



Above: Jordan -
Oil Pastel



A STUDY OF **MOUNT ARROWSMITH:** FROM TED HARRISON TO LAWREN HARRIS

Introduction

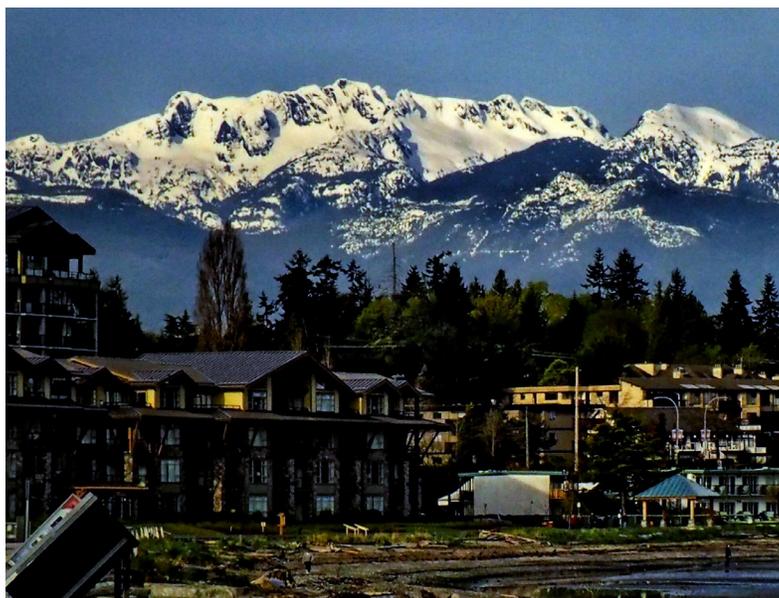
I teach at Springwood Elementary School in Parksville, British Columbia. Parksville is a seaside community on Vancouver Island with many beaches, resorts and is a backdrop of the Beaufort Mountain Range. The largest local mountain is Mount Arrowsmith which is snow-covered for much of the year and whose

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profile looks to many like 'Sleeping Beauty', lying at rest. It is also the largest mountain on southern Vancouver Island, located between Parksville and Port Alberni with an elevation of 1800 meters. The mountain was named about 1883 by Captain Richards after the cartographers Aaron Arrowsmith and his nephew, John Arrowsmith. The mountain was known as 'Kulth-kachoolth' or 'jagged face' in the Coast Salish Language. The mountain can be seen throughout the local area, and on any walk, hike or drive. It provides a beautiful backdrop to our town and is a constant landmark. Since it is an integral part of our local scenery and very picturesque, I chose Mount

Arrowsmith as the 'constant' for our art lessons.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Education from Simon Fraser University in 1995 and started teaching in Parksville shortly after. I have taught K-7 and currently teach all subjects in grades six and seven including cooking and sewing. I love art, but don't have visual art or art history in my





Above: Julia - Oil
Pastel and Chalk

professional background. I want my students to learn about drawing and painting and the skills associated with these mediums. My own art is knitting, which I teach to students at school and adults in my knitting group. Luck was with me when I enlisted an artist- teacher friend to become part of a collaborative project dealing with Mount Arrowsmith and master artists.

Beginning

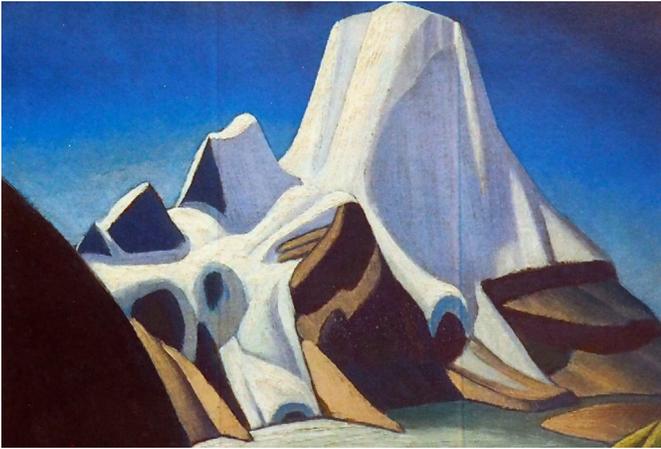
Our constant in this study was Mount Arrowsmith because it is near our school; we can see it every day on every walk and drive through town whenever it is visible. We began with projected photographs of the mountain; students examined and discussed the large images while learning how to draw the foreground, middleground and background of the landscape. For the first painting, we referenced Ted Harrison because his bright, large areas of evenly applied colour are inviting to students. We studied Harrison's simplified lines and students drew their own versions of Mount Arrowsmith based on the projected photographs. With a few practice

