

Lavender Leonardos

MARK MAKING | VINCENT VAN GOGH

This week we will be exploring Vincent Van Gogh's extraordinary mark making he used within his drawings. Although most famous for his paintings, Van Gogh believed that drawing using simple marks was 'the root of everything', and spent a lot of time practising. These marks were stand alone and rarely blended or merged.

Let's see how he created them.

YOU WILL NEED

- HB Pencil (and 2b-8b if you have it)
- Rubber
- Ruler
- A4 paper
- A5 paper

(Sketchbook paper or printer paper)

- Duration:
1hr 30mins -
2hrs

Fact:
He produced
1,100
drawings.

Who was Vincent van Gogh?

Vincent van Gogh is one of the most famous and influential artists in history. He produced some of the most recognisably popular art in the world. He lived during an incredibly exciting period in the history of art, and played an important role in the development of the art movement known as post-impressionism.

From the beginning, he felt it necessary to master black and white before attempting to work in colour. His drawings formed an important part of his development as a painter. There were periods when he wished to do nothing but draw. When the fierce winds made it impossible for him to set up an easel, he found he could draw on sheets of paper tacked securely to board.



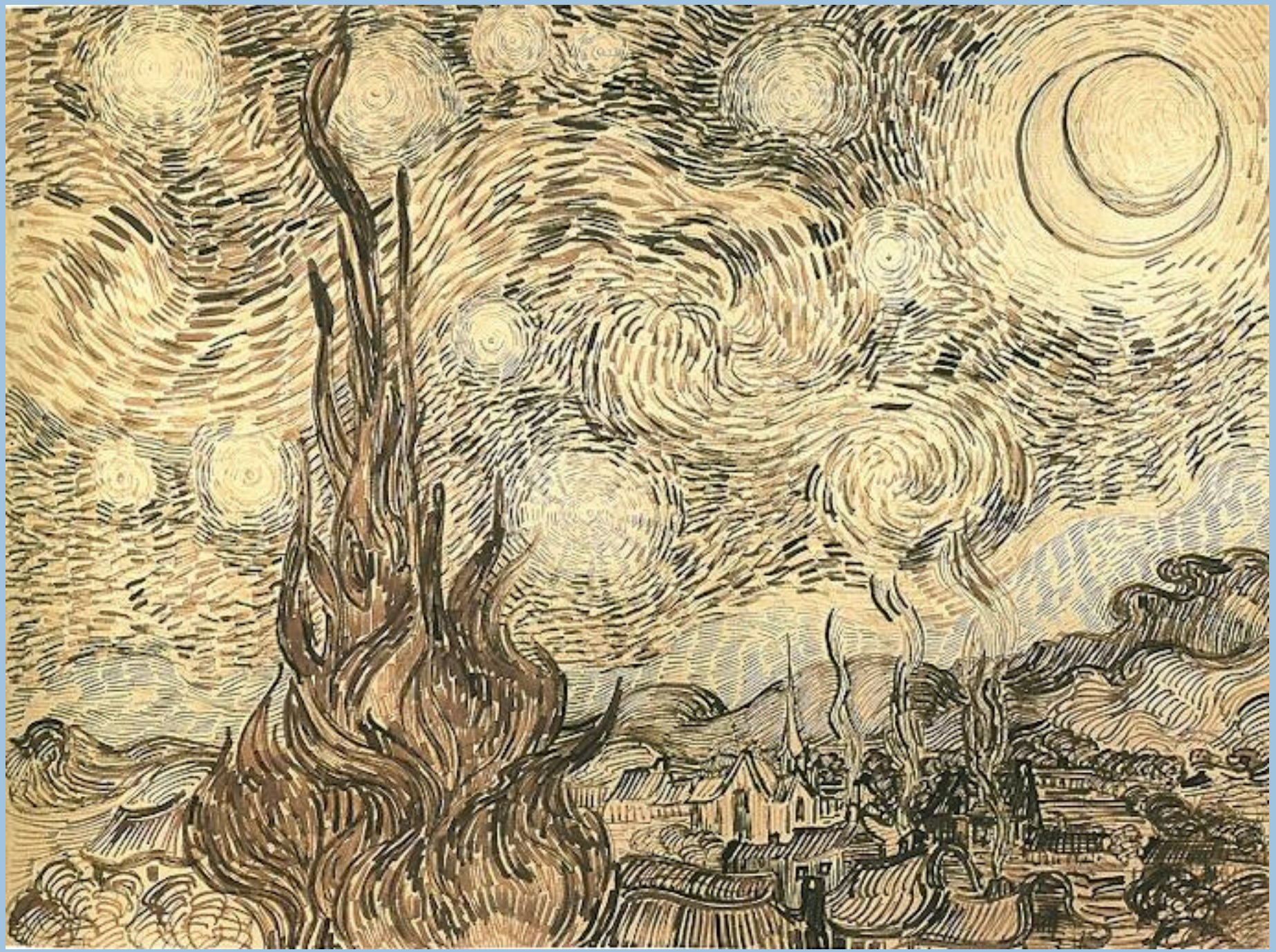
Let's take a look at this drawing on the left 'Street in Saintes'

