

SAINT LOUIS ART MUSEUM

Art Quest: Painting Nature

Art: [Landscape](#)

[The Little Mountain Goats](#)

[Study of a Cedar](#)

The three paintings linked above were made more than 100 years ago and were inspired by and feature scenes of nature. Explore different drawing and painting techniques, and make your own outdoor scene using paints made from materials found at home.

Nature Paintings



Suggested materials

Watercolor paper or construction paper, baking soda or corn starch, water, food dye, container to mix and hold the paints, brushes, rag or paper towel, pencil



Homemade paint recipe

For each color of paint, you will need:

- 1 tablespoon baking soda or corn starch
- 4–5 drops food dye
- 1 tablespoon water

Mix baking soda or corn starch, food dye, and water in a muffin pan or another small container. For more vibrant colors, add more food dye. If the paints are too runny, add more corn starch or baking soda to thicken the paint.

You may want to begin by making paint in the three primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. To make secondary colors, mix red and yellow food dye to make orange paint, red and blue to make purple, and yellow and blue to make green.

Instructions for making your nature painting

Take a sheet of watercolor paper, construction paper, or any thick, nonglossy paper. Sketch or lightly draw the main areas or features of your nature or outdoor scene, such as a skyline, an outline of a tree, or rolling hills. Don't worry about including the smaller details at this stage. Make sure to have a container of water and a rag or paper towel handy to rinse the brush as you go back and forth between different colors to paint your scene. Paint the large areas in the background first, such as sky, mountains, or hillsides. Paint the foreground, the areas in the front, last. This allows the areas that have already been painted to dry, and you are less likely to smear any parts of the painting or get your hands messy.

