



SONOMA VALLEY MUSEUM OF ART

Art Rewards The Student

ARTS@Home

Mud Painting with Spices (and Twig Paintbrushes too!)

Teaching Artist: Diane Egger-Bovet



Lesson Overview:

Project Description: Feel like painting but don't have any supplies around? Make your own paint with mud, water, and spices. Then turn a twig or stick into a paintbrush with a hammer and start painting!

Medium or Technique: Painting, Bogolanfini Mud Painting

Materials Used: Marker and/or Colored Pencil, Pencil, Different Kinds of Dirt, Spices (like Turmeric, Cinnamon, and Paprika), Water, Cups/Bowls/Baggies, Spoons or Forks, Twigs or Sticks, Paintbrushes, Hammer, Paper or Fabric.

Grade Level: 4th or 5th, suitable for younger artists with supervision

CA Visual Arts Standards:

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and Conceptualize Artistic Ideas and Work

Grade 4: 2.1 Explore and invent art-making techniques and approaches.

Grade 5: 2.1 Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice

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Instructions:

Step 1: Digging in the Dirt

Go outside and look for different colors of dirt. Pick some up and see how it feels. Does it stick together? Is it crumbly? Dig down a little bit to see if the dirt down below is more claylike. This is great for painting.



Collect some in cups or plastic baggies. You won't need very much to make paint. $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup is more than enough.



When you get home, add some water to your dirt and stir it with a spoon. You might need to let it sit for a little while for the water to absorb.

You want to stir enough so that the mixture is fairly smooth. Some lumps are okay.

Step 2: Select Some Spices

If you are using spices too, take about a tablespoon of each spice, put them in a separate cup or on a plate, and add water. Stir with a spoon or a paintbrush. You don't need very much water, just enough to make a watery paste. The more water you add, the more diluted the color will be. Turmeric makes a very vivid yellow color. Cinnamon is a light brown. Paprika is a rust color.

You can try out other spices you have in the cupboard as well. Just be sure to ask permission! Don't rub paint made out of spices in your eye or use paint made out of different kinds of pepper if you have cuts on your hands. It will burn!



Step 3: Pound a Paintbrush

If you want to make your own brushes out of sticks, you will need a hammer. Ask an adult for permission and for help holding the stick!

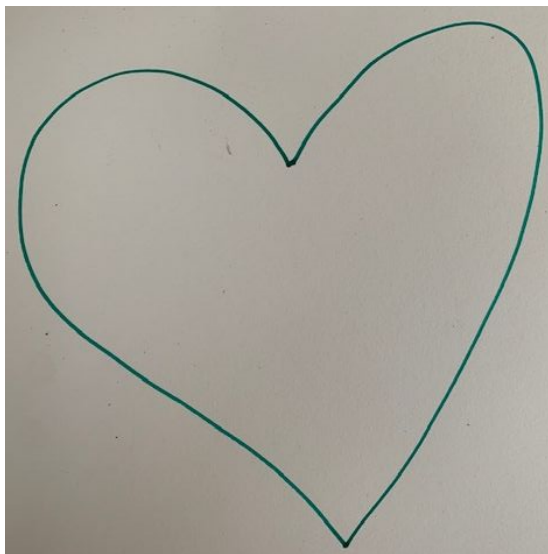
Take some different sized sticks, place them on the ground outside (cement driveways are good for this), and pound the ends until they are flat. You have

an instant brush! Try some dry sticks and some sticks that are still green and pliable. Can you notice a difference? It is good to have some very small twigs and bigger sticks for variety.



Step 4: Plan Your Painting

Take your paper and draw a design. It can be any shape. You can draw many shapes that overlap to create lots of different spaces to paint, or you can draw one big shape. You can also just start painting designs. It's up to you.



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Step 5: Start Painting!

Take your brush and dip it into the mud. Start painting. The more water you use, the more diluted the colors will be. It's nice to have a mud mixture that is less watery to start. You can always add more water. How does it look? It might take some practice to get the right consistency for painting.

You can dip your fork in the mud and use that to make marks. Drag the tines of your fork along the paper and see what happens.



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Use different sized brushes. Use the twig brushes you made if you made some. Are the marks they make different than a regular brush?

You can make dots, lines, swirls, and **patterns**. Paint with your spices for contrast. See how many different shades you can make with one type of mud. Enjoy!

Pattern is the repeating of an object or symbol all over the work of art.

Additional Resources:



For inspiration you can look at traditional African mud paintings called Bogolanfini. Mali is the country in Africa most associated with mud painting. The designs are wonderful. It is an ancient tradition and one that carries on today. Look up some of the designs and see if you can recreate them.

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