

Sun Printing on Fabric

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆ - Easy

Time: 30 minutes (+ inactive 1-2 hours when the sun does its magic)



Materials

- Acrylic paint or fabric paint (preferably dark colors)
- Flat waterproof surface to work on (for example, a tray or board, covered with aluminum foil or plastic wrap)
- White fabric (preferably 100% cotton)
- Spray bottle with water
- Paint brushes
- Found objects like leaves, flowers, sticks and pebbles

Tips

This activity is best when completed on a bright sunny day. The more direct sunlight, the better the results.

Steps

1. Water down the paint: 1 part paint to 1 or 2 parts water. The paint should be thin enough to flow easily, but still have enough pigment for bright color.



2. Put the fabric on your waterproof surface and bring it to an area that will get **several hours of direct sunlight**. Wet the fabric slightly by spraying water onto its surface.



3. Paint your fabric. If you want to use more than one color, leave unpainted (white) areas for the other colors.



San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles

520 South First Street | San Jose, CA | 95113 | www.sjQuiltMuseum.org

4. Arrange the leaves and flowers on the wet fabric. Press the edges of the leaves and flowers as flat as possible. The more contact with the fabric, the sharper the image will be in the end.



5. Leave the fabric out in the sun for 1-2 hours. If it is really hot, mist the fabric during the first 30 minutes to an hour.



6. When the fabric is **completely dry**, remove the leaves and flowers to reveal the magical prints.



7. To set the paint, iron the fabric for 2-3 minutes on the setting appropriate for the fabric you used (e.g. cotton).



How does the sun work here?

Water evaporates from the exposed (uncovered) surface of the fabric as it is heated by the sun. The covered areas of the fabric are essentially protected from evaporation, remaining wetter than the uncovered areas.

Once the exposed areas of the fabric are dry, water diffuses from the covered areas to the dryer areas, pulling the paint pigments along with it.

