

The hands-on art making sessions at RAM's Wustum Museum are process-based and engagement-focused, rather than product-driven. While presenting programs that result with a wonderful art keepsake is important, the main goal is to create an enriching learning environment that encourages free, uninhibited thinking and creative self expression. Many factors are key to achieving a successful program such as: creating a welcoming environment with educators and volunteers who are supportive, friendly, organized; staying flexible is a main factor; bringing in additional stimulants and creative expression tools such as visual art samples or local artists for demonstrations; listening to music that is familiar to this age group; using and creating poetry that is reflective of the atmosphere and the day's them. Most of all, it is important to remember to live in the moment, to value innate gifts and talents and to allow for freedom of spirit.



Watercolor Birch Trees

Watercolor landscapes from the museum's galleries were presented and discussed at the beginning of the session. SPARK! participants created watercolor landscapes of birch trees using a masking tape resist method.

It is always successful for the group to have a live demo. Invite a local watercolor artist to demonstrate one or two simple techniques at the beginning of a watercolor art making program.

Directions:

1. Tear or cut strips of masking tape in various thicknesses and apply to a piece of watercolor paper in the shape of a tree or trees. Paper can be taped to drawing boards so it stays flat when wet.
2. Dampen paper with a large flat brush or sponge brush.
3. Apply watercolor in a random application to create a sky using shades of blue watercolor. Then paint the ground using shades of green and brown.
4. Sprinkle coarse salt over the blue area to add interest to the sky. The salt will absorb some of the water and paint to give it a mottled appearance.
5. Allow painting to dry. This can be accomplished quickly using a hair dryer on a lower setting.
6. Once dry, brush off the salt from the surface. Remove the masking tape. The image of the tree or trees will appear unpainted.
7. Using a black Sharpie pen, add details to define the tree trunk and limbs. Leaves can be painted for extra details.

Materials:

- Watercolors (greens, yellow, brown and blues) brushes, sponge brushes, masking tape, watercolor paper (9" x 12"), black sharpie pens (ultra fine tipped), scissors, kosher salt, hair dryers, drawing boards



Finishing Touches*

This project was a great success! Images of famous paintings were projected, focusing primarily on Georgia O'Keefe's flowers and Monet's Water Lilly series. Talk about color and feeling. SPARK! participants each received half of a famous painting, and were challenged to paint the other half-either trying to mimic what they saw, or enjoying creative license and making up the other half in whatever manner they wished.

Directions:

1. Find several images online and print them out in color.
 - a. Suggestions: Georgia O'Keefe's large flowers or cloud scenes, Monet's Water Lilies, Van Gogh's Sunflowers or any still life paintings such as Cezanne, Gauguin or Matisse.
2. Cut the paintings in half and tape them down to a 11"x14" heavy tag or watercolor. Tape around the perimeter of the blank half.
3. The participants can use a pencil to draw in what they want to paint, or just start with a brush.
4. Using tempera or acrylic (we used acrylic), have the participant paint in the other half. You can give them the missing piece to look at as a sample or just let the participant make up their own version of that half.
5. Use hairdryers to dry and take off the tape once dry to have a nice white border.

Materials:

Printed masterpiece images

Tape, watercolor or tag board, pencils, erasers, brushes, paints (acrylic or tempera), paper towels, hair dryer.



Colorful Fall Collages

Show the SPARK! participants different collage styles and techniques. The SPARK! participants created large, colorful fall collages using bright pieces of tissue paper and leaves cut out of tissue paper.

Time Length: 1-1.5 hours

Directions:

1. On large sheets of white tag board (we used double thickness by folding large sheets in half and gluing them together) brush an area of the tag board with watered down white craft glue or Mod Podge and cover with pieces of colored tissue paper. When that area has been covered, spread more glue to an adjacent area and add more tissue paper until the background is covered. Continue until the entire sheet is covered with tissue paper. You may want to use random colors for the background, or you may want to use “sky” colors and “ground” colors.
2. Brush more glue over the entire background to seal the tissue paper.
3. Tear or cut strips of brown tissue paper in various thicknesses to create a tree trunk and branches. Using glue, apply strips to the background.
4. Apply tissue paper leaves cut in various fall colors. We used die cut leaf shapes.
5. Brush more glue over the tree and leaves to seal them to the background and set aside to dry.

