



Painted Paper Art

MEXICAN SUNS

MIXED MEDIA
PROJECT

INSPIRED BY AZTEC CERAMIC SUNS

MEXICAN SUNS



MEXICO: LAND OF MANY CULTURES



Around 1300 CE, a wandering tribe of Indians, the Nahua (more commonly known as the Aztecs), settled in the Valley of Mexico. The valley is a highlands plateau in central Mexico. Evidence suggests the indigenous Nahua people originated in northwestern regions of Mexico and migrated into central Mexico around 500 CE.



THE CALENDAR AND THE SUN

Ancient people, like the Aztecs, knew the importance of the sun in their lives but they did not understand what it was. Some thought the sun was born every morning, moved across the sky during the day, and died every evening after setting in the west. The ancient Aztec religion was highly focused on keeping nature in balance and the sun was a large part of that. The Aztec carved a stone sculpture called a sun calendar or sun stone. Not only was this sculpture used as a calendar, it also had geographical, political and religious aspects.

Today, ceramic suns influenced by the sun calendar are made in Mexico by the Nahua Indians who are descendants of the Aztecs. The painted paper Mexican suns in this project are inspired by the ceramic suns sold in the marketplaces of Mexico.



SUPPLIES

- ☐ 12" x 12" brightly colored construction paper (I suggest Tru-Ray brand)
- ☐ 12" x 9" painted paper (cut into a 9" x 9" square and a 3" x 9" strip)
- ☐ 2" x 4" white paper for eyes
- ☐ Scrap paper for pupils
- ☐ Painted paper scraps in various colors
- ☐ Paper plate template for the sun shape
- ☐ Elmer's Glue-All
- ☐ Pencil
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Oil pastels
- ☐ Placemats for protecting the tabletop



VOCABULARY

- Aztec
- Symmetrical
- Patterns

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop an appreciation of the Aztec culture and their beliefs.
- Demonstrate an understanding of symmetrical designs.
- Demonstrate an understanding of lines and shapes used to create patterns.

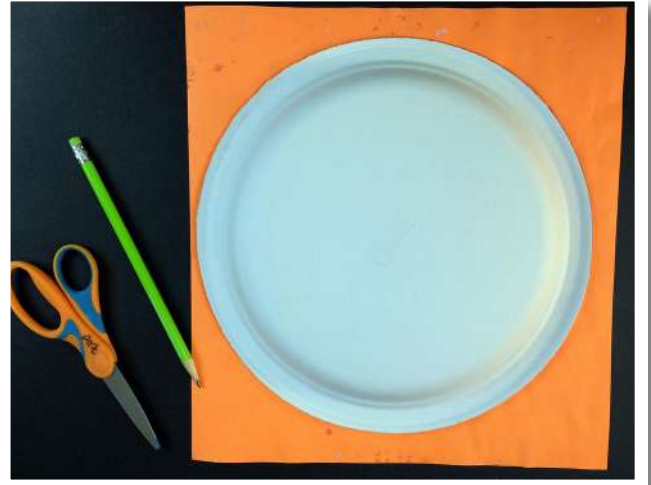
During painting projects, I have the students put an 18" x 24" piece of tagboard (which I refer to as placemats) underneath their projects. The students clean their brushes on the placemats while painting. This keeps the paints bright, the tabletops clean, and creates beautiful papers which I save for future projects.



DIRECTIONS

Step 1

Use the paper plate as a template. Trace around it in pencil on a 9" x 9" piece of painted paper. Trace on the backside of the painted paper so there are no pencil marks on the front. Cut out the circle.



Step 2

Use white paper to create the eyes. Fold the paper in half and draw a circular or oval shape. Keeping the paper folded will result in two symmetrical eyes when cut out.

Repeat this process using scrap paper, making two smaller circles for the irises.

Use painted paper scraps to create a nose and mouth in simple shapes, like an oval or triangle. You can also add circles for cheeks as well.



Glue down all the facial features.

DIRECTIONS

Step 3

Use oil pastels to add symmetrical designs on the face. Simple patterns like dots, dashes, flowers, hearts and diamonds work best.



Step 4

Create the sun rays out of a piece of 3" x 9" painted paper cut into 3" x 1/2" strips (about the thickness of french fries). Glue them around the perimeter of the face. Some students glued them on the front, but gluing them on the back of the face results in a neater appearance. Make sure that all the painted paper sides are facing forward.



DIRECTIONS

Step 5

Use one or two colors of oil pastels to add lines on top of the sun rays.

For vibrant designs use bright colored oil pastels.



Step 6

Mount the sun on a background by gluing onto a 12" x 12" piece of construction paper.



GALLERY

