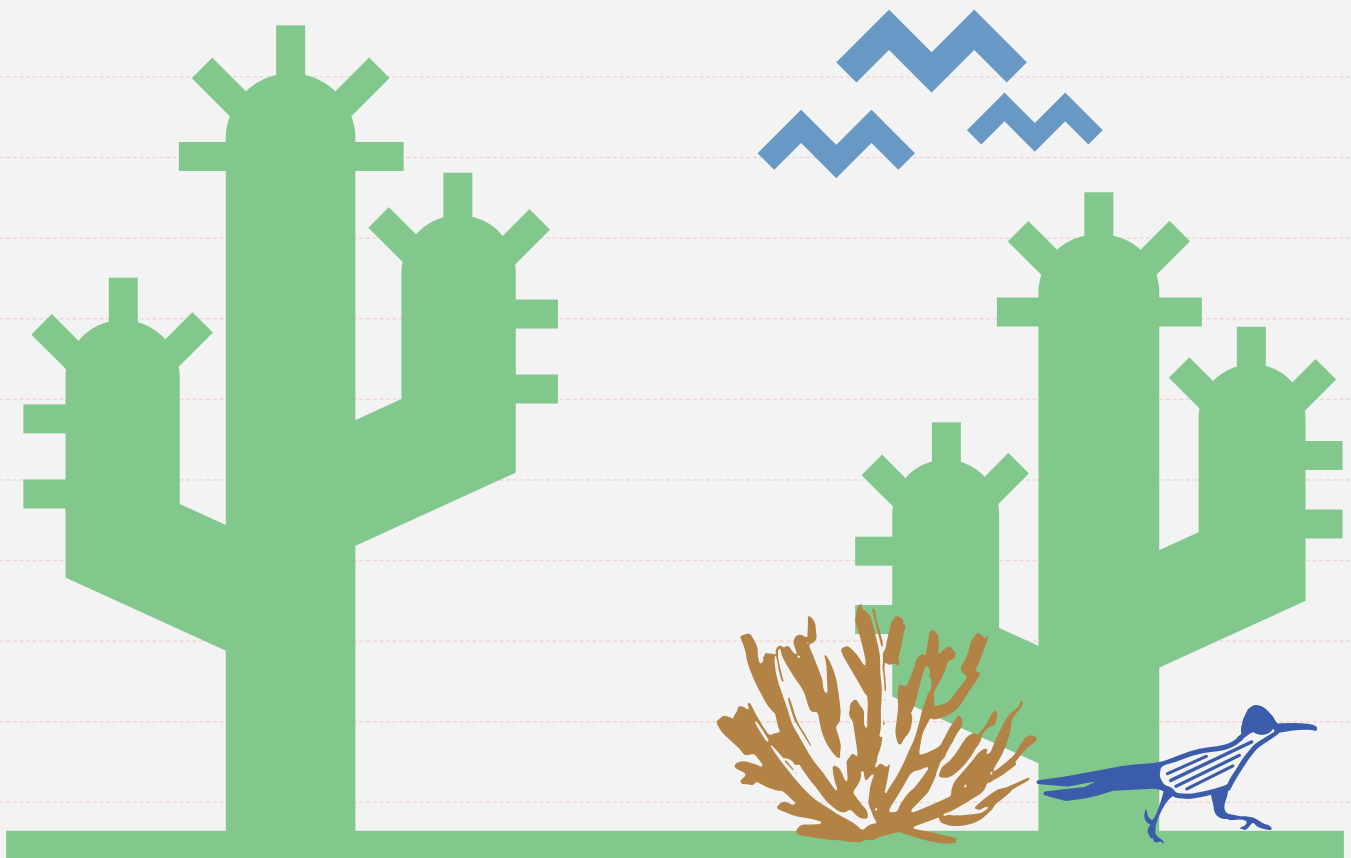
Lesson 1: Art and the Environment.

How does the *environment* influence art? The environment is all of the surroundings on the planet Earth, but it can also refer to where a person lives. It can shape many things in art, such as the materials a person has access to; it can form their understanding of the world; and it can inspire creativity. While a person's past and present surroundings generally influence many things in their life, there are some artists who actually use the environment in their work.

