

Trees: Shape, Shadow, and Highlights

Lucie Wellner ©



Simplify the tree to a basic SHAPE.

Think in SHAPES and BLOCKS.
Not lines.

What words come to mind when observing the tree? Write them down.

Where does the tree divide from light to shadow?

Simplify the tree into a few MASSES.

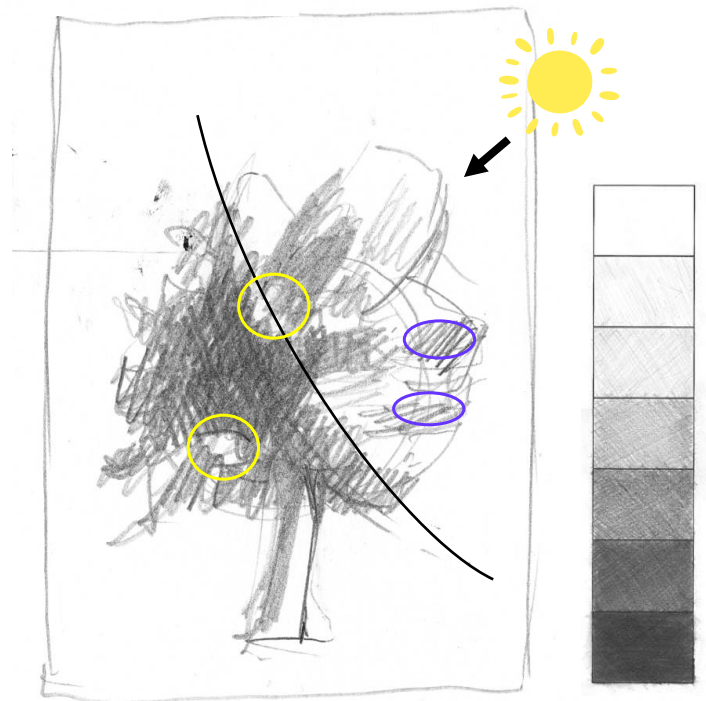
What direction is the light coming from?

Where are the highlights found within the shadows?

Where are the shadows found within the light areas?

Scribble in the shadows, erase the highlights.

Add middle values.



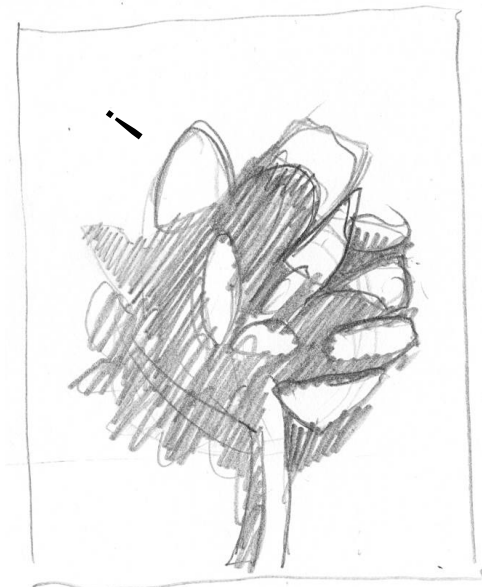
Simplify one more time and identify the HIGHLIGHTS.

Remember, the tree has VOLUME.

The volume is defined by shadows and light.

The leaves catch the light, even in areas of shadow.

Find the GESTURE of the branches, the leaves, and limbs.
This will help convey the essence of the tree,



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Create a small color study.
Find the **LIGHTEST** color in the tree.
Find the **DARKEST** color in the tree.
Work out some of the middle colors.

For natural looking greens,
add a little bit of orange, red, pink, or
brown



Draw an outline of the tree.

Try to make graceful looking lines and shapes to capture the gesture.



Wet in Wet. SCARY! Work Quickly.
Use paint that is consistency of cream.

Start with the background.

Then the lightest color, working
toward the darker colors.

Keep some sky showing through
the tree.



Add darker colors.



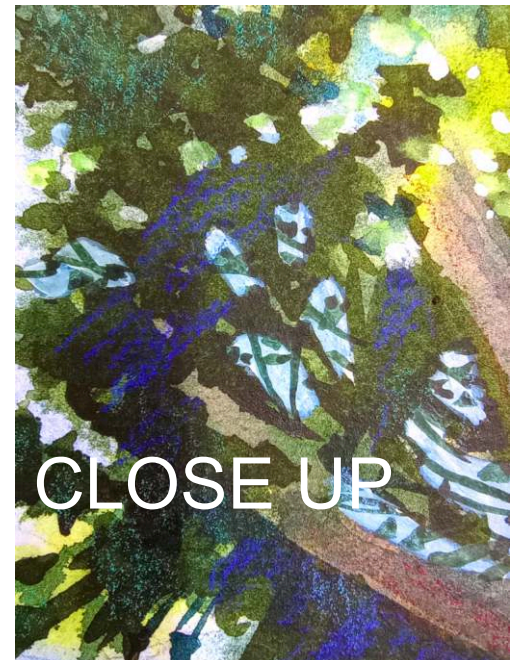
Add even darker colors once
paper is dry. Make LACE

Finishing touches on dry paper:

Some plausible leaves

Gouache

Color Pencil



CLOSE UP