Materials:

A variety of colored tissue paper cut in small squares or rectangles, brown tissue paper, leaf shapes in tissue paper cut in a variety of fall colors, white craft glue mixed with a small amount of water (or Mod Podge), sponge brushes or large bristle brushes for applying glue, white tag board- 18” x 24” or 12”x18” (depending on your time)



Animal Art Prints

A variety of animal prints from the museum’s collection were shown, but organizations can find wonderful animal art on line. Suggested work to look at: *Three Animals Dog Fox And Cat* by Franz Marc, dog paintings by George Rodrigue, the work of Henri Rousseau...there is plenty out there to look at! Another fun thing to do is google animals that paint- you can find information about a variety of animals that like to paint: dogs, raccoons, elephants, gorillas, dolphins, parrots, etc.

Directions:

1. Contact your local pet shops to see if they have animal magazines to donate. Pull many different images from magazines to have a variety of different animals to choose from.
2. Tape a 12”x18” or 11” x 14” watercolor paper on to drawing board, leaving an inch or two around the edge.
3. Glue down animal image.
4. Draw with watercolor pencils an environment around the animal. Can be realistic or imaginary. Encourage participants to fill in most of the background with color and design.
5. Using watercolor brushes, paint with water on the background that was colored with the watercolor pencils. The colors will blend and turn into a painting.
6. Dry the painting with a hair dryer and take the tape off.
7. Stamp around the edges of the white border with animal print stamps in black ink. You can purchase these or cut your own (can be made with E-Z Cut or something similar).

Materials:

Magazines with large animal images, watercolor paper, tape, drawing boards, glue, masking tape, watercolor pencils, brushes, water containers, paper towels, hair dryers, stamps and black ink pads.

Additional activities:

- Incorporate animal sounds into this activity. We had a lot of fun talking about different animals, their characteristics and their animal sounds.
- Create a group poem! Go around and ask each participant for a word or phrase that summarizes their animal or animal painting. Then read the poem as a whole.
- Have a local art therapy dog group come in and put on a little show for the participants.
- Check with your local Zoo to see if they can bring in 3-4 animals and talk about some of their characteristics.



Silk Painting

Show examples of silk paintings that are both wearable and traditional silk wall hangings. SPARK! participants can create a hanging silk painting and a wearable silk scarf or two.

Time Length: 1.5 hours

Directions for Silk Painting on Scarves:

SPARK! participants can design one or two scarves, using a variety of techniques. Education staff should wet scarves in advance and cut large pieces of industrial aluminum foil, one for each scarf.

1. Give each participant a piece of aluminum foil, a wet scarf, brushes and dyes. Have each participant pick two or three dyes
2. Mark initials on tag with sharpie. Crinkle, twist and fold the scarf onto the

aluminum foil.

3. Paint in blotches or long strokes onto the scarf, using a larger brush full of dye.
4. Encourage participants to allow dyes/color to blend and run together. Try to fill the scarf with color.
5. Let the scarves dry overnight and then submerge them in fixative and fabric softener and rinse them out. They will have to be delivered or mailed to participants.

Optional: Paint on Silk Rounds, that can be used as a wall hanging.

Materials (Dharma Trading Company, dharma trading.com)

- Jacquard Silk Dyes (green label), Habotai Scarves, either 11'x60' or 8"x54" (scarf lesson), Dharma Dye Fixative, Watercolor brushes(multiple sizes), Bamboo or Sumi brushes (if you have them), Dye Sticks (Pastel Fabric Fun Dye Sticks work great!), Heavy Duty Aluminum Foil, Paint Palettes or small container for dye, Large buckets or bins (to soak scarves), Paper and Paper Towels, Sharpie Markers
- Silk Stretched Hoops, 10" (silk round painting lesson)

Holiday Cards

Present a variety of holiday cards to inspire the group. This project can be done for any holiday—but RAM did a winter holiday inspired project.

After the program, each of the SPARK! participants created a small watercolor resist painting that was produced into holiday cards that they could mail to their family and friends.

Time Length: 1.5 hours

Directions (for a Christmas inspired winter scene):

1. On small sheets of watercolor (8x10 or smaller), draw a Christmas tree with green crayons for the branches and brown crayon for trunk.
2. Add lights on the tree with bright crayons.
3. Using a white crayon, loosely color snow on the ground. It is hard to see the white as you are drawing, but show up nicely when you add the watercolor.
4. Draw snow in the sky with dots of white crayon and draw stars in the sky with dots of yellow crayons.
5. Use a dark or turquoise blue watercolor paint, and paint a wash on top of the crayon drawing. The crayon will create a resist and you will have a lovely painting.
6. Once dry, you can add details with a thin sharpie.
7. Once dry, museum staff can take the paintings to print shop to have them scanned and reprinted on card stock in a 3x5" or 4x6" folded format as cards. Or do this in house with a scanner and color printer, to save money.
8. Print a dozen for each person, and package together with envelopes. You can also stamp a message inside if desired.
9. These will have to be mailed or delivered to each participant.

