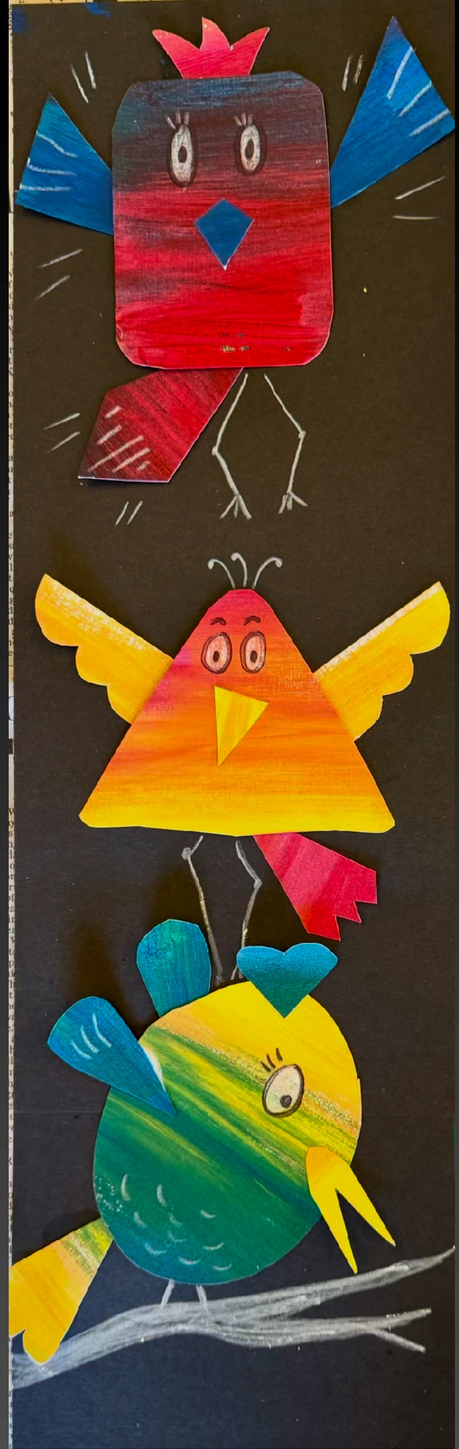


PVAC
PALOS VERDES ART CENTER
Beverly G. Alpay Center for Arts Education

Three Little Birds
A collage inspired by Charley Harper

Created by
Sandi Arthur
October, 2026

ART AT YOUR FINGERTIPS



Charley Harper



Charley Harper (1922–2007) was an American artist known for his distinctive, stylized wildlife illustrations. Born in West Virginia, Harper studied at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, where he developed his signature approach, which he called "minimal realism." Rather than depicting animals and nature with intricate details, he used geometric shapes, bold colors, and simplified forms to capture the essence of his subjects. His ability to convey movement, personality, and natural beauty with clean lines and minimal detail set his work apart from traditional wildlife art.



Harper's illustrations gained widespread recognition through his work for organizations such as the National Park Service, the Audubon Society, and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. His art often carried an environmental message, encouraging appreciation and conservation of wildlife.



Hawaii Volcanoes

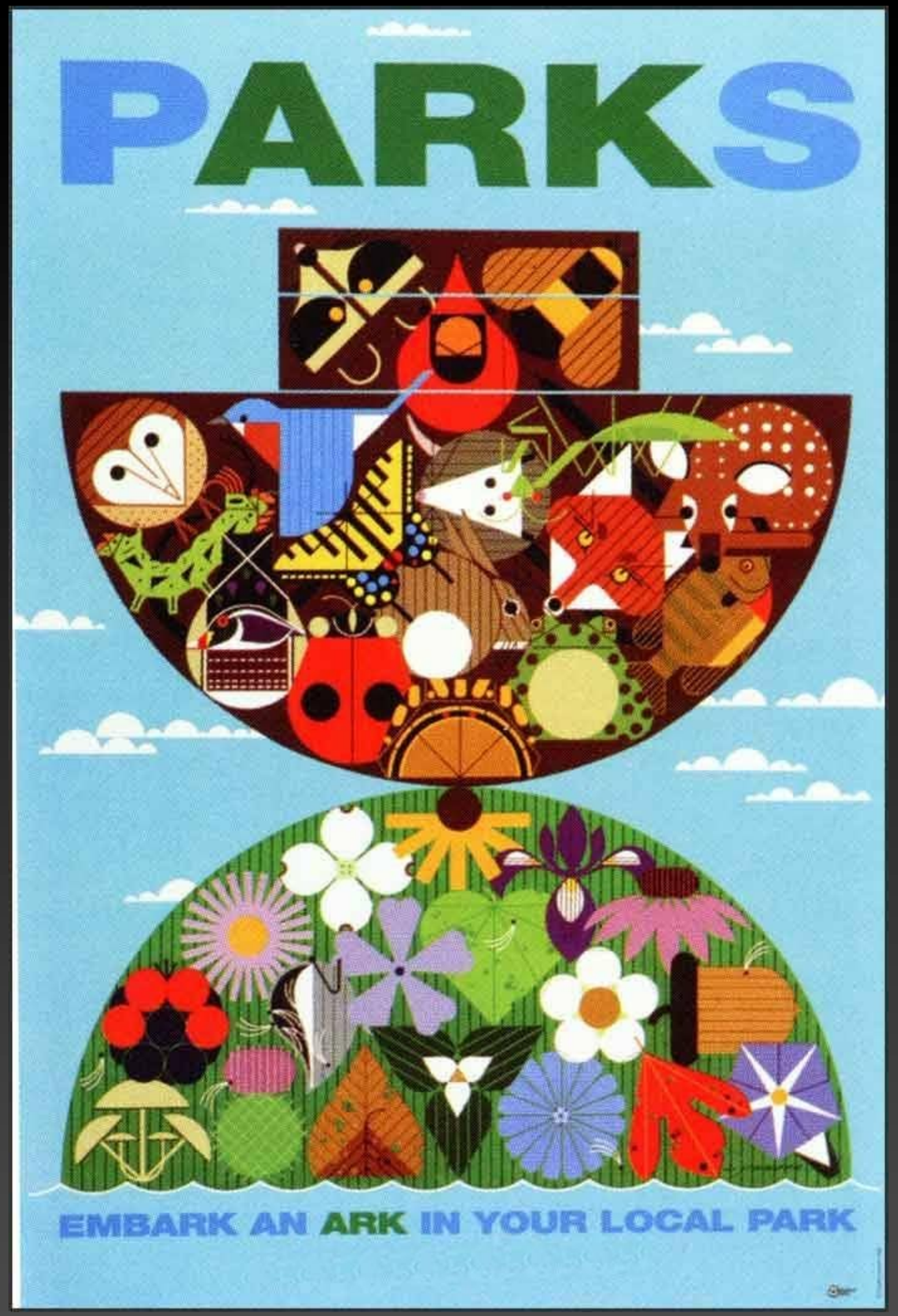
Lava flowing toward the sea often surrounds higher areas, creating undisturbed islands of life called kipukas.

Visit Hawaii Volcanoes National Park to see these extraordinary refuges of plants and animals.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

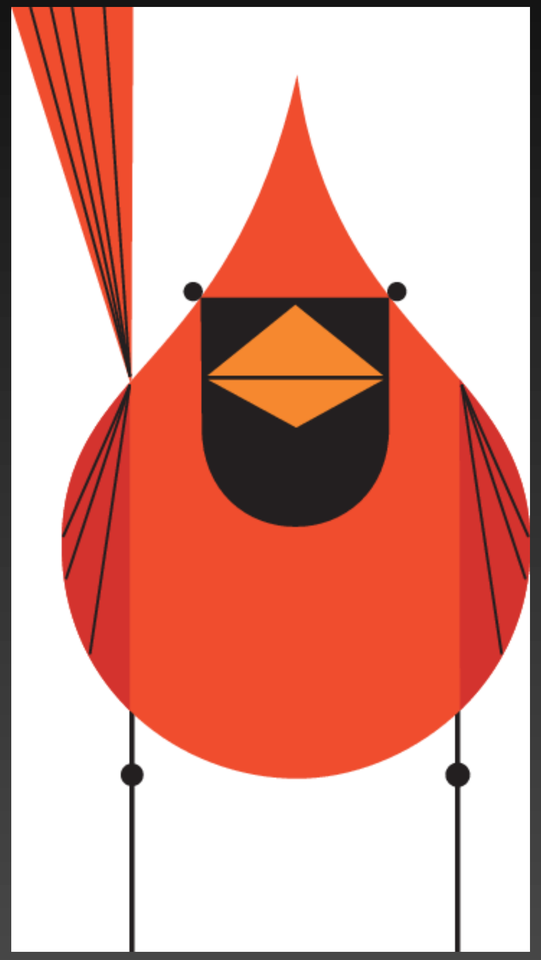


© Estate of Charley Harper 2008 Printed in U.S.A.