We can clearly see the types of marks he used to portray texture, shade and movement. The light background contrasts with the vertical marks used for the houses and trees. Whilst dots and dashes describe the rough ground.

One of Van Gogh's most celebrated attributes was his amazing ability to create movement within his drawings and paintings. On the next few pages you will find more of his drawings. I would like you to really study the marks, where and how he uses them.



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STEP 1: PRACTICING YOUR MARKS



After you have studied his drawings, we'll practice the different marks on a piece of paper. Use the different hardness of pencils, from HB - 8b.

(If you don't have a selection of pencils then think about the pressure you are putting onto your paper)

STEP 2: OUR LANDSCAPE



To the left is a beautiful landscape of Coniston, in the Lake District. You can see already there are a variation of textures and tones. There's movement within the sky and you can clearly see the vanishing point and horizon line.

Lets start by drawing the landscape onto our piece of paper. I would like you to think about:

- The horizon line.
- Vanishing point.
- Key references within the picture e.g stone building.



You can use
your ruler in
this section.

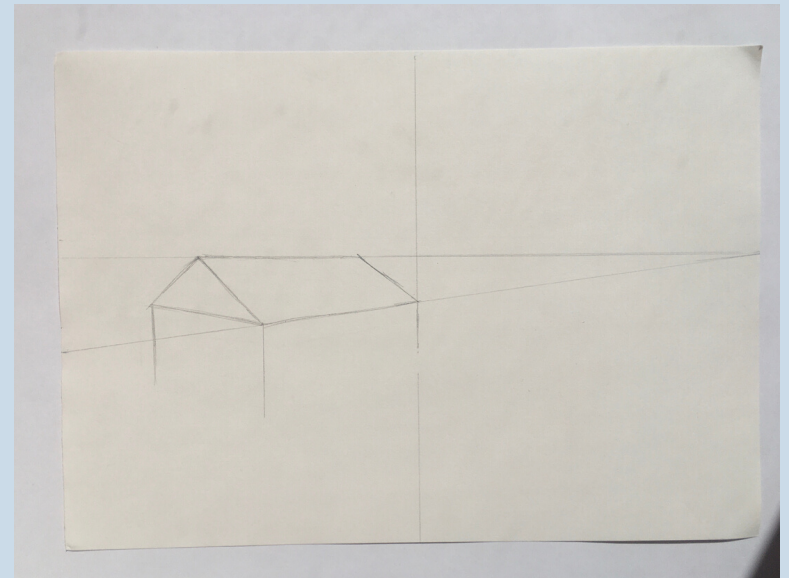
1. Draw a line vertically on your plain
piece of paper.



