



Still Image:

Freezing the world

Investigating paints

Paint contains a pigment, which gives the colour, and the medium which makes it stick to the paper or fabric. Artists from the stone age cave painters to those working today have experimented with different compositions of paints. Some of their experiments were not always very successful!

Many of the masterpieces painted by the famous painter Leonardo da Vinci have not survived because of the composition of the paint he used. Some faded in the sun. Others cracked or flaked off the canvas or wall on which they were painted. Leonardo added different solutions to his paints, such as water, egg white or linseed oil. He did this to create different textures and finishes or to paint on different materials.

Instructions

1 Plan and carry out investigations to compare the characteristics of different paint compositions. You should be able to answer the questions below from your investigation results.

- What effect does adding water have on the paint?
- What effect does adding egg white have on the paint?
- What effect does adding oil have on the paint?
- What effect does adding white spirit to the oil and paint mixture have on the drying time?
- Is there any difference when using boiled and raw linseed oil?

Equipment

- Poster paint
- Egg white
- Linseed oil (boiled)
- Linseed oil (raw)
- White spirit (flammable!)
- White paper
- White card
- White cotton fabric

2 Produce a poster to report your investigation. This should include:

- Your plan
- Results (these could be attached to the poster)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations for artists

3 How can you test for the effects of the following on the dried paint:

- Water?
- Sun?
- Folding or rolling the material on which you have painted?