PARKS
EMBARK AN ARK IN YOUR LOCAL PARK


Isle Royale
National Park, Michigan
National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

Charley Harper





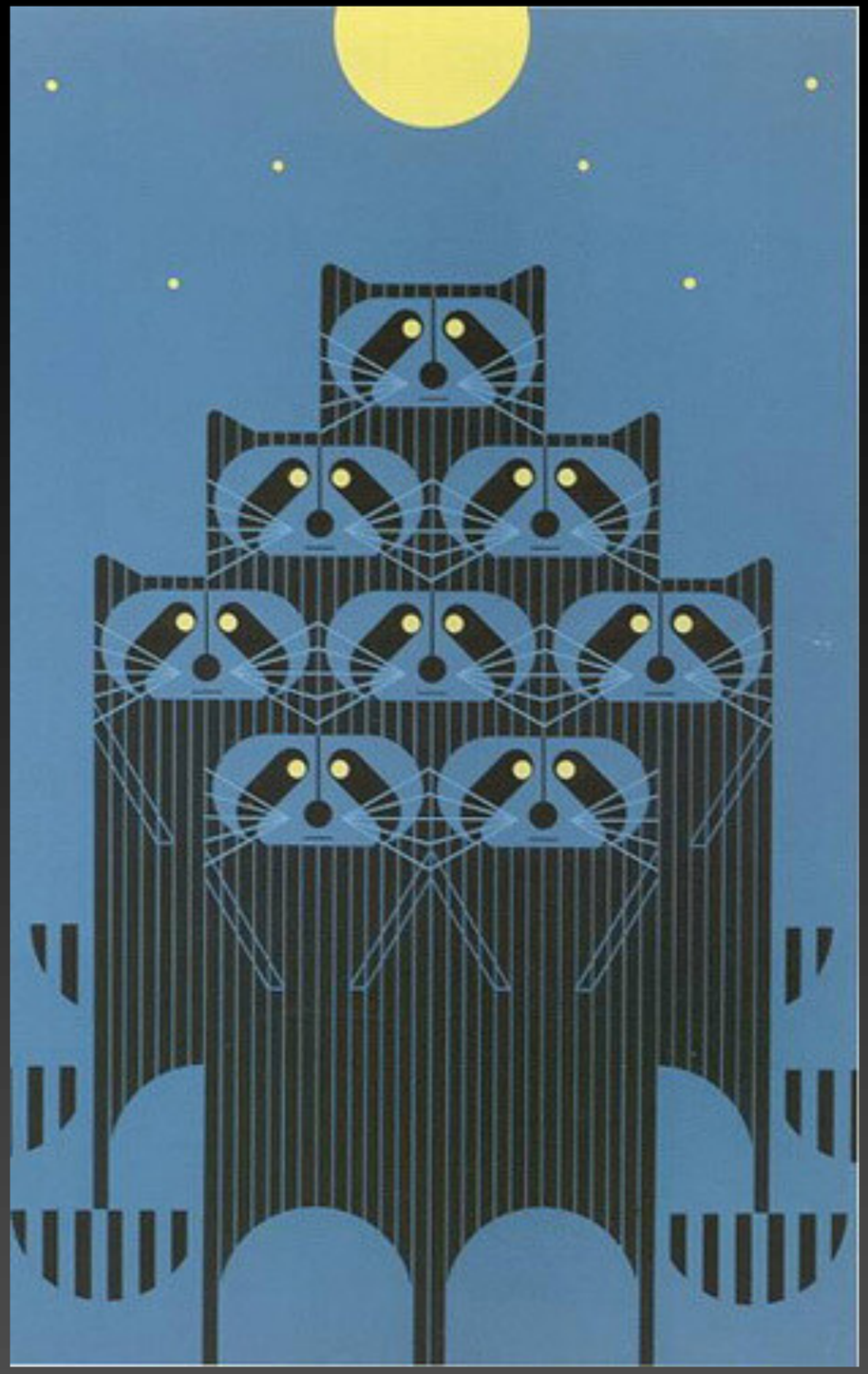








Brrrrd Bath



Raccpack



Serengeti

Spaghetti



Wedding Feast

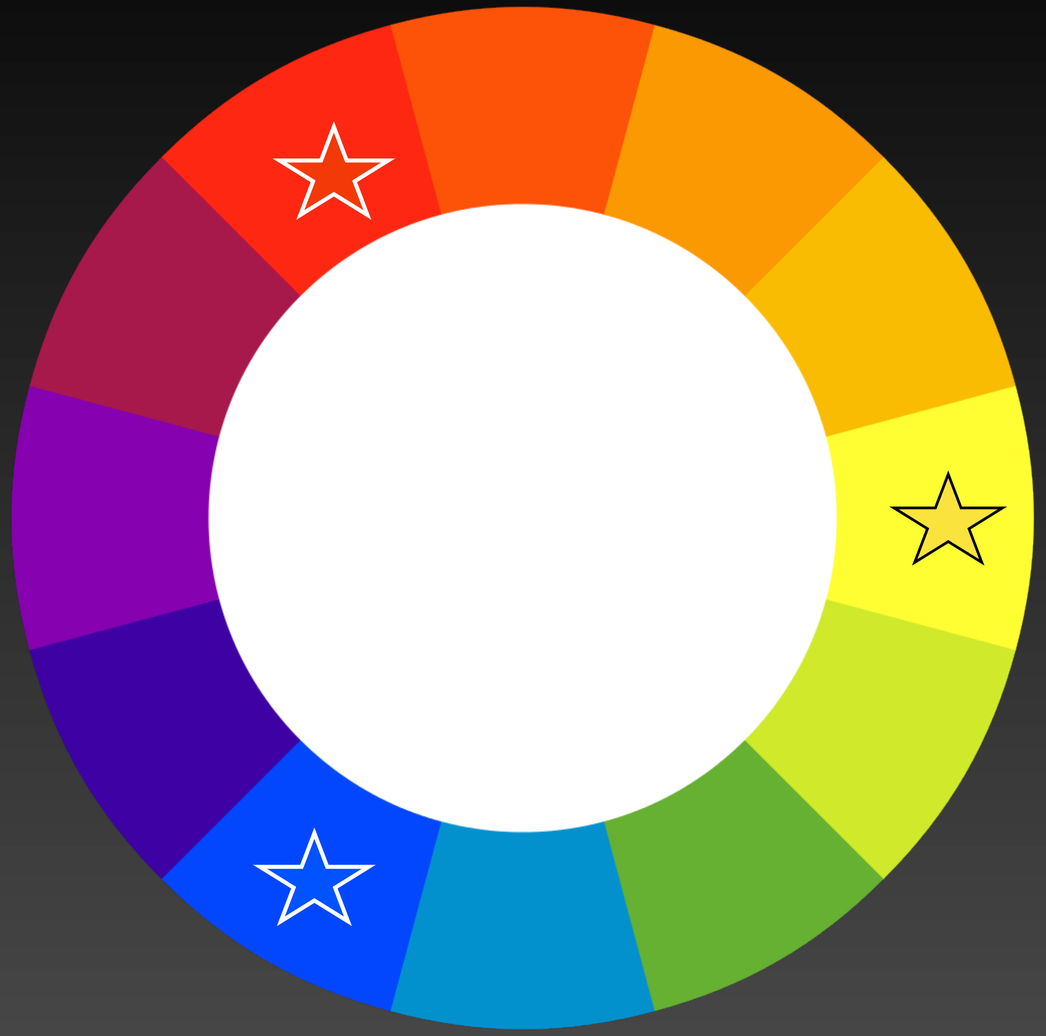


BIODIVERSITY IN THE BURBS

PAVED TO PROTECTED: Society for Ecological Restoration 1996 International Conference, Rutgers University

To get started, we will do a little color mixing,

then we will build birds from simple shapes.



