

Create Out-of-This-World Art

Make Solar System art with crayons, watercolors, and salt!

Materials Needed:

White paper (heavier paper such as watercolor paper or cardstock work best), cups or jar lids in a variety of sizes, pencil, crayons, watercolor paints, paintbrush, salt, paper towels.

Instructions:

Step 1: Trace circles on your paper. Make them different sizes to represent different planets. You can also draw comets or asteroids! *Hint: Press lightly with your pencil so the lines will not show up later.*

Step 2: Use crayons to color in the planets and make background stars. Press hard, and use a variety of colors. You can make the planets look like the ones in our Solar System, or use your imagination! *Tip: If you use a white crayon, it will show up when you paint over it!*

Step 3: Paint over the picture with watercolors. Use a dark color or colors to create a night sky. You can paint over the planets, or go around them. Try to make the paint nice and wet.

Step 4: Sprinkle salt on the wet paint. Try different kinds of salt, like rock or kosher salt, to create different effects! After the paint dries, brush the salt off; it will create a starry textured background.

Colors in the Solar System

Objects in the Solar System appear different colors depending on what they are made of and what is in the atmosphere. Scientific instruments often use *false color*, adding color to help us see more details.

Mercury appears a gray color. It is a rocky planet covered in craters.

Venus is covered with a thick atmosphere of carbon dioxide and sulfuric acid, which makes it appear a bright yellowish-white.

Earth is our home planet. It is uniquely blue and green, the colors of life. The blue comes from liquid oceans, and the green comes from vegetation.

Mars is nicknamed the Red Planet because of rusty iron in the ground. It is a rocky planet, and its surface shows traces of water.

Jupiter is a gas giant. It is covered in swirling clouds and storms in different colors, including oranges, yellows, and reds, including the famous Great Red Spot.

Saturn, like Jupiter, is made of helium and hydrogen gases. Ammonia ice and clouds give it different shades of gold and yellow.

Uranus has methane in its atmosphere, which makes it appear blue. The rings of Saturn also has rings, but they are faint and hard to see.

Neptune has more methane and ammonia in its atmosphere than Uranus, which makes it appear a darker blue. Its Great Dark Spot is a storm similar to Jupiter's Great Red Spot.

Asteroids are rocky objects that orbit the Sun and are much smaller than planets. Many are found in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. They can be different shades of black, gray, and brown.