

Oil Pastel: Scraffito

by Kim Fjordbotten

Materials

Oil pastels 12/set, Holbein or Rose Brand
5" x 5" square of heavy white paper with a hard surface (Bristol, Mayfair or railroad board)
Toothpick or paperclip

Goal

The purpose of this project is to understand how to manipulate pastels. Scraffito means 'to scratch in'. This is a subtractive technique. It is useful to know how to scratch back into a thick pastel to correct and add details to any oil pastel drawing. Students will also learn that dark oil pastels will layer over light-coloured ones. This is also a fun technique to master before trying scratch art or lino cutting.

Procedure

'Colour-As-Fast-As-You-Can' is rare opportunity – and it is hard to do without laughing. Still, to get a solid coverage in each layer is important. Follow these steps.

1. Use a yellow oil pastel to draw a square about 4", leaving a 1/2" border all around. Now colour it solid yellow *as fast as you can*.
2. Turn the square 90 degree. Choose an orange oil pastel and colour the square solidly in orange *as fast as you can*.
3. Turn the square 90 degree again. Choose a red oil pastel and colour the square solidly red *as fast as you can*.
4. Turn the square 90 degree. Choose a blue oil pastel and colour the square solidly in blue *as fast as you can*.
5. Turn the square 90 degrees. Use black oil pastel to colour the square solid black *as fast as you can*.

Creating the Art

We now have a rich, thick layering of colorful oil pastels ready to scratch into using a toothpick or paperclip to create a drawing. Encourage students to use different types of marks and designs to express texture and define shapes. Drawings can be simple or complex.

How about a Hallowe'en image?