We will take two primary colors

and make secondary colors.

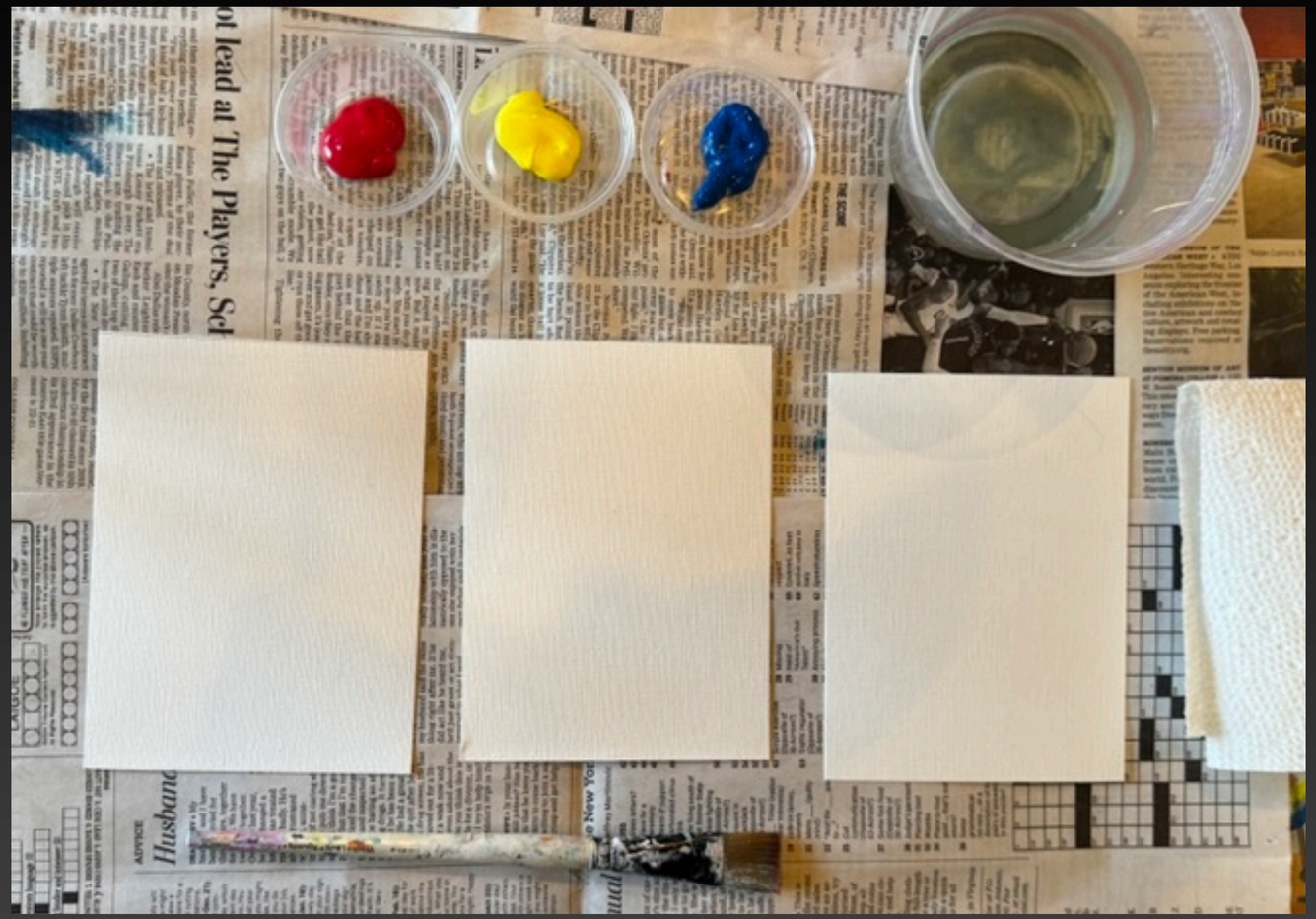
Stars mark our primary colors.

Supplies

- Black Strathmore Artagain paper 400 series 6” x 18” (12” x 18” cut in half the long way)
- Three quarter sheets of 9” x 12” acrylic paper per student
- Primary Magenta Acrylic Paint (or red)
- Bright Yellow Acrylic Paint
- Cobalt Blue Acrylic Paint
  (dispense paint in souffle cups to share among 3 kids or so)
- Scissors (make sure you have some left-handed ones available!)
- White Glue (individual bottles, or a small souffle cup and a Q-tip)
- 1” flat brush - one per child
- White Colored Pencil (plus other colors if desired)
- Black fine tipped Sharpie
- Pencil
- Water / Paper Towel
- 1 sheet of copy paper
- AAYF labels

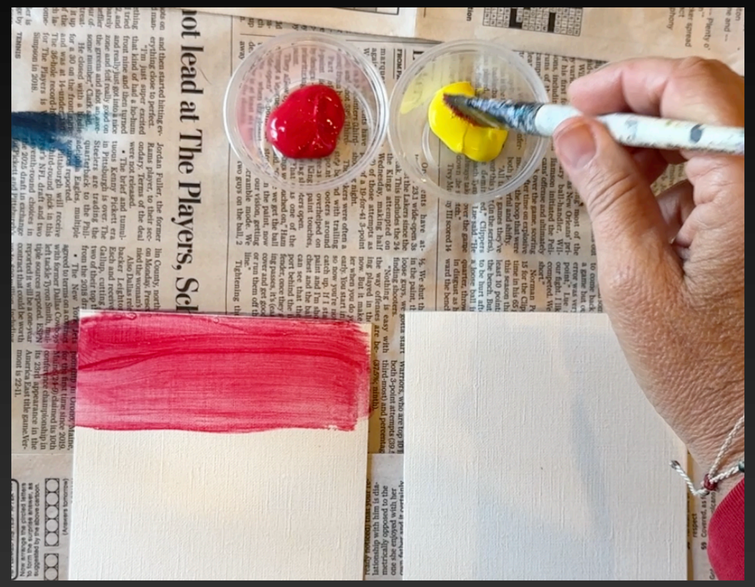

We'll make
whimsical birds
Whimsical style design is a playful and imaginative approach to design that often incorporates fantastical elements, bright colors, and exaggerated shapes.

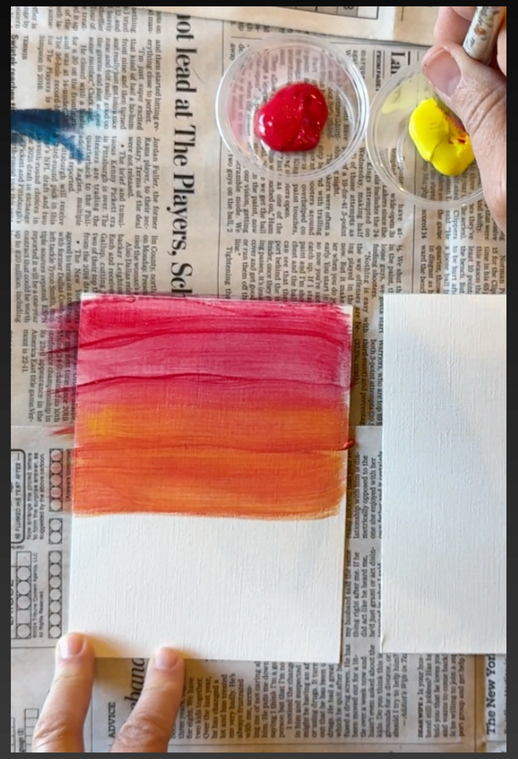
Start with three primary colors



Line up your three 1/4 size sheets. We will start with red…

Paint about 1/3 of the first sheet with red.
With a little red on your brush, dip in the yellow and keep going