2. Draw your horizon line and vanishing
point. Lining it up with the building.



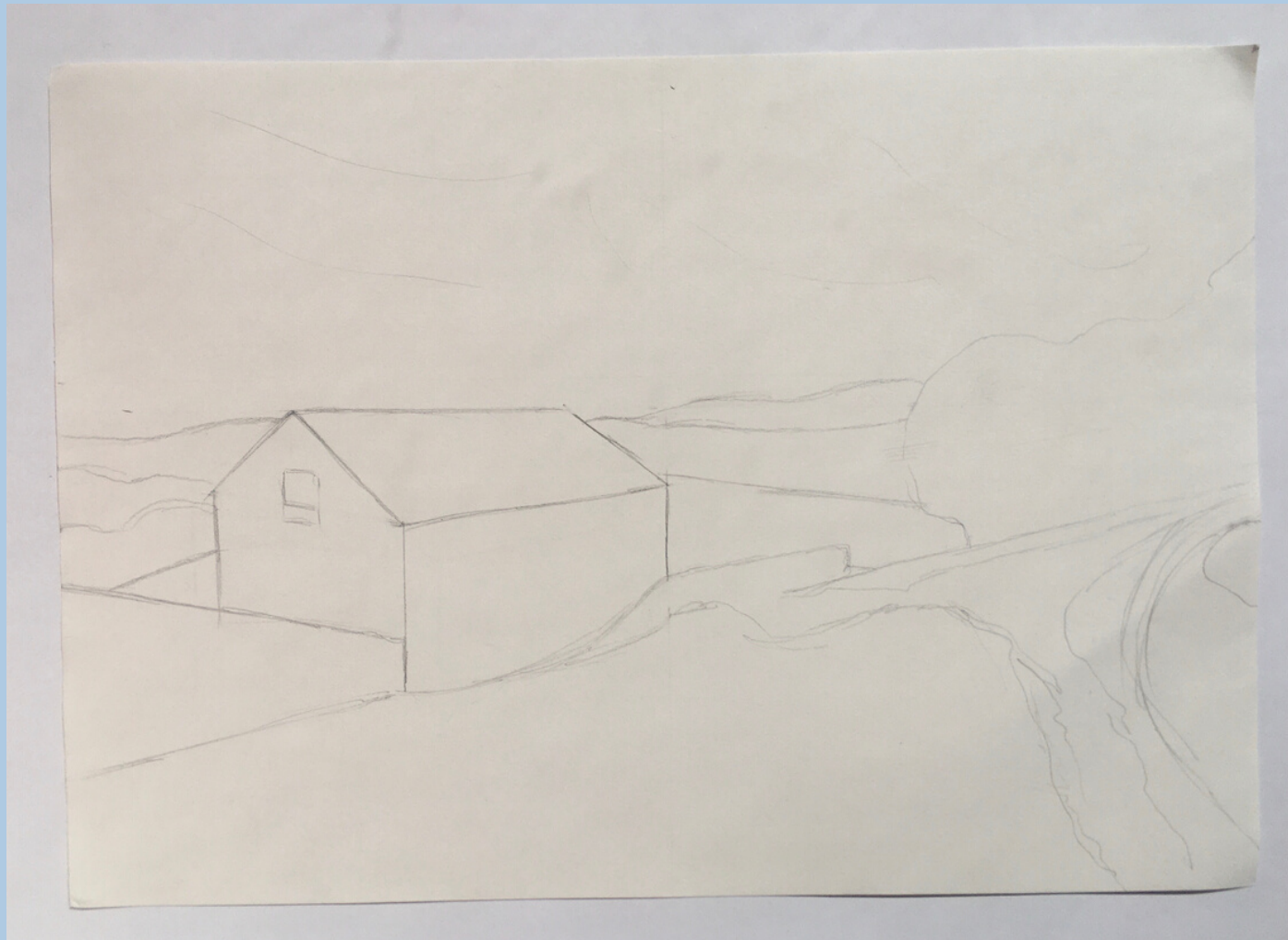
3. Help yourself by drawing a line on the
wall of the stone building. This will ensure
your perspective is correct.



4. Build up the rest of your lines on your
building.

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5. Draw free hand. (Without a ruler) Add detail to your drawing, for example the stone wall, mountains etc, but you don't need to go into too much detail. We just want the rough outline of our landscape. Use the guidelines to help you draw each section. It should be like a puzzle, it all starts to fit into place. You can then rub your guidelines out when you are happy.



STEP 3: MAPPING OUT OUR MARKS

Before we start, it's important that we draw a rough plan of where our marks are going to go. You can either do the same marks as me or chose your own.



- Plan white space, it's effective to have contrast.
- Think about the direction of your marks and the relationship with the marks next to them.
- Use different hardness of pencils or different pressures.

Remember:

This is only a plan,
fill in sections not
the whole part yet.

STEP 4: STARTING OUR DRAWING | THE SKY



Tip:

Grab a scrap piece of paper to put under your hand, so you don't smudge the pencil.

The Sky in this drawing is an important part, so we want to make sure we're creating that movement with our lines.

I'm going for a variation of lines, dots and white space. Ensuring there is a mixture of thick and thin lines.



