

Creating Art in the Style of Charley Harper

Who was Charley Harper?

Charley Harper was an American artist who loved to draw animals, birds, and nature. He made his pictures **very simple** but also **very clever**. He used **shapes, colours, and patterns** to show what something looked like *and* how it felt—without lots of tiny details.

What is the Charley Harper Style?

Charley Harper's art is:

- **Simple** – he used **basic shapes** like circles, triangles, and lines.
- **Bright** – he loved to use **bold, cheerful colours**.
- **Flat** – no shadows or shading, just **clear, clean shapes**.
- **Nature-based** – birds, bugs, fish, and flowers were his favourite!

He called his style “**minimal realism**” – that means he showed the *most important* parts of something, not every little bit.

Tips to Be Like Charley Harper:

- Start simple—less is more!
 - Use big shapes and bold colours.
 - Think about how your animal *feels*, not just how it looks.
 - Keep your picture tidy and balanced.
 - Look at nature—then *imagine it as shapes*!
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What You'll Need:

- Paper
 - Pencil and rubber
 - Colouring pencils, markers, or paints
 - Ruler or stencils (to help with shapes!)
 - Imagination!
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Step 1: Pick an Animal or Plant

Choose anything you want, a machine, a house, or something from nature. Look at pictures for ideas.

Step 2: Break your item into Shapes

Ask yourself:

- Is the main part of the item a **circle**, **oval**, or **rectangle**?
- What shapes can you put together to create this item?
- Are there parts such as wings leaves you can make from **triangles** or **lines**?

Use your pencil to sketch your item using **just simple shapes**.

Step 3: Keep It Neat and Flat

No scribbles, shading, or fur—Charley Harper made everything smooth and tidy. Go over your shapes with pen or a dark pencil once you're happy.

Step 4: Add Bright Colours

Use colours that make your creature stand out!

Try:

- Red animals
- Green leaves
- Blue water
- Orange houses

Use **block colour** – fill each shape with one solid colour.

Step 5: Add Patterns and Lines

Charley Harper liked to include:

- Lines on wings
- Dots on bugs
- Stripes on fish

Add little patterns that help people **recognise the item**.

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More fun ideas

 **Cut out paper shapes and use them to make a bug or a fish collage**

- Body: oval
- Head: circle
- Antennae: thin long rectangles
- Legs: thin rectangles