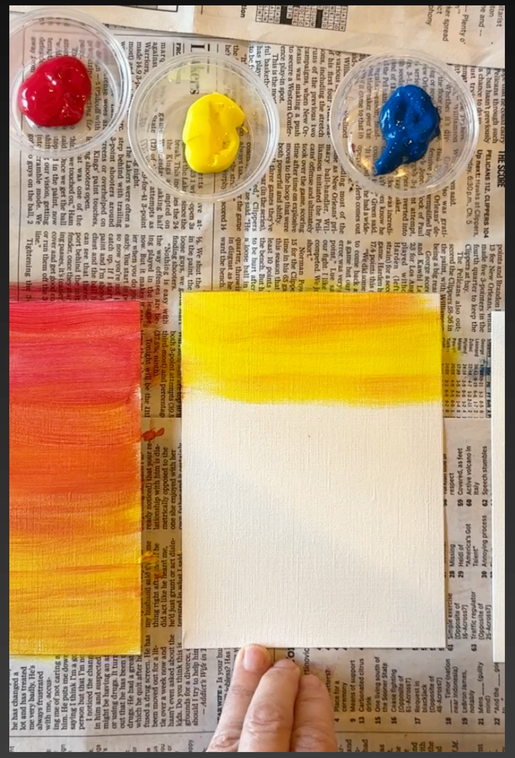


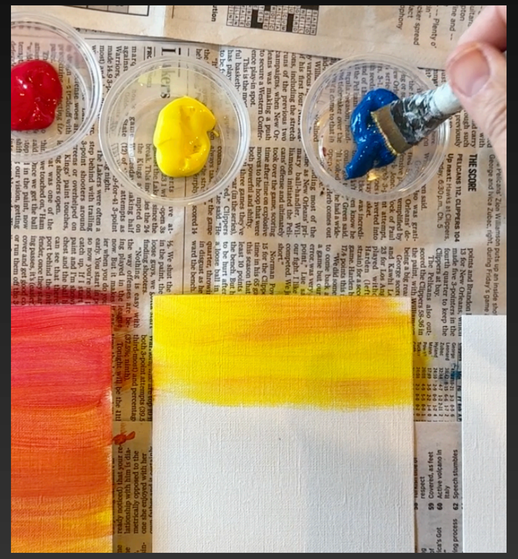


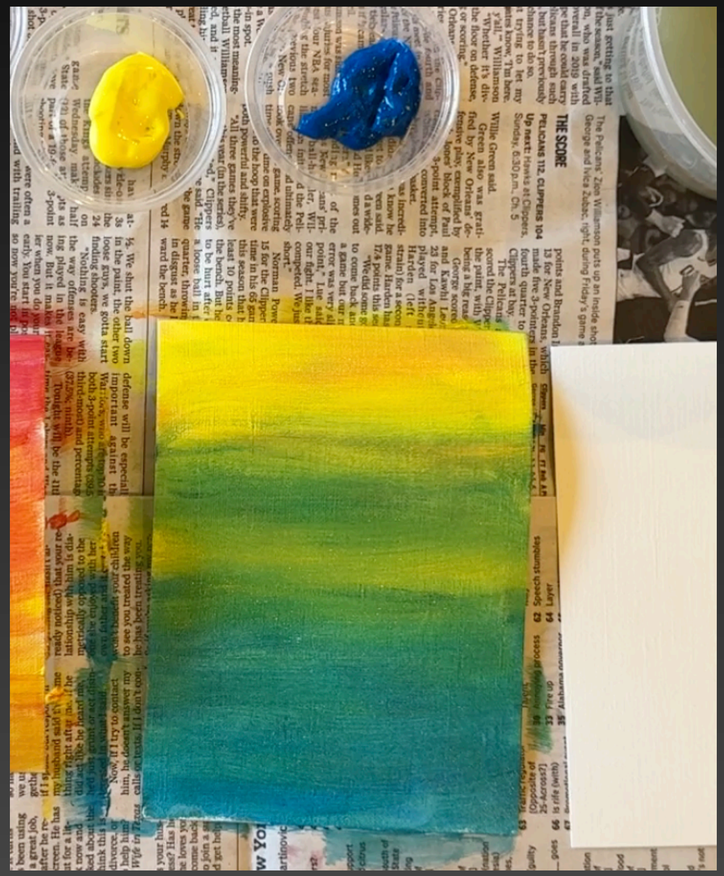


Finish with only yellow. Go over the overlap
to try to get it to be smooth and gradual.
Do not leave any wet stripes… smooth it out so it dries quickly

Your brush still has yellow… dip again and start a new sheet.

