

Pumpkin Seed Mosaics

Art, level: Elementary

Concepts Taught: Studying and creating mosaics

Objectives/Background:

Mosaics are made of tiny colored pieces of stone, pottery, glass or other materials, arranged together and set in plaster or cement to make patterns and images. They can be used to decorate a floor, a wall or in some cases a ceiling.

Mosaics have a long history. They were created in Ancient times in Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome. When the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum (which were buried under lava when Mount Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79) were rediscovered, many wonderful mosaics were found.

Ask your students to imagine, making a mosaic using over one million pieces of glass - all hand cut, and placed into wet plaster to create a large pattern for their entry hall! It is a project that would take months and in some cases even many years to complete.

For several centuries, interest in the making of mosaics declined. It wasn't until the 19th century, when architects started to look at old ideas for new inspirations, that the interest once again returned and mosaics began popping up in public buildings and private homes.

Make your own mosaic ... Don't throw those pumpkin seeds away! Roast a few and paint the rest for a spectacular work of art.



What You Need:

Pumpkin Seeds (clean)

Paint brush

Thick paper (poster board)

Pencils

Tempera paint (dark colors)

Shallow container

Glue

Wax paper or newspaper

What You Do:

1. Have students choose a few paint colors.
2. Put the seeds into a shallow dish, squirt some paint on the seeds and mix the paint around until all seeds are covered in paint. They should do this for as many colors as they need.
3. Spread the seeds out on wax paper (or newspaper) and let dry.
4. While they are waiting for the seeds to dry, students can draw a picture onto poster paper you can use paper plates. Some ideas include masks, fish or wild designs, fall leaves or jack-o-lanterns. Or they can free form the design without a pattern pre-drawn.
5. Remind students to keep it simple, remember, they will be "coloring in" with seeds.
6. When the seeds are dry, they can be arranged and glued onto the poster paper in the appropriate areas.

***If you are feeling really adventurous, try using plaster instead of glue to create the mosaics. Just remind students to work quickly as plaster has a very quick set time. **Also, never pour plaster down the sink. Wait for it to dry and throw it in the garbage.**

***You can always use dried beans, lentils, popcorn or other types of seeds for this project or with this project... you don't need to use pumpkin seeds. In fact, if you use dried beans, you can leave them in their natural colorful state (black eyed peas, red kidney beans etc).