

Marc O'Brien - Whimsical Outer Space Paintings



Marc O'Brien is an Australian artist living on the island of Tasmania. His work is whimsical and fun. A lot of this work is figurative and is created with simple forms and bright colours.

You can see images of his work at: <http://www.obieart.com/>

In this unit I wanted to explore the whimsical nature of O'Brien's art and have the children work in leafing. Leafing is the application of thin sheets of gold, or silver (imitation) to a surface.

I chose to use the planets as a theme to link the leafing and the whimsical art together.

Materials

Imitation gold and silver leaf

Aquasize (the adhesive for attaching the leafing)

Acrylic Paint

Acrylic paint globs that are dried (when acrylic paint dries on a palette it create very interesting shapes that can be removed a saved)

Oil Pastels and wax crayons

Watercolour



Procedure

Introduce the art of Marc O'Brien using images off of the Internet

Examine closely how he creates his figures, the arms are longer than in real life and thinner, the bodies are elongated. Often his figures are floating in mid air.

Have the children look at pictures of various planets. Observing the craters and indentations.

The children draw images of planets, thinking of composition, texture(craters). They also draw the images of people that they wish to have in their piece and where they will adhere the gold or silver leaf.

The children decided where they would place their dried acrylic paint globs on their rough sketch and they begin putting them on. The globs are secured with glue, use white glue. Paint the globs white with acrylic paint so that they can be painted any colour another day.

Decide where pieces of gold will be placed on the planet.

Using the Aquasize paint the area that is to be leafed. Do not have bubble of glue, use very little. If too much glue is applied it will flatten out and change shape when the gold is added. The gold should be larger than the area that it will be applied to. Lay the gold on very carefully. It is very thin and tears easily. Leave the gold and glue dry overnight. The next day excess gold can be removed with a tissue (soft Kleenex).

Once the excess gold is removed the children used crayons or pastel to create areas of interest on the planet or begin painting it with acrylics. The planets were painted in acrylics but I used watercolour in the background as it created a better atmospheric look. The children need to be careful when working with oil pastel near the leafing as it will smear it and create smudges.