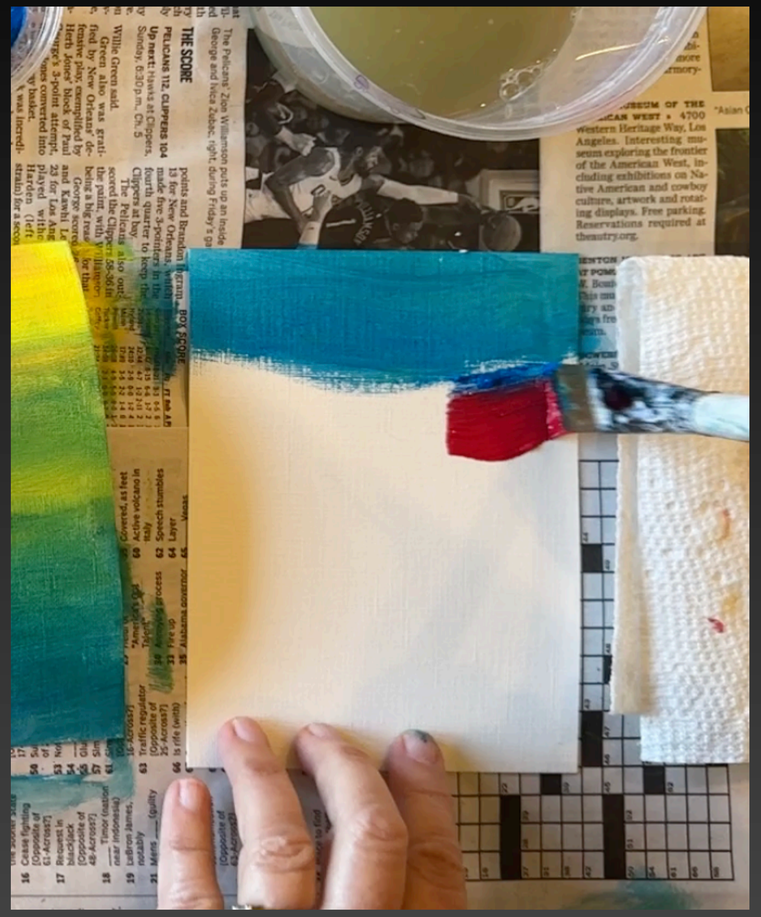


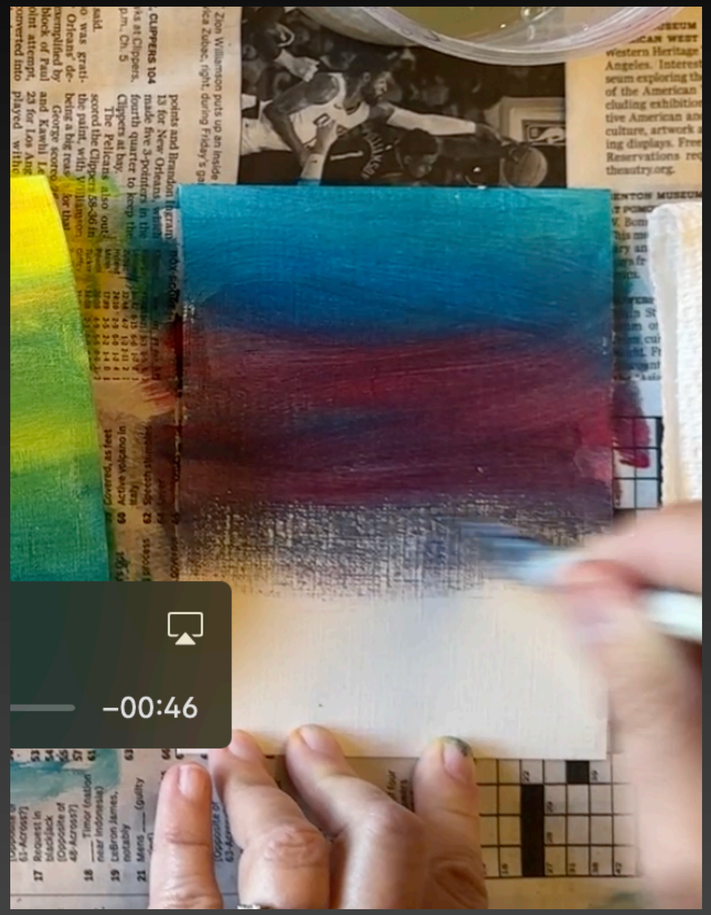


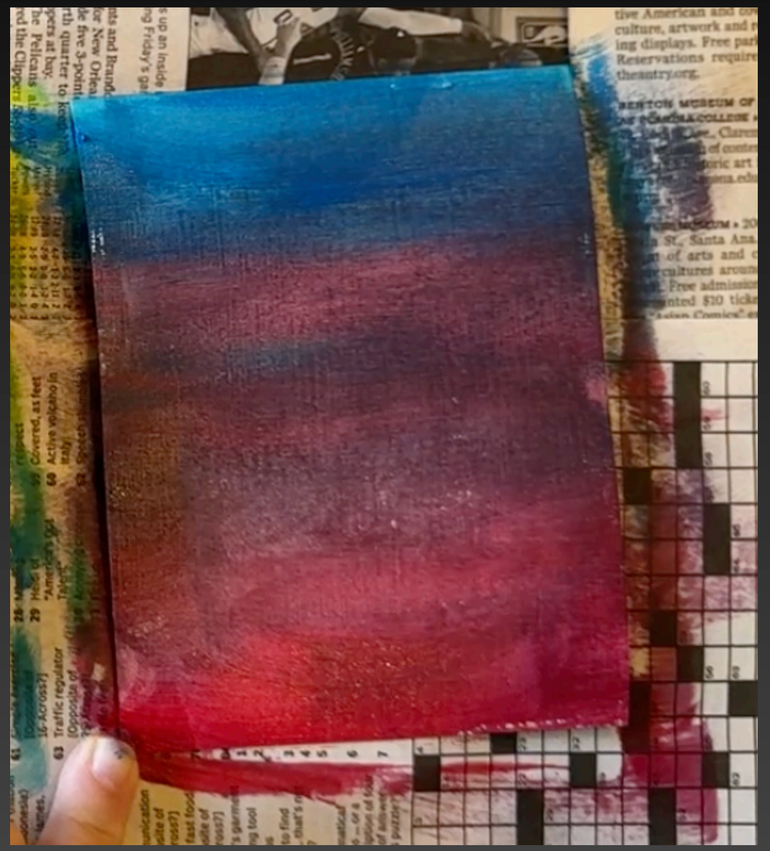


This time gradually add blue. Blend, remove any thick paint

Your brush still has blue… dip again and start a new sheet.



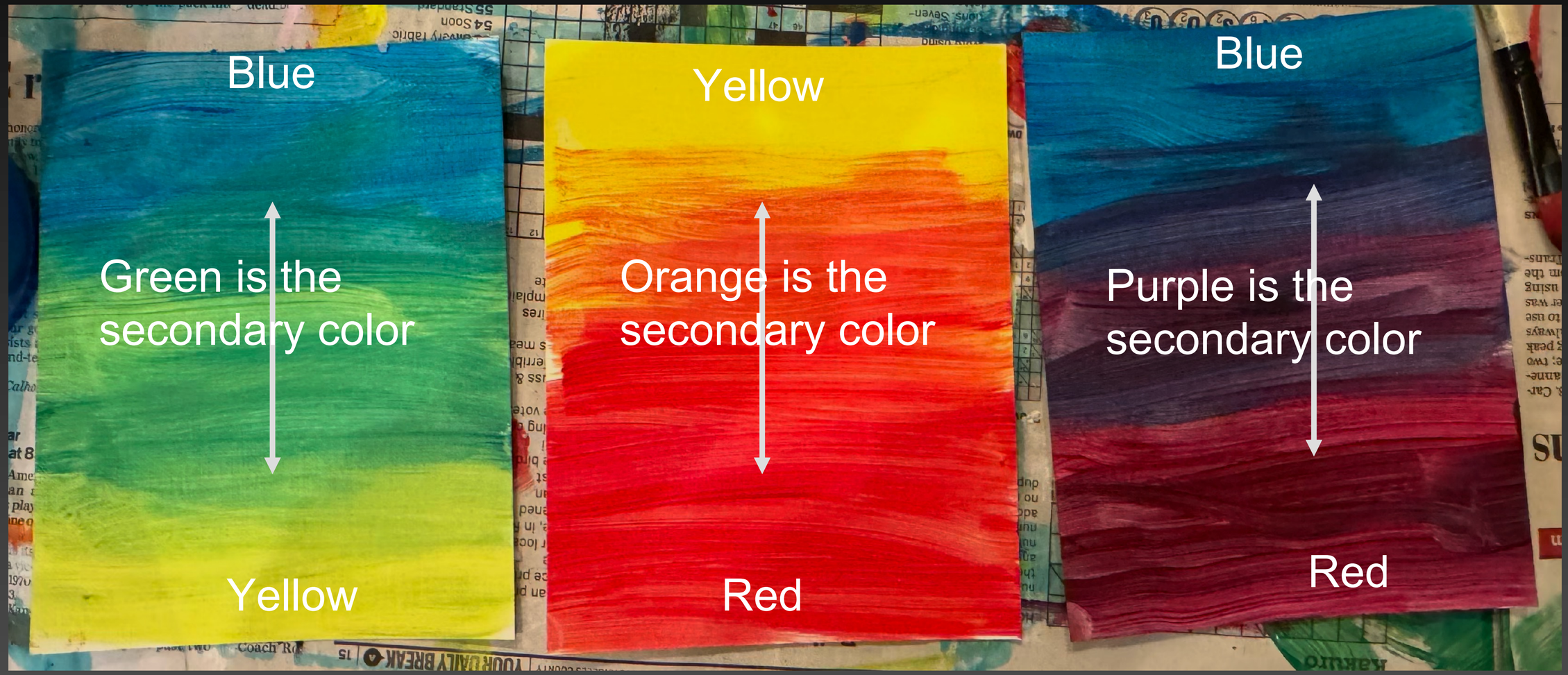




This time gradually add red. Blend. Do not leave any thick paint.

Use only a side to side motion and a flat brush to make these graduated color rectangles from one primary color to another.

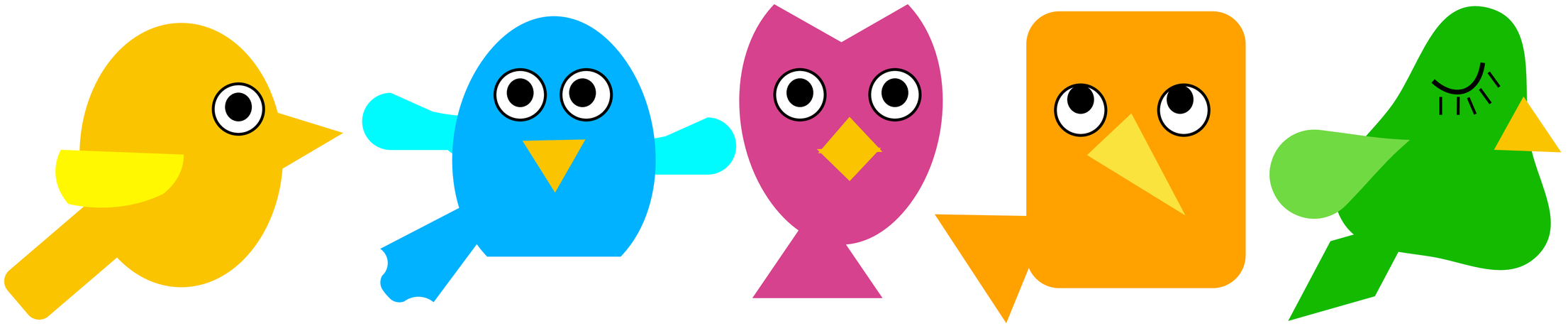
(The color in between is the **secondary color**, made from mixing two primary colors)

