

3rd Grade LWSD Art Docent Project: Aboriginal Dot Painting

Element of Art: Texture

Objective: to explore visual texture in art through the lens of Aboriginal Australian art while playing with tempera paint and alternate tools.

Artistic Influence: Aboriginal Australian artist Shorty Jangala Robertson



Elements of Art:

Texture (visual texture) – main topic of this lesson

Color (mostly warm with cool green veins in the leaf to suggest water)

Line (esp. contour)

Materials:

- **Tempera paint**
- **Cotton swabs** (Q-tips), 5-10 per student
- **Paint palette** (1 per student)
- **Orange construction paper** printed with leaf outlines (oak, sugar maple, aspen, magnolia & ivy – see following pages)
- **Paper towels**

Instructions and notes:

1. Have students observe the form and lines of the leaf outline. Remembering the importance of water in the western Australian desert, consider how water travels through the veins and use green (**cool color**) to paint a solid line over the internal veins of your leaf. (5 minutes)
2. Choose the next color and demonstrate using a Q-tip to dot the external **contour line** of the leaf. Have students do the same. Repeat with different colors until inside of leaf is covered in dots. Note that painters can switch colors partway through some the contour lines. Contrasting colors and spacing of dots create **rhythm** in the finished painting. (20-25 minutes)
3. Fast finishers can continue dotting contour lines in contrasting colors on the outside of the leaf as shown in the 3rd and 4th examples above. (5 minutes)
4. Clean-up! Volunteer helpers can help, but students should take charge of throwing away their Q-tips and wiping down their palettes and trays with baby wipes. (10 minutes)
5. Distribute parent information page for students to take home, and print an extra page to post on your bulletin board with the finished art. See following page.
6. Please complete the brief [LWSD Art Docent Program Feedback Survey](#) for this lesson.
7. Thank you for supporting our elementary students' visual arts education.

Adaptations: This lesson can be used for animal or abstract shapes as well. Older students can draw leaves freehand instead of working off of a printed shape.

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The goal of this 3rd grade lesson was to explore **visual texture** in art through the lens of Aboriginal Australian art while playing with tempera paint and alternate tools.



WA State Visual Arts Standard

Identify and explain how and where different cultures record and illustrate stories and history of life. (VA: Pr6.1.3)

In this art lesson taught by volunteer art docents, students learned about **Australian Aboriginal dot painting**, a painting technique in which small, distinct dots of color are applied in patterns to suggest an image, often of places and sources of water in the western Australian desert. We took our inspiration from Aboriginal painter **Shorty Jangala Robertson** who has a large painting hanging at the Seattle Art Museum.

Students learned that **texture** is an element of visual arts that portrays surface quality. They used cotton swabs and tempera paint to create a vibrant **visual texture**.

We had a lot of fun!

The development of this Lake Washington School District art docent lesson was made possible by a grant from the Lake Washington Schools Foundation.









