

# CALIFORNIA ARTISTS

Projects for Kids

# Robert Bechtle

Robert Bechtle (b. 1932) has been a pioneer of a painting style that is now known as Photo Realism. He paints with a cool, accurate touch from photos he takes of neighborhoods in San Francisco. His paintings of cars, street scenes & people blend the snapshot quality of photography with the timelessness of careful painting.

## Photo Realism

Robert Bechtle regularly walks his neighborhood taking pictures of intersections, buildings, shadows & light. He returns to familiar spots using his camera to collect ideas for paintings. In the studio, he carefully chooses a picture, projects it onto a canvas, traces the major shapes & begins painting. Step by step, he sets the painting's form, adding light, shadows & color in meticulous detail to create a photo-realistic painting.

- ◆ Choose a photo of a familiar spot. Photocopy & enlarge it.
- ◆ Draw grid lines on the photocopy & your drawing paper.
- ◆ Using the grids as guides, outline key shapes in each square.
- ◆ Fill in lights, shadows & details with black, white & gray chalk.
- ◆ Spray with fixative or hairspray to prevent smearing.

Learn more about Robert Bechtle at:

[www.sfmoma.org/bechtle/](http://www.sfmoma.org/bechtle/)



Student artwork, grade 6



Student artwork, grade 3

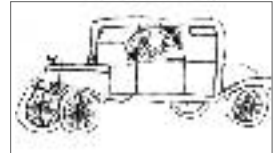
Robert Bechtle draws every angle of his paintings correctly. He uses perspective techniques to show cars & buildings realistically. Use perspective to draw your house, street or car in realistic detail.

## Car Print

Before 1975, Robert Bechtle's paintings often focused on cars. After WWII, Americans moved from cities to suburbs, building strip malls, drive-ins & highways, making cars a necessary part of everyday life. Bechtle, fascinated by this change, included cars in many of his paintings & etchings.

- ◆ Draw a picture of your favorite car.
- ◆ Cut a "printing plate" from a flat styrofoam food tray.
- ◆ Carefully draw your favorite car on styrofoam, pressing down firmly.
- ◆ Ink the styrofoam plate by rolling an inked brayer over it.
- ◆ Lay plate on paper, rub back of paper firmly & lift off plate.
- ◆ Ink, print & press many times. Trade prints with friends.

### DRAWING



### INKED PLATE



### PRINT



Student artwork by Shalene L, grade 3



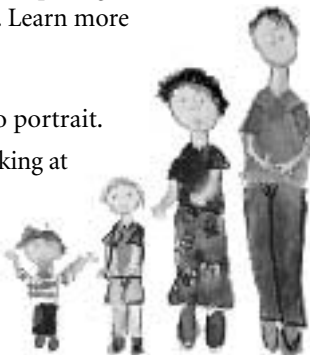
Robert Bechtle, '61 Pontiac, 1968-69, oil on canvas, 59 3/4 x 84 1/4 inches, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase, with funds from the Richard and Dorothy Rogers Fund 70.16, © Robert Bechtle

## Family Portrait

At a time when many artists painted with sweeping brush-strokes, abstract shapes & expressive color, Robert Bechtle began painting realistically. He captured a simple, stopped moment of an everyday scene with detailed painting techniques. His paintings were of familiar subjects: his family, friends, home & neighborhood. This picture shows the artist with his wife & children posing in front of their station wagon in 1961. Learn more about this painting at:

[whitney.org/learning/gallery](http://whitney.org/learning/gallery)

- ◆ Find or take a family photo portrait.
- ◆ Draw your family while looking at the photo. Notice posture, expressions, size & position of each person.
- ◆ Include details to show more about your family.



Student artwork by Megan R, grade 1

## Look in the Mercury News

- ◆ Search the paper for a house or car. Cut picture in half & glue half to a blank piece of paper. Draw other half using perspective & shading.
- ◆ Robert Bechtle watches changes in his neighborhood. Read articles about issues that affect neighborhoods: redevelopment, immigration, housing prices, climate.



Robert Bechtle, b. 1932, '68 Oldsmobile, 1969, Color Lithograph, 21.6 x 27.8 cm (image); 33.1 x 43.4 cm (sheet) Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Museum purchase by Exchange, 1971.31.10, © Robert Bechtle



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Written by Mary Bender; Designed by Ina Johnson, ©2008

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