sessions, they were able to decide on the amount of detail to include but also realized the importance of keeping their drawings simple. For the painting, they drew outlines in oil pastels and filled the spaces with tempera paint. They aimed for strong, evenly applied colour tints and shades.

A couple of the student painters included shading as well as streaking effects to dramatize the mountain snow and the middle ground of the forest. This led us to selecting Lawren Harris as our next reference because his landscapes were similar some of the students' paintings. His paintings capture the essence of mountains in a sophisticated way, but students related to his work.

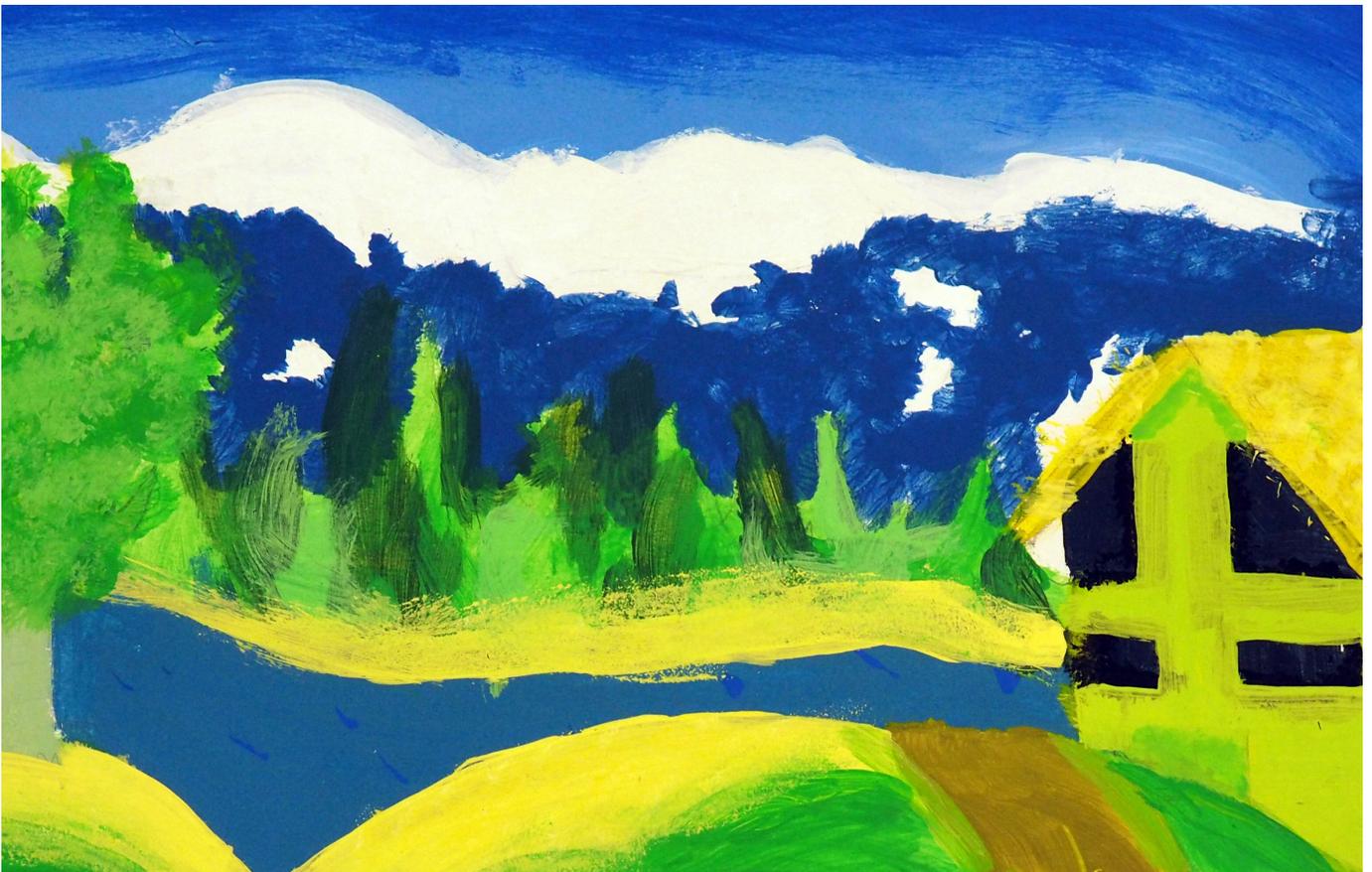
Evolving Experience

We then projected a different view of Mount Arrowsmith, a bit closer and more looming, in keeping with Harris's *Mount Robson from the Northeast*. Students sketched, added detail, and applied oil pastels for the land and chalk pastels for the sky. They loved smearing the oils and blending



