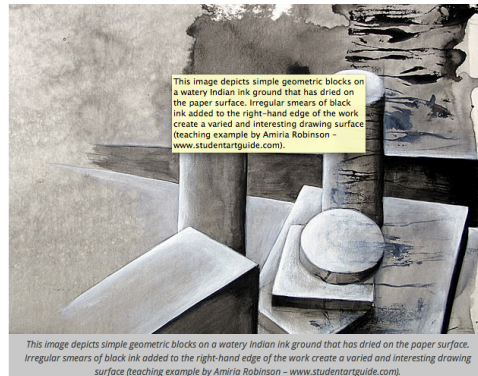


DIP PAPER DIRECTLY INTO PAINT / INK

Splashing liquid paint or dye onto a surface is one of the most unpredictable and exciting means of applying colour. Take turns at the classroom sink, dipping whole sheets of paper into watered down acrylic, splashing and flicking water across your work: holding paper, canvas or other painting surfaces in the air and letting the paint run down. Once an appealing wash of colour has been achieved, place the artwork flat to dry, so the paint or ink pools and dries in naturally occurring swirls.

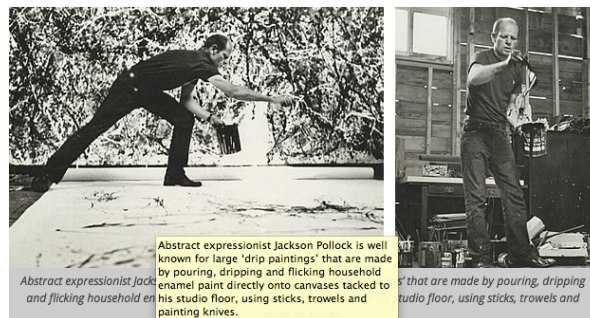


This image depicts simple geometric blocks on a watery Indian ink ground that has dried on the paper surface. Irregular smears of black ink added to the right-hand edge of the work create a varied and interesting drawing surface (teaching example by Amiria Robinson – www.studentartguide.com).

PAINT USING DRIPS

Gravity can be a superb painting tool. Working with thicker, yet still runny paint (the consistency of house paint is ideal) long splashes and drips of paint can be controlled through tipping and altering the direction of a canvas, or through flicking paint wildly at a work in the style of Jackson Pollock (photographed by Hans Namuth) below.

There was complete silence ... Pollock looked at the painting. Then, unexpectedly, he picked up can and paint brush and started to move around the canvas. It was as if he suddenly realised the painting was not finished. His movements, slow at first, gradually became faster and more dance like as he flung black, white, and rust colored paint onto the canvas – Hans Namuth.

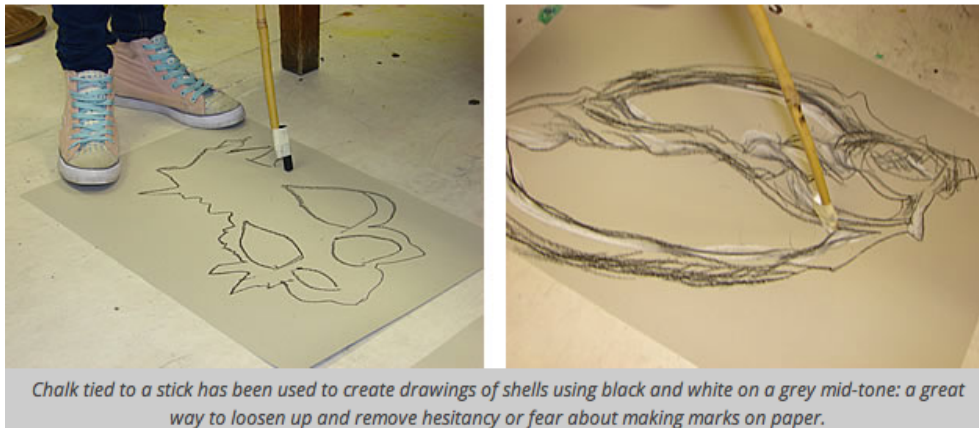


Abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock is well known for large 'drip paintings' that are made by pouring, dripping and flicking household enamel paint directly onto canvases tacked to his studio floor, using sticks, trowels and painting knives.

Abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock is well known for large 'drip paintings' that are made by pouring, dripping and flicking household enamel paint directly onto canvases tacked to his studio floor, using sticks, trowels and painting knives

DRAW USING UTENSILS TIED TO A STICK

Just as removing the boundary between the maker and the creation can result in exciting outcomes, so too can exaggerating the gap between the artist and the work. Here we see exciting, gestural drawings by Year 10 students from Bolton School (Girls' Division):



Chalk tied to a stick has been used to create drawings of shells using black and white on a grey mid-tone: a great way to loosen up and remove hesitancy or fear about making marks on paper.

SMEAR PAINT WITH A RAG

Most students will wipe paint off their work at some point – usually when fearing they have made an error. Michael Shapcott does this with a magical beauty: using a rag to spread paint across his canvas until the right intensity is achieved. Beginning with a detailed graphite under-drawing, he applies oil and acrylic paint over the top and then wipes most of it away. Watching him work is entrancing:



APPLY PAINT WITH CARD

An alternative to applying paint with a palette knife is to use the flat edge of a piece of cardboard. This is a cheaper and much more accessible strategy for a high school art student. Able to be cut, bent or folded as required, card is a great material for applying flat areas of colour to a work.

An example of painting with card by artist Mike Bernard:



Cardboard can be used to achieve flat hard-edged areas of colour, or to apply paint to the raised up portions of a textured area (as illustrated in the left artwork by Mike Bernard).

Cardboard can be used to achieve flat hard-edged areas of colour, or to apply paint to the raised up portions of a textured area (as illustrated in the left artwork by Mike Bernard).

PAINT WITH A ROLLER

Most students have used a roller to apply printing ink; fewer experiment with using a roller as tool to apply colour to their paintings. Although acrylic paint doesn't roll out as well as printing ink (it doesn't spread easily and covers surfaces in an irregular, unpredictable fashion) it is nonetheless a great way of achieving layers of flat tone in an artwork.

An example of painting a sketchbook page background with a roller by Julie Fei-Fan Balzer:



Suitable for creating grounds (in both artworks and sketchbooks) ink rollers are a tool that most painting students enjoy.

SQUASH BLOBS OF PAINT FLAT WITH A PIECE OF PAPER

A less controllable method of achieving areas of flat tone in a work is to press paper in blobs of paint and use these to transfer paint from one area to another (see example at 0.17 in this video by artist Michelle Brown):



PAINT WITH A SPONGE

Sponges of all kinds make excellent painting accessories. Whether you use specialist artist sponges, cleaning sponges or naturally occurring sea sponges (able to be purchased from most art shops), sponges can be used to apply beautiful textural mark-making to a painting.

Painting with a sea sponge: dabbing a fine layer of paint across a coloured ground can result in the illusion of intricate textures such as those shown in the example above. This can be an excellent way of depicting natural surfaces, such as foliage or shrubbery.

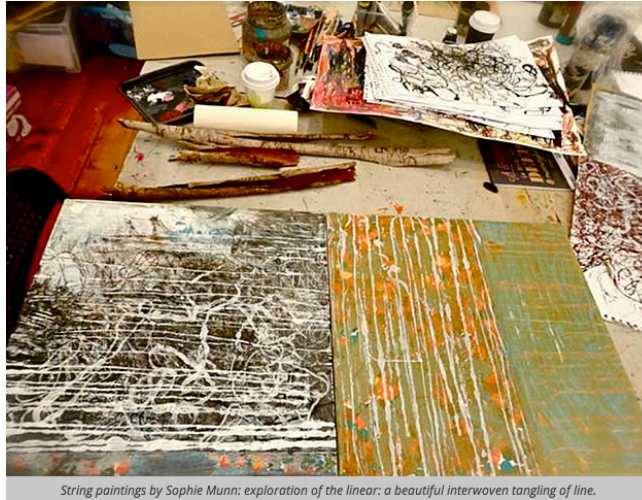


Painting with a sea sponge: dabbing a fine layer of paint across a coloured ground can result in the illusion of intricate textures such as those shown in the example above. This can be an excellent way of depicting natural surfaces, such as foliage or shrubbery.

