



# Creative Studio

Welcome to the studio, a place to relax, to be inspired and to develop your own creative potential. Here, we will explore ideas and create art with mediums and techniques that will have you achieving rewarding results with your own art.

Connector Paint is a unique paint that offers the bright vibrant color of watercolor, and the opacity of Gouache. It mixes well, and is wonderful to work with.

In this lesson plan, we explore the basic steps in painting a charming rural scene in a folk art style inspired by the art of the legendary Grandma Moses.



## ***Materials used:***

*FC Connector Paint Box*

*FC Graphite 2B Pencil*

*Large Sheet of Strathmore Watercolor Paper, Cold Press*

*A Medium Size Soft Flat Brush*

*A Medium size Filbert Brush*

*Paper Towels*

*Water*

## ***Inspiration: Maple Hill Farm Inn***

Maple Hill Farm is my step brother's lovely old Victorian farmhouse built in 1906, and turned into a highly rated country inn. Nestled in the beautiful green Maine countryside, it is surrounded by acres of rolling fields and woods. It has been a wonderful location for many special events, including memorable weddings over the years.

There are several charming things that make this place quaint; an old barn full of llamas and chickens, wild turkeys roaming freely, stone walls and of course, big beautiful old maple trees.

With fall in the air, I could imagine what a sight it would soon be— trees ablaze in brilliant shades of red, orange and yellow. Overcome by all of this charm and character, I was reminded of the paintings of Grandma Moses, and decided then and there, to create a piece of art inspired by her folk art style and technique.

## ***Anna Mary Robertson, aka Grandma Moses (1860-1961)***

Anna Mary was a farmer's wife who spent decades living the rural life that she would later depict in her paintings. She had just begun painting in her mid-seventies when a New York art collector discovered her work in the window of a local drugstore in her small town of Hoosick Falls; he bought it all. The next year, these paintings appeared on display at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Her first one-woman show soon followed, and from there she went on to become one of the most famous and beloved folk artists of the twentieth century.

Moses often painted her scenes of rural life from memory, having said:



*“I’ll get an inspiration and start painting; then forget everything except how things used to be and how to paint it so people will know how we used to live.”*

During her career, Moses created 1,500 works of art. Her paintings remain popular today. President John F. Kennedy remembered Moses as “a beloved figure from American life” and “The directness and vividness of her paintings restore a primitive freshness to our perception of the American scene.”

**National Grandma Moses Day: September 7**





## ***The drawing***

My first steps in developing this large drawing (16 x 20), was to sketch my ideas to size on separate pieces of tracing paper— the barn, the 2 houses, the trees and the wild turkeys. I referred to several photos I took that day while visiting Maple Hill Farm, and composed the picture much like Grandma Moses did, a perspective from up high, so as to see the entire property, with the barn and big tree being larger in the foreground. These tissue drawings allowed me the flexibility to size, compose and then trace into position onto a large piece of watercolor paper.





## ***The Underpainting***

In this step, I do an underpainting by simply adding water to the Connector Paint to create a thin watercolor wash. I paint a simple, light, basic color over the entire drawing. Doing an underpainting helps to map out the painting, making you think about how you will paint different areas before you proceed; what will look best in the final art. It also helps to ease you into a rather large, seemingly intimidating painting where you don't want to make any mistakes.

When the paint is dry, I draw the llamas into position on this light wash, so they integrate well onto the grass.

### ***TIP***

*Always keep a scrap piece of paper (same type as the artwork) at hand to test colors on throughout the painting.*





## ***About Connector Paint***

Connector Paint is a real workhorse of a paint, and in my opinion belongs in every art room. The beauty of it is in its flexibility— its ability to be transformed from a transparent watercolor paint into an opaque Gouache paint. In this next step of the painting, I will simply add white (from the tube included in the box) to all of the colors I will be using, to create a solid opaque effect- a *Gouache* paint. This flat Gouache paint is a nice alternative to Grandma Moses's oil paint, allowing me to paint using beautiful colors and techniques for the final art.

### ***TIP***

*Do not ever wash off your palette of mixed colors before the completion of your artwork. It is nearly impossible to remix a color to the exact match of the original color. Dried paint on the palette can be reactivated with a little water.*





## ***Painting***

Here, I begin with the foundation colors; all else revolves around that. I create a few tones of the green for the grass that is slowly yellowing into fall/winter grass, and use a medium soft flat brush to loosely paint this large area in a quick cross-hatch style (crisscrossing strokes). The grass is greener on the left, which will look nice behind the red and orange leaves that will be blowing off the tree. I paint the gray road in a couple different tones, giving it a mottled, painterly effect. I paint the barn, sky, stone wall and some of the fall foliage.

I then paint the large tree on the left, and am very pleasantly surprised at the interesting result. Sometimes in painting, you can get an unexpected effect with certain colors and paint consistency, and it's reaction on certain papers. The bark-like texture this combination creates here is a real surprise.





Here, I continue with details— the house in the back, the trees, the turkeys, and the flat color for the first stage of the llamas.

As I paint, I remind myself that I am going for a naive, folk art look; this means that I am not trying to achieve realism, things are imperfect, loose, stylized and even child-like in some details. Grandma Moses' self-taught style was quite child-like on close examination of many of her paintings, with unrealistic perspective, and no shadows anywhere. This adds to the charm of her work, and the story that her paintings tell.





## ***Final art***

And now it is time to carefully evaluate the painting thus far, and add final details. I decide to make the barn more lively and interesting by adding texture and more shades of red and gray. I use the top straight edge of my flat brush, and create sketchy horizontal lines in both darker and lighter colors. I add a rough effect to small areas of the barn by using a dry-brush technique— a literally dry brush lightly dipped in paint and sparingly dabbed on.

Contrary to the Grandma Moses style, I decide to go in for detail on the llamas— they need their long hair to read as llamas and not anything else.

Finally, I paint fall leaves blowing everywhere! Be sure to use a filbert brush here; the brush tip's rounded shape will create just the right leaf shape.

I “carve” my initials onto the tree on the left, and am finished. Happy fall folks!