



# Rousseau's Rain Forest

By Janis Doukakis

*"Nothing makes me so happy as to observe nature and to paint what I see."*

—Henri Rousseau 1844-1910

**Grade Level:** 2nd - 6th grade

**Time Required:** 3 45-min. class periods

## **Objective:**

Students become acquainted with Henri Rousseau's life and art, and then create their own fantasy rain forest painting inspired by his work.

## **National Core Arts Standards**

**Creating: #1, 2, 3**

**Presenting/Producing: #5**

**Responding: #7**

<http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

## **Vocabulary:**

Compose

Horizon

Foreground

Middle Ground

Background

Tint

Shade

Cohesive

## **Materials:**

Tempera Paint

Brushes

Paper 18 x 24

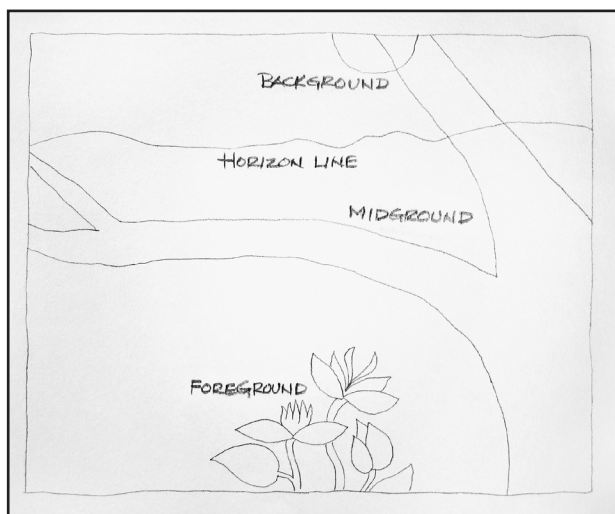
Pencil

Black Marker

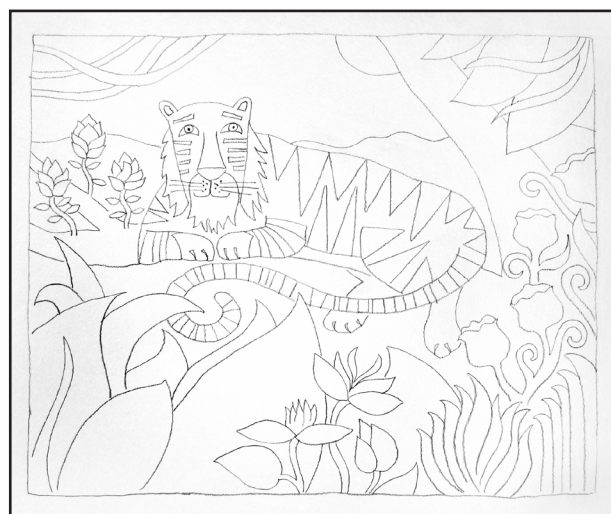
[www.greatartstartshere.com](http://www.greatartstartshere.com)

[www.fabercastell.com](http://www.fabercastell.com)

**Henri Rousseau, 1844-1910** was a French painter known for his imaginative art of lush jungle scenes with wild animals and exotic flowers; amazing paintings he created all without ever leaving France. Rousseau found his inspiration for his paintings from postcards, magazines, and visits to the arboretum and zoo. His exotic animals were also drawn from toys and figurines bought in Paris gift shops. His charming paintings were known for their uneducated and naïve style. Their unrealistic scale, vivid colors, and dramatic quality gave them a dream-like feel. Search **Rousseau** for more on his life and works.



**1. To begin**, have students establish a foreground, middle ground, background and horizon line. Discuss types of animals to include. Study Rousseau's jungle scenes and notice his fluid, stylized drawings and repeated shapes.



**2. Compose your scene.** Demonstrate how to create a dense jungle scene by sketching plants and animals to the middle ground, then leaves, flowers and grass to the foreground. Use large, simple repeated shapes.



**3. Mix color.** Begin with the background and paint the sky in blue or dreamy sunset colors. Demonstrate how to create a variety of greens by mixing paint—add blue or black for darker **shades** and add yellow or white for lighter **tints**.



**4. Paint your picture.** Create contrast with the use of dark, medium and light colors and shades. Repeat colors throughout the painting to create a cohesive look. Finally, give your painting a stylized look by adding a black outline to everything.