



Introduction

Let your creativity flow! Mark-making is the process of using various tools to create lines, textures and shapes in your art. It can be the whole art project, or it can be a piece of a larger project. It's also a good way to warm up for other art and can be very meditative.

You can adapt this activity to various age and skill levels, attention spans and interests. You can do this project with your family, your roommate, your significant other, your friend – you can even work together online if you want to include someone who's far away.

Materials

This project can be adapted to use whatever art materials you have on hand! You'll need **something to make the marks with** (Sharpie, poster paint, gouache, India ink, markers, etc.) and **something to make the marks on** (drawing paper, regular old white copy paper, cardstock, newspaper, cereal boxes, junk mail, wrapping paper or anything else that will hold paint).

Try experimenting with different objects and tools. 

Some things you can make marks with besides brushes & pens:

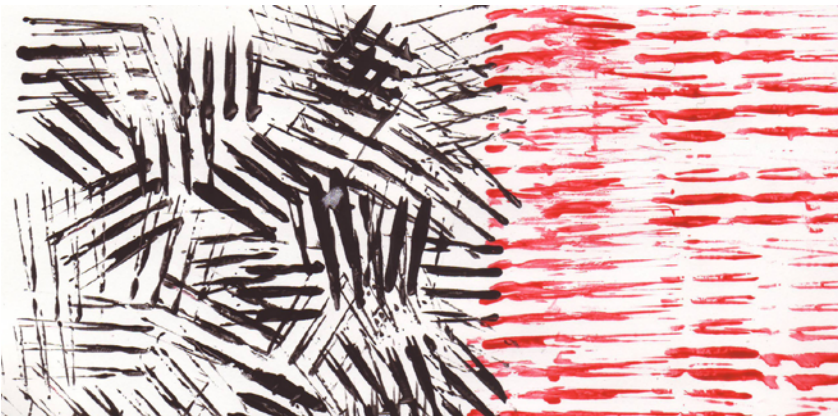
- ★ Natural materials (sticks, leaves, feathers, potato stamps)
- ★ Fingers
- ★ Empty cardboard toilet paper rolls
- ★ Coffee stir sticks
- ★ Cotton buds
- ★ Pieces of fabric or carpet
- ★ Bubble wrap
- ★ Kitchen tools (forks, dish scrubbers, sponges, a spatula, an old-fashioned potato masher)
- ★ The eraser end of a pencil
- ★ Spools
- ★ Bingo daubers
- ★ Whatever you have on hand that has an interesting shape or texture (that's okay to get paint on)

How to

Draw or stamp a pattern on your paper or cardstock. You can cover the whole page with one kind of mark, or divide it up into sections and make different kinds of marks. Or make one kind of mark over another kind of mark.

Don't be too precise – try to just doodle whatever shapes you feel like – scribbles, dots, lines, whatever – or make the same mark over and over without thinking too much about it. If you need some inspiration, see the examples here:

<https://www.pinterest.com/llelobirddesign/art-lessons-mark-making/>



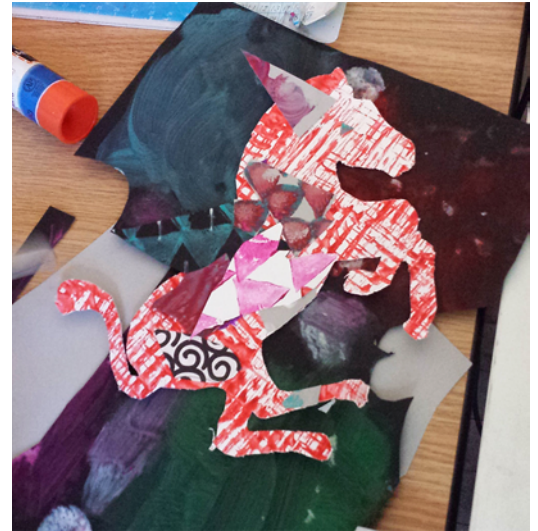
DESIGNS STAMPED WITH FORKS

Tip

Some kids (or adults!) – especially the perfectionists – have a hard time getting started because they aren't sure what kinds of marks to make – stamping repeat designs with an object is a great entry point for people who are struggling with what to do.



DESIGNS STAMPED WITH PENCIL ERASERS



Extend it:

- ★ Go for a walk before you start and pick up things like sticks and leaves that you could use to make marks.
- ★ Look at mark-making by artists like [Cy Twombly](#), [Eric Carle](#) and [Yayoi Kusama](#) (kids will particularly like her sticker-covered [Obliteration Room](#)).
- ★ Cut up your mark-making papers and make a collage. Make an [animal](#), a [forest](#) or anything else you can think of. It can even be abstract. Trade papers with your art partners to get a fun mix of designs to work with. (If you're using paint, it's a good idea to make this a two-day project so your designs have time to dry before you cut them up.)
- ★ Hang your art up on the wall, or mail it to someone to let them know you're thinking of them.