Left: Lawren Harris
Mt. Robson 1929

**Below Clockwise
from top left:**
Russia - Acrylic
Paint, Ross -
Acrylic Paint, *Julia*
- Acrylic Paint



"I liked walking to a field where we could see the mountain and sketch it while being outside. It was fun to be outside sketching." Christian

the chalk. They also enjoyed the freedom and ease of creating dramatic images.

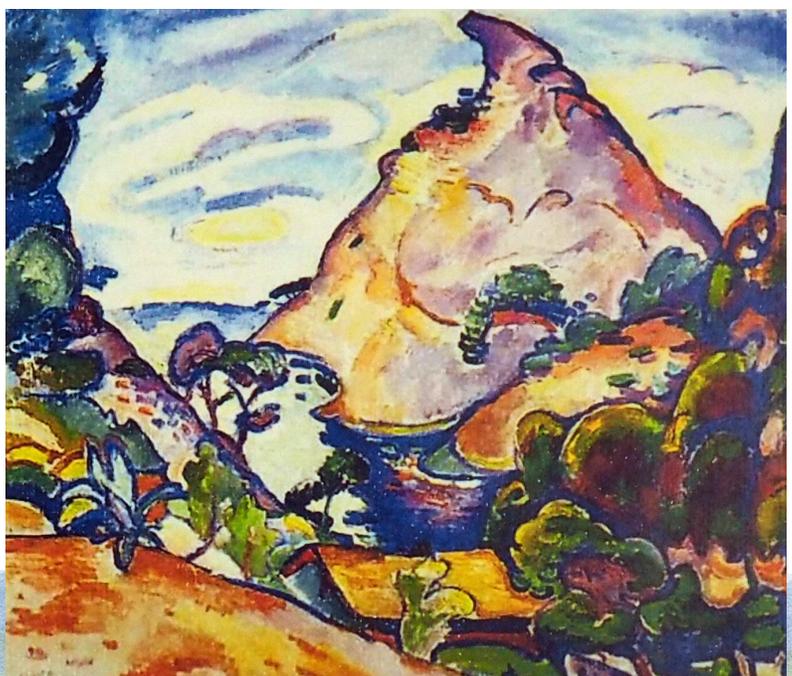
At this point, one student created a colourful version that made me wonder "Why did he pick purple and red and blue for a land that had none of those colours?" My colleague admired his ability to see and enjoy colour and suggested we look at the artist, Georges Braque, a contemporary of Picasso. That led us to study Fauvism, a style that features strong, bold colours.