FLICK PAINT-COVERED STRING

Construction workers flick taught string covered with chalk to mark straight lines in buildings. A similar principle can be used to create painted lines, using string laden with paint.

Examples of painting with string by artist Sophie Munns:



String paintings by Sophie Munn: exploration of the linear: a beautiful interwoven tangling of line.

PAINT USING UNCONVENTIONAL MEDIUMS

Although care needs to be taken when using materials that are not purpose built for art-making (especially when posting artwork to another country for assessment), avoiding sticky mediums that do not dry cleanly, or those which decay / rot over time, there are plenty of exciting, unusual products that can be used, which are found outside of the art supplies cupboard. Dye from walnut skins, stains from coffee cups, brightly coloured food dyes, splashes of shellac (varnish) and so on, can create wonderful outcomes.

Painting with M&Ms by Nikau Hindin:

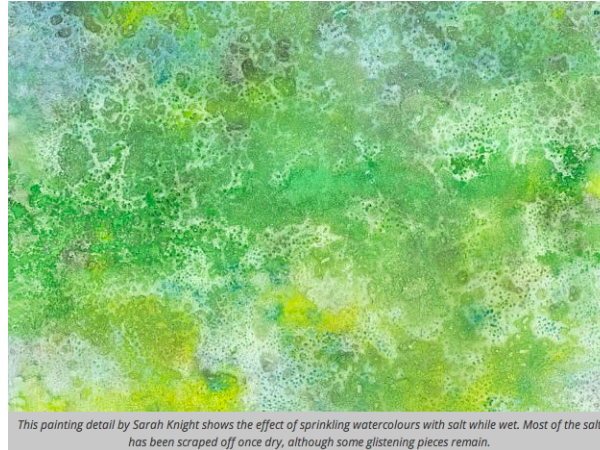


The brightly coloured food dye from M&Ms has been used as a painting medium in this example, with the chocolate candy photographed in place (photography is a good option when using mediums that might erode or decay over time).

SPRINKLE WATERCOLOURS WITH ALCOHOL OR SALT

Artists have long known that certain chemicals resist wet paint and can be used to create textural surface patterns. Sprinkle semi-wet washes of watercolour with alcohol, salt, dishwashing soap or bleach etc, and the result will be an organic, intricate pattern.

Example of salt sprinkled onto watercolours by Sarah Knight:

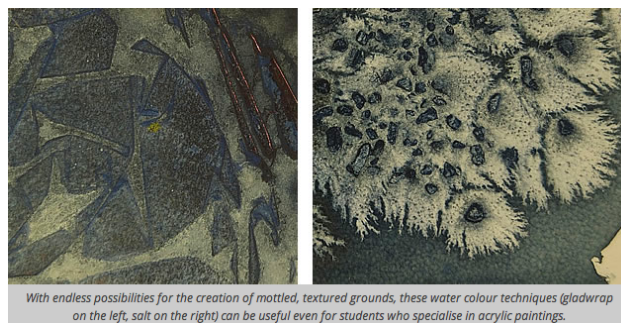


This painting detail by Sarah Knight shows the effect of sprinkling watercolours with salt while wet. Most of the salt has been scraped off once dry, although some glistening pieces remain.

PRESS FOODWRAP INTO WATERCOLOURS

As with the technique above, pressing crinkled plastic foodwrap (such as Gladwrap) into wet watercolours results in intriguing patterns once the plastic is peeled off when dry.

