



# Home Lesson

## Harper's Mosaics

**Goal:** Explore the Minimal Realism art style coined by Charley Harper by making your own paper mosaic.

**Materials:** A sheet of paper for your background, colorful paper to make mosaic pieces, scissors, glue.

**Lesson:** Charley Harper (1922-2007) was an American Modernist artist. He grew up on a farm in West Virginia and moved to Cincinnati in the 1940s to study at the Art Academy. His childhood on the family farm forever influenced his art, which typically focused on animals. In his well-established style, which he called “minimal realism,” Harper captured the essence of his subjects with the fewest possible details, using geometric shapes.

This style lent itself well to tile mosaics, which reduced the figures even further into triangles, squares, and lines. In his lifetime, Harper created three tile mosaics in the Cincinnati area. Two of these, Space for All Species in the John Weld Peck Federal Building downtown and Web of Life at Miami University, feature various animals and plants in Harper's signature style.



“Web of Life” (1986) – Charley Harper

### Instructions:

1. Choose a subject matter- Look around your yard or your neighborhood for something that interests you. Maybe a pet? Or a bird hopping in the grass? A green tree? Some colorful flowers? The sky's the limit! Really – you could do the sky if you'd like.
2. To create your mosaic tiles, think about the colors of your subject matter and their habitat. Check the recycling bin for old magazines, newspapers, advertisements, or any other paper that is ready to be reused. Cut them into shapes like triangles, squares, and rectangles. You can make the pieces as big or as little as you want.
3. Charley Harper's artwork uses simple shapes to create pictures. What shapes, big and small, make up the world you want to create in your artwork? Take time rearranging the shapes and laying out your design before gluing!
4. Glue your pieces down, let it dry and share a picture of it with us @cincymuseum!

**Looking for more Learning from Home resources?** Keep learning with us!

We are creating virtual learning opportunities and online resources – including exhibits, videos, blogs, curator interviews and activities – to help students keep their minds active during school closure.

Visit <https://www.cincymuseum.org/learning-from-home/>