There is a genre or type of art called *environmental art*. Artists who are engaged with the environment work in a number of ways. This might include using their art practice to raise some of the issues caused by humans on the environment, such as climate change (meaning a big change in the normal pattern of weather over a long period of time for a large area). Some artists also might use materials such as rain, fog, grass, and moss as subjects and elements in their work.

There are also artists who show their surroundings in their work, and in doing so, convey or tell a story about the area and their natural environment.

In the collection of the Palm Springs Art Museum, there are paintings and photographs of landscapes (images of land or scenery) that are of the Coachella Valley, as well as other areas throughout the United States and world. Many of these landscapes show what the environment looks like and are often connected to the artist's relationship with their setting.





Above: Agnes Pelton (American, born Germany, 1881–1961), *Smoke Trees in a Draw*, ca. 1950, oil on canvas, 25 x 31 ½ inches. Museum purchase with funds provided by the Western Art Council, Mary James Memorial Fund, 2008, 31–2008.

Smoke Trees in a Draw is a desert landscape painting by artist Agnes Pelton. Pelton was an observer of nature who was inspired by the unique shapes, forms, and light of the desert environment. She also was influenced by the mysterious plant life that burst into colorful blooms during the winter season. Named for its indigo-colored blossoms that looked like puffs of smoke—smoke trees became one of her favorite desert subjects.

Originally from the East Coast, Pelton came to the Palm Springs area in 1932 and settled in Cathedral City for the remainder of her life. There she painted more landscapes and other types of paintings that were inspired by her environment. The Palm Springs Art Museum has nine paintings by Agnes Pelton in the permanent collection; seven are landscapes.

There are also photos and drawings of buildings, as well as actual buildings in the museum's collection that use the environment as part of the design. Some of these designs consider the setting not only as inspiration, but actually as part of the construction.

Albert Frey was a Swiss architect (a person that designs and builds buildings), who was also fascinated by the desert and settled permanently in Palm Springs in 1939. He not only designed the first building for the Palm Springs Art Museum that was open from 1958 to 1975, but he gave his residence to the museum that is now a part of the permanent collection. *Frey House II* is the name of his second home in Palm Springs, CA, and sits on the hill top of Tahquitz Canyon Way above the current site of the Palm Springs Art Museum. The building was designed in and around part of the rock, keeping intact the natural environment so as to have as little impact on the surrounding area; bringing the natural environment into the living space.



Above: Photo of Frey House II by Bethany Nauert



Above: Photo of Frey House II by Bethany Nauert

One of the most famous elements of the property is the incorporation of a large boulder into the design. It extends into the house and acts as a divider between the bedroom and living room. With this decision, Frey acknowledges our relationship with nature and the environment.

Albert Frey is one of the most important modern architects of our time, and you can still see some of his buildings in the area, including the Palm Springs City Hall. Frey's *Aluminaire House*, a large-scale model for a house made out of aluminum and other metals, was recently added to the museum's collection and will be on view in the near future.

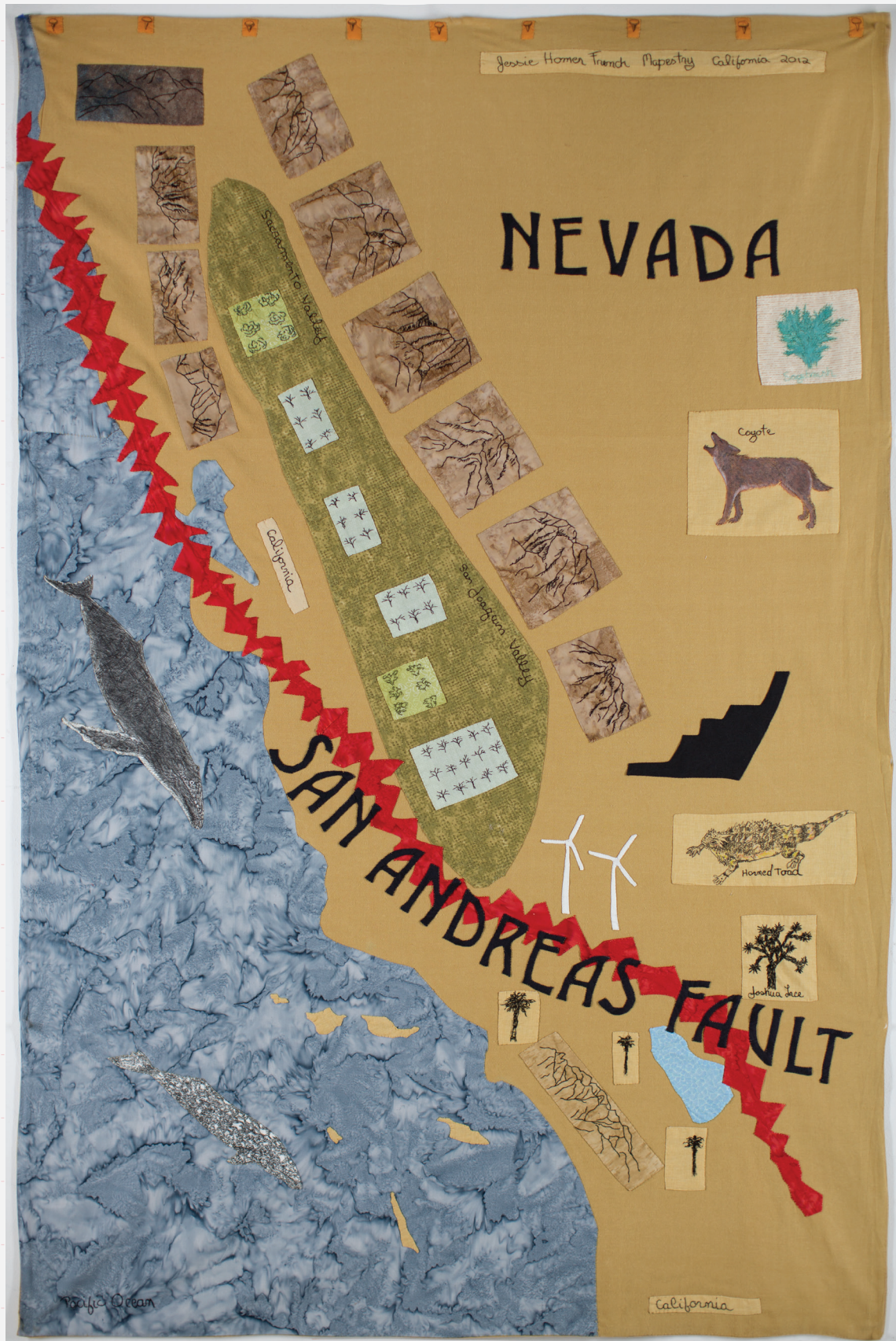
Like Agnes Pelton and Albert Frey, artist Jessie Homer French is also inspired by her surroundings, but approaches it differently. She creates maps that document what is around her home.



ABOUT THE ARTIST AND ARTWORK

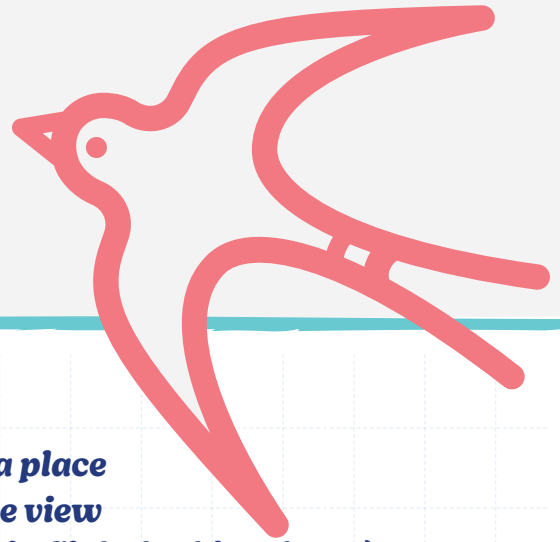
Jessie Homer French is a self-taught, self-declared “regional narrative painter” and longtime resident of Southern California, meaning that she creates artwork that tells stories or uses ideas about her environment. Her “mapestries”—a combination of the words “map” and “tapestry” (a woven fabric with pictures or designs)—are visually simple yet finely detailed. Using flattened forms, text, pictures, and different *perspectives*, she demonstrates her knowledge of the physical and environmental landscape in which she has lived as a resident of Los Angeles, La Quinta, and now Mountain Center near Idyllwild (located about fifty miles west of Palm Springs).

