

Charcoal Pigment and Egg-yolk Based Paint

This activity is broken down into Four Steps

1. Introduction to Chinookan Art Themes
 2. Grinding the Charcoal
 3. Mixing the Paint
 4. Painting and Sharing
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Supplies Provided

Activity Instructions
Handout “In Chinookan art and culture...”
Charcoal
Small screen
Red paper

Additional Supplies needed

Table covering (if desired)
1 egg (more if you intend to make a lot of paint)
Mortar and pestle (or large spoon and bowl)
Spoons (for measuring, grinding, and stirring)
Cups and/or bowls (for grinding, collecting ground charcoal, and mixing paint)
Paint brushes
Scrap paper

Step 1: Introduction to Chinookan Art Themes

Look over the provided handout “In Chinookan art and culture...”

Spend some time on a good discussion with your family about the general art themes introduced in the handout – repetition of shapes, specific meanings of colors, etc...

Please remember to share the meaning of the colors red and black

If you like you can spend some time on the internet looking at photos of the Cathlapotle Plankhouse and other examples of Chinook art for inspiration

Step 2: Grinding the Charcoal

Clear a workspace and set out all of the supplies, check to make sure you have all you need

Place a small amount of wood charcoal into the mortar/bowl

Grind the charcoal inside the mortar/bowl with the pestle/back of the spoon

Place screen over a cup to collect ground charcoal

Occasionally sift the ground charcoal into the cup

Return remaining wood charcoal chunks back to the mortar/bowl and continue grinding

Add larger chunks of unground charcoal to the mortar bowls as needed

Please make sure that an adult helper is physically assisting with transferring the sifted charcoal to the collection container.

This will help ensure that the charcoal collection container does not get knocked over, resulting in the loss of all that hard grinding work and pigment!

Step 3: Mixing the Paint

Helpful hint: Appoint an adult as an official egg breaker/separator

Crack the egg and separate out the yolk from the white

Spoon about a teaspoon of charcoal into a clean cup

Add only the egg yolk to the ground charcoal

Stir the ground charcoal and egg yolk until completely combined

You will need to experiment with the yolk: charcoal ratio until you get the paint dark enough

Step 4: Painting and Sharing

As your family paints: talk about the paint and the paint making process. What would it be like to have to make all of your art supplies before using them? We encourage you to explore the themes introduced in the Chinookan art and culture handout.

Allow exploring of texture and scent to play a role in this portion of the activity. Practice using the paint on scraps of paper. How is the paint different than other paints you have used? What do you think salmon eggs (roe) based paint would feel like?

Once everyone is comfortable with the new paint, pull out the red sheets and have fun painting your final project! Once done, have everyone share their painting. What did you paint and why?

Thank you for participating in the Cathlapotle Plankhouse Second Sunday Series 2021. We hope you enjoyed Charcoal Pigment and Egg-yolk Based Paint as our At Home Activity.