

Nature Print Silk Suncatchers

(art + social studies; art + science)

Introduce students to the beauty of silk painting by creating a colorful leaf-print suncatcher that glows like stained glass when placed in a window. The silk is pre-stretched and ready to paint, and even very young children can enjoy watching the colors flow across the silk. This project is a great way to teach color mixing and will easily link with social studies disciplines following Asian cultures (Japanese and Chinese silk painting) and also with science, as botanical studies.

Grade Levels 3-8

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Gather leaves to print. Large, defined shapes such as oak or maple are easy to work with. Dispense yellow, cyan and magenta silk dyes in palettes. Also, fill a palette well with silk salt. Because students will use actual dye, take precautions to prevent stains. Have children wear plastic aprons and keep the hoops in a tray while they paint.

Process

1. With a paintbrush, coat one side of the leaf with clear resist, covering completely to the edge. Place the leaf carefully on the silk hoop, resist side down. Use fingers to gently smooth leaf flat, particularly the edges and stem. Pull leaf up and away from the hoop. If desired, use extra resist and a brush to fill in any areas that didn't hold. Allow resist to dry for at least 30 minutes.
2. Place the hoop at an angle by propping it up on the edge of the tray. Apply dye to the silk around the leaf print. The color will flow through the silk, up to the resist and stop. Begin with yellow, followed by magenta, then cyan. Colors will mix randomly on the silk, but can also be mixed on the palette to make orange and green. Apply with brush, taking care to clean tools thoroughly with water and wipe with paper towel before changing color. For best results, avoid applying over the resist. Drips and runs are exciting — rotate the hoop to allow paint to flow in various directions. Sprinkle salt in wet colors and allow to dry — it will create patterns ranging from tiny starbursts to stipples, depending on the crystal size.
3. Allow the hoops to dry for 24 hours. Gently brush salt away from surface. Use a small hook or clip and nylon string to hang in window.



Materials

Jacquard® Silk Hoops Class Kit (01240-1029), contains materials for 30 students

Rectangular 6-Well Palette (03010-1006) one per student

Art Aprons (04994-2980), one per student

Trays — cookie sheet, cafeteria tray or low-sided box — to catch drips and confine hoop as it is being painted, one per student

Water containers

Paper towels

Leaves or other items from nature to provide print

National Standards

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

K-4 Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

K-4 Students identify specific works of art as belonging to particular cultures, times and places

5-8 Students know and compare the characteristics of artworks in various eras and cultures

Content Standard #6 — Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

K-4 Students identify connections between the visual arts and other disciplines in the curriculum

5-8 Students describe ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with the visual arts