



# A Lesson in Creating a Sense of Place

The The Historic Woodstock Art Colony: Art in the Arthur A. Anderson Collection at the New York State Museum

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## For Grades K–5



The New York State Museum is a program of | The University of the State of New York | The State Education Department | Office of Cultural Education

# Introduction

## *Why an Artists' Colony?*

In 1902 the Byrdcliffe Arts Colony was established in Woodstock. The year-round utopian community promoted the Arts and Crafts movement, which originated in late nineteenth-century England as a response to industrialization. The movement emphasized individual, hand-crafted work over mass production. Wealthy Englishman Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead and his American wife, Jane Byrd McCall, along with writer Hervey White and artist Bolton Brown, founded the colony; its name was derived from the middle names of the Whiteheads, who financed the project.

The idea of an artists' colony was not new. Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century in central Europe, clustering around Paris and in parts of Germany and the Netherlands, artists began to found village-like communities, outside of cities, in which they could live and work together, socializing and sharing inspiration. Over time, the trend spread to other parts of Europe and leapt across the Atlantic to the United States. Artists were drawn to the Woodstock area because of the natural beauty of the Hudson Valley.

By the summer of 1903, some 30 buildings—including studios, workshops, and housing—were constructed on Mount Guardian near the village of Woodstock. Byrdcliffe drew artisans from across all media: furniture makers, painters, printmakers, photographers, metalworkers, weavers, ceramicists, and others, as well as writers and musicians. Classes were offered, and notable teachers included co-founder Bolton Brown and Birge Harrison, as well as Hermann Dudley Murphy and William Schumacher. The multi-skilled artist Zulma Steele numbered among the students, as did photographer Eva Watson-Schütze, who studied painting there. Initially, the prevailing style in two-dimensional work was Tonalism, a subtly colored, moody approach to landscape. Many artists were influenced by contemporary European trends.

Byrdcliffe continues to flourish today under the auspices of the Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild.

Disillusioned with what he felt was a restrictive artistic environment, Hervey White left Byrdcliffe in 1904. He purchased a nearby farm and established what would become the Maverick Arts Colony, a community more bohemian than Byrdcliffe. Early on, the colony attracted mostly writers and musicians, though by the 1920s visual artists of wide-ranging approaches had a large presence too. In 1910 White launched the Maverick Press, which published original literary and artistic material. A theater and concert hall also graced the grounds.

In 1915 White staged the first Maverick Festival, which would provide the main economic support for the colony. Held annually on the night of the August full moon, the festival featured music, dancing, food and drink, and attendees dressed in creative costumes. It is often seen as the forerunner to the famous Woodstock Music & Art Fair that was held in Bethel, New York, in 1969. Every summer Maverick Concerts still take place in the concert hall built by Hervey White in 1916.

There was much overlap of artists, both students and teachers, among the various organizations in Woodstock. As painter Birge Harrison noted, the foundational desire for an arts community at Woodstock was “to develop a number of individual painters and not to develop a ‘school,’” or single style. Still, while a wide range of subjects was undertaken by these artists, the beautiful natural setting became the main source of inspiration for many working there.

## Warm-Up Questions

- ▶ What is a map?
- ▶ What is a map's purpose?
- ▶ What types of features do we find on maps?



# Guided Practice

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# Guided Practice



Rudolf Wetterau and Margaret Wetterau  
Map of Woodstock, 1926  
Ink on board  
20 x 28 ½ in.

## Encourage students to ask themselves:

- ▶ What is going on in this map?
- ▶ What makes me think that?
- ▶ What more can we find?
- ▶ What story is this map telling? What is its focus?
- ▶ What information is given? What information is left out?
- ▶ What is important to the artists? What is the artists' connection to Woodstock?
- ▶ What does the map tell us about the people living there?
- ▶ What does the map tell us about the year 1926?

# Expanded Discussion

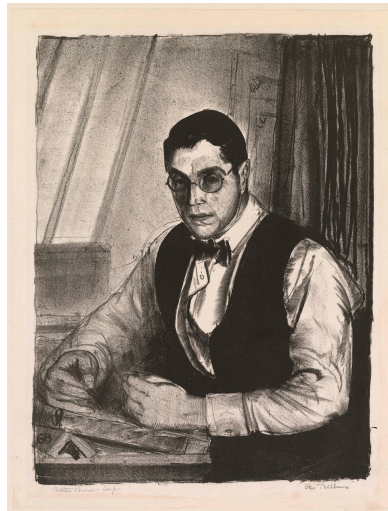
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# Expanded Discussion

Examine George Bellows' artwork, *Eugene Speicher Drawing on a Stone*. Bellows chose to depict Speicher, his friend and fellow artist, working on a lithograph stone, preparing a print. Both Bellows and Speicher worked with Bolton Brown, who was known for his innovations in the field of lithography. Bellows, Speicher, and Brown were all artists who lived in Woodstock, and their homes can be found on the *Wetterau Map of Woodstock*



**Rudolf Wetterau and Margaret Wetterau**  
*Map of Woodstock*, 1926  
Ink on board  
20 x 28 ½ in.



**George Bellows**  
*Eugene Speicher Drawing on a Stone*, 1921  
Lithograph on paper  
11½ x 8½ in.

## Encourage students to ask themselves:

- What does this lithograph tell us about the artists' connection to the physical location of Woodstock?
- What does this artwork tell us about the connection between artists?

# Artmaking Activity

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## Design a Map of Your Community



### Materials: Pencil, Paper

**Ask the following questions at the start of the activity:**

- ▶ What places in your community do you go to on a regular basis?
- ▶ How do you get there?
- ▶ Draw and label landmarks like your home, school, grocery store, park, etc.



### Wrap-up

**Have students present their maps to the class. What did they include, and why?**

- ▶ What things were different?
- ▶ What might an individual map tell us about the person who made it?



### Advanced Practice

**Students can discuss ways to collaborate and merge ideas together to make a master map.**

- ▶ Take a large roll of paper and help the students plot locations.



# Vocabulary

**compass rose** – A circle showing the principal (cardinal) directions printed on a map.

**cardinal directions** – The four main points of a compass: north, south, east, and west.

**horizontal lines** – Run left to right across a page or plain.

**vertical lines** – Run up and down a page or plain.

**intersecting lines** – Two lines that cross and share exactly one point.

**land feature** – Naturally formed features, such as plains, plateaus, mountains, valleys, hills, etc. Also called “landforms.”

**scale** – Size relationship, proportion, or ratio of the length in a drawing to the length of the real thing.

**colony** – A place where a group of people with similar interests live together.

**collaboration** – The action of working with someone to produce or create something.

**subjective** – Based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions.