

# *Hooked on* **Collage**



**From simple shape collages to full art collages  
Inspiring children's creativity through collage**

**A step by step approach to collage**

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## ***Introduction***

As the title of this report indicates, I am hooked on collage.

I think collage is one of the most creative, fun, enriching, thoughtful and satisfying types of artwork that children can be involved in.

In the world of modern art collage is considered an art form..

It is used however, as an expressive, modern art type of activity and would not usually be used to depict representational art.

Collage looks like a very haphazard activity. But it's not.

What gives it that reputation is many teachers' propensity for using old scraps and pieces of material from extra projects to give the children to collage with. That is because most of these teachers don't know about the range of collaging activities that there are.

What is going on in a collage activity is this:

The children have a problem to solve. They have a background and materials to glue onto that background and they have to decide how to arrange and glue these pieces to make a pleasing piece of artwork.

For young children that is a problem to solve. The more experiences children are given with problems like this to solve, the easier it will be for them to solve more difficult problems in later years.

Really young children are learning about the materials properties and what they can and cannot do with them, before they start to think about what they want to make.

If they are given many collages as they are developing, they will start looking at their materials in different ways and will start to arrange the pieces with more thought.

It is fascinating watching children's collages develop as the children themselves grow and develop. One can even tell where a child is in her or his development by how they collage.

Many years ago when I was a preschool director, I would notice collages on the walls of the classrooms. If I saw a child collaging at a much more basic level than the rest of the class I would know to check out the child in question.

As children start turning about 4 or 5, they usually start developing an interest in making more representational objects with their collages.

The more collages they are exposed to with different types of materials and topics, the more creative they get.

Most teachers in the Early Childhood arena give children collage as a purely expressive, sensory activity that follows along the modern art ideas of collage. I do that as well and at the same time I also introduce a new concept.

I have created a new form of collage that I call **art collage** that I introduce in this complete collage curriculum for children.

This collage curriculum is a sequential series of collages that you can do with children, starting with simple shape collages and proceeding to the new, more sophisticated art collages.

Collage can be started with children as young as 3.

If you want to give 2 yr olds collage just be aware that they are only interested in the glue part of the collage and usually how it tastes.

Children that do collages from an early age and on often become quite creative and sophisticated in how they plan their collages.

Collage materials need to be presented to children in a thoughtful, attractive manner so they can actually think about how they will use the materials. Plates, styrofoam strays and lazy susans are just some of the items you can use to arrange the materials being presented.

The children's ages and stages are what will determine when to give them the more sophisticated collages.

When I see that children are starting to create representational pictures in their collages, I know that it is time to take their collages to a higher level and give them art collages.

In a nutshell, art collages are collages with a theme. The theme can be a season or a topic like *transportation vehicles*.

If you are doing a social studies unit on transportation this would tie in greatly, but you can also just give them independent collaging activities without a unit to connect it to.

For children around the age of 5 and above I also prepare photographs for inspiration for their collages.

I look online for many different types of pictures on the theme they will be collaging copy and print them out so that they can get some inspiration. Color is beautiful if you can do that, if not use a black and white printer it works as well.

I have even called a calendar company for their old calendars and they sent me old, out of date calendars with beautiful pictures to use as inspiration. Old greeting cards and

images from books can work as well. Just make sure you have a number of images so that the children don't feel that they have to copy any one type of image.

Just because we don't give children models to copy doesn't mean that we can't use images from the natural world to help jumpstart their creativity.

These pictures are in no way used as a crutch and the children should be encouraged to just use them as springboards. I personally don't find that the children feel that they have to create what is in those images and it all depends on your direction to the children.

Example: If the topic is **flowers** I will choose a variety of images including flowers. One flower, a field of flowers, flowers in a vase etc.

I tell the children that the topic is flowers and they can look at some of the pictures I hung up to decide what type of picture with flowers that they want to make. I will then go over the pictures.

*“Look there is one flower, a field of flowers, flowers in a vase or even if it's not shown a flower on a window sill and make sure children whatever you decide to make it does have a flower or many flowers in your picture”*

On occasion I will let them use other media like paint to enhance their art. I always allow them use markers or crayons if they need to finish up their pictures.

As part of the collage planning you will have had to decide what materials to give the children to collage with before you even hang up the pictures.

I tend to use the manila or white tag board as background for the collages as they are sturdier than construction paper. The size tag board will depend on the age children, what project they are working on and your space considerations.

When deciding which materials to give them to collage the important thing is to give materials that **suggest** some of the items or shapes of items that are in a particular scene or theme.

*For example:* For a winter collage I will give them lots of white materials like cotton balls and q tips and maybe even white round circles to suggest snowmen. I may also give them black or dark blue construction paper to collage onto.

If you are an old time traditionalist, and are used to preparing models for them to follow then you can compromise. Give them a bunch of materials that you would use if you were actually preparing a model for them to follow, throw in some extra stuff to the mix and let *them* figure out how to use the materials.

The amazing thing is how all different ages will all do the same activity with vastly different results.

The suggested materials like circles for snowmen, will actually make even really young children's pictures look more like winter scenes.

Not all activities need pictures for inspiration and really young children absolutely do not need pictures for inspiration.

At the end of this e book I have included images that I used for inspiration for 5 different collages. You can pick and choose which images ones to use and you can use them for other inspirational activities as well.

# What is included in this e book

I could have of course just listed all the different collaging activities that you can do with children.

That however, would be a list not a book.

I thought it would be beneficial for you to see actual samples of the work that children have done. This way it can help you plan the activities and see the types of activities you can expect. You will note the different levels that children create at throughout the various collages.

Each collage activity has samples of some children's work.

These collages have been photographed over the past few years from the activities that we do at our summer art camp and some art classes I give during the year. I also got a few pictures from some collages that some of my colleagues classrooms as well.

Some activities show you the set up with the materials and some just list the materials.

These materials are of course not set in stone and you are encouraged to use materials that are available to you.

Choosing materials to present to children for their collaging activities is a great way for you to use your own creativity and of course you have to work with what you have in your part of the world.

Beginning *collagers* start out with simple shape collages. There are quite a few variations on the simple shape collage.

Though simple shape collages are mostly for young children they are also good for older children that have not had much experience with collage.

The difference with older and younger children is that that older children will get immediately creative with just a few shapes, while the younger children will just put anything down anywhere without much thought.

Younger children can also spend lots of time on very simple shape collages while older children need more of a variety.

**Be aware if you are a teacher of children in the 3 yr old range. They will spend most of the year pasting without thought so if you need to see the results of the more representational types of collage, don't teach 3 yr olds.**

There is a lot of variety included in the simple shape collages that I present to you because as I said young children can spend much time doing the same activities or the same type activities over and over again.

After shape collages we introduce torn paper collages. Torn paper collages then are expanded with extra materials and they are also introduced to free form collages using various materials. (Yarn, fabrics, etc.)

We then move to the art collages that are collages with a theme.

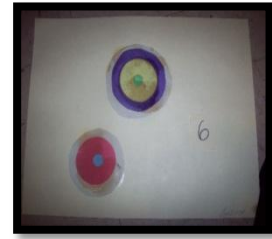
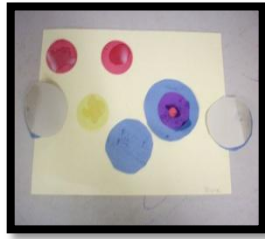
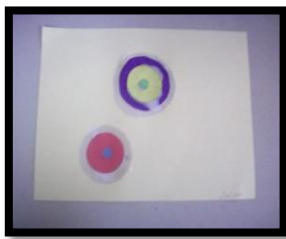
## Circle Collages

I usually start collages with circles for some reason.

Cut circles out of construction paper into a few sizes and display them on different plates or trays that package fruits and vegetables so the children can see clearly the materials they are choosing.



These collages were done with an assortment of ages. I don't always have the collages separated by ages and in these pictures some of the collages have numbers on them which tell you the ages of the children they did them.

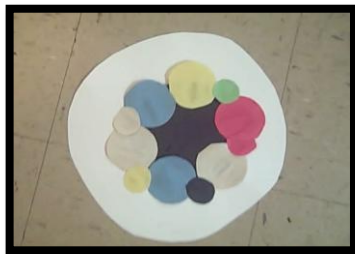
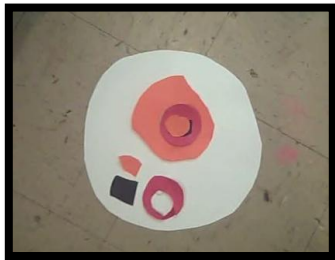


## Circle Collages with Circle Backgrounds



Adding a new type of background to simple circle collages would be the next step.

If you add scissors at one point the children will utilize them by cutting the circles into any shapes they want to use.



In this case the child decided to use only the circles and bypass the background



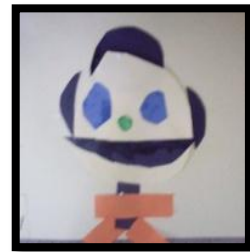
An assortment of circle collages using regular rectangular backgrounds along with circle background

## Geometric Shape Collages



Most shape collages usually consist of the standard shapes squares, rectangles, triangles and circles.

This probably comes about from the ease of preparation. Feel free to add your own hexagons or octagons if you'd like.

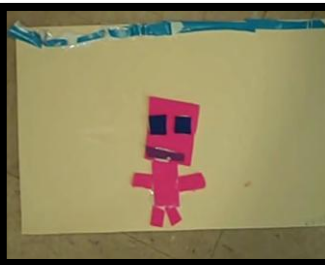
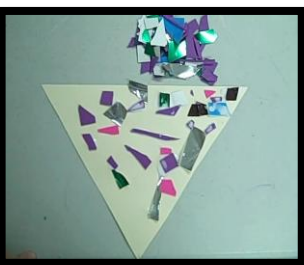
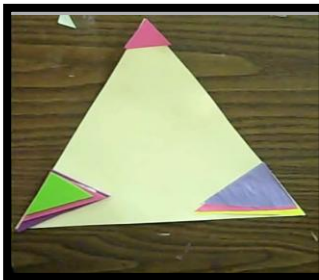
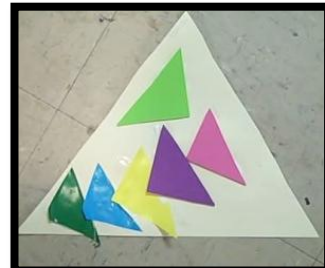
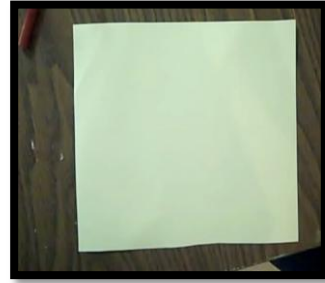
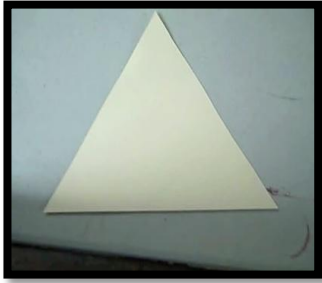


Most of the time you won't see sophisticated collages like the person above made out of the circles unless the child is at least 6 years old.

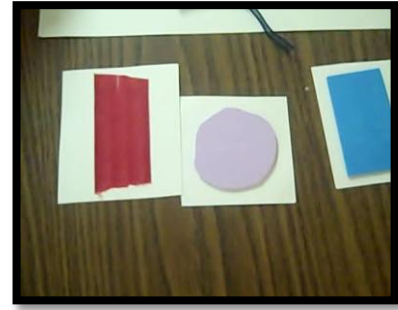
## Different Shape Background collages

These collages used the 3 shapes below as background and we added shiny paper to the shapes they were given to collage with.

You can mix and match which shapes you give the children to work with. You can give triangles for triangle paper or triangles for square paper or you can just give them all to which ever background you choose.



## Collage Shape Game



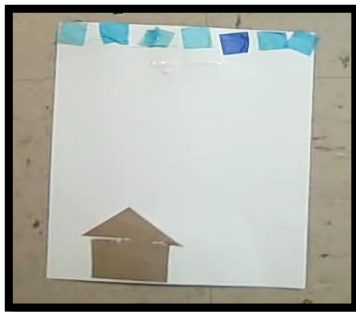
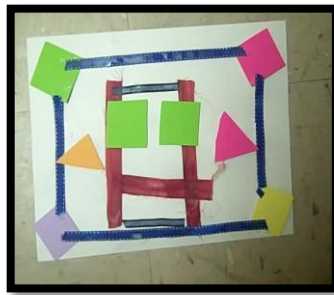
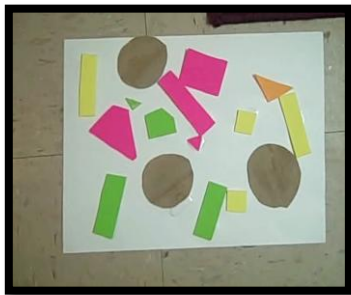
I originally called this a collage with a twist.

I made this collage into a game with the children.

I cut up a number of different shapes of different materials and divided them.

I then took 1 of each of the shapes and pasted them onto a square piece of card stock as shown above.

The children then had to choose a few pieces from the pile which were turned upside down and then choose the matching collage pieces and then used those particular pieces to collage with.

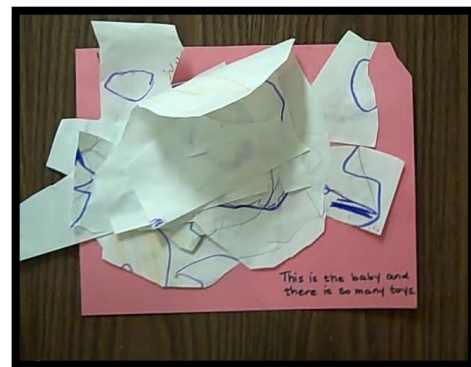
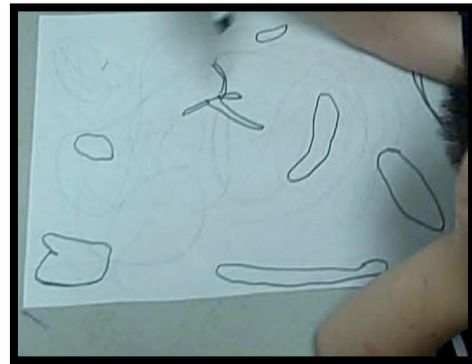
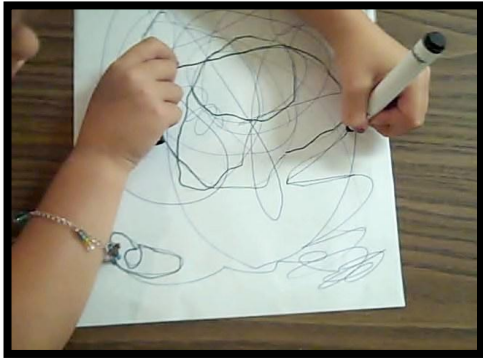


## Scribble, Find the Shapes, Cut and Collage

The children were given a pencil and told to make as they call it “scribble scrabble”.

They were then given a black marker and told to find different shapes within their picture and outline them.

This is the first shape collage that uses free form shapes. (As opposed to geometric).



## Torn Paper Collages

The first kind of torn paper collage that I encountered was using brown kraft paper as the background and pieces of newspaper from the classified section to rip up.

I find that this what I did below is more popular with the children and works better although you can certainly try many different options.

The children are allowed to choose 2 different colored construction paper. One for the background, and one to tear.

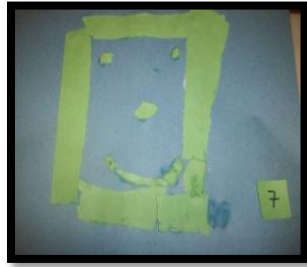
They are told that they cannot use scissors for this only their hands.

In these pictures the numbers in the corners also indicate the children's ages.

You can see how even older children like 7 or 8 are doing more random types of pictures as well as more representational.



As the children get more used this type of collage they start ripping with a purpose to either create more design and representational ideas to their collages.



Below I added feathers to the equation to add more variety to their collages.

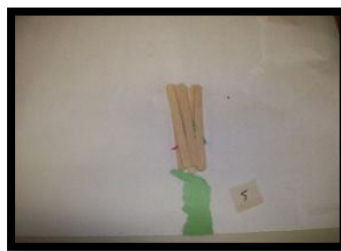
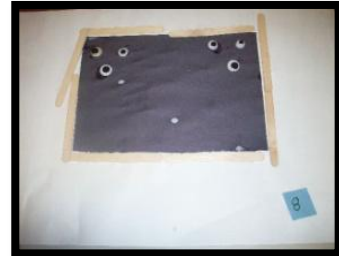
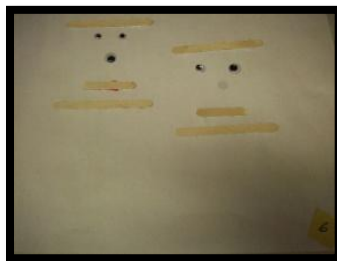
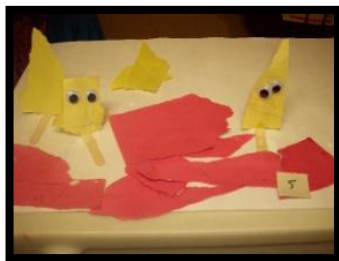
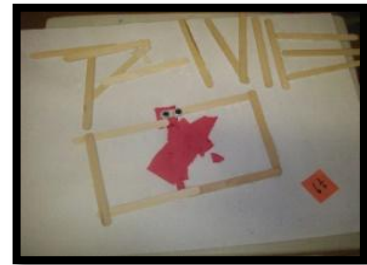
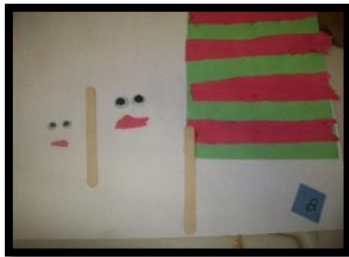


## Torn Paper Collages plus Other Materials

As I did in the collages with the feathers I at times add different materials to make the torn paper collages more interesting, and of course to make the kids think a bit more.

Sometimes I add googly eyes, crafts sticks maybe some aluminum foil.

The point of the added materials is to have them integrate these materials into their collages as you've seen they've done. Use what you have to add your own additions.



## Paper Collages



For a paper collage such as this one I would collect as many different kinds of paper as I could.

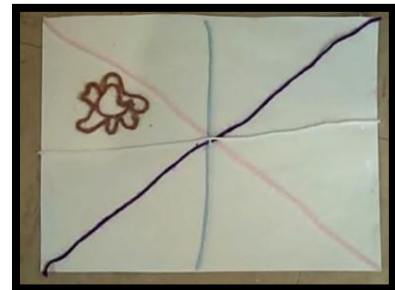
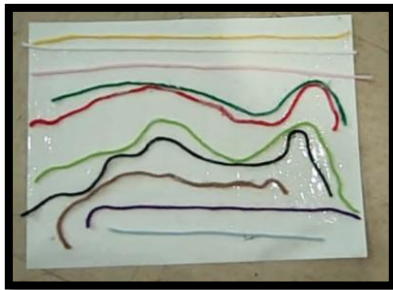
Shiny, aluminum foil, newspaper, printed papers, cellophane paper, wallpaper, tissue paper, gum wrappers and anything else you have around.

In this particular collage we allowed the children to choose which papers they wanted from whole pieces and let them cut them up as they needed. For very young children you will need to cut first.



## Yarn Collages

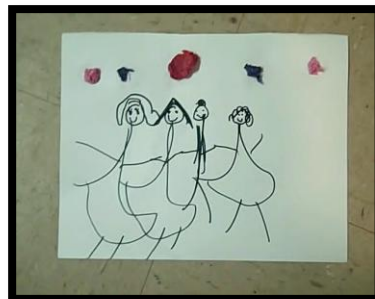
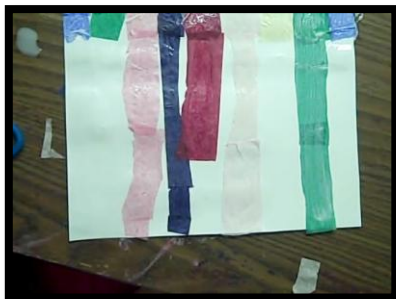
These yarn collages were inspired by this bunch of knotted yarn you see in the red box on the left. We cut up as much as we could from the bunch and had them collage with it. Of course you can use yarn from regular skeins as noted on the right.



## Tissue Paper Collages

There are actually a few types of tissue collages you can do. You can give them sheets like I did here and let either just make overlapping collages or they can use them as part of their pictures. Another idea is to allow them to take small squares of tissue paper, scrunch them up and use those for collage. You can cut the tissue paper into any small size to use to glue as well. Some teachers use the overlapping collages for color mixing activities as well.

I've also used water instead of glue which allows them to lift the tissue paper off the paper in essence dyeing the paper.

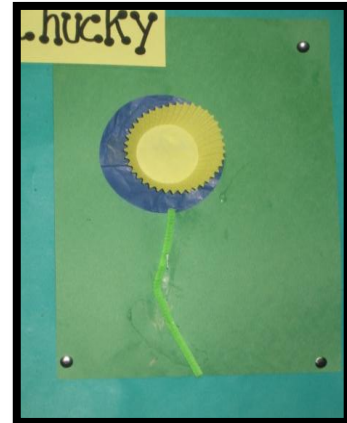
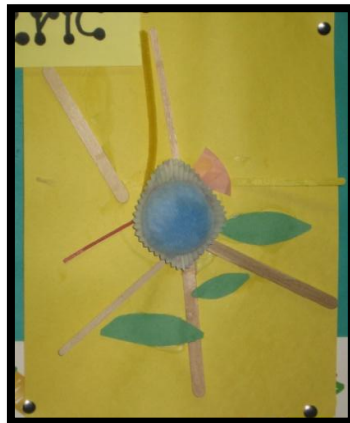


## Flower Collages

There are 3 types of flower collages that I have done here. I'm sure you can figure out other types with materials you have as well.

For the first one I used small paper plates, cupcake holders, pom poms, crafts sticks, some cut up pieces of circle tissue paper and some oval pieces of tissue paper.

Children were told to make flowers and in this case it was a colleague of mine who gave me these where the finished products were displayed with the children's names next to their artwork.

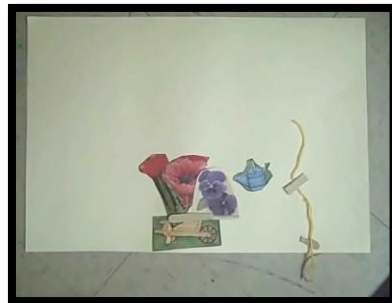
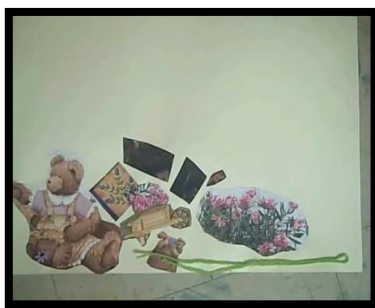


This flower collage was something I had never done before . Using real pictures to their collages.

I gave the children lots of old pictures from calendars with pictures of flowers.



I had them cut up the flowers they wanted from these pictures and put them on a tray. I then told them they can make a flower collage using those pictures and I added yarn and crafts sticks to use alongside their cut up pictures.



What I found from this activity was interesting. Using the actual pictures seemed to have stunted their creativity. They were unable to really be creative as they were too busy looking at the pictures they liked and cutting them out. One child even just cut out the image above right and pasted in on her paper and voila! That was her collage.

It was almost like they were doing some kind of traditional copycat collage that took away their ability to think and be creative and just to rely on the pictures themselves.

This flower collage was one that I used inspirational pictures for.

The larger pictures are at the back of this guide that you can print out for your own use but below are some thumbnails of the type of pictures that you can use for inspiration.



I told the children that the theme is flowers and they can choose to do anything they want with flowers as the topic. They can do a vase with flowers, a person with flowers a field of flowers etc. I then gave them number of items shown below that they could use to create their art collages.



Below are just a few samples of a few children's samples and the process they took. One child chose to make a vase of flowers and then wanted to color in the background so decided to use large swatches of tissue paper where you lay it down, paint over the tissue paper with water and then lift up and the color is there.



Another two children saw this dyeing technique and added it to their collages above.



You can see the difference in sophistication that the different children have used to create their flower pictures. The one on the right worked very hard to use the sequins to create a flower and knew exactly what she was doing, but it came out looking like a mush.

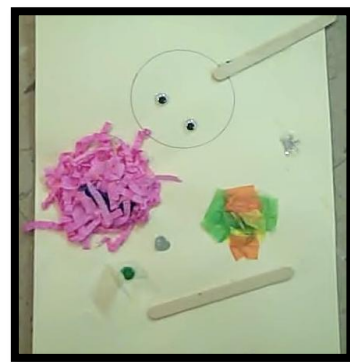
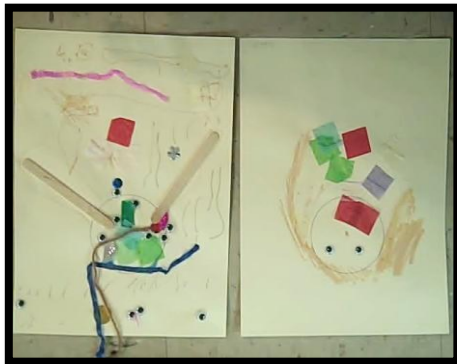
## All About Me Collages

Each child was given a piece of tag board with a circle on it and told that they should collage a picture about themselves.

This was a group of girls as you can tell.

I gave them yarn, crafts sticks, googly eyes, tissue paper pieces, sequins and markers.

I did offer pieces of materials that I thought they may want to use for clothing but the children did not use it. You do not always have to use a circle but I knew it would ensure that they would actually concentrate on people that way.

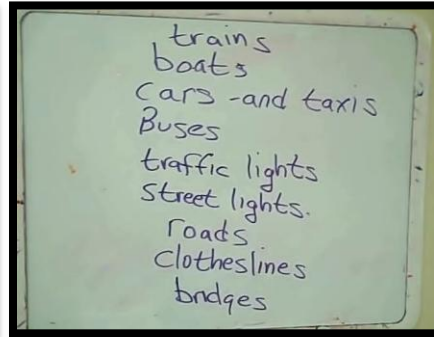


# City Landscape Collages

I tried this same collage 2 different ways.

Below is a picture of the images I printed out to use as inspiration. As you can see, I don't have a color printer but it does the job. The full color images are at the back of this guide.

I also went over with the kids what kinds of things they saw in the pictures and wrote them down to remind them what they can add to their collages.



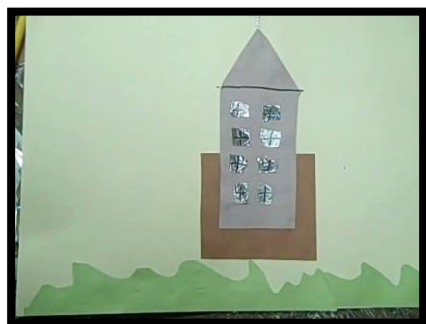
Collage #1 I gave the kids very little prepared shapes. Just small squares as shown and the rest was just large sheets of tissue paper and construction paper that they had to cut



For the second part of their city collages I gave them more prepared shapes that suggested buildings plus other small shiny squares that suggest windows.



I wanted to see if the children are more creative, with prepared or unprepared materials.





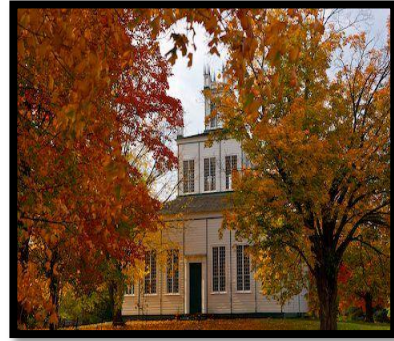
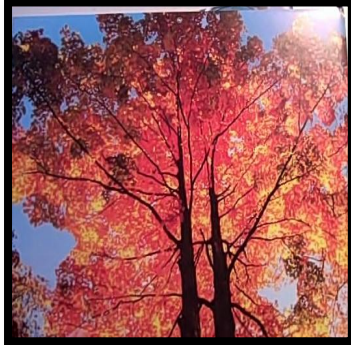
The child who did this picture wanted a sunset and had learned about horizon lines while painting and wanted to fill up her picture with sky, so she incorporated some painting into her collage. (A mixed media collage)

Below I took some pictures of the before and after of the kids and it was interesting in that I noticed that some of the children were more creative when they had less to choose from and had to cut out objects themselves.

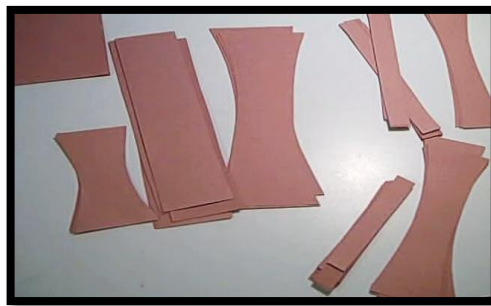


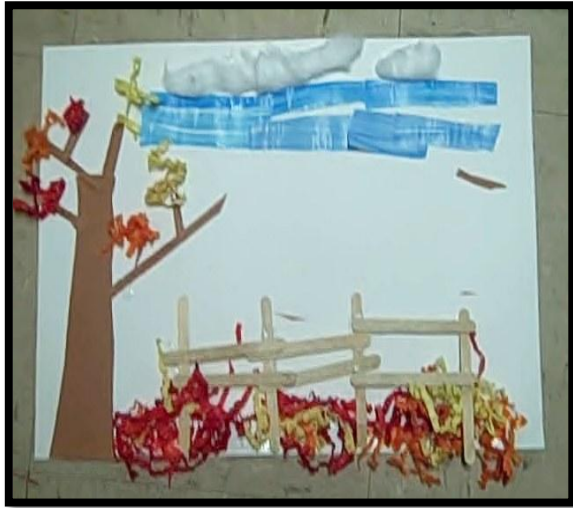
## Fall Collages

Below are a few pictures of fall scenes that you can use for inspiration. The rest of them are at the back of this guide



I basically gave them tree trunks and then all different color fall materials in tissue paper, and shiny and cellophane papers and some cotton balls.





## Other Kinds of Tree Collages

The fall collages were of tree scenes and there are other ways to make various tree scenes. Trees are an element that come through in holidays and seasons and are always a good project to work with. This is a different type of collage.

The children got tree trunks to choose from and used leaves they got from a nature walk. They made rubbings of the leaves and then cut them out. They then used a combination of these cutouts and real leaves to make their trees.



These are collages from other colleague's trees that they made using different materials than I did.

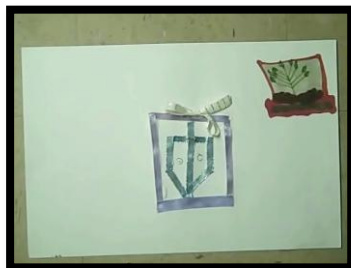
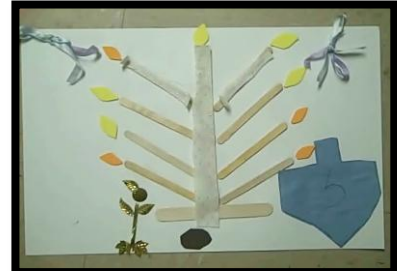
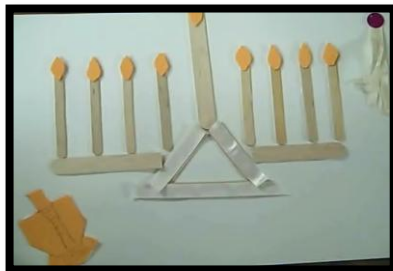


This is a group of tree collages that were actually made by adult teachers in a workshop for teachers that I gave. Even though they were not done by children I liked them so much I thought I would share them.



## Chanukah Collages

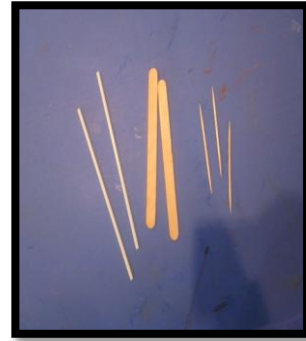
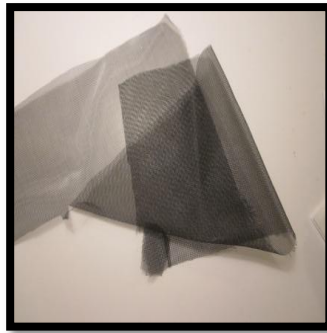
I started this activity by displaying real live Menorahs that they could use as I did have a few real examples. They were then given the materials that suggested flames and candlesticks.

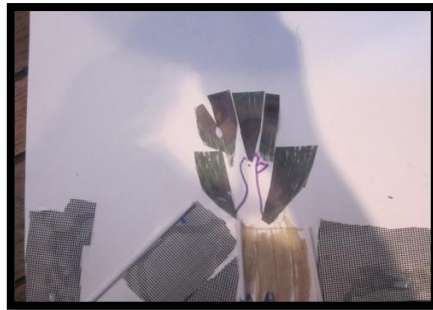
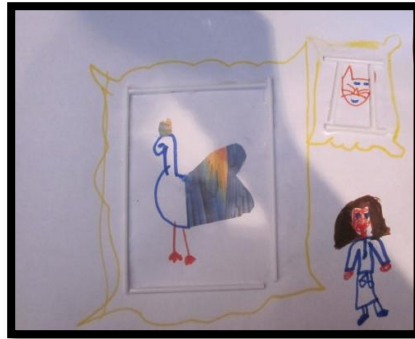


This child made the window with the menorah on the right and when I asked "Aare you looking from inside or outside" she continued the full picture by adding bricks to the outside of her house.

## Zoo Collages

These were given to the children after a visit to the zoo. Some of the materials given were these really great animal print papers, pieces of screen that I had left over from my window screens and crafts sticks and toothpicks.



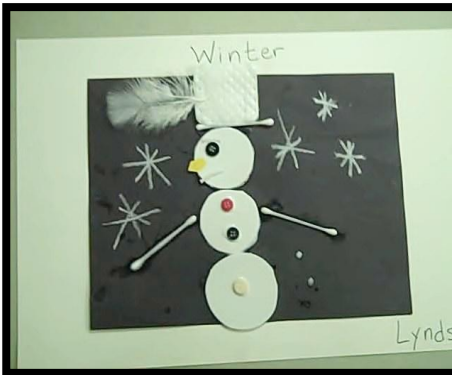


## Winter Collages

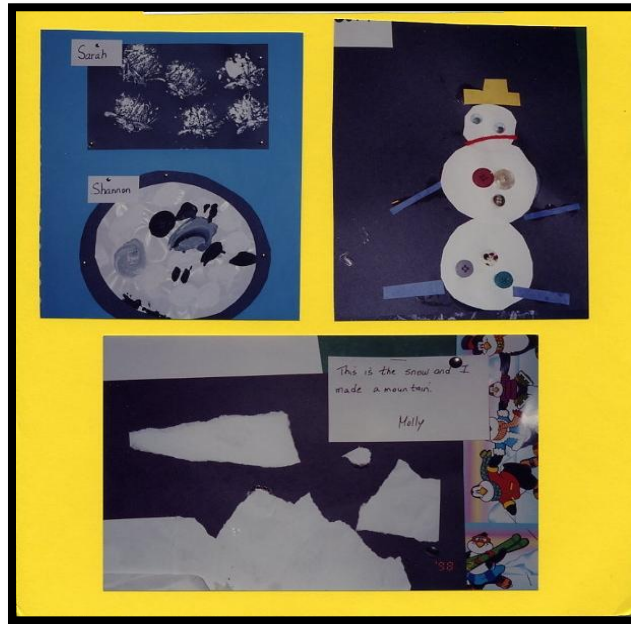
You can try to find winter images to use as inspiration but the truth is the winter materials are so suggestive that you don't really need them. Just give them black or dark blue paper as a background as the white shows up better and white circle makes it look like winter.

Add some q tips, buttons, cotton balls, some other small cut up colorful shapes and maybe even some white doily pieces will do the trick.

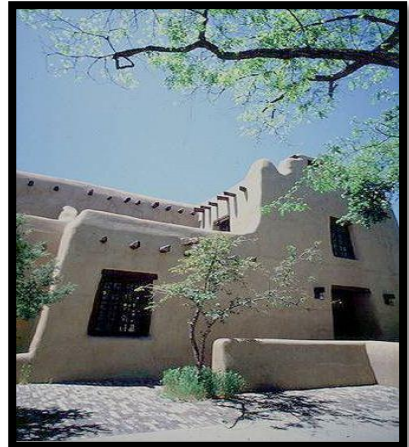
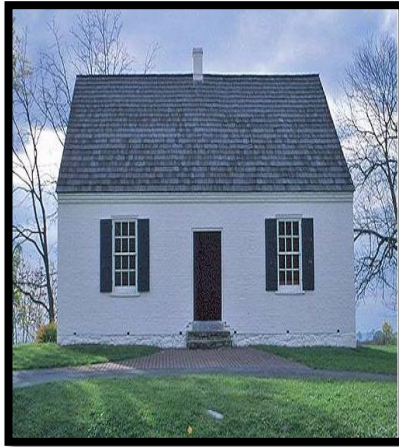
If you want you can always stick in small orange, triangles and see if they even use them as noses for snowmen.



Below are some samples of what some colleagues of mine have done for winter.



## Houses Collages

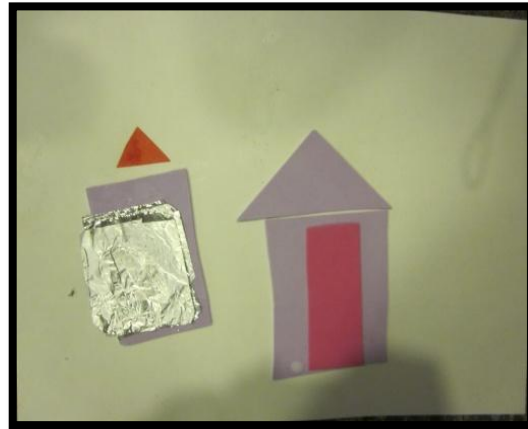
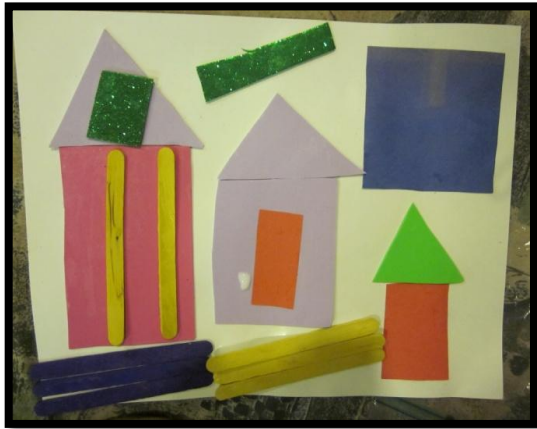


The pictures above are for inspiration for our house collages. The rest are at the back of this guide. Below is an array of materials I used for this project.

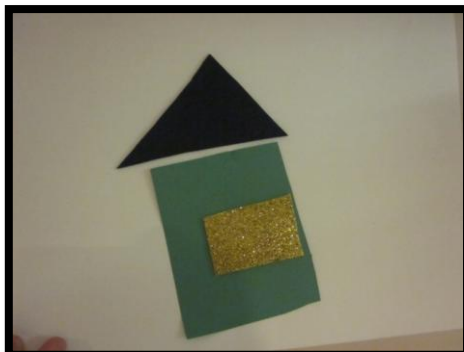
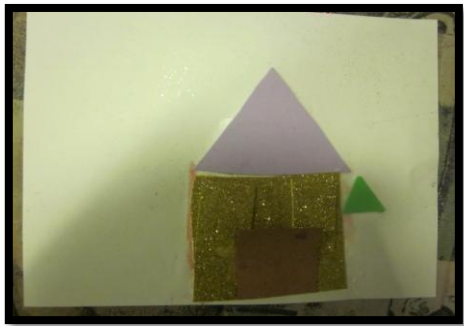


Two groups did do this project. The older children were ages 5 1/2, 6-7





The ages of this groups collages were 3 1/2, 4-5

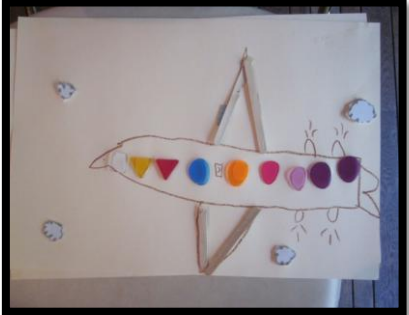


# Vehicle Collages



The black and white images are copies of the ones that are in back of this guide.

I made sure to put lots of circles and triangles in the materials to suggest wheels and boat sails.



That's it for actual collages that children have done. Based on what you have seen, you can now come up with your own collages to do based on topics of your choosing.

Not everything can be done in collage form. If you get fixated for example, on the children making let's say a certain animal, for the most part it won't work.

There has to be enough flexibility in the topic for you to be able to come up with the materials that will allow the children to be creative

Some collages will call for picture for inspiration and others will not. You will have to use your judgment as to which activities will need pictures. I would love to see pictures that you have done with children using these techniques that I can use as updates for this book.

Below you will find the images I used for inspiration for 5 collages.

## Images to be used for collage Inspiration

There are images in this section for:

- Urban landscapes (city scenes)
- Fall scenes
- Flowers
- Houses(places to live)
- Vehicles

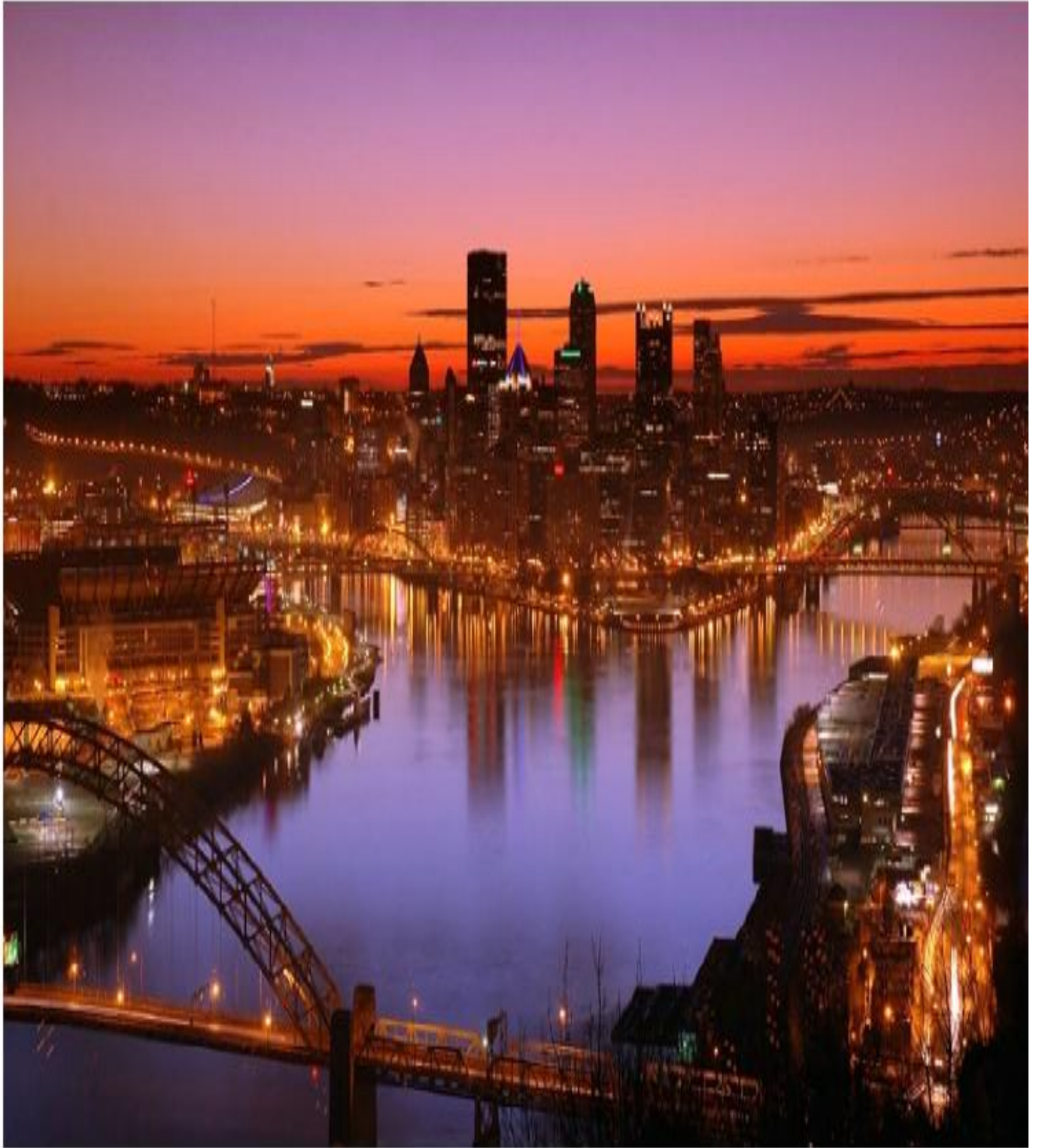
These images can be used for the painting section as well and you of course do not have to use all the images.

It is best to print them out in color. If you can't, then just print them out in black and white. Be aware that these images are solely for inspiration and children should in no way feel that they have to copy any of them. They can use parts of one image and parts of another for one collage.

If you have Windows 7 there is a great tool in accessories called the snipping tool that enables you to copy anything on your computer which enables you find pictures that you like anywhere to give the children inspiration.

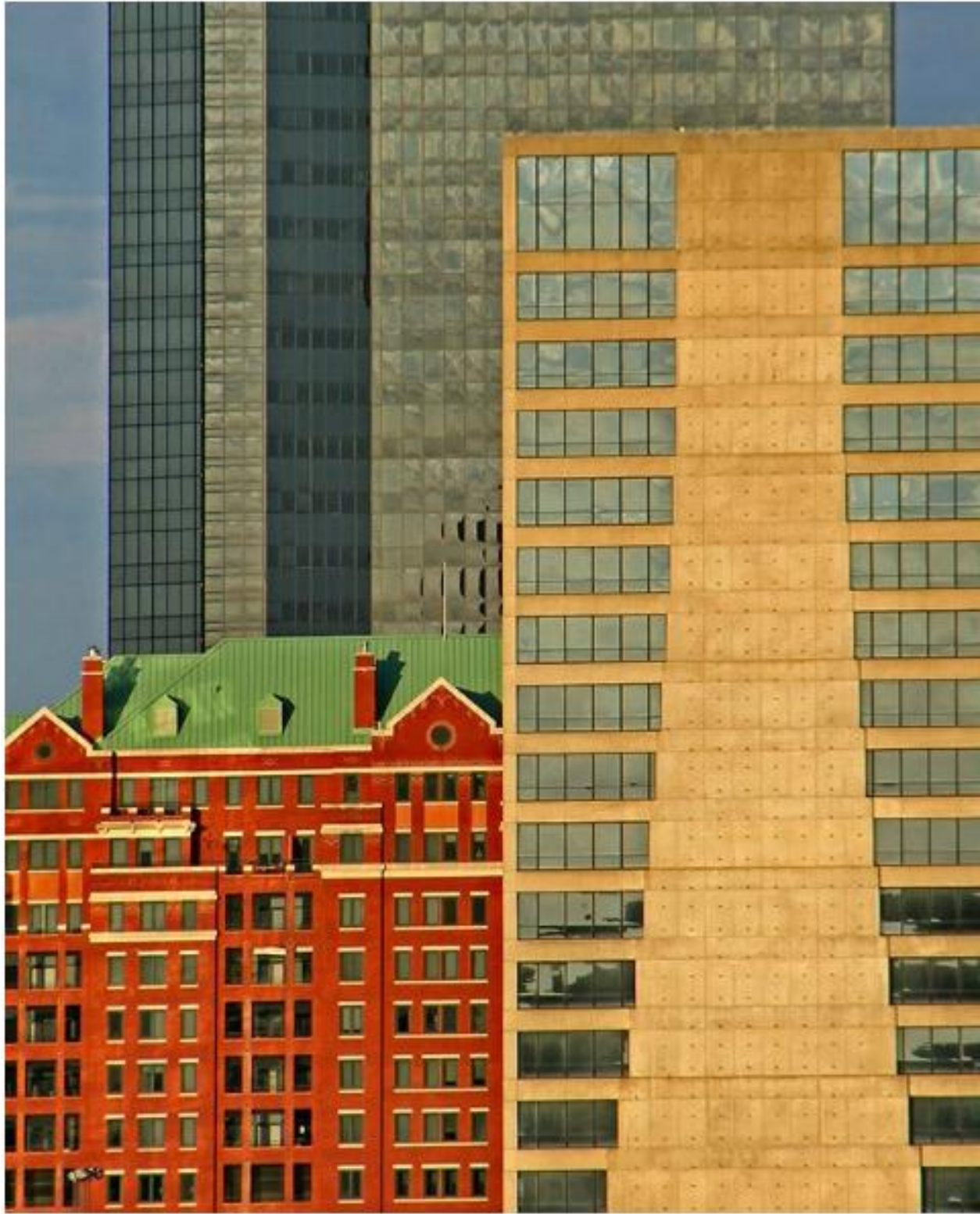
Enjoy