Inspired by cartography (the science or practice of drawing maps), French’s artwork titled *Mapestry California* shows the iconic natural and built elements in the state, including the Pacific coastline, the San Andreas Fault, the Sierra Nevada, and our neighboring state Nevada. The Southern California region where she lives is identified through a series of place markers, including the windmills in the San Geronio Pass and a black stealth bomber marking the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms. There is also a whale, a coyote, and a Joshua Tree which are visual reminders or landmarks of specific locations in California.



Above: Jessie Homer French (American, born 1940), *Mapestry California*, 2012, fabric, thread, fabric paint, and pen, 66 × 42 inches. Museum purchase with funds provided by Robert Shiell, 2017.31

Let's Take a Closer Look and Answer the Questions Below:



1 Studying maps is one way to get to know a place because they show details from a bird's eye view (a perspective that looks down; like a bird in flight looking down). How does a bird's eye help in understanding our environment?

2 Imagine you are a bird flying over a familiar area, such as where you live or your favorite place. Think about important markers or landmarks, like a house, a playground, park, stores, or trees. If you were to draw a map of your bird's eye view, what details would you include?

3 Name your location, and then write a list or draw what you see from a bird's eye view.

Glossary

ENVIRONMENT All of the surroundings which are made up of places and things on the planet Earth, including everything living and everything non-living, such as plants, animals, air, and water.

ENVIRONMENTAL ART A science that studies different places, landforms, countries, oceans, rivers, deserts, and mountains on the planet Earth. It observes the natural environment and human activity as it relates to the Earth and its atmosphere.

GEOGRAPHY A science that studies different places, landforms, countries, oceans, rivers, deserts, and mountains on the planet Earth. It observes the natural environment and human activity as it relates to the Earth and its atmosphere.

GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS Areas that are divided by boundaries, such as countries, cities, land, or water.

MAP A drawing of the Earth or parts of the Earth, such as countries, cities, roads, and other geographic features.

PERSPECTIVE The spot from which the observer is looking at the scene; also an art technique used to create the illusion of space and depth.



Lesson 2: Map Your Own Story About an Environment or Place.

Maps are drawings or representations of geographic regions. As visual drawings of countries, cities, roads, and other geographic features, they help us visualize and understand our environment.

Artist Jessie Homer French's work uses maps to tell stories about an area. Design your own map to show a place. You might start with somewhere familiar, such as where you live, or you might create someplace imagined.

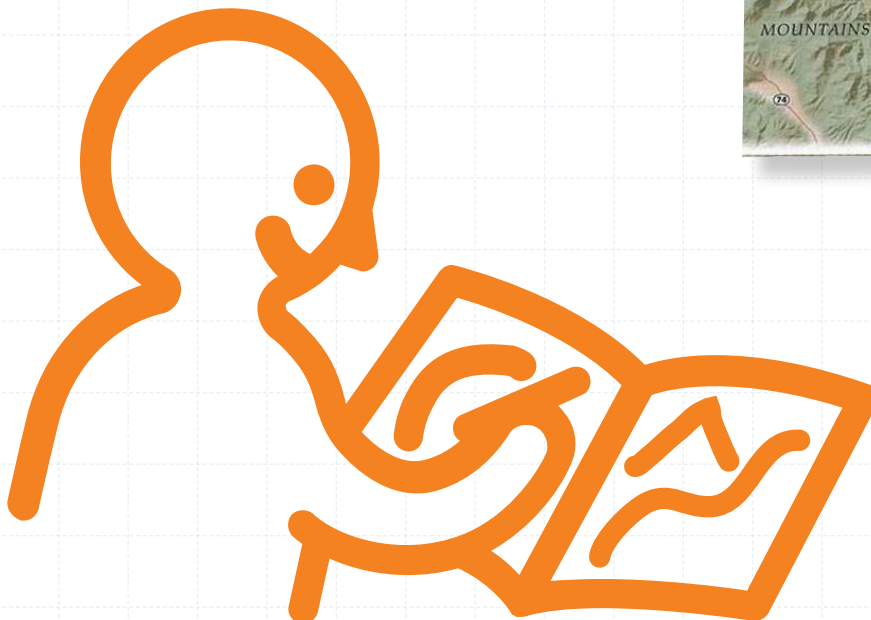
Supplies

- Paper
- Pencil
- Eraser
- Coloring supplies
- (Optional: maps, magazines, scissors, and glue if you would like to add other materials)