Example by artist John Burge:



With endless possibilities for the creation of mottled, textured grounds, these water colour techniques (gladwrap on the left, salt on the right) can be useful even for students who specialise in acrylic paintings.

USE GEL MEDIUM TO CREATE DIGITAL TRANSFERS

Although students should be careful not to rely on digital transfers at the expense of their own observational drawing, there are times when the integration of digital elements in traditional paintings can have spectacular outcomes. The following video by Chrystal Hethcote shows a simple image transfer technique using gel medium, which could be useful for applying a digital image to a traditional painting surface:



SPRAY PAINT THROUGH HOLES TO CREATE TEXTURE OR PATTERNS

Painting students often forget that stencils offer exciting possibilities. Items with gaps or holes can act as a stencil through which paint can be sprayed or flicked, creating repeating patterns, textures or irregular marks. Any number of found objects (leaves, branches, feathers, lace, mesh, fabric) or purposefully created items (card templates or paper with holes cut or ripped through it) can be suitable. It is not necessary to purchase large cans of industrial spray paint for this (indeed these can be hard to wield and tend to fill a classroom with paint fumes); rather use small, empty spray bottles from craft shops and fill these with watered down acrylic in appropriate colours.

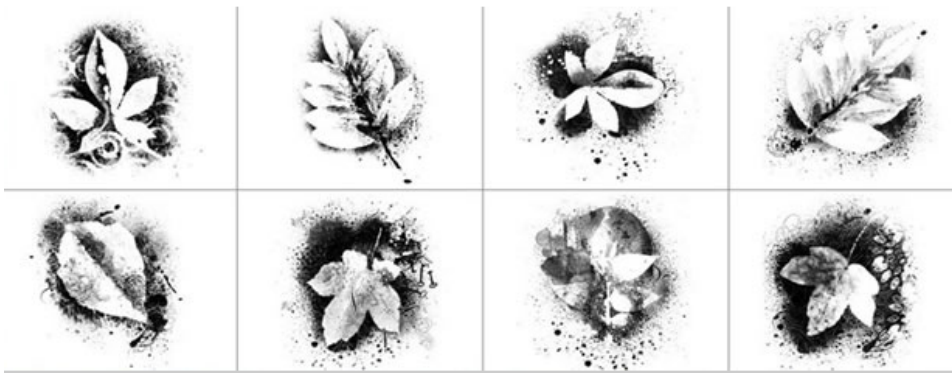
Application of spray paint through lace by Tara Nelson:



Spraying through patterned lace can result in exciting and beautiful ornate patterns. This technique works well when the patterns created seamlessly integrate with your subject-matter.

Spraying through patterned lace can result in exciting and beautiful ornate patterns. This technique works well when the patterns created seamlessly integrate with your subject-matter.

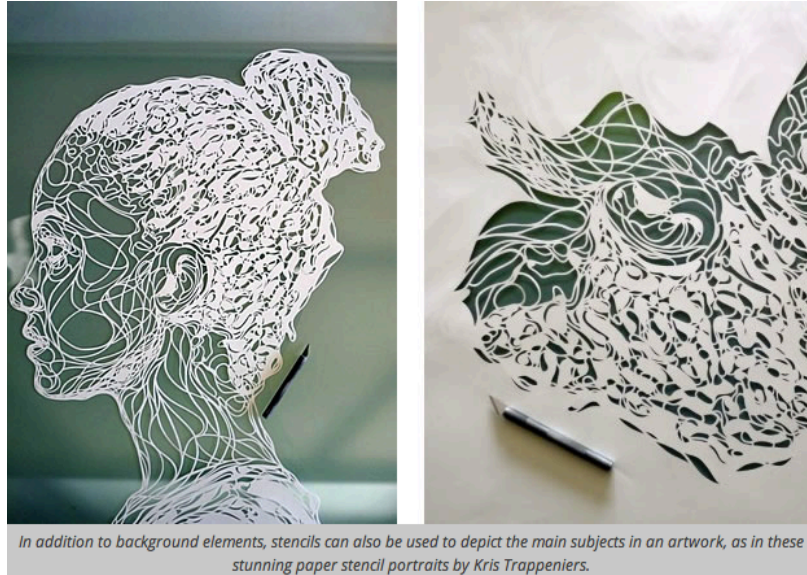
Leaf prints by Diamara:



Prints and stencils created by natural forms can be used to create backgrounds for detailed observational drawings, or to add textural elements within a painting. (Note: this should be used with care and not as means to 'trace' objects).