# Urban Landscapes

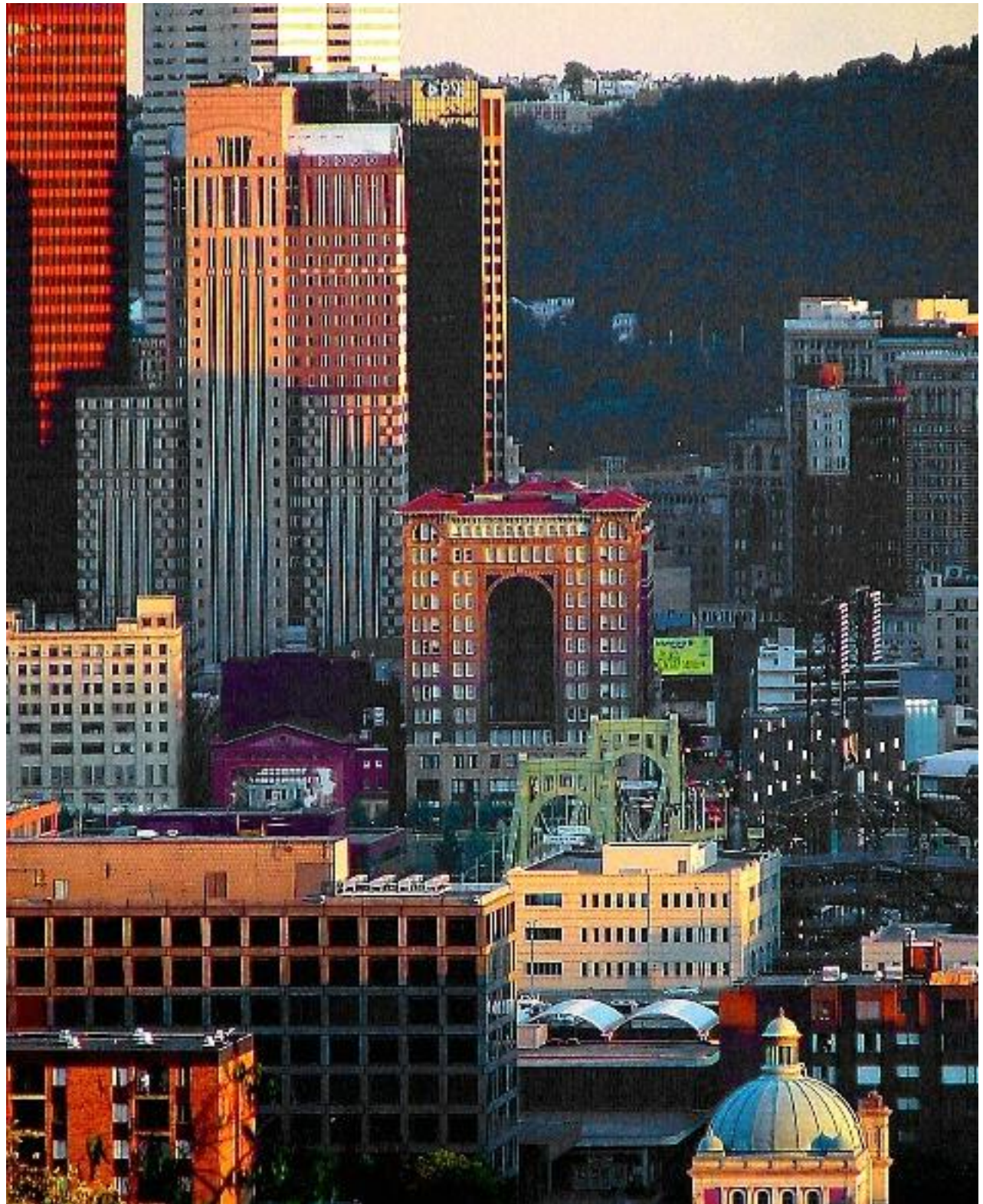








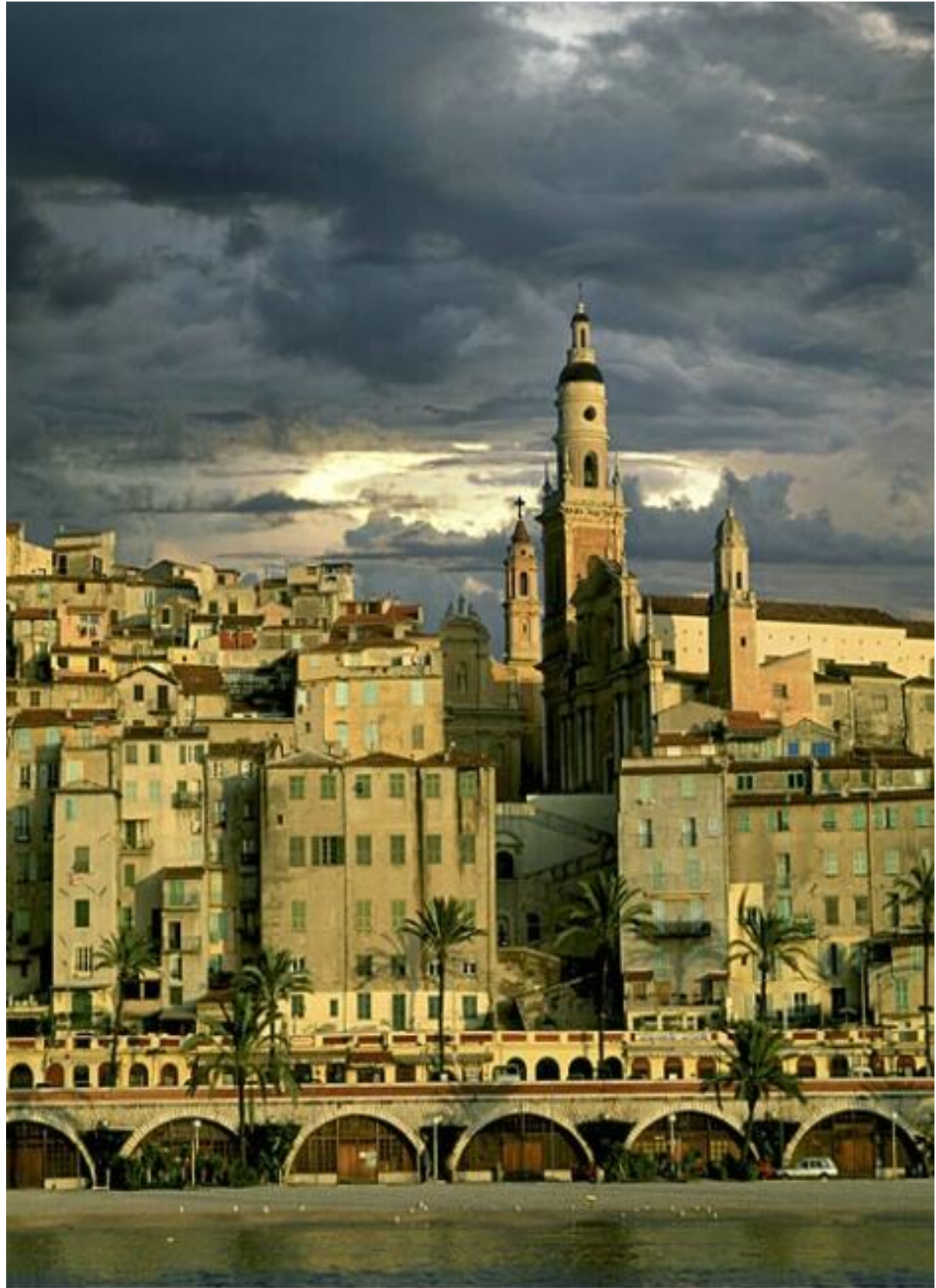




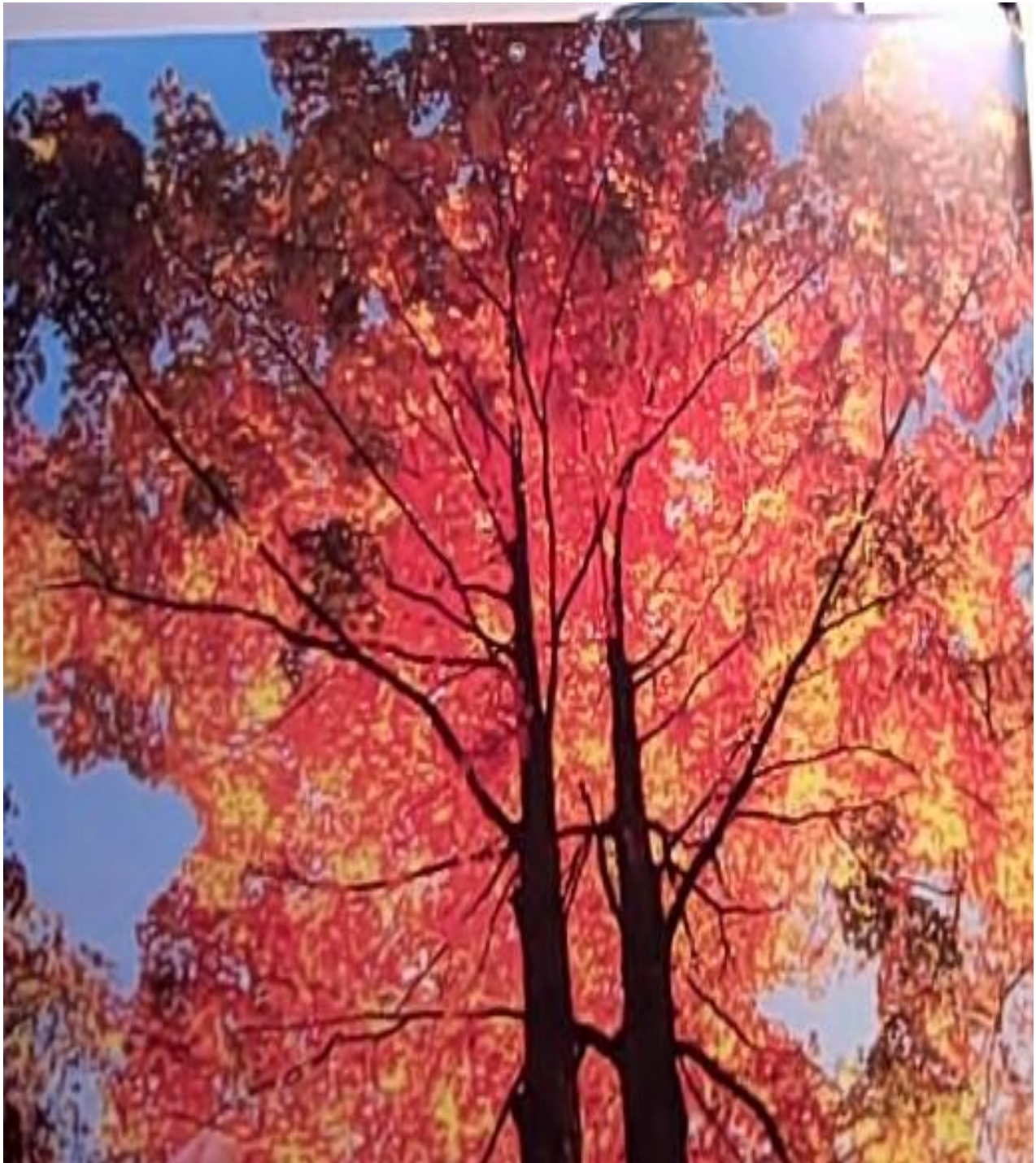






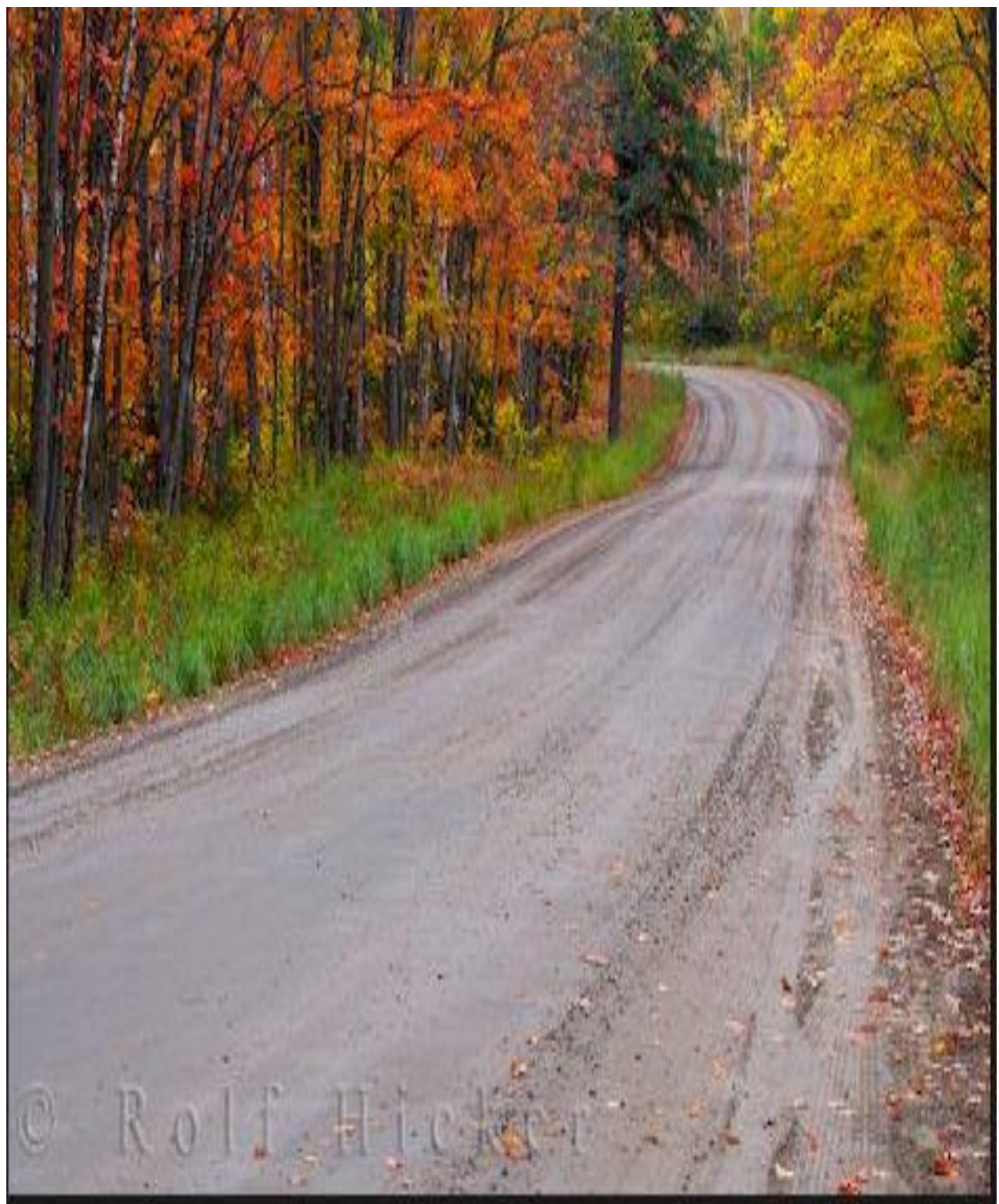


# Fall

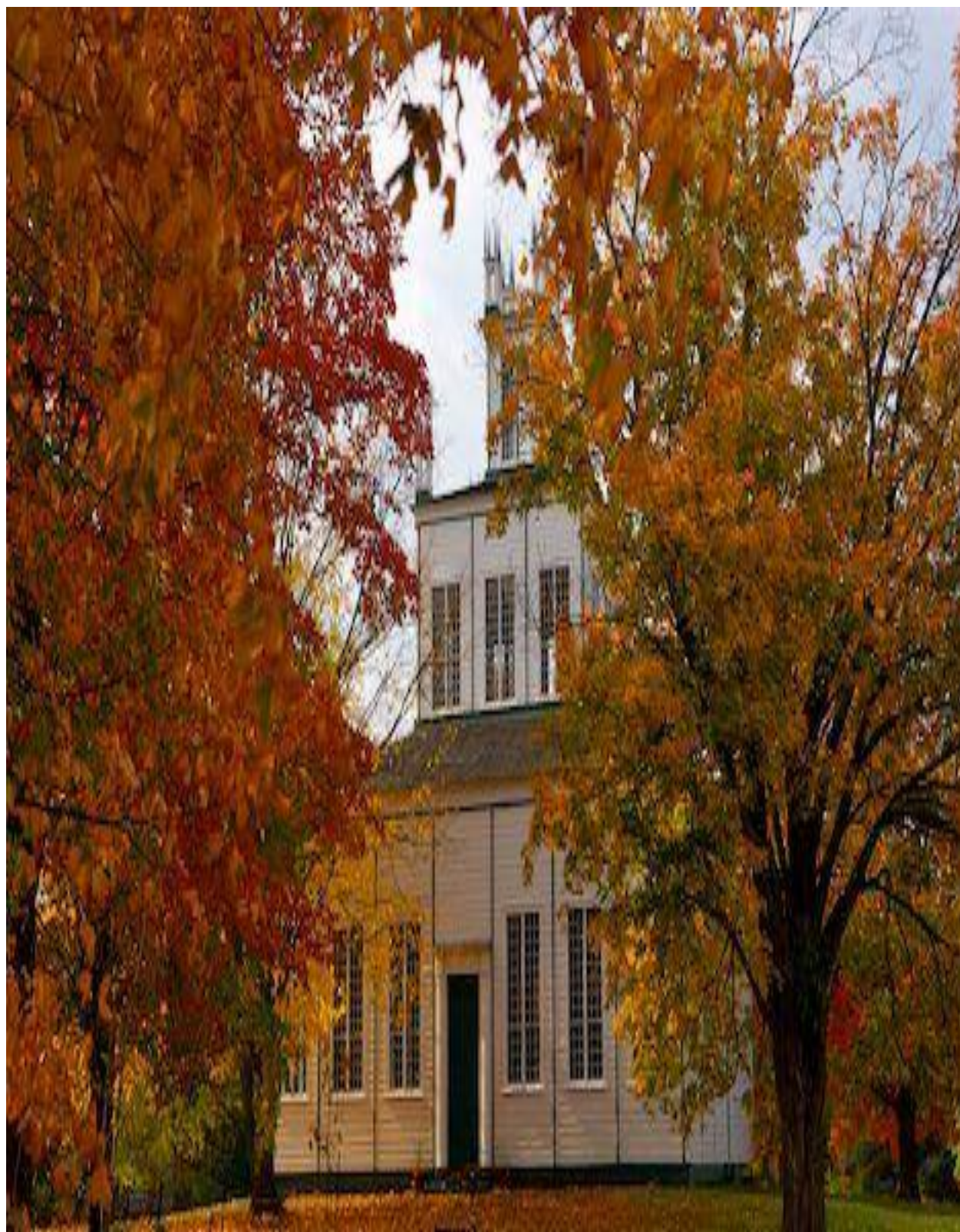












