

RECREATING THE SCREAM


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Last night, I was sitting in my room wondering how in the world I was going to make a piece of modern art. I was flipping through the book *Modern Art*, edited by David Britt, looking for something simple which I could recreate. I was thinking that there is no way I am going to be able to make anything close to the art in this book.

At that point, I remembered ArtRage, a painting program for the Tablet PC. I had used it before to show off what a tablet can do, but ever since I formatted my hard drive and installed Windows 7, I had not used it. I have a Fujitsu T4220 Tablet PC which I carry with me everywhere I go. The tablet feature on my laptop is nice since I can take notes and draw pictures right on my screen. When the professor posts his or her slide deck online before the lecture, I can write on top of the slides in my notes.

* industrially this reaction is conducted at 280°C in the absence of solvents

* lab demo uses two immiscible solvents (water and hexane) and dissolves a reactant in each: **reaction occurs only at the interface**



$\text{H}_2\text{N}-(\text{CH}_2)_6-\text{NH}_2(\text{aq}) + \text{HO}_2\text{C}-(\text{CH}_2)_4-\text{CO}_2\text{H}(\text{hexane})$

Make solid
From 2 liquids
Video demo

The program that I use, OneNote, only has basic pens that make straight lines independent of pressure and other lines on the page. ArtRage, however, has many tools. Some of these tools are pressure sensitive. A good example of pressure sensitivity is the airbrush. The tablet pen records how

hard it is pressing against the screen. ArtRage then translates this pressure to the thickness of the density of the airbrush particles.



The paint brush is the most interesting of the tools. It has a model where the ink does not dry immediately. If you change the color of your brush and then run through existing ink, the ink will blend and smear.



After becoming reacquainted with ArtRage, I tried to recreate a cubist painting. I started out making a red square similar to Mark Rothko's *Red, White, and Brown*, however it was not really exciting. I thought I could draw a few boxes on the page, but Professor Bove would know how little time I spent on his assignment.



I thought about making my own abstract painting myself. I randomly drew a few lines on the page. This took even less time than making the square. I figured that this would not be acceptable either.



I then remembered the movie *The Incredible* and the amazing 50s style of architecture. The style is particularly pronounced in the family house. I thought I could draw something that was similar to the style of architecture. I then noticed a button labeled "Tracing." I was intrigued, and so I clicked on the button. It asked to open a picture for tracing, and so I opened the picture of the house. It was

very low detail, since it was so small. I started with a pencil, but it was not easy at all. I did not even save my meager attempt to trace the outline of the house.



Then I remembered the last project where I studied the intricate stroke details of Impressionist paintings. I was thinking I could try to recreate some of the stroke details from one of the paintings. I would just have to change the brush stroke color to match each section of the painting. That would be a lot of work to change the color each time, but far better than anything I could draw. I was flipping through the pages of Britt and saw Edward Munch's *Scream*. The strokes at the top of the page were very pronounced and would be fairly easy to copy. I downloaded a copy of the picture from the internet and opened it for tracing. In the tracing menu there was an interesting option to convert the image to paint. I was wondering whether I could now blend the image, and so I tried the blend tool. I was able to run the tool across the painting and ruin it. I pulled the dark blue ink through the orange. I drew swirls through different sections of the painting.



This was cool, but not very artistic. The assignment also called for making something new. I reset the picture and discovered the next option to use the trace color. This took whatever color was under the brush to start with and extended it through the entire brush stroke. In addition, it applied the paint texture and blending effects of the paint brush tool.



I zoomed in on the image and started to make simple back and forth strokes in order to match the colors from each section. This turned out surprisingly well. At this point, I did not paint over other strokes too much at the top and did not rely on blending, leaving some blank spots on the final image.



As I went down the page, I zoomed out, and used a bigger brush, and relied more on blending. This technique made the second and third set of orange lines turn out better. On the other hand, in the fire section on the right-hand side of the painting I used brush strokes which were too wide. These strokes did not pick up the intricate details of the fire, so that zone turned out to look like mush.



For the lake zone I tried hard to preserve the boats, and so I drew those in pencil and did not paint too close around them. In hindsight, I should not have brought pencil into a painting. I should have painted in the background under them and then zoomed in and used a small brush to paint the

boats. However, if I would have painted over the background, I would not have been able to trace the boats. In addition, the lake was the first zone where I did not paint simple horizontal strokes. To the left of the lake, I followed the curves of the inlet. On the right however, I painted the inlet with so many curves that it looked like a wave. Perhaps this addition makes the painting more frightening, as it looks like the ships are about to be swallowed.



The people and walkway were difficult. I used small, vertical strokes to draw the people. This choice of technique gives them an effect not seen in the original. I choose to draw in the boardwalk with the smallest strokes possible to represent the wooden planks used to build a boardwalk. My strokes were far more narrow than Munch's, who again relied on blending, perhaps from water colors, which ArtRage 2.5 does not support.



The Scream himself was the hardest part of the entire painting, and so I painted him last. I started with his shoulders since they have a pronounced shape, especially near the elbows. I then painted his hands with thin, long strokes. His body was also somewhat easy to paint since it had long curving strokes. His face was the hardest part, since there was very little blending. The eyes were

difficult to leave space for. I had the same issue as with the ships; I should have painted the background in and then painted the eyes myself. The right eye did not look good at all on my first try. I used the eraser for the first time and tried again.



In all, the image took me thirty minutes to make. As I went I tried out different techniques for tracing the painting. Some worked out, but others did not. Except for at the end, I did not erase any strokes.

If I were to start again and use the lessons I learned from this experiment, I could make a better looking painting. For example, the ultra-thin brush strokes on the boardwalk did not work. Munch managed to convey more detail through the blending of thicker strokes. At the top of the painting, I had thicker strokes, but they were too short and did not overlap. A moderate amount of blending would have helped. On the other hand, I must be careful to limit the thickness and extend of the blending to avoid turning the colors into mush. In addition, I should have painted closer to the subjects of the painting, even if it meant I could not trace over the subject easily. Perhaps I could trace the subject in a different layer, and then paste them in. If I had more skill, I could start to select my own colors and actually recreate more parts of the painting. In all, the reproduction turned out far better than anything I could make on my own and far better than I expected for this project.