Prints and stencils created by natural forms can be used to create backgrounds for detailed observational drawings, or to add textural elements within a painting. (Note: this should be used with care and not as means to 'trace' objects).

Intricate paper stencils by Kris Trappeniers:

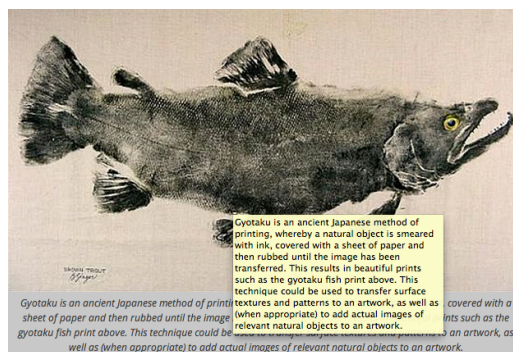


In addition to background elements, stencils can also be used to depict the main subjects in an artwork, as in these stunning paper stencil portraits by Kris Trappeniers.

APPLY INK DIRECTLY TO OBJECTS AND PRINT THEM

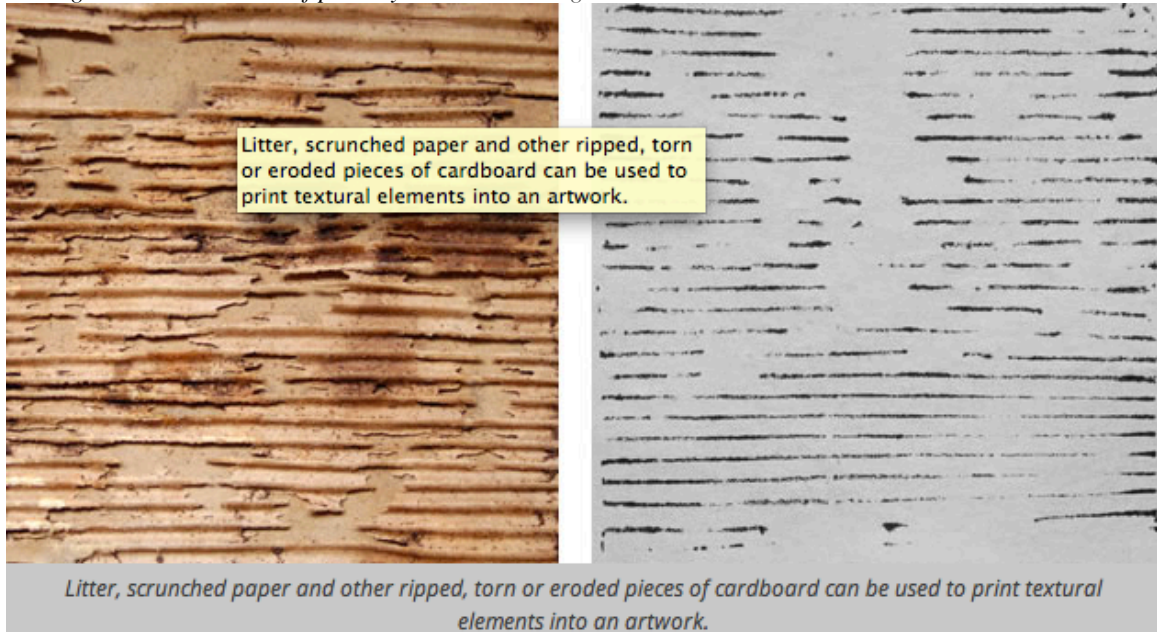
There are many natural forms (i.e. leaves, fish, mushrooms, eroding sticks) and manmade materials (i.e. corrugated cardboard) which can act as printable objects themselves. While objects should only be used if they support your theme or subject, this can be an exciting method for introducing textural elements to painted artworks.

