

ART & THE COSMIC CONNECTION: Art Activity Teaching Guide

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Courtesy NASA/McREL

The *Pastel Art Activity* is designed to be a simple, yet fun and engaging, way for students to explore the concepts they've learned from the PowerPoint presentation. Students enjoy making art in science class or exploring science in art class depending on the department in which the project is taught. This reinforces the connections between the arts and sciences and engages the students in an interdisciplinary learning environment. The art project can be taught during the same session as the presentation or in subsequent sessions.

Time Recommendations

Grades K-5: 30-45 minutes

Grades 6-12: 45-60 minutes

Supplies

- **Drawing paper** – A larger-sized, fine artist drawing paper is recommended, budgets allowing. Students enjoy working with fine art materials and tend to take their projects more seriously. The drawing paper should be appropriate for the drawing media used.
- **Drawing media** – Soft pastels are recommended for their ease of use and blend-ability. However, they should not be ingested. Crayons, markers and pencils are more appropriate for K-2 students.
- **NASA Planetary Prints** - Provided on the NASA website, the prints will be given to students to inspire their artworks.
- **Gummy erasers** – Can be used effectively with soft pastels to lift pigment and create highlights
- **Q-tips** – Are a great blending tool
- **Cleaning or Baby Wipes** – Pastels are dusty and messy but easy to clean up, especially with cleaning wipes.
- **Fixative (optional)** - A pastel spray fix can be used; however, it is toxic and should only be used by a teacher with older or experienced students. For other students, aerosol hairspray can be used. A light coating will help fix the pastel pigment to the drawing paper. Drawings can also be spray-fixed between layers if they get too heavily loaded with pigment or muddy so that students may work back on top of the drawing. This process should be completed or supervised by the educator. A fixative is not necessary.

Implementing the Art Activity

- Have all students select a NASA planetary print to work from while student helpers pass out paper.
- Ask students to make pastel drawing inspired by their image.
- Educators may choose to discuss or share images prior to the project, if desired.
- Ask students to pay special attention to the Elements of Art and how they relate to interpreting the geologic history of their image. Encourage students to analyze their image using multiple art elements.
- Explain that students to DO NOT have to make their artwork exactly like their image. They are making “art” and should feel free to interpret their image by altering their composition, cropping, color, orientation, etc. This is effectively done using question prompts, ie. *“Do you have to make your artwork black and white like your image? No, feel free to explore color!”*
- Distribute drawing supplies AFTER you explain the assignment above so that students do not work ahead or get distracted.
- At the conclusion of the art activity, display artwork and discuss the project. Encourage students to share what planetary image they selected, interpret the geology of their image, and discuss how they used that image to inspire their artwork. Encourage other students to make comments and engage in group discussion.
- Clean up studio or classroom.