

Wings of Nike

Not just a brand name, Nike is also a superhero from ancient Greece and one of the world's most beloved sculptures

One of the most celebrated sculptures in the world is known as Winged Victory or Nike of Samothrace. She was created by an unknown artist during the Hellenistic period — approximately 300 BC — when Greek culture flourished and spread throughout the Mediterranean.

It is believed that this depiction of Nike (the Greek goddess of victory) was created to honor a battle won at sea. She is considered a masterpiece not just because of her drapery and pose, but because of the widespread, windswept wings unfurled behind her.

There are many awe-inspiring things about the Nike's wings. First, they convincingly describe flying. Their movement gives the impression that the goddess has just alighted, emphasizing her supernatural ability and her freedom to go anywhere she wishes.

Considering the weight of marble, it seems impossible that the wings could support themselves without breaking off. To accomplish this, the sculptor designed them in pieces that fit into the body at a downward slope, so that their weight sits on her lower back. The complexity of the feathers is not like that of any bird or any other wing design in Greek art: they are uniquely hers.

Like her arms and head, one of her wings is missing — the right wing is actually a plaster copy of the left. Her beauty and strength are perhaps more inspiring because of her imperfections.

Perhaps every child has wondered what it would be like to fly as a superhero or bird. This lesson plan provides them with a fun process for creating a pair of life-sized wings through monoprinting and then envisioning where those wings can take them and what personal triumph they might achieve!

GRADES 2-8 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Put tempera in squeeze bottles to distribute across the class and control paint usage.



Materials (required)

Prang Ready-To-Use Washable Tempera Paint, 16 oz, assorted colors including Glitter and Metallic (00045-); share a minimum of four across class

Plastic Squeeze Bottles, 2 oz (014916-1003); six for each color

Strathmore 300 Series Printmaking Paper, 18" x 24", 30-sheet pad (13824-1009); need one sheet per student

Blick All-Purpose Newsprint, 8-1/2" x 11", 500-sheet ream (10204-1085); need one sheet per student

Materials (optional)

Pacon Premium Glossy Fadeless Rolls, White, 48" x 12 ft (12776-1020)

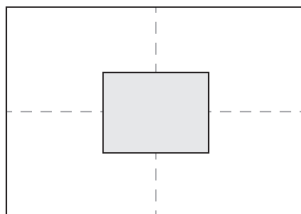
Delta Artist Ultra Fine Mist Water Sprayer, 5 oz (03479-1004)



Process

1. Fold paper in half and crease it. Fold in half again, and create a second crease. Unfold, and paper will be divided into fourths by fold lines.

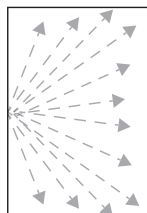
2. Position paper horizontally (wide side at top and bottom). Place a sheet of newsprint in the center of both folds, see (A). Trace around the sheet with a pencil to make a rectangular box.



(A)

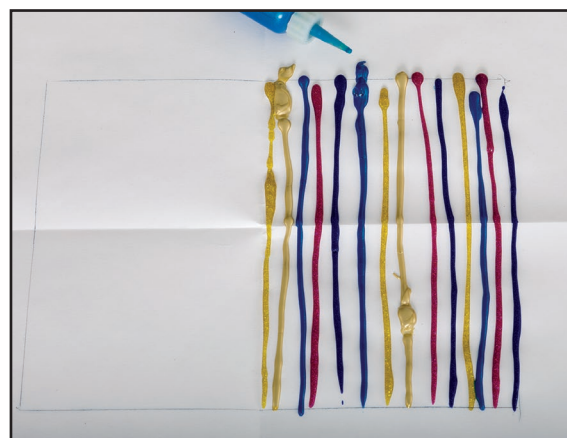
3. Squeeze generous paint stripes inside the box, side by side. They may be applied vertically or horizontally, as long as they are all in the same direction. Paint lines should be close together, but not touching.

4. Drag a craft stick through the paint in the opposite direction, creating lines that form a grid pattern. Some blank paper may show between the lines.
5. Fold paper on the vertical center fold. For this next step, work on one side of the horizontal fold at a time (1/4 section of a full sheet). Hold fingers together and, with one stroke, press firmly from the center (where fold lines meet) to the upper corner of the page, stopping before the paint is pushed out. Start at the center point again and repeat the stroke, next to the paint that was just pushed to the corner, see (B).

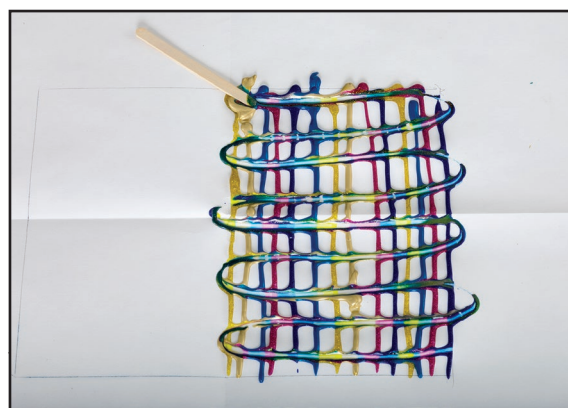


(B)

- Repeat multiple times to form the upper portion of the wing. The paper will be translucent enough to see the location of the paint.
6. Repeat the step above, this time on the other side of the fold line. Start from the center and push out diagonally to the corner. Go back to the center each time a stroke is made. This will create the lower section of the wing.
 7. When the paper is opened, feather-like patterns will have been formed in a mirror-image print. Allow to dry, then cut around the paint "feathers." As with Nike of Samothrace, these feathers are unique and impossible to replicate.



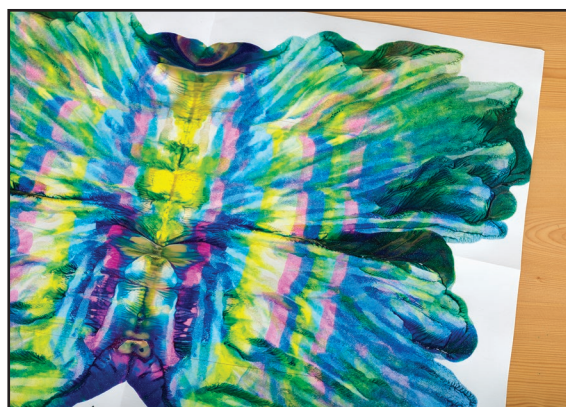
Step 1: Fold paper in fourths. Trace around a sheet of newsprint in the center of the page to create a box. Apply lines of paint inside the box to one side of the center fold.



Step 2: Drag a craft stick through the lines of paint in the opposite direction.

Options

- Hang wings on the wall and have students pose for photos in front of them.
- Have students imagine where the wings could take them if they could actually fly, then write about that journey around the edges of the wings, on the back side, on a separate piece of paper or in an art journal.
- For larger students, paper may be cut from a roll into larger pieces. For best results, choose a coated paper.



Step 3: Fold the paper and push from the center to the corners, first on one side of the fold, then on the other (follow diagram (B), above).

Step 4: Open paper and allow to dry, then cut around "feathers" to make a set of wings.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art

Presenting

Anchor Standard 6: Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

