

Serpentine Values

MATERIALS

FOR STUDENT: (one per student unless otherwise noted)

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Block, cut from large Foam Block (see "FOR TEACHER") to 2 1/2" x 12" x 1" thick
- Cotton swabs, 40
- Pencil
- Paper, 2 1/2" x 12" (to practice sketching serpentine line)
- Paintbrush, medium size
- Plastic cups, seven (for paint, cotton swabs and water)
- Large paper plates, two
- Paper towels, two
- Paint apron

FOR TEACHER:

- FloraCraft® Make It: Fun® Foam Block, 1" x 12" x 36" (can get 14 pieces per foam block)
- FloraCraft® Design It:® Wire Cutter
- Sheet of white address labels
- Acrylic paint: Black and white
- Paintbrush, medium size
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Serrated knife
- Glue gun (for teacher only)
- Paper bag
- Old newspapers or plastic tablecloth (optional)
- Cutting mat (or stack of newspapers)
- Plastic-lined garbage can
- Paper towels
- Sink (water)
- Wet wipes
- Drying area
- Internet access for research



ART

GRADE LEVEL
SECOND - THIRD

COMPLETION TIME

- 15 minute demonstration
- 50 minutes (2 hours minimum drying time)
- 30 minute session

OBJECTIVES

Students learn:

- To see light and dark values in black and white photos
- How to physically mix paint to create new values
- To distinguish and create an even transition among five values

STANDARDS

- Develop creative expression – creating... in the visual arts
- Apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media
- Use skills, processes, materials, and tools - Mix and apply paint to create tints, shades, and neutral colors

TEACHER PREPARATION

Note: Read through all the instructions first and check out the TIPS! Plan for two class sessions with drying time in between them. Instructions are written for each student to make one but you can have students work with partners, to minimize painting time. It is also recommended that you make one sample, since it's good to understand, firsthand, how the paint mixes and to have an example. Note that the foam serves as a drying strip and then is turned over to make the sculpture.

[1] Use a ruler and pencil to measure and mark 2 1/2" x 12" pieces on the foam block. Then, on a cutting mat or stack of newspapers, use a serrated knife against the edge of ruler to cut the foam block with several passes of the knife for each cut. With each block, compress and slightly round all the edges and corners, by pressing the foam edge down onto the table with even pressure as you rock the foam back and forth to smooth.

[2] Use the wire cutter to cut in half 40 cotton swabs per pair of students. For safety, cut them inside a large paper bag, to catch any flying pieces. Put 40 in a plastic cup for each student.

Also cut apart the address labels, one per student.

[3] Prepare the painting area with paint bottles, five cups, cup of water, two paper plates, foam strip, paintbrush and paper towel to be able to demonstrate for students.

[4] Similarly, prepare for each student: Two paper plates, five cups, cup of water, cup of cotton swabs, two paper towels, a pencil, and a label. Just before the students arrive, squeeze a small amount of white paint into one cup and less of black paint into another cup. For demonstrating, squeeze paint into your cups, too.

LESSON INTRODUCTION

• Ideally, the day before, gather samples of black and white photos and show the students. Help them find black and white values. Lead them in finding and naming light gray, medium gray and dark gray. Explain that you'll help them mix black and white paint to create three values of gray.

• Show students Internet examples of "artwork made from nails" (ideally, without strings) so that they see the look of many dots creating pictures. Explain that the word "serpentine" means snake-like and refers to lines that curve. Show them your sample of the serpentine line that you've made with values of painted dots. Explain that a painting made using dots is called "pointillism" but that they will be making a relief sculpture.



[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]



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INSTRUCTIONS



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[1] Have the students wear their aprons and roll up their sleeves, explaining that this paint will not wash out of clothes. Explain how the foam strip will serve two purposes, so they need to be careful with it and keep it clean. On the board, draw a long, vertical rectangle. Demonstrate how to sketch a “serpentine” (snake-like / curvy) line, starting at the bottom. Show how it weaves back, and forth and back again and ends in a spiral. Explain that for this project, the line should not ever cross over itself.

Optional: Distribute strips of paper and have the students practice drawing a serpentine line before drawing on their foam. When ready, have them sketch their serpentine line on the foam.

Then, on the board, show the students how they can add one or two curved lines going out from the main line, into the three open spaces. Have the students add those. Note: They need to keep the lines simple and not let them touch each other.

Have them put their name on the label, turn over their foam piece and attach the label to the back. Leave it back/label side up.



[2] Ask the students to get comfortable and be ready for you to spend about 15 minutes demonstrating how to mix the paint, before they can start painting.

To demonstrate, arrange the cups in a line, with black at one end, white at the other and the three empty cups in between. Explain that black is more powerful as a color than white, so when you mix, start with white. Scoop up white on the brush and put it down into the center cup, gently wiping the bristles on the bottom to leave as much paint there as possible. Repeat with each of the other two empty cups. Wash out the brush and wipe it on the paper towel to dry.

