

Exploring Method and Creating an Action Painting

This activity will guide you in creating a painting inspired by the “action painting” method of the artist Jackson Pollock.

Time: 30 minutes

Difficulty level: Low

Messy level: High



Investigate the Work of Art!

1. What colors did Jackson Pollock choose for this painting?
2. One characteristic of Pollock’s “action” method of painting is the energetic application of paint. Knowing Pollock would place the canvas on the ground, how would you describe his process and the tools he might have used?
3. If you were describing this painting to someone who had never seen it before, what descriptive words would you use?

To view a hi-res image of the work, visit the [MFAH Collection online database](#).



Let’s Make Some Art!

Gather These Art Materials

- Pieces of string, twine, or yarn
- A large piece of paper, canvas, or cardboard (an old box, etc.)
- Paint (acrylic or tempera)
- Water
- A painting shirt or apron
- Plastic plates or containers to use as paint palettes
- Drop cloth or old newspapers to cover the ground

Step-by-Step Artist Instructions

1. Find a clear spot at home where you can make art and get a little messy.
2. Lay out a drop cloth or old newspapers on the ground. Place your piece of paper, canvas, or cardboard on the floor.
You may want to do this outside or in a garage.
3. Cut the string into 8–10 inch pieces.
4. Pour a small amount of paint into each plastic container and add water until paint is fairly runny.
5. Dip the string into the paint and then, while moving the string around, drip it over your canvas. See what happens when you move the string quickly and slowly.
6. Use a fresh piece of string for each color that you use, layering colors and filling your composition.

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