INSTRUCTIONS

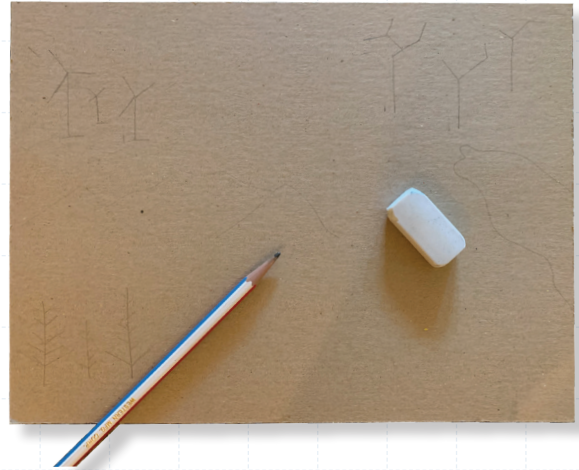
Step 1

- Select the area you would like to be the focus of your map. This could be a favorite place, your neighborhood, a path you travel often, or a somewhere imaginary. It could even be parts of where you live.



Step 2

- Identify the most important and familiar landmarks or signs to include in your environment, such as streets, buildings, or trees that show where things are. List them and think about the paths and routes you will draw to connect your environment.
- For example, if you are traveling from the grocery store to the park, you might start your map with the store on one end and then draw landmarks that are along the way to the park. Think about things that are familiar or things you see so that you know you are on your way to your location, such as buildings or street signs.



Step 3

- Sketch out your ideas on a sheet of paper in pencil first. Start with the important landmarks and place them along the path that travels through your area.



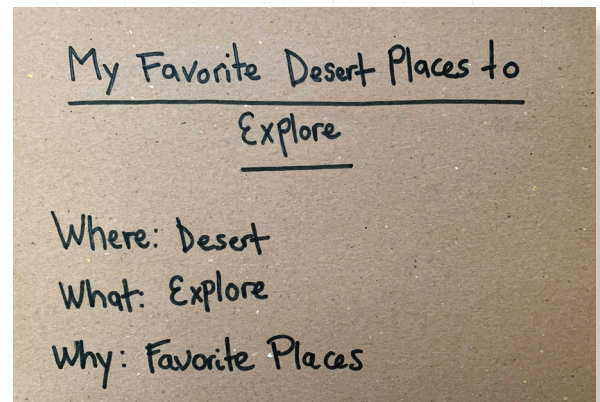
Step 4

- Once you have your layout, finalize your map. Consider drawing roads or paths between the landmarks. Add symbols like a compass, pictures, and words to show your path. You might also add color or cut out images and glue them onto your map.



Step 5

- Jessie Homer French uses the titles of her work to tell the viewer where the work of art is, what it is about, and why it is happening.
Come up with a title for your map and include all or some of the questions: Where? What? Why? Write your title on the back of your map.



QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Where is your map and why did you choose to create a map of this environment?
- What details did you include in your map and why?
- How did you show the environment in your map?

See and Do. Lesson 7, Maps.



**Palm Springs
Art Museum**

California Arts Standards for Visual Arts
(Lessons also integrate the
Common Core State Standards)

3.VA:Cr1.2; 4.VA:Cr1.2; 5.VA:Cr1.2

3.VA:Cr2.3; 4.VA:Cr2.3; 5.VA:Cr2.3

3.VA:Cn10; 4.VA:Cn10; 5.VA:Cn10

3.VA:Cn11; 4.VA:Cn11; 5.VA:Cn11

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