# Aloha Shirts

(art + social studies; art + science)

The craze for colorful island shirts began in the 1930's, when Hawaii was first becoming a tourist paradise. Wanting to take the "aloha" - the warmth and casual atmosphere of Hawaii —with them, people from all over the world began taking home shirts with hula dancers, sunsets, palm trees, flowers, fish and other images from Hawaiian culture. Shirt designers were often influenced by the colors and patterns of Chinese fabrics and Japanese kimonos.

Using nature as a source for printing materials, students can make their own Aloha shirts with brightly-colored fabric paints. Flowers and leaves, especially ones from tropical climates, make wonderful prints on fabric. "Gyotaku" - the Japanese word for "fish print"- is a fun and exciting way to give shirts an island beach look.

### **Grade Levels 5-8**

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.





## **Materials**

Jacquard® Textile Paint, (01208-1009) 2-1/4-oz set of 8 colors, one set per 10 shirts

T-Shirt (44959-), one per student

T-Shirt Board (44943-), one per student

Gyotaku Fish or Reptile Replicas (42907-), enough to share throughout class

Sargent Art<sup>®</sup> Glitter Glaze (00704-1006) 16-oz bottle, one per class

Royal Kids' Softgrip Class Pack (06031-0729)

Rectangular 6-Well Tray (03068-1006), share between 3-4 students

Blick Economy Buff Manila Drawing Paper 9"x 12", (10203-1103) at least one sheet per student

Kwik-Cover Tablecloth (04500-) to protect work surface

Tropical leaves and flowers Iron

### **Preparation**

- 1. Gather leaves, flowers, fish or reptile replicas.
  - Imitation or "silk" foliage will print as well as the real thing and will likely allow more repetition.
- 2. Pre-wash fabric. Use cotton, polyester or blended t-shirts or camp shirts. Iron out any wrinkles.

#### **Process**

- 1. Stretch shirt over a waterproof, reusable t-shirt board. Corrugated cardboard can also be cut and placed inside the shirt, but it will absorb some of the paint.
- 2. Place the leaf, flower or replica to be printed on a piece of manila paper and brush textile paint over the entire surface. Work quickly, the paint may dry on the surface and not transfer to the fabric. Use multiple colors for one print, if desired (see fish shirt example), or print colors individually (see frog shirt example). Textile paint is translucent, so print light colors first, Colors may be mixed to achieve a variety of hues and Glitter Glaze may be mixed with the paint to add sparkle.
- 3. Turn the leaf, flower or replica over and set it gently in position on the shirt. Apply pressure gently to one area at a time, until all surfaces have been pressed down. Lift a piece up and check the paint coverage. If it looks too light and the paint isn't as solid as you wish, try one of the following:
  - Keep the item in place and apply more pressure. It's best to begin with a light pressure and add more than to apply too much at the beginning. If there's a thick coat of paint, too much pressure can cause smears.
  - Remove the flower, leaf or replica and apply more paint. It may have gotten too dry or been applied too thinly. Position it carefully over the first print and press again.
  - Remove the object and use the paintbrush to apply more color to the shirt.

- NOTE: Paint coverage doesn't need to be solid. The white of the shirt showing through is a hallmark of hand printing.
- 4. Repeat, allowing paint to dry thoroughly before overprinting.
- 5. When printing is complete, turn shirt inside out and iron from the back side on a cotton setting for 30 seconds. When laundering, use mild detergent, cool water and low dryer heat.

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#### **National Standards**

<u>Content Standard #1</u> — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

- **K-4** Students use different media, techniques, and processes to communicate ideas, experiences, and stories
- **5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas
- <u>Content Standard #5</u> Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others
- **K-4** Students understand there are different responses to specific artworks
- **5-8** Students describe and compare a variety of individual responses to their own artworks and to artworks from various eras and cultures