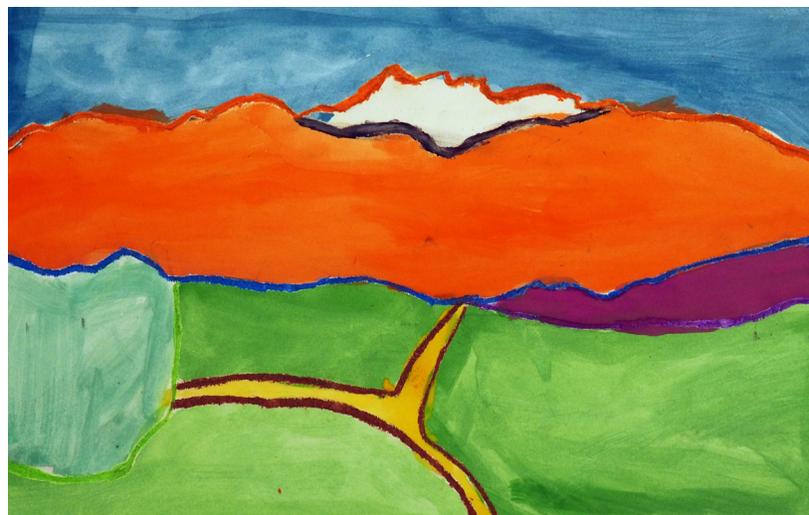
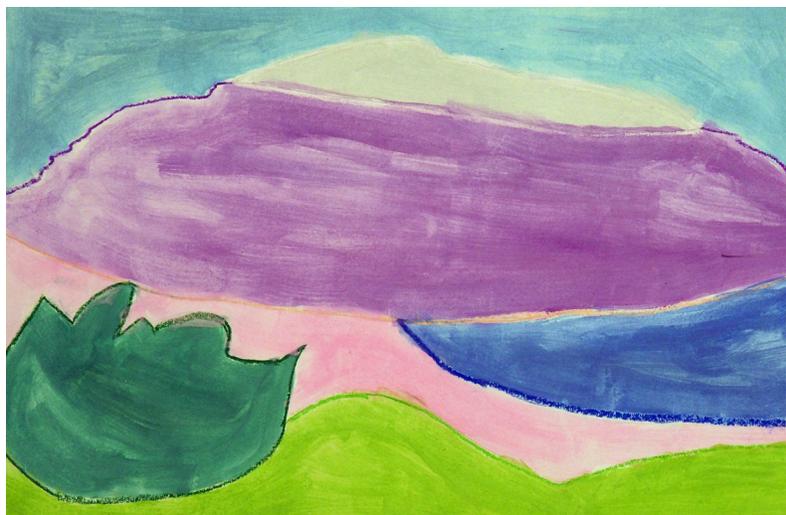
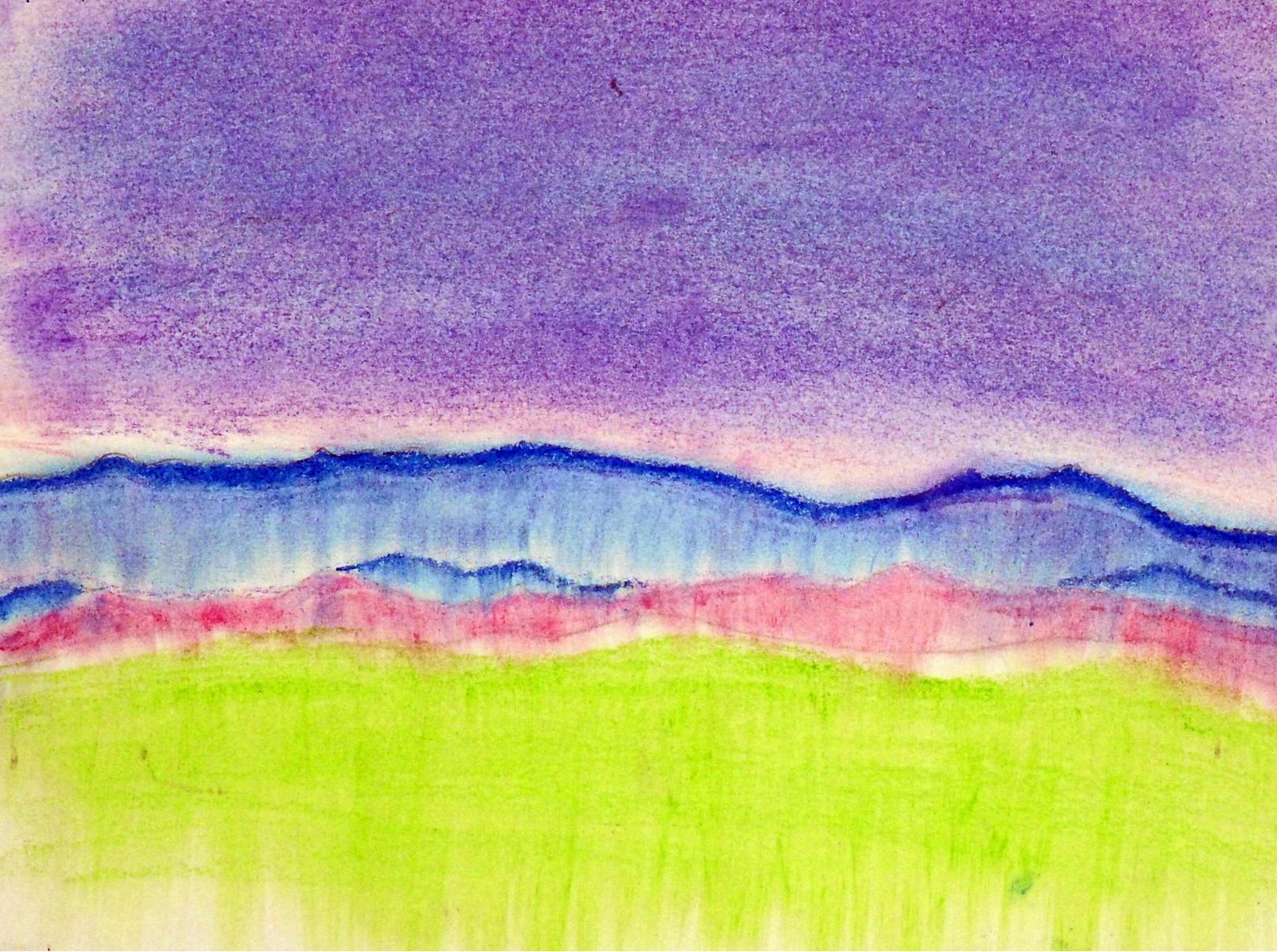
For the final painting, students were encouraged to exaggerate their colours, to look for colour possibilities and exaggerate or emphasize colours by layering them. The final pieces of artwork were completed with acrylic paint. Students found acrylics very difficult to use, and since I had no experience with the medium, we struggled through the experience together. I should add, the students loved the newly purchased paint brushes and the nice thick, rich paint textures characteristic of acrylic paint.