Gyotaku fish prints by Barry Singer:



Gyotaku is an ancient Japanese method of printing, whereby a natural object is smeared with ink, covered with a sheet of paper and then rubbed until the image has been transferred. This results in beautiful prints such as the gyotaku fish print above. This technique could be used to transfer surface textures and patterns to an artwork, as well as (when appropriate) to add actual images of relevant natural objects to an artwork.

Corrugated cardboard relief print by Christina Leung:



Litter, scrunched paper and other ripped, torn or eroded pieces of cardboard can be used to print textural elements into an artwork.

Print from a rotated termite eaten stick by Christina Leung:



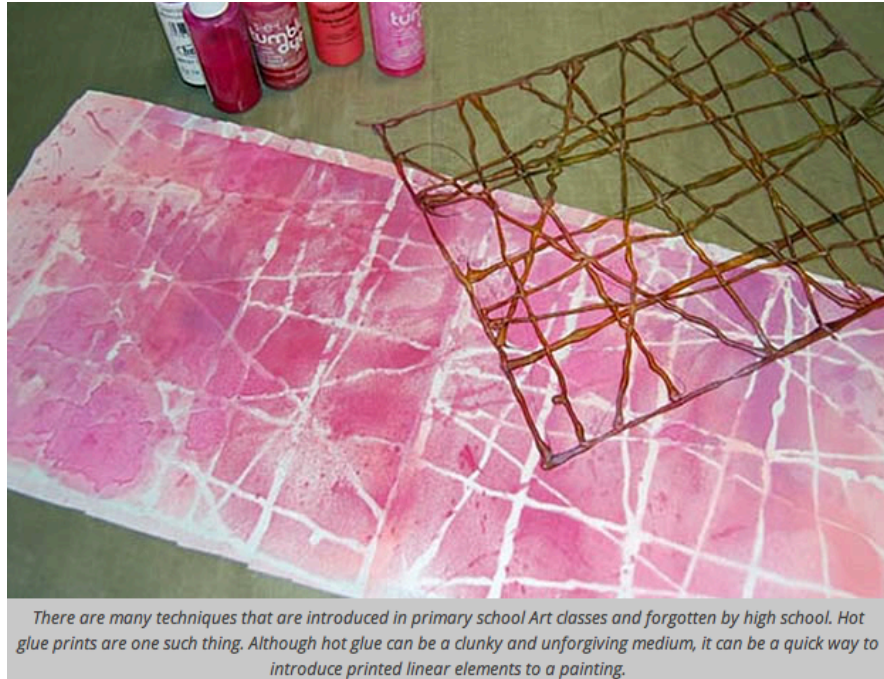
Cylindrical items are ideal for creating a wide area of repeating textural pattern; here Christina Leung has rotated a termite eaten stick to create a beautifully irregular series of marks.

MAKE ITEMS TO PRINT FROM

If you are unable to find suitable items to print, make some. From drizzling hot glue to layering strips of cardboard, there are endless ways to create abstract pattern making that can provide interesting

mark-making within (or under) a painting. Remember not to make random patterns for the sake of it: select shapes and forms that support the ideas explored within your work.

