Make an abstract textured landscape inspired by the installation *White Gold* by Thomas Sayre

**Supplies**
Lawn sign, utility knife, paint, paintbrush, glue, plastic card (an old gift card or playing card)

**Thomas Sayre and *White Gold***

Why cotton? One answer is that it is a lens to view agriculture, in general, with cotton being a particularly charged version. I suppose it all began many years ago while in college. I attended one of the State’s first fiddler’s conventions in central North Carolina that spring, and I vividly remember venturing out into the nearby fields in the early morning hours. I walked out between the rows and felt compelled to drop to the ground, face up, looking at the stars, listening to the night sounds, and feeling the adjacent barns guarding the land. I imagined whose footsteps had come before on the clay-filled soil and wanted to embrace the furrows, the dirt, and the plants that you could almost hear growing. It was a feeling of being surrounded and pulled down while my mind struggled with “big picture thoughts” of growth, decay, timelessness, and loss. Row. Track. Barn. Thicket. In part, these works came from that seminal experience. I hope the viewer will feel similarly enveloped by that breadth of our beautiful, rich, and haunted land. –Thomas Sayre

Born in 1950, Thomas Sayre grew up in Washington D.C. and currently lives and works in North Carolina. He is best known for his large-scale earthcast sculptures, where he creates large cast sculptures by carving out huge molds into the earth. These large public works are all over the United States and the world, including Tampa! You can see his sculpture *Ripple Gates* (2018) at the entrance of Julian B. Lane Riverfront Park, commissioned by the City of Tampa.

In this installation, *White Gold* refers to cotton and a reverence for the land, the labor, and the people (forced or unforced) who made cotton their livelihood. *White Gold* is a forceful expression of the Southern landscape, the searing beauty and the haunting pain of history, memory – and ultimately belonging. Thomas Sayre has always made work that balances human intention with the natural resistance of materials. His process of making creates a kind of beauty that arises from the intersection of human labor and nature. The artist has one idea for how to manipulate the materials, but different materials, especially natural materials, will react each in their own different ways. The earthcasts in *White Gold* are one expression of this intersection of mark-making and nature. In the newer two-dimensional work, the same intersection is achieved with earth, tar, paint, and the artist’s labor, the physical act of smearing, scraping, and rubbing. For Sayre, this process is also a way to process the past.
Let’s Make a Painting!

1. With a utility knife, cut off (with the grain of your coroplast) about 1/3 of the lawn sign to make a long rectangular panel.
2. With your glue, squeeze out your cotton blossom or flower shapes. Don’t yet worry about stems or leaves, we’ll make those later. Don’t use too much glue or the spiral designs will spread out and become a blank blob.
3. Use a hair dryer on high to spread out the glue and get some more splattery shapes.
4. While your glue dries, use brown paint, or mix some with leftover paints from another project.
5. Smear your brown paint all over the panel with a large brush.
6. Quickly, before it dries, use your plastic card to push the paint in between your glue lines, and to spread it all over the rest of the panel.
7. Scrape away more paint near the top to create the sky, and use the corner of your plastic card to create branches below. Don’t just create branches for your blossoms, crape away a bunch of extra branches to create a dense thicket.
8. Once this layer is dry, go back in with white paint to emphasize your cotton blossoms.
9. Take your painting outdoors, and when the white paint is still wet, find a stick and smack your blossoms a couple times to create some splatters.

Mixing a Brown

Any two colors directly opposite each other on the color wheel will make brown when they’re mixed. For example, combining green & red, or orange & blue, or violet & yellow will produce more natural brown colors.

Go on a color hunt and try to create an earthy brown color by mixing together two opposite colors that you already have a lot of in your art supplies.