

Melted Paintings (art + science)

Part Salvador Dali and part “Shrinky Dinks”, this project compels students to reach beyond a traditional, flat painting and feeds their natural hunger for artistic experimentation. The surface is Yupo - a polypropylene, non-absorbing paper that lays perfectly flat. Paints flow smoothly across it and colors remain strikingly brilliant over it's bright white surface. When heated, Yupo shrinks and distorts in unpredictable ways, then immediately cools to retain a rigid and free-form shape. The altered paintings that result are sometimes amazing, sometimes humorous and always unique.

Grade Levels 7-12

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

Process

1. Have students plan a painting and sketch it out on the Yupo. For subject matter, suggest painting a face (they usually look very humorous), an object that really wouldn't melt (Think Oldenberg's drumset or Dali's watch) or a geometric pattern. Make sure students don't concentrate on detail and proportions, because the finished piece will alter their efforts significantly. Execute painting and allow to dry.
2. Place paintings on cookie sheet and put on a lower rack in a cool oven. Set oven temperature to to 300° to 325°F. It's important not to overheat, because Yupo will simply melt into a lump. The oven can be preheated, but the distortions are greater if you start with a cool oven - larger bubbles form.
3. Watch the paintings as they heat. It's fun to watch the distortion happen, and it's necessary to know when to remove them. Watch for an interestingly distorted state and remove paintings before they melt into an unrecognizable form. If your oven doesn't have a window or light, you might want to leave it open just enough to peer in. If distortion is too mild or doesn't appear to be increasing, turn the oven temperature up a few degrees.
4. Remove the painting from the oven on the cookie sheet. It will begin to cool immediately and within one minute, it will reach a hardened state that will allow it to be removed from the tray. Use a pair of scissors to trim any jagged or “stringy” edges.



Original paintings, and paintings after oven-heating and trimming.

Materials

Yupo® Paper, heavy 144-lb weight, (10067-1022) 26" x 20" sheets, cut to 8-1/2" x 10" pieces for six per sheet, need one piece per student

Liquitex Acrylic Glossies, (00615-1003) 6-color set, 2-oz jars, share across the classroom

Blick Scholastic Wonder White, rounds, size 6 (05857-1006), need one brush per student

Armada™ Lollypop Scissors (57057-1007), need one per student

Oven or toaster oven

Glass or smooth-surface metal cookie sheet to bake on

Options

- Glossies paint can be used as a glue to add even more dimension to the paintings. The paint will reach a liquid state and then harden, so shapes will be fused together. Yupo will not meld to itself.
- Cut, bend or roll your painting to form a shape prior to baking, rather than simply a rectangle. Use a hobby knife to cut shape inserts and openings. Baked pieces can be trimmed and cut even after hardening.
- Place wire, screen or other oven-safe items on or beneath your painting while baking. The Yupo will pick up the texture, but it won't stick to the object.

National Standards

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

- **5-8** Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work.
- **9-12** Students demonstrate the ability to form and defend judgements about the characteristics and structures to accomplish commercial, personal, communal or other purposes of art

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- **5-8** Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art
- **9-12** Students reflect analytically on various interpretations as a means for understanding and evaluating works of art