Show the students (and talk through) how to dip just the tip of the brush into

the black paint and wipe it on the inside of the center cup, without touching the white paint, but close to it. This will be the middle gray. Without getting more black paint on the brush, take whatever is left on the brush and wipe it inside the cup between gray and white. (Wait with the dark gray.) Mix the light gray up to see if it actually is light gray. If it's too dark, move that cup over to be the middle or even the dark gray. If it's too light, add the smallest amount of black possible. With this mindset, mix the other two values of gray, talking through the mixing and having the students help you decide what is needed to make the values transition evenly.

If the paint is too thick, dip just the tip of the brush into the water to thin it a little.

Instruct students to mix their paints and use very little water. Help them as needed.



[3] Have them thoroughly wash their brush in the water. Explain that they should start with the white because their water will get too dirty if they start with black. Gently dry it off on the towel and rewash a couple of times to be sure it's clean. (Caution them not to squeeze and pull the brush bristles.)

Ask the students to remove fifteen cotton swabs (halves) from the cup. Demonstrate how to paint a swab with the white paint: Start where the cotton joins the stick and brush out, going all around the swab. If any cotton sticks out, brush it back onto the rest of the cotton. Then, show the students how to push the stick into their foam on one corner, making sure the label side is up. Paint another and insert it in a line, about 1/2" from the first. Caution students not to push the stick in very far – just enough to hold it until it dries.

Have students paint their fifteen cotton swabs white.

Then, have them rinse their brushes, dry them on the paper towel and paint fifteen more swabs using light gray. Have them

start a new row of painted swabs on their white foam.

Next, wash and dry brushes and paint swabs medium gray and start another row in their foam.

Similarly, continue with dark gray and black.

While students paint, squeeze more paint into their white and black cups and distribute wet wipes as needed. As students finish, have them clean their brushes, discard their painting plates and put the foam strips in the drying area.



NEXT SESSION

[4] Have the students remove their swabs, one row at a time, and place them on their plate, in piles according to their value.



[5] Demonstrate and have the students turn over their foam and insert swabs going straight down into the foam along the serpentine pencil line, starting at the bottom, going in order from lightest to darkest: White, light gray, medium gray, dark gray and black. Encourage them not to push into the foam too deeply and have them leave 1/8 – 1/4" between each one. Continue with the same pattern going up the entire length. (Wait to do the offshoot

REFERENCES

Teach Art To Children by Joy Evans

Mix It Up by Herve Tullet

Gray Scale & Values Finder by Color Wheel

Teaching Art With Books Kids Love Darcie Clark Frohardt

INSTRUCTIONS

lines until the main line is finished.)

Note: There will probably be some left over swabs. If students put theirs too close together, they may need to ask other students for their extras.)



MODIFICATIONS

To simplify project:

- Pre-mix the paint for the students, but do demonstrate the mixing so they understand what you did.
- Make a shorter length of foam with fewer cotton swabs.

To expand project:

- Create larger designs with larger foam; longer, curvier serpentine lines; and more swabs.
- Mix five or more values of gray, along with black and white.

For multiple ages:

- Younger and older students can work side-by-side, with younger students painting and older students inserting the cotton swabs into the foam.
- Older students can help younger students paint and then they can take turns inserting them into the foam.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- For a class project, make a jumbo serpentine values sculpture by connecting the student's foam pieces using toothpicks inserted into the sides.
- For the truly ambitious, students can make a range of ten values of gray plus black and white. They can look at a black and white photo, draw the main lines of what they see and transfer it to a foam sheet. Then they can fill in the entire sheet by inserting cotton swabs of the correct value, placed closely together to create a pointillism-like painting with dimension.
- Have the students research information on pointillism and that period in art history.
- Encourage them to look at more artwork / sculptures created with nails, jelly beans, and other small items that have been used to create the pointillism effect.
- Have the students use the information they've learned from mixing the paint to mix the same number of values of tints and shade of each of the primary and secondary colors.



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TIPS

- Have extra paper plates, paint and foam.
- Prepare the painting area, covering tables if needed. Allow for plenty of space for each student. Have a large, plastic-lined garbage can ready.
- Explain to students that they shouldn't scrub the cotton ends, simply give them color without distorting the cotton shapes.
- If students wiggle the cotton swabs so that they are loose, have them remove them, one at a time, squeeze a little white glue into the foam, and replace the swabs.
- If you plan to hang the foam sculpture, slightly separate the ends of a large paper clip, approx. 1/4". On the top back of the foam, 2" down from the top, insert the shorter ends into the foam, creating a hanger loop with the longer end. Hot glue to secure.