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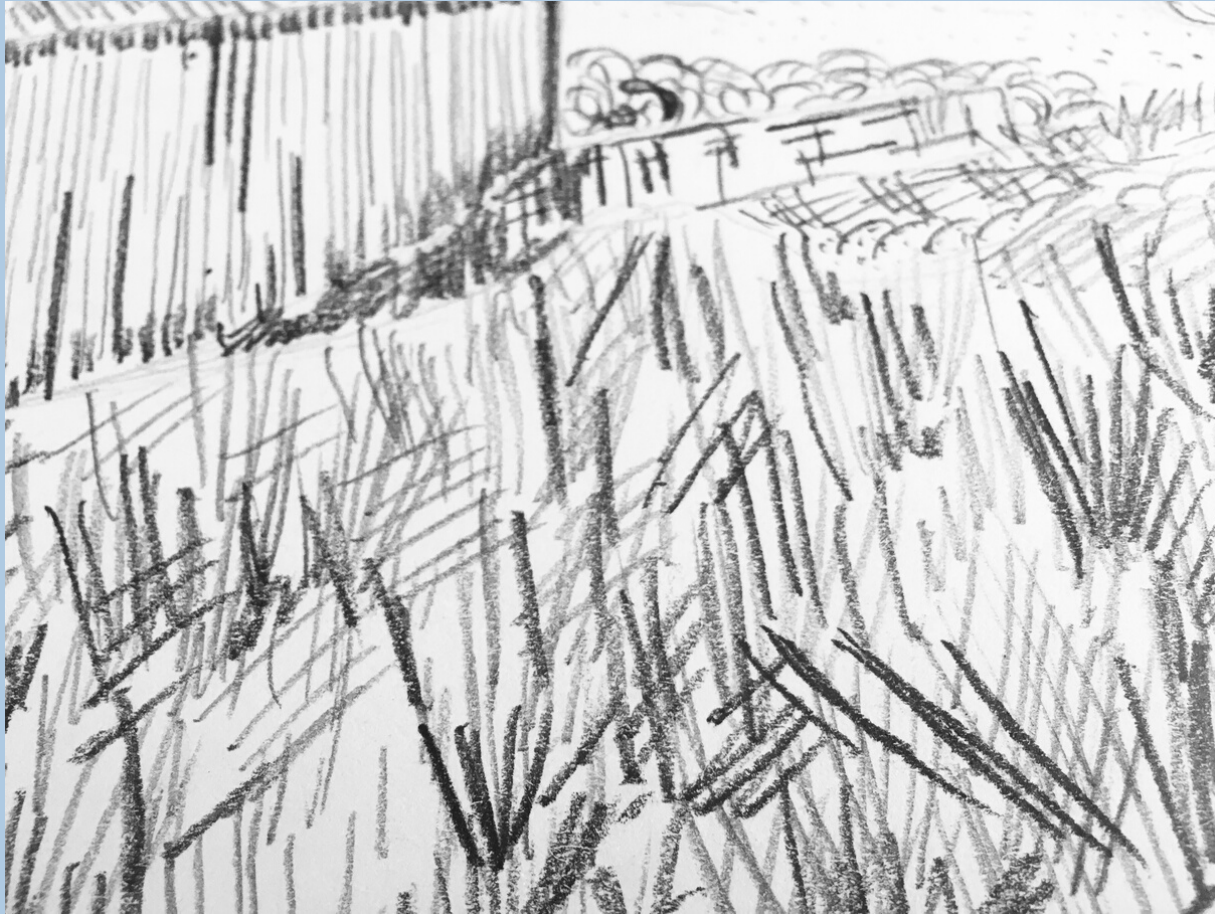
STEP 5: THE BUILDING



The light is coming from the left, making the back of the building lighter. The building is a three dimensional shape, therefore I want to make sure each side is different and the marks are made in the same direction.

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STEP 6: THE FOREGROUND



The foreground is busy and heavily textured. I want to show this by creating a variation of lines applied in different directions that overlap.

STEP 7: THE MOUNTAINS AND TREES



I've always been inspired by Van Gogh's mountains and trees in his painting 'Starry Night'. He so effortlessly captures the rolling hills and the movement of the trees. I'm going to use my HB pencil to form single lines and layer with a darker tone, this enhances certain areas and creates movement.

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STEP 8: THE WINDING ROAD



The final step: I would like you to keep this section relatively simple, as the marks surrounding it are full and textured. Dots will help create a rough ground like the 'Street in Saintes' drawing.



Can you see how allowing white spaces helps the drawings composition, especially when viewing it.

We would love to see all your work :)

Please send to lavenderleonardos@gmail.com. We now have a gallery page on our website with all your work that you send in. Plus keep an eye on our social media channels, as a few will be selected.

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