



Black Velvet Mystery Painting

Make a pastel drawing on rayon velour and then create a mysterious “over-painting” with UV paints!

(art + history)

Many of us remember the black velvet paintings of the 70s for sale at gas station parking lots and highway off-ramps. Black velvet paintings have been viewed by many as the epitome of bad taste. These critics might also think black velvets in an art museum would be an aesthetic outrage! But plenty of 20th-century artists have pushed the boundaries of what is in good taste or aesthetically pleasing. A recent traveling exhibition titled “The Art We Love to Hate: Black Velvets” questioned this prejudice.

Velvet painting actually boasts a distinguished history. Produced in societies all over the world, velvet art may have been invented by Islamic people who also wove designs into the fabric. Velvet we brought to Europe during the Crusades and was traded in China.

One of the oldest surviving velvet paintings is a tiger from 19th-century Japan displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. From Japan, velvet painting was imported to the Philippines and then exported to Mexico in the 1930s. Meanwhile, 19th-century English and American ladies painted flowers on black velvet for pillows and wall hangings.

In this project, an oil pastel “painting” is first created on black velour, then black light poster paints are applied, creating an over-painting that at first disappears, then is revealed under black light!

GRADES K-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Research historical velvet paintings.
2. Cut velour into 11" x 14" squares (nine pieces per yard).
3. Glue each piece of fabric to a 9" x 12" canvas panel for rigidity.

Materials (required)

Rayon Velour, Black, 52" (12907-2052); need 3 yards

Blick® Economy Canvas Panels, 24-pack, 9" x 12" (07015-1023); need one per student

Sakura® Cray-Pas Expressionist Oil Pastels, set of 25 (20012-0259); share at least six sets across class

Tri-Art® UVFX Black Light Poster Paint, 250 ml (02043-); Share six bottles across class. Recommend:

Fluorescent Yellow (02043-4226)

Fluorescent Blue (02043-5246)

Fluorescent Tangerine (02043-4636)

Blick® Economy Golden Taklon Round Brushes, set of 6 (05151-0069); share four sets across class

Aleene's® Quick Dry Tacky Glue, 4 oz (23884-1004); share four bottles across class

Fiskars® Recycled Scissor, Bent, 8" (57097-1108); share five pairs across class

Black Light or Black Light flashlight

Optional Materials

Loew-Cornell® Double Ended Stylus (04902-1002)



Process

1. Glue an 11" x 14" piece of black velvet velour to a 9" x 12" canvas panel by spreading glue onto the panel, centering the fabric, and then folding any excess fabric to the back. Secure the back and corners with additional glue. Let dry.
2. Make a pastel drawing on the fabric using oil pastels. Using a pointed tool, scratch through the oil pastels to add fine details, if desired.
3. Think about what the painted scene or objects would look like in the dark. Would there be areas that are highly reflective if a light were cast on them? Would the eyes of an animal reflect back at you? Would stars or fireflies twinkle? In a city scene, would the lights shine from windows, or might the headlights of cars project a beam? Create a layer of mystery by painting over the oil pastels with UV paints. When dry, the paint will disappear, but under a black light, the night scene will be revealed!



Step 1: Glue black velour to a canvas panel.



Step 2: Make a pastel drawing on the velour with oil pastels.



Step 3: Create an "over-painting" using black light paints. The painting will disappear as it dries, but will be revealed under black light!



National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes.

K-4 • Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.

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.

9-12 • Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks.

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

K-4 • Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures.

5-8 • Students describe and place a variety of art objects in historical and cultural contexts.

9-12 • Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.