# Flowers













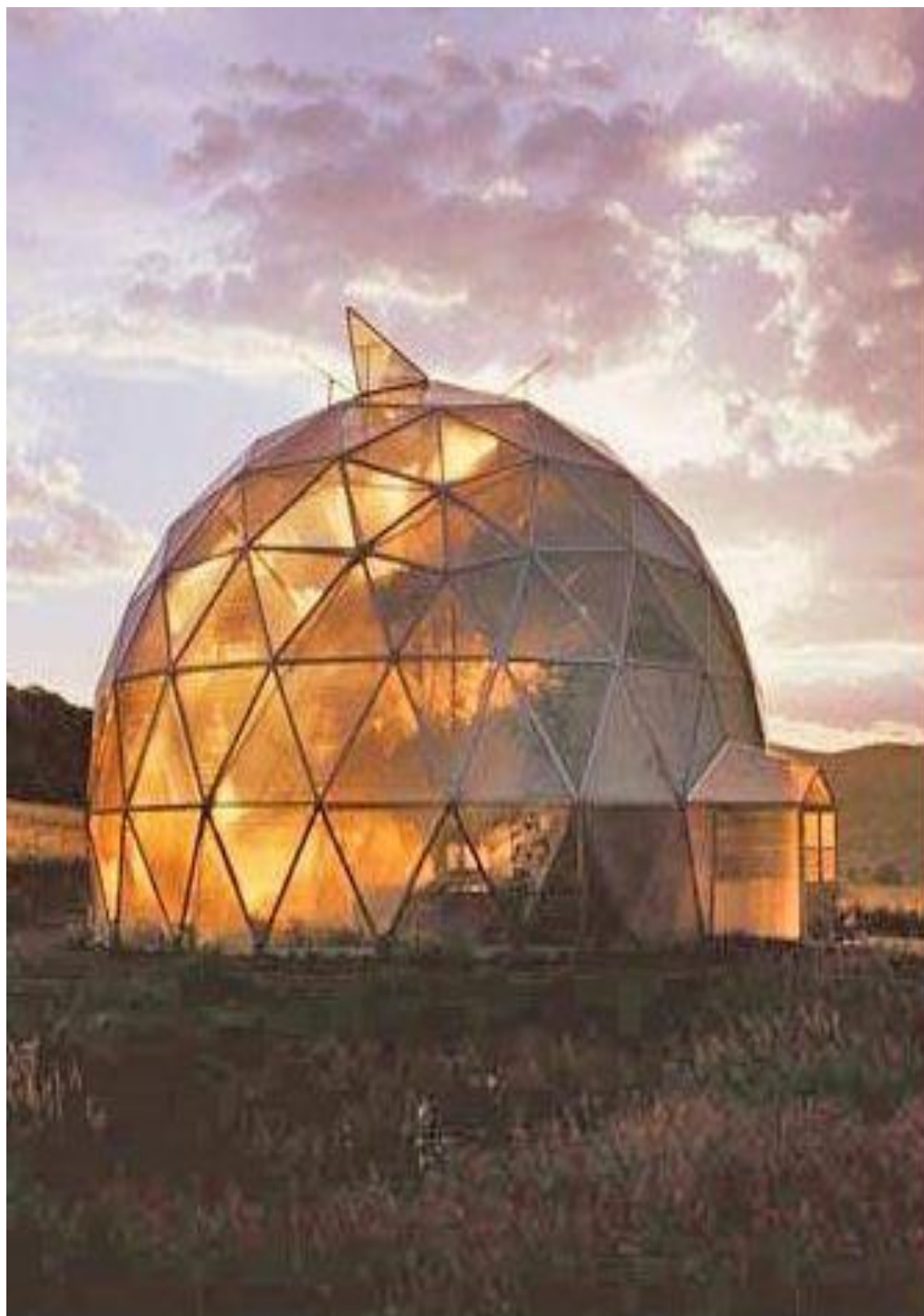




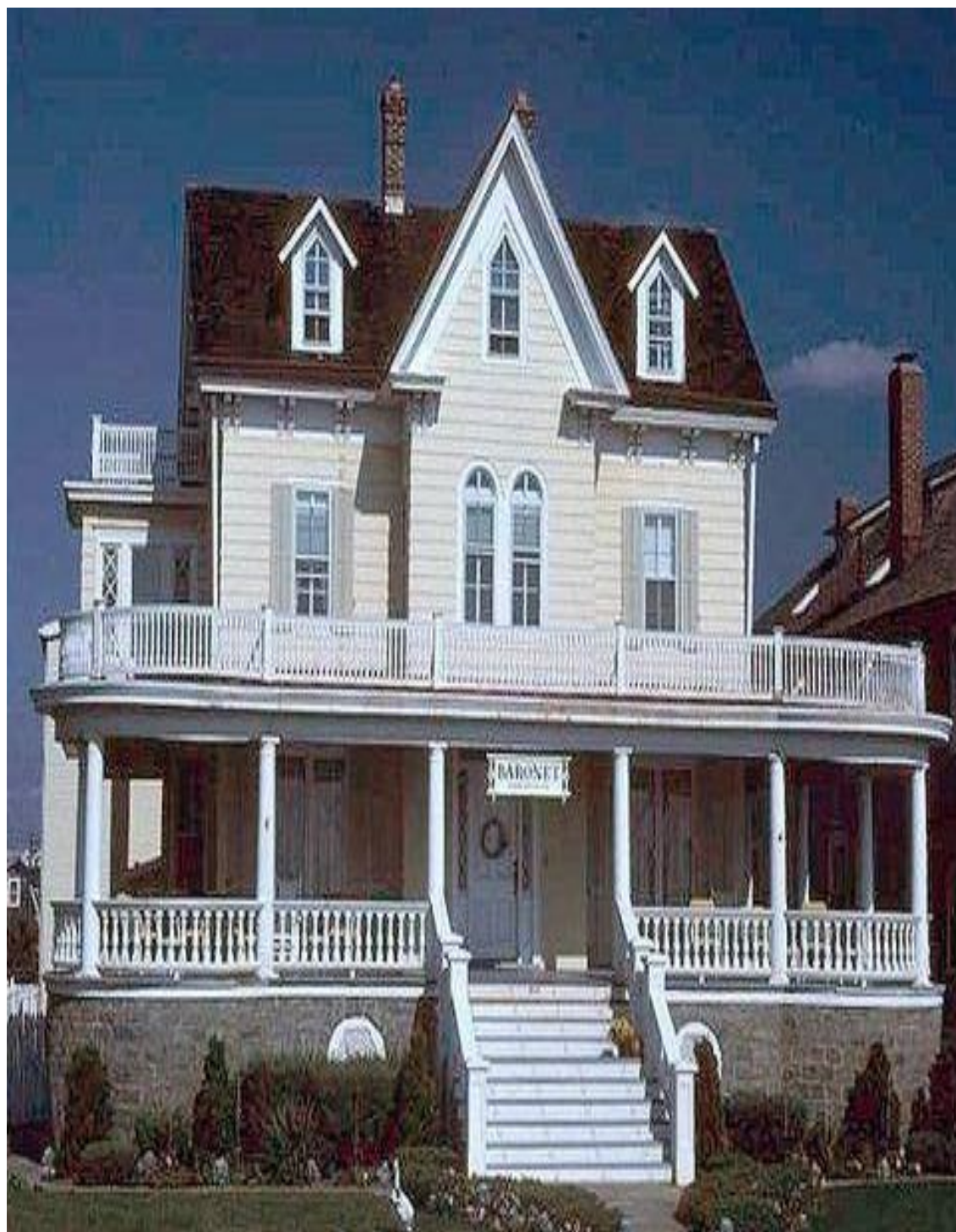


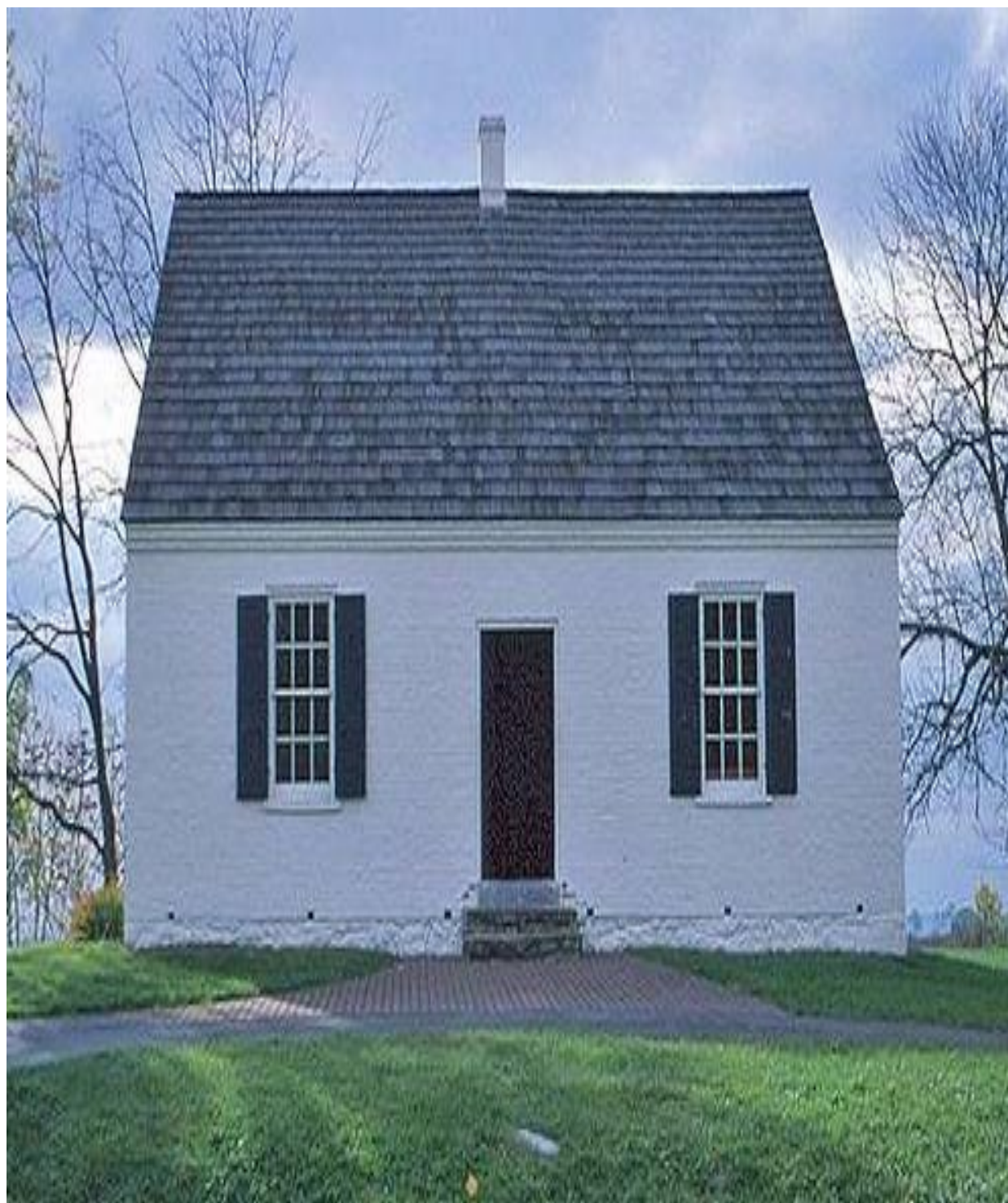
## Houses (places to live)



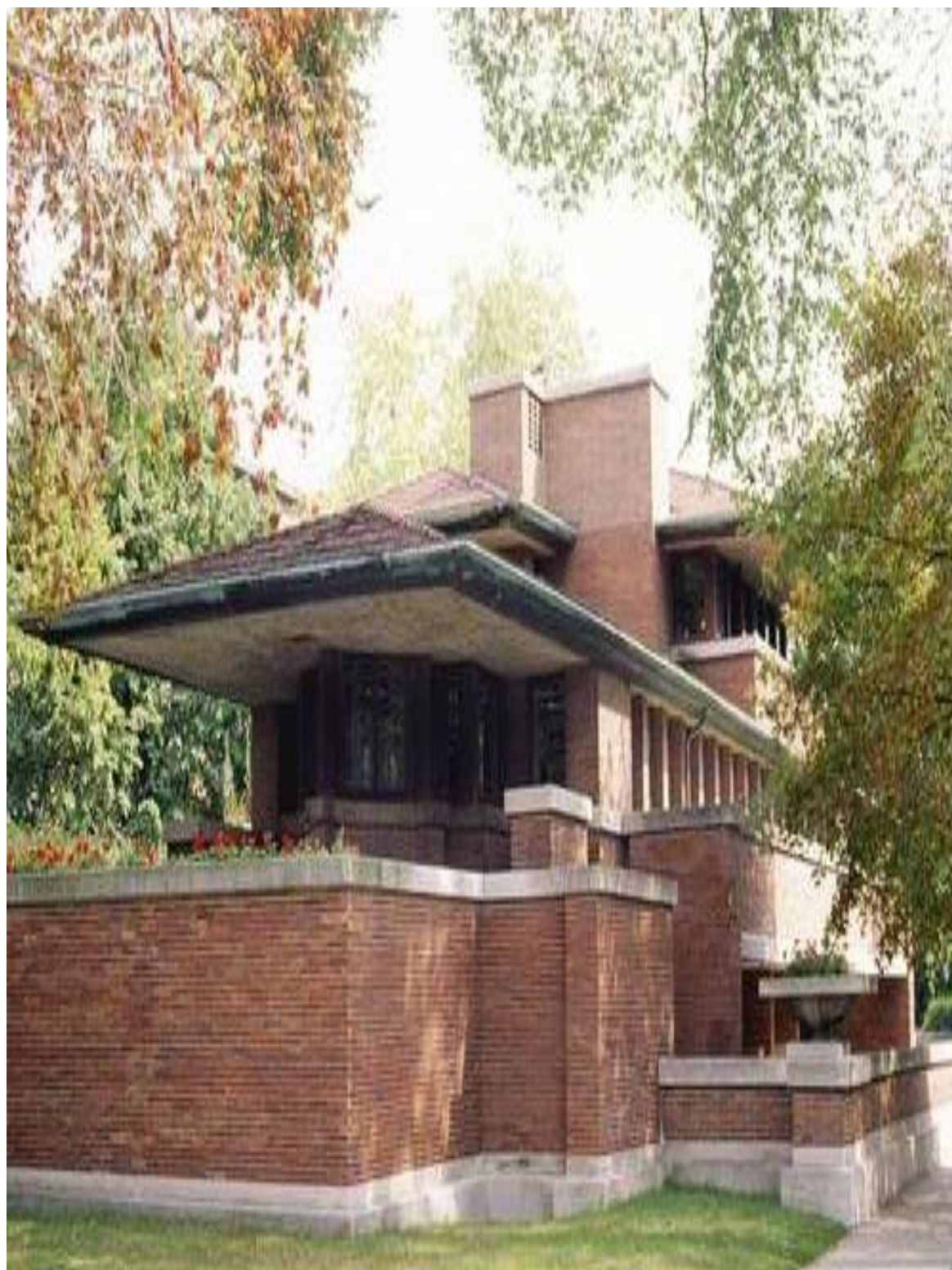


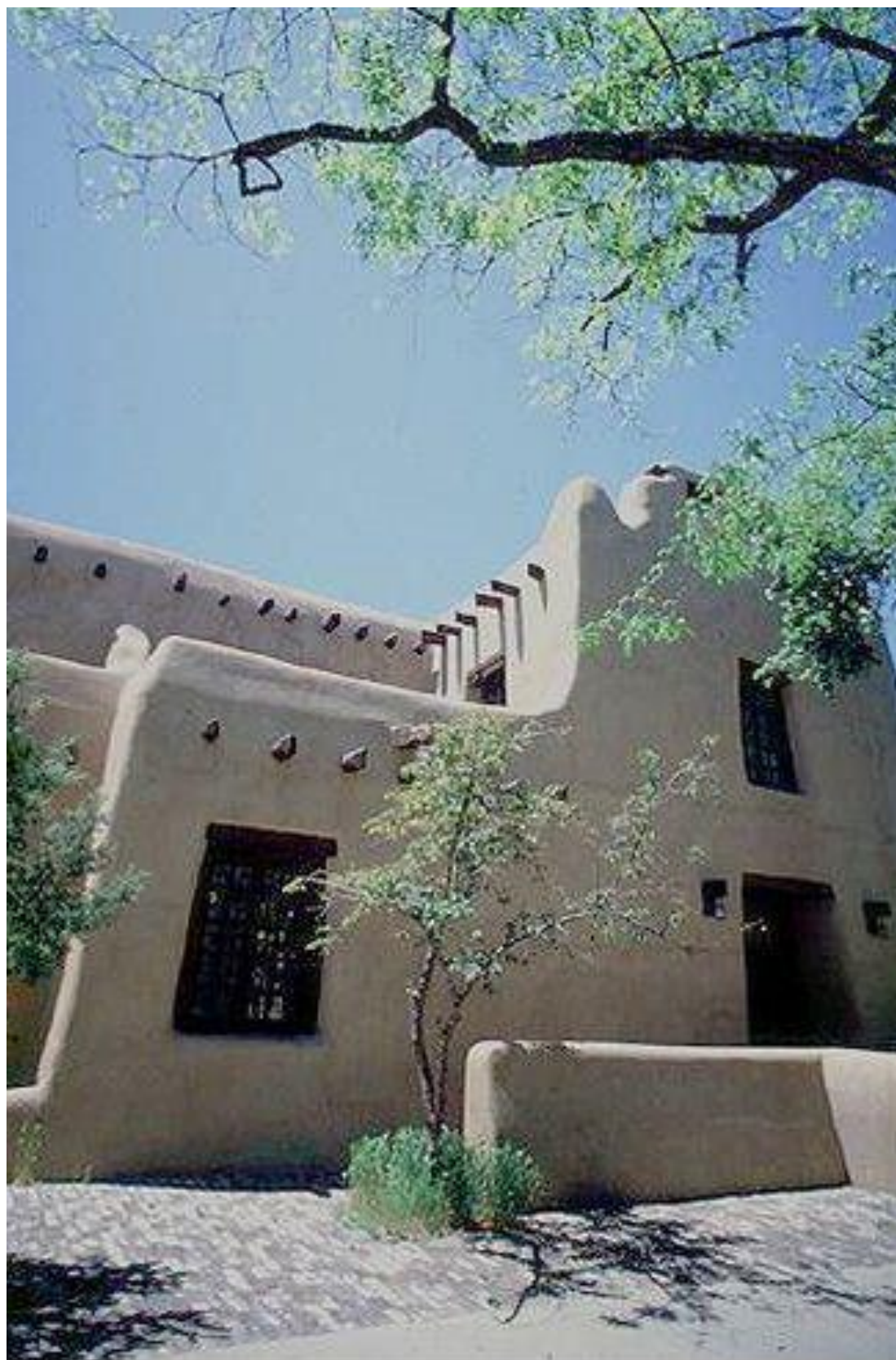














# Vehicles











