

Cave Paintings

Materials:

Prang Semi-Moist Watercolors
Prang Peel-Off Charcoal Pencil – Soft
Celluclay Instant Papier Mache

Optional:

Prang Ready-to-Use Tempera Yellow, White
Brown and Black.

Activ-Wire Mesh – Large

Snow Dazzle Giant Flake Glitter

Sand Dazzle Glitter Sand

Equipment:

Mixing Tub or Zip Lock Bag

Measuring Cup

Sheet Plastic or Garbage Bag

Rolling Pin

Vocabulary: Paleolithic, archeologist, bison, ibex, vaulted walls, rotunda, calcite, horse, aurochs, hemione.

Grade Level: From 2nd through 12th depending on variables selected and size/complexity desired. Lower grade projects would be smaller and less dimensional – characters depicted more simple in nature. Most elaborate could be an installation of complete cave setting.

Project Time: Class period to create cave “stone like” surfaces. Time to dry between. Research into cave painting images and a short period to sketch and paint caves. The more elaborate the cave setting – the longer the time required for each stage.

Key Words: cave art; lascaux.

Favorite Site: www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/arcnat/lascaux/en/
Features virtual tours & more.

Standard: lower grades should be able to identify caves and kind of animals. Make flat surface and Paint a recognizable animal. Mid grades should understand the approximate time and make somewhat more advanced image. Surface somewhat rock like. Upper levels – overlapping images on dimensionally Formed rock like surfaces

Introduction: Cave paintings have been found primarily in France, Spain and Australia. However they have also been found and documented in Mexico, India, Africa, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. Perhaps the most famous caves and the ones most documented for art history, are those of Lascaux, France. Discovered in September of 1940 by a group of archeologists, The caves have since been closed to the public for preservation – and life sized models of the more famous sections have been made for people to visit and observe.

Cave Surfaces to Paint: Mix Celluclay according to package directions – using about 4 cups warm water per lb of material. Mix and knead well until smooth and elastic. Easiest mixing is done by lacing all materials in a plastic zip lock bag – push out excess air – zip and work until clay like. Either Bright White or Original Grey work fine. For more advanced technique – use a small amount tempera as part of the mix water – too dye the Celluclay. When forming cave surfaces 2 or 3 mixed colors will look more stone like. Add small amounts of the Snow Dazzle Giant Flake Glitter when forming. Take a ball of prepared Celluclay about the size of your fist – lay it between sheets of plastic and roll with a rolling pin until flat and about 3/16” thick. Peel back the top layer of plastic and smooth the surface with fingers, craft stick or palette knife and a bit of water. For larger caves – use more Celluclay. For very dimensional caves – form a base out of Activ-Wire mesh (folding under edges and handle wearing gloves for protection) as a support. Cave surfaces may be draped or allowed to dry as flat as desired, Dry Celluclay will flatten if sprayed lightly with water and ironed to “relax”. For a very stone like surface sprinkle a bit of Sand Dazzle Glitter Sand on to the rolled out surface – cover and roll again lightly before final arrangement and drying.

Images: visit the website listed or others pertaining – or look up examples in art history books of cave painting images – notice that the animals are stylized – yet anatomically correct. Talk about the kinds of animals shown and the hand prints found with many of the paintings. What kinds of colors are used? Is there a story to be told in your cave by the sequence of animals?

Painting: using a charcoal pencil - sketch very generally the animal(s) to be painted – adjusting to make the image fit the “cave” you made. Using watercolors – paint your animal(s). Remember – you can go back and add additional layers of color and details as they dry and final details may be added with another round of charcoal pencil. Be sure to sign and date your cave!