A hot glue print by Terri Stegmiller:



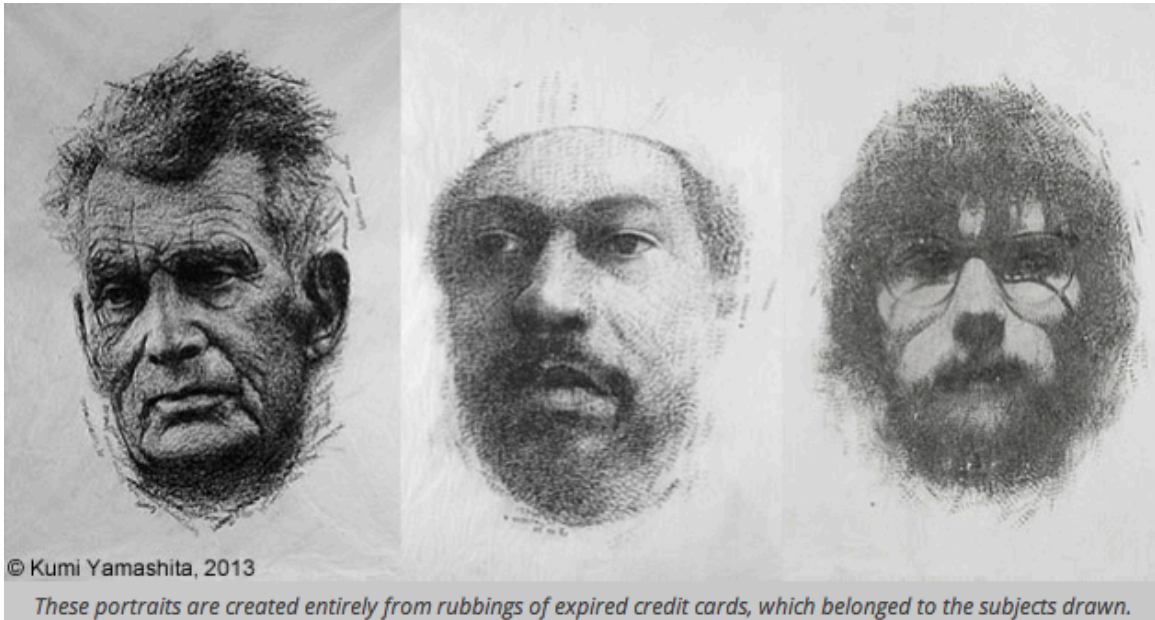
There are many techniques that are introduced in primary school Art classes and forgotten by high school. Hot glue prints are one such thing. Although hot glue can be a clunky and unforgiving medium, it can be a quick way to introduce printed linear elements to a painting.

Repeat patterns created by rolling ink onto lino, MDF or other engraved surfaces can be a great way to add a patterned painting ground to an artwork. The use of a subtle print with a darker tone in this example creates a varied and interesting surface which would be an excellent ground to paint upon! Take care if using printing ink for such an exercise, as some brands take a long time to dry and can 'bleed' into a painting when subsequent layers are added. There are often inconsistencies in drying time between colours, so test first!

TAKE RUBBINGS / USE FROTTAGE TO ADD TEXTURE

A 'rubbing' is the act of laying a piece of paper over a textured item and rubbing a pencil or crayon (or some other medium) over the top to make an impression of that texture on the paper. The frottage art technique simply involves taking a rubbing one step further, and using it to create an artwork that no longer directly mimics the original form. Although it can be difficult to add frottage to paintings (unless as pencil under-drawings), using frottage can quickly result in interesting and varied drawings.

Frottage art by Kumi Yamashita:



These portraits are created entirely from rubbings of expired credit cards, which belonged to the subjects drawn.

PAINT WITH ANY OTHER RANDOM THING YOU CAN FIND

When it comes to painting utensils and tools, you are limited only by your imagination. Kids' toys can be driven through paint; old shoes can be used to create footprints; fly swats can whack gridded patterns across a piece of paper.

Although it is not always necessary to apply paint in wild and unexpected ways, there are times when this can breathe fresh air into your project!

Do you need more ideas for how to apply painting or drawing mediums? Join the discussion in our forum!

This is the third article in a series aimed at encouraging inventive use of media for high school Painting / Fine Art students. You may also be interested in reading [Part 1: How to make your Art Project Exciting](#) and [Part 2: Painting on Grounds!](#)

- See more at: <http://www.studentartguide.com/articles/inventive-mixed-media-techniques#sthash.kAMox4w6.dpuf>