

# THE PAINTINGS OF LAWREN HARRIS ACTIVITY GUIDE

**AGO**  
FROM HOME



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# THE ARTIST

## LAWREN S. HARRIS (1885–1970)

Lawren Harris was born in 1885 in Brantford, Ontario to a wealthy family. As a child he was often sick, and while staying in bed he amused himself with drawing and painting. At age 19, Harris went to art school in Europe. After four years, he returned to Canada and lived in Toronto.

Harris, along with six other Canadian artists, developed a new style of painting landscapes. Together, they founded an artist collective called the Group of Seven. Many people have come to love their paintings and find inspiration in them.

When Harris started painting, he used lots of detail and colour. He painted city scenes, especially houses in an area of Toronto called The Ward.

Later, after travelling north to the Rockies, Lake Superior and even once to the Arctic, he changed his style completely. He began to brush the paint on smoothly, with little detail and few colours. He painted landscapes with mountains, lakes, clouds, trees and icebergs.

He wasn't trying to make realistic paintings of what he saw. Instead, he wanted to show an experience.

**How would you feel if you were standing in front of a grand view of a mountain?**



# A TORONTO NEIGHBOURHOOD: THE WARD

For more than one hundred years, in Toronto there was a busy, bustling neighbourhood called The Ward. Houses, shops, theatres, factories and community centres were crowded into the area where the Eaton Centre and city hall now stand. People from many parts of the world came and lived there.

Harris visited The Ward often. He felt sadness for the people who lived there and the poor conditions they lived in. He sketched the houses, and other people took photographs. That means we have a record of the neighbourhood even though most of it was torn down to make space for the new buildings in the 1950s.

**YOUR TURN:** The next time you go for a walk in your neighbourhood, look out for old buildings and houses. Are there a lot left? In the space below or on your own paper, sketch the oldest building you see.



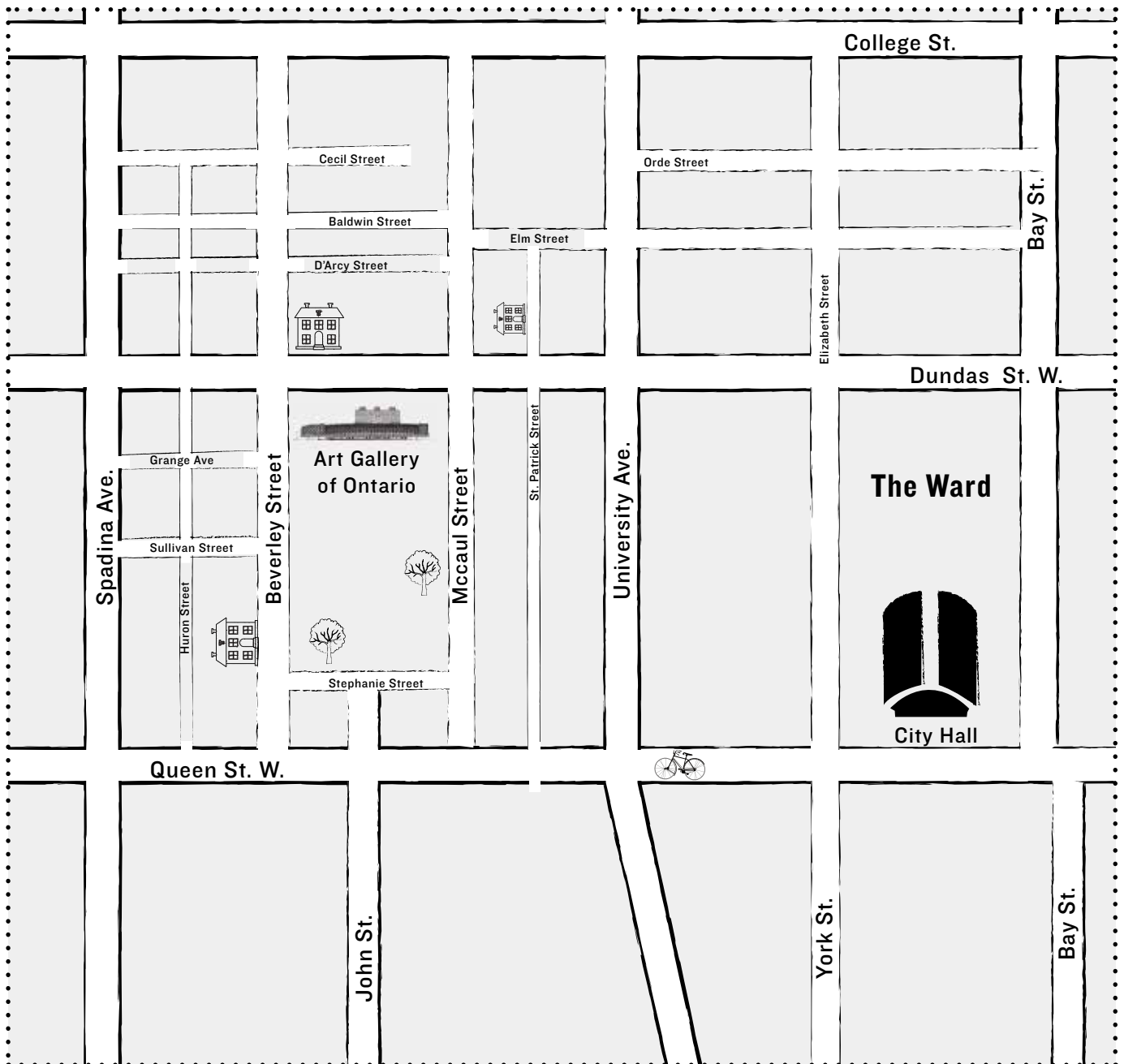
A large rectangular area enclosed by a dotted line, intended for a student to sketch an old building.

# OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD MAP

Check out this map of the AGO's neighbourhood in Toronto, including part of The Ward. The streets and buildings have changed a lot in a hundred years. Some streets have disappeared and others have changed names. Did you know why Dundas Street is not as straight as others in Toronto? It was formed by connecting a number of smaller streets!

**YOUR TURN:** Is there a wonky sidewalk or walkway in your neighbourhood? How would you draw it? What does it resemble?

Continue the map with your own drawings! What would you build in your neighbourhood? What would you add? What would you remove? Imagine your neighbourhood one hundred years from now – what will it look like?



# DRAW YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD MAP





# LIFE IN THE WARD



In this painting, Harris shows us examples of houses that were once in The Ward.

**YOUR TURN:** What does your home look like? Draw it below.

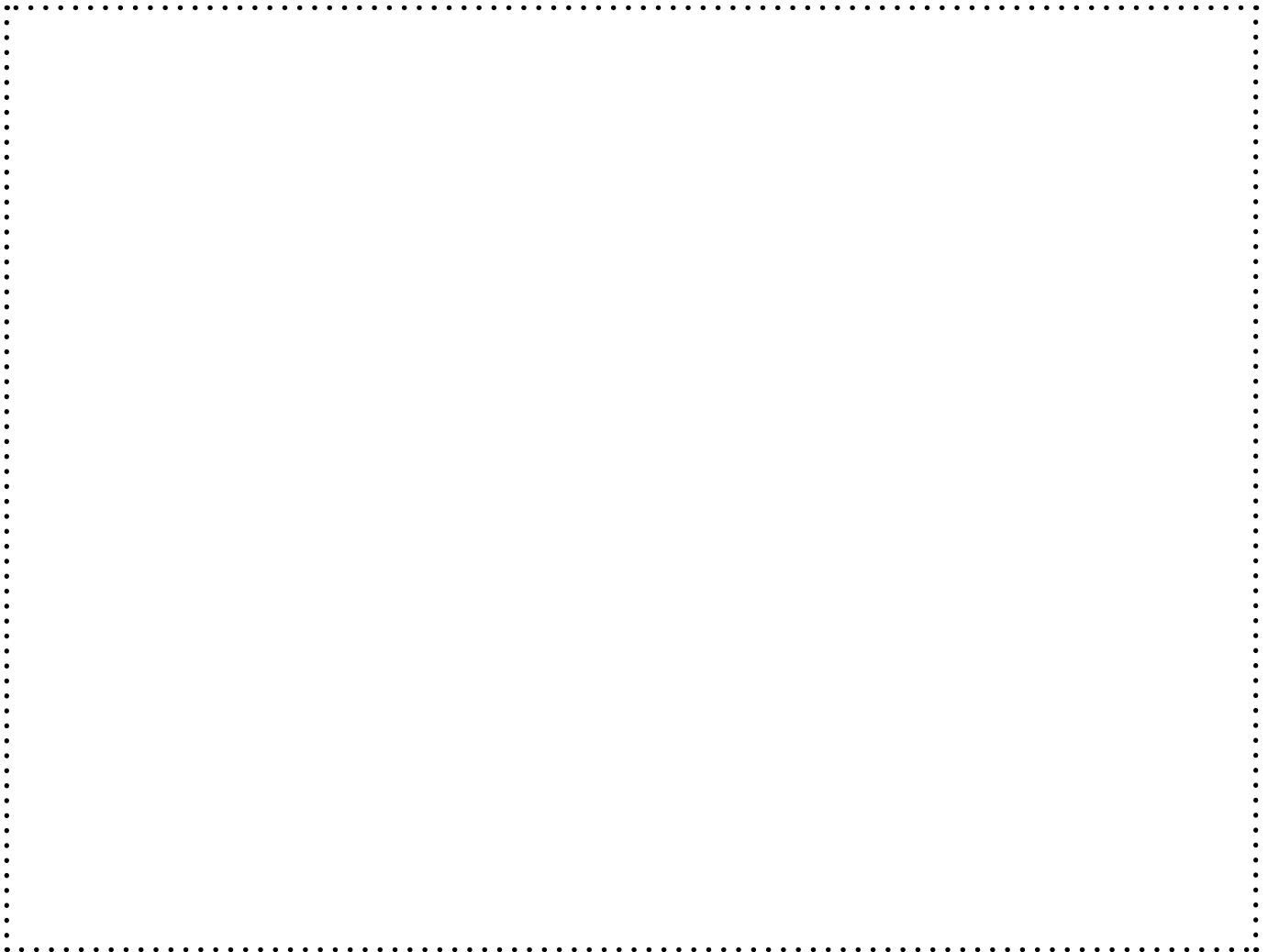
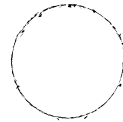
A large rectangular area defined by a dotted line, intended for drawing a home.

# WHAT LAWREN HARRIS SAW



Look at how Harris created this scene using simple coloured shapes to capture the island.