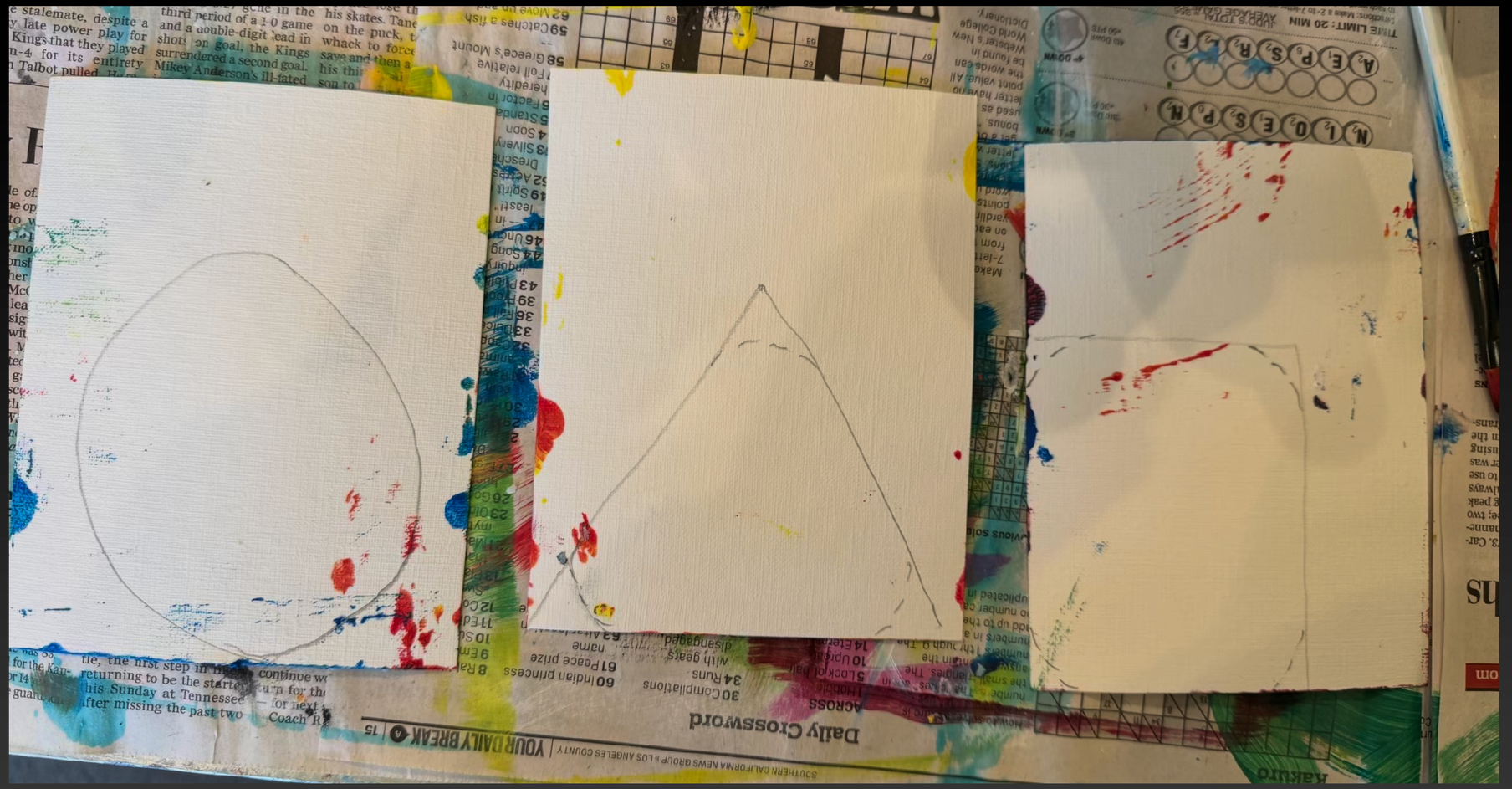


We will make our bird bodies from simple shapes.



You can start with almost any shape, and if you put the right details (wing, beak, tail, eye) our brains will see it as a bird!







When the paint is dry, turn the rectangles over and draw simple shapes like an oval a triangle and/or a rectangle. Curve the corners on the triangle and rectangle.

Note the size - about 2/3 of each for the largest shape. Start from the bottom and one side.

Cut them out.



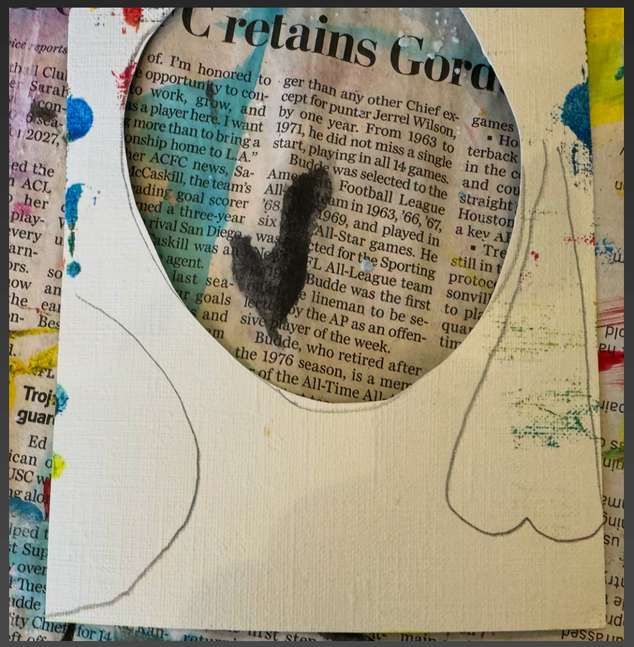
IMPORTANT: If a child is left handed they will need special left handed scissors!



After you cut out your bird bodies, use the remaining paper for wings and tail.