Materials:

- Watercolor paper, 8X10" or smaller
- Crayons
- Watercolor brushes
- Blue Watercolor Paint
- Water/Water Containers
- Paper Towel
- Thin Black Sharpies
- Envelopes

*This project can easily be done seasonally; Fall: draw pumpkins or leaves with crayons; Spring/Easter: draw flowers or eggs with crayon and paint background light blue; Summer: draw Fourth of July Fireworks with crayons, paint background with dark blue or black.

This is a really nice gift for your participants- to send their own holiday cards that they created in the SPARK! program. And can be done for any holiday/season!

Clay Pinch Pots and Clay Tiles

Pull a few different clay vessels from your collection or from your clay studio. It is nice to show the group different stages of clay: soft clay, green ware, bisque fired and glazed. SPARK! participants will create a clay pinch pot with feet and a clay tile.

Have a clay artist or teacher do a demo on the potter's wheel, if possible. This is a wonderful introduction and an exciting process to view.

Directions for Pinch Pots:

To prepare, museum staff needs to condition clay and roll into balls, enough for every person to have at least two balls to play with and conditions extra clay to use.

1. Have participants start with very soft piece of clay, molding and shaping to get a feel of texture and form. They can create small sculptures.
2. Have each participant take a ball of clay
3. While holding the ball in the palm of one hand, take the thumb of the other hand and make an indentation in the center of the ball.
4. Keep turning the ball of clay and pressing down with the thumb to within 1/2 inch of the bottom.
5. When the pot is the desired depth, rotate while pinching the sides with the thumb (inside) and fingers (outside).
6. Work from the bottom up until you have achieved the desired shape.
7. As the clay dries it may begin to crack. Keep dipping your fingers in the small container of water and wipe the surface of the pot frequently with damp paper towels.
8. Add texture and design by pressing objects into the clay or etch designs with tooth picks or skewers.
9. Create feet to the pinch pot by forming 3 or 4 small balls of clay (marble size), score the tops of each clay piece and the area on the pot where they will be attached. Use a little slip (water mixed with clay) and press the balls to the bottom of the pot.
10. Clay can be painted with an under glaze, if desired.
11. Have participants etch names into the bottom of their pots
12. Museum staff will have to see that they clay is dried and bisque fired

Directions for Clay Tiles:

Museum staff should condition clay and roll out into flat slabs. If you have a clay studio and a slab roller, this makes it much easier! Cut square pieces of clay (6"x6" area good size) and put on boards.

1. Have a variety of materials available that make nice impressions
2. SPARK! participants can create an impression on their clay tiles using multiple objects
3. Create names or words on clay tiles by rolling clay snakes and adding them to the tile.
4. Have extra slabs that participants can use cookie cutters for making shapes to add or can cut their own shapes with dull knives.
5. Don't forget to score each piece and use slip as your additive agent.
6. Tiles can be painted with an under glaze, if desired.

Materials:

- Clay – any soft clay like an earthenware, raku or buff.
- Water containers and paper towels
- Tooth picks, skewers and/pr clay pin tools
- Dull knives
- Items that can be used to make impressions- lace, decorative silverware, decorative jewelry, pine cones, found objects, etc

As a rule, SPARK! participants should leave with a piece of art, if at all possible. As clay projects need to dry and be kiln fired, you can send clay images home with your group. Or if you have a clay studio in your museum, sometimes there are leftover or unclaimed pots or small sculptures. These make lovely take homes!

Still Life Mon prints

Using art prints from the collection as visual stimulants, Spark! Program participants created beautiful mono print designs while looking at still lifes of various fruit or flowers.

Time Length: 1.5 hours

Directions:

1. Soak paper for printing and keep wet until ready to print.
2. Using acrylic paint or mono print ink, (we ordered the ink from Dick Blick) paint an image of the still life on a sheet of glass, plexi glass or metal cookie sheet.
3. It is important to work quickly so that the paint doesn't dry out. You can lengthen the drying time of acrylic paint by mixing a small amount of gel medium into it. The mono print inks we used have a longer drying period.
4. Spray a very fine mist of water over painting if it is too dry.
5. Place damp paper over painted image and roll over it completely with a brayer. The image will transfer to the paper. If the paint or ink was applied heavily, a second print can be pulled from the image. Just repeat the printing process.

Materials:

- Acrylic paints or mono print inks
- Brushes of various sizes
- White paper for printing – not heavy weight - 6" x 8" or 8" x 10"
- Sheets of glass or plexi glass- one per person or smooth cookie sheets
- Brayers