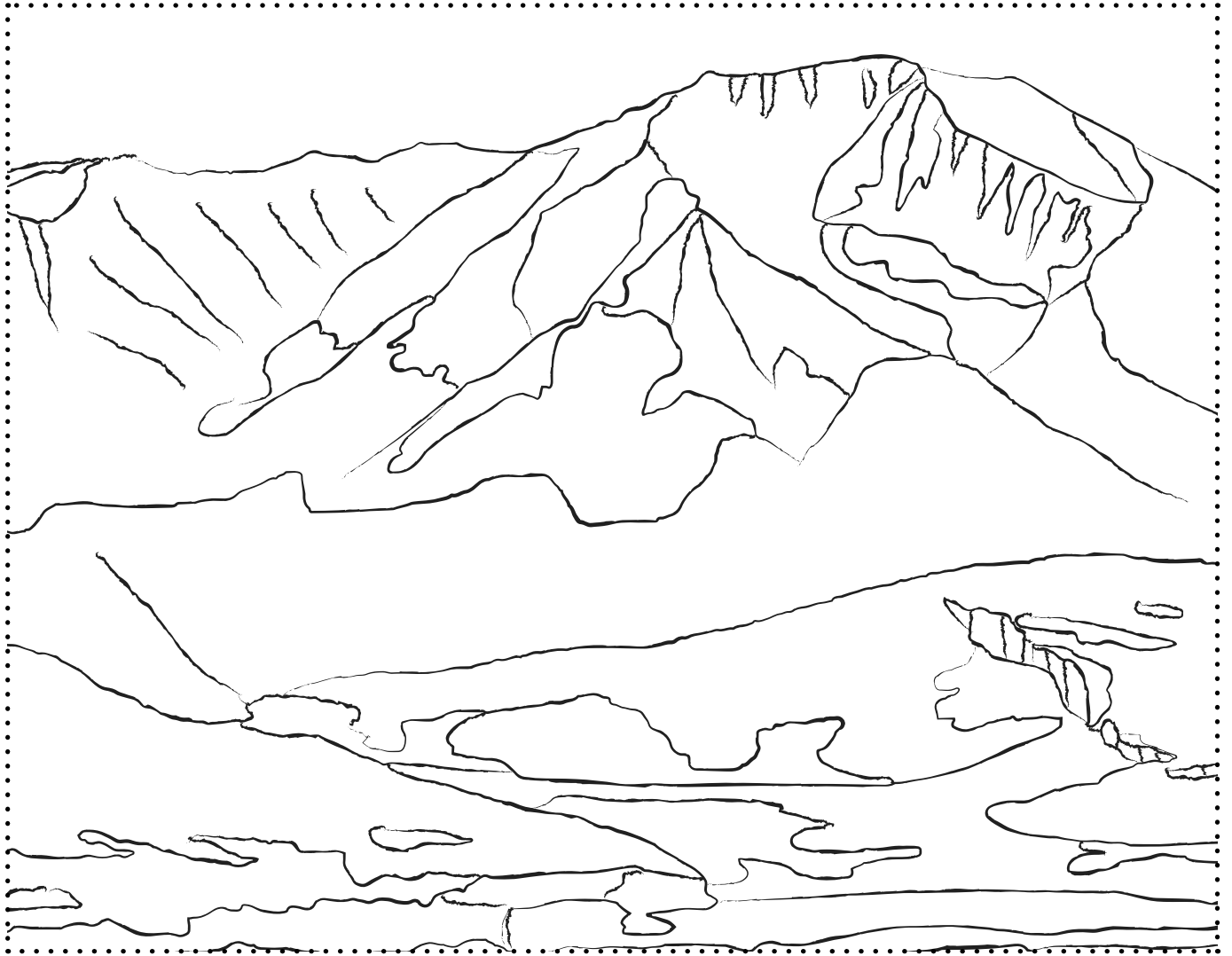
**YOUR TURN:** How many shapes can you think of? Use them and the shapes below and create a drawing. You can draw an island like Harris, or any other outdoor scene.



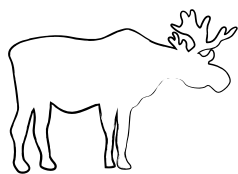
# WHAT'S MISSING?

Look at this image of the Rocky Mountains. What's missing? Lawren Harris did not include the birds, animals or people who might have been in this landscape.

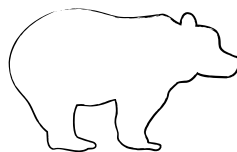
**YOUR TURN:** Add your own animals and people to the drawing below. There is a selection of animals as examples below, or you can make up your own.



elk



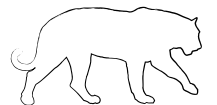
moose



bear



mountain goat



mountain lion