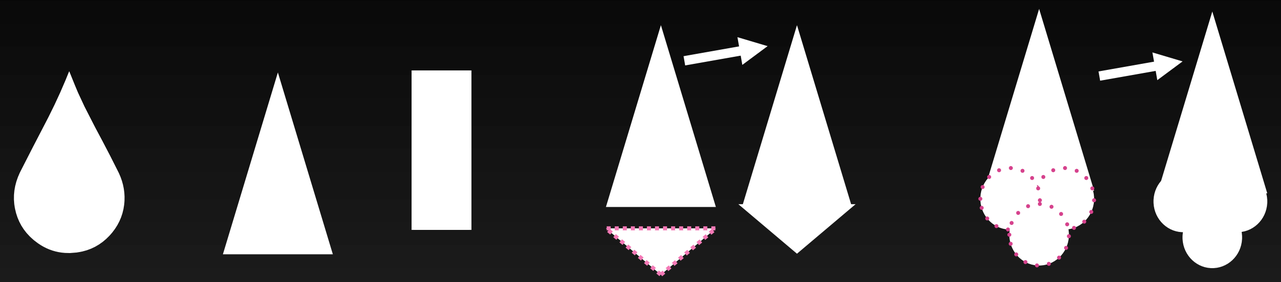


These will be your bird’s bodies

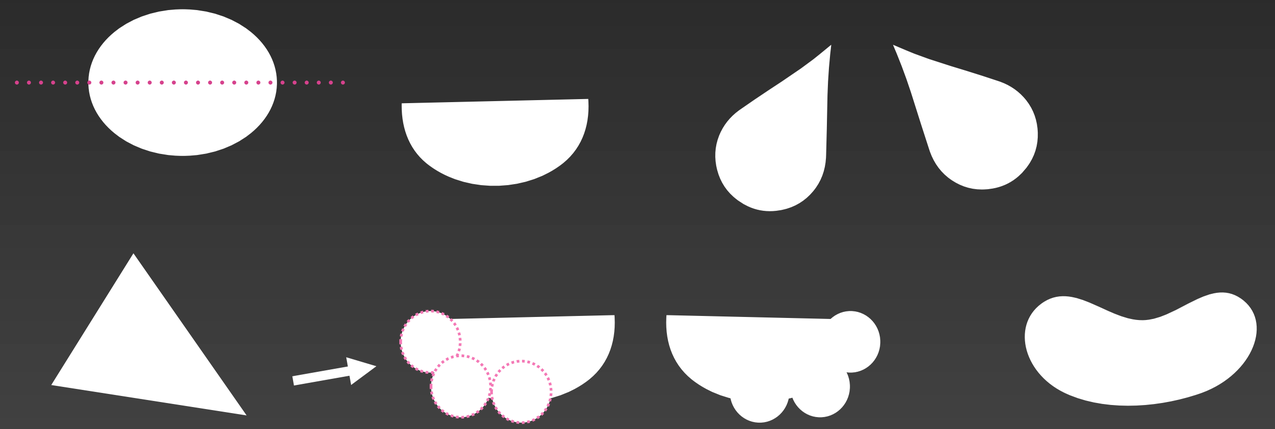


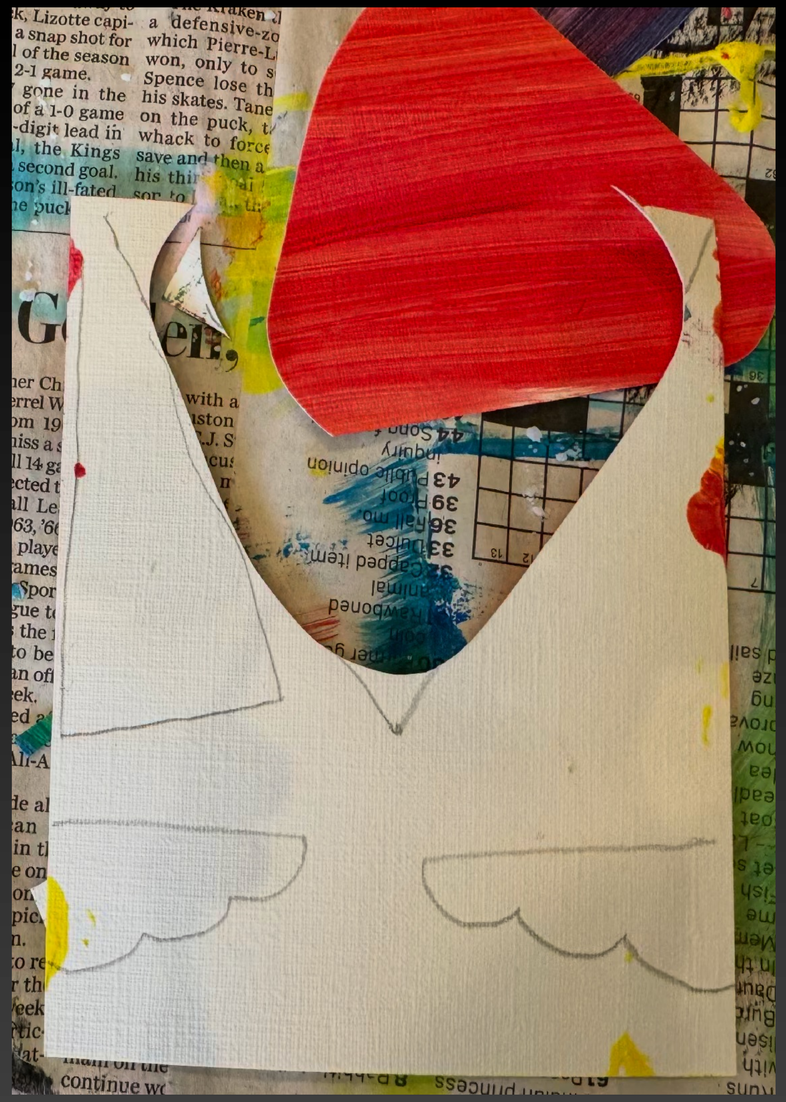
Use the remaining paper to make one or two wings, a tail and a beak.

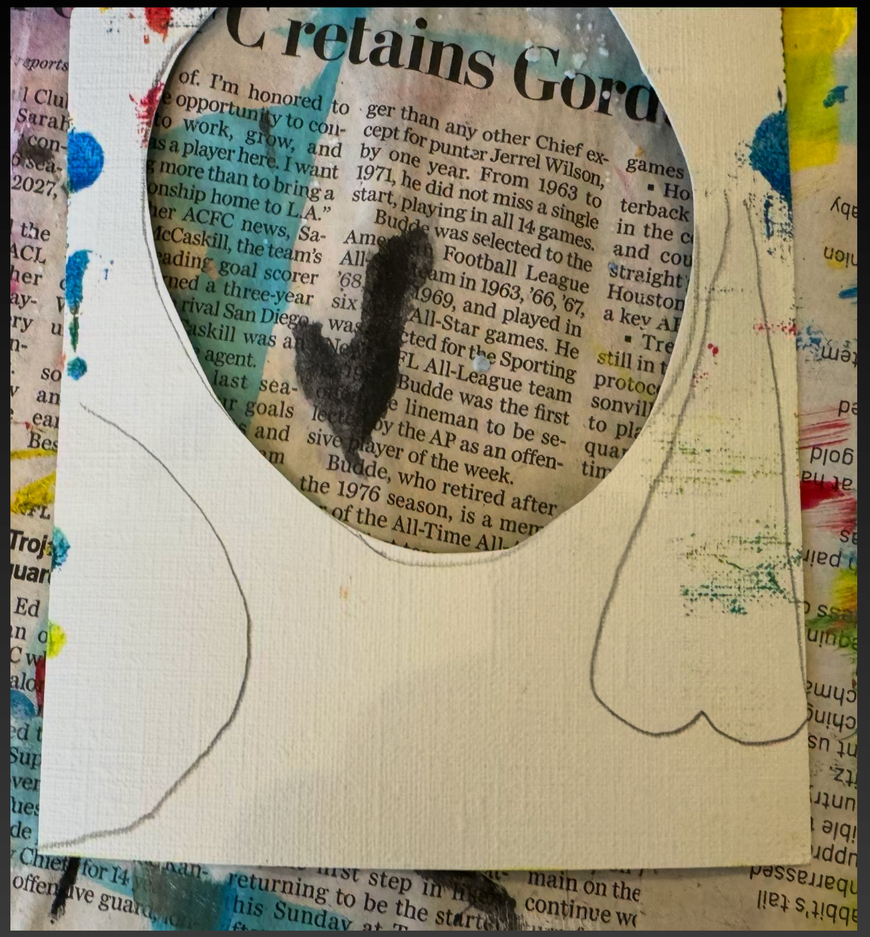
What shapes might make up a tail?