Top: Megan -
Acrylic Paint

Middle: Jacob -
Acrylic Paint

Bottom: Georges
Braque, *Grey
Weather in Cove*





Clockwise from Top: Amy - Oil Chalk,
Jon - Tempera Oil Pastel, Jayde -
Tempera Oil Pastel



Student Comments

Christian said "I liked walking to a field where we could see the mountain and sketch it while being outside. It was fun to be outside sketching."

Taylor said "I liked learning about different artists and styles. The acrylics were sort of easy because you paint what was in your mind and it turned out like you thought it would."

Ross said "I didn't like painting but enjoyed anytime we got to draw outside."

Aubrey liked painting with acrylics.

Katherine liked sketching outside because she could move around and pick an angle for her drawing.



Above: *Jordan* - Acrylic,
Influenced by Fauvism

Left: *Megan* -
Tempera Oil Pastel

Conclusion

Throughout this art study, I heard the students wanting more lessons to improve their skills and I saw their enjoyment in learning about artists and movements. I witnessed how much they engaged with the materials and tools, and appreciating better quality brushes for future tempera and watercolour painting. In the future, I will continue to include some drawing lessons with each new study and allow more practice time with each new medium. I will certainly call on the help of an experienced art teacher to guide us again because my collaboration with a colleague who was experienced with art gave me insight into the world of master artists and the way materials and tools could be used in innovative ways. I recommend identifying art teachers or artists in the community to assist those of us who are less experienced. There is much to learn from them and about the wonderful world of art.

Max said he loved painting and learning about painting styles. He said: "I learned more about art and painting than I did in my Art elective". Tai said he "liked using oil pastels because you can blend them. I spent a lot of time on each part making the colours how I wanted them."

Avery said "I like drawing realistic landscapes and being outside makes it better because you decide which part you want to draw. It is so much more realistic than drawing from a photograph."

