

Art Project – Winter Trees **by Sophia Eberhart**

This project can be done using a number of different techniques to create scenes of bare-branched trees (and some of those ever-present fir trees) in a winter landscape. The way I see it, there are several goals. Having fun is right up there! Keeping the kids busy (in a creative and useful way) is a close second. Not spending too much money on kits and tools is definitely on my list! Plus, the cool thing about this project is that there is no dilemma about what to do with the final product. Throw away the experiments that didn't work and trim the ones that did. You (or the kids) can glue the nice looking paintings to card stock for holiday well-wishing and thank-you notes. Or mat them and frame them for the wall. Read the steps and hints, then take a look at the examples.

Step 1. Background Sky Wash

Using the paint of your choice (watercolor, fingerpaint, etc.), create a horizontal wash across the paper starting at the top and ending somewhere near the bottom third; this lower portion of the paper will be left white (with some inevitable, artistic smudges) to look like snow.

Step 2. Salt Texture

Using table salt (I can't tell much difference between iodized and non-iodized), sprinkle some across the still-wet-paint. As the paint dries, the salt crystals soak up the color and leave artistic-looking pale spots.

Step 3. Trees

Before paint dries, use a watercolor-pencil or crayon or fingernails (which work especially well with fingerpaint) to create the effect of trees with bare branches.

Step 4. Dry

Set aside to dry or for faster results, use a hair dryer and watch the salt crystals do their thing!

Hints and Variations

-Crayons (especially white) can be used **before** the application of paint

-Stamps (homemade or otherwise) can be used over a wash after it has dried

-Create snowflake speckles with white craft paint on an old toothbrush or other wide, stiff-bristled brush. You simply scrape your fingers/fingernails along the bristles, thereby "spraying" the paint onto the paper. (Try it out on scratch paper first to see if you like the results.)

-Torn strips of white paper can be glued to the bottom portion to give the impression of snowdrifts

-Try dividing one large paper into smaller portions so you can sample all the different techniques side by side

-If part of the picture looks good and other parts don't, try salvaging it by covering the offending portion with dribbles of glue then sprinkle glitter onto that.

-Experiment with sprinkling crayon shavings onto the paper (or cardboard or whatever your non-metal base is), then pop it into the microwave to melt the crayon. I have only had so-so results with this one. If the shavings are thick it won't melt right away. If you decide to use glitter, make sure you do it **after** the microwave step... otherwise there will be lots of sparking and popping!

Happy Painting!

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