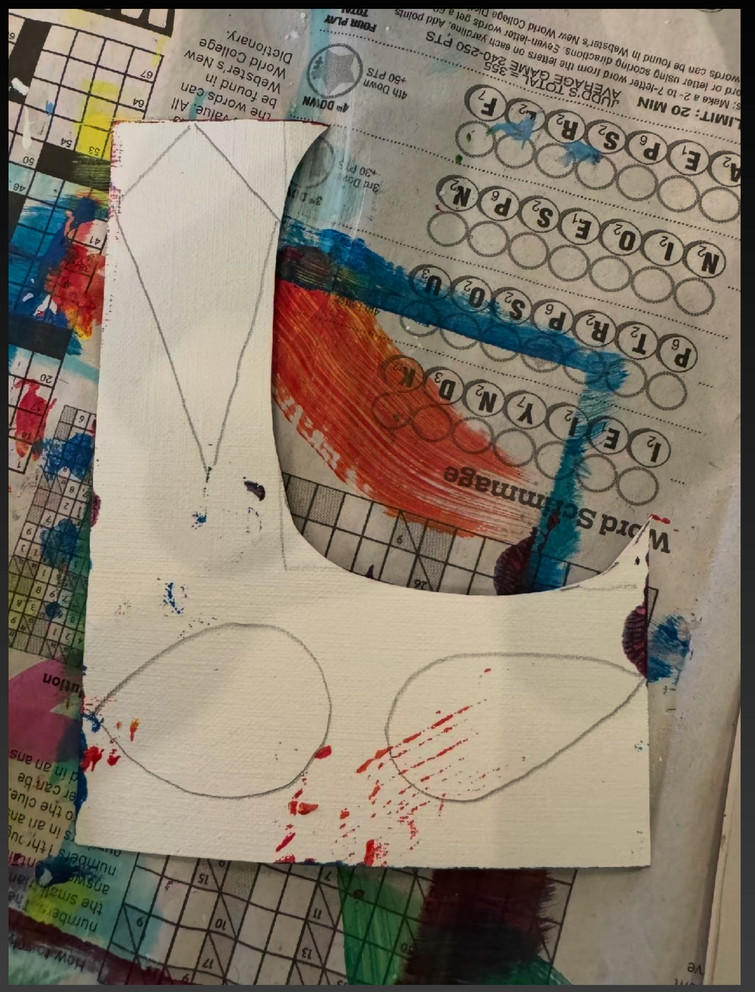


What simple shapes might make up a wing?









Here are some sample wings and tails. You will also need a triangle or a diamond shape for the beak.



Arrange your bird parts, putting the tail behind the body and deciding where the wings and beak should go.

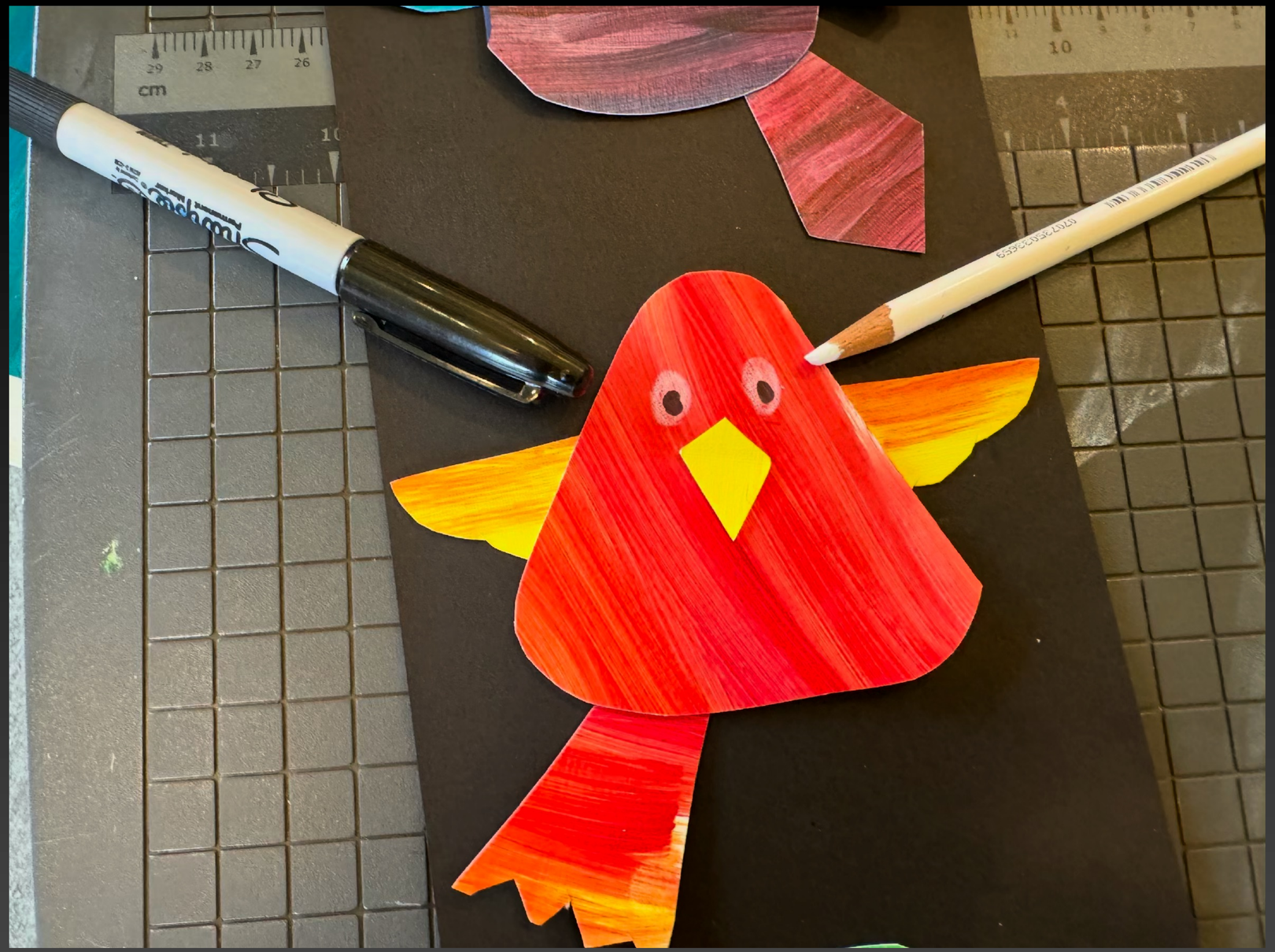




Once you have them arranged, glue them down.

Start with a dot of glue at the center of the body - so you can tuck the tail behind.

<u>Hold them in place and count to 10.</u>



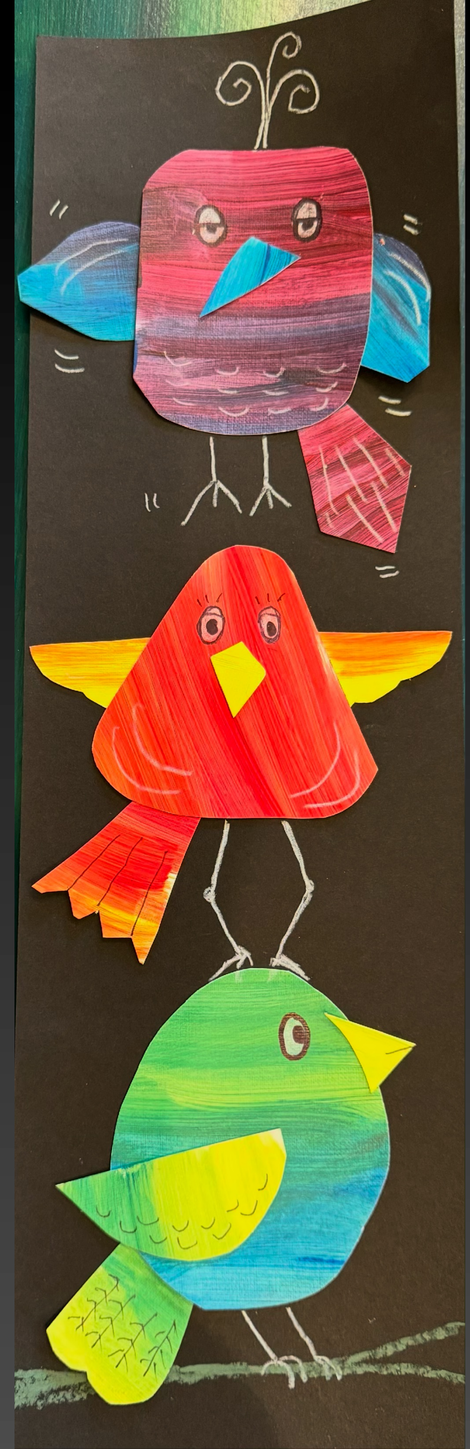
Use a Sharpie to make the eyes and fill in the whites with white colored pencil.

(note: Sharpie doesn’t write over colored pencil well, so do it first and add the whites around the pupil)

ADD FINISHING TOUCHES…







Glue down anything that needs it.

Use white colored pencils to add the legs and other features.

Use ultra fine sharpie to add feather details if you would like.

Use other colored pencils to make a branch and leaves for the bottom bird to sit on. (Optional)

What simple shapes do you see…









What simple shapes do you see…

