Ralston Crawford sailed all the Great Lakes as a boy. By the time he was fourteen he was also interested in how buildings were made. His interest in building and boats influenced his paintings. He said: "My pictures mean exactly what they say, and what they say is said in colors and shapes."

Crawford was an abstract painter who used flat shapes and neutral colors in this work of art. These shapes suggest his interest in industrial equipment such as ships, grain elevators, factories and machines.

Many artists feel that all natural and man-made things can be broken down into simple geometric forms.

This painting was made for a construction company. Crawford builds his paintings using shapes, lines and colors.
Create a composition of colored shapes and lines. Use various sized rectangles of colored construction paper. Place your shapes on the paper and move them around. What happens if you have all of the dark colors together or all the light colors together? What happens if you separate them? Build your own design using industrial colors like Crawford.