

Tree Bark

Trees are remarkable living organisms. At this time of year we can see clearly the fabulous colours and patterns on the tree bark on a wide variety of trees. In this workshop we will explore texture work, pattern, acrylic paint techniques, and imaginative work.

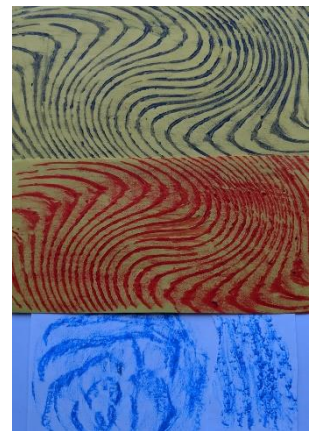
Materials:

- Paper (Watercolour / coloured/ photocopy)
- Pastels
- Paint (watercolour/ acrylic)
- Pencils (coloured/drawing)
- Felt-tip pens
- Cardboard
- An old comb
- Sharp tool (e.g. a needle)
- Pen
- Scissors
- Sellotape

Activity 1 – Bark/Wood rubbings

If possible, collect a few samples of wood or bark and do some rubbings. Alternatively, you may have some wooden items around your house that you could use, even floorboards!

Put thin paper over the object and use a pastel on its side to make a rubbing. This is a great way to see natural patterns.



Activity 2 – Pattern

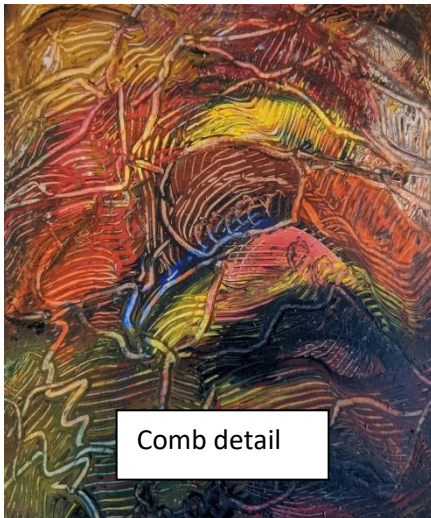
On a piece of A4 paper draw, with a ruler, a few boxes. They can be of the same size or different sizes. In each one recreate the patterns of different tree barks. I have done silver birch, mulberry, hawthorn and golden birch. Try using a variety of materials to produce the patterns.



Activity 4 – Tree Composition

You could produce this image on a canvas or watercolour paper taking inspiration from what you see outside or pictures of wintery scenes. I chose to explore Silver Birch trees using acrylic paint.

- First I drew my design lightly in pencil.
- I added the background by slightly watering down the paint and adding in blocks of colour.
- On top of that I added undiluted paint to make a thicker layer. I dragged an old comb through the paint to create texture. If you don't have a comb you could make one from cardboard with a jagged edge.
- I painted the trees on top using layers of thick paint before finally adding in the details.



Activity 5 - Sgraffito

Cut yourself a small piece of watercolour paper. On the smooth side cover the whole page with pastels. You could use just one colour or many (do not use dark colours). Now change to a dark colour and go over the whole sheet again with the dark pastel. Remember to press quite hard for both layers to get lovely rich colours.

Now using a sharp tool (e.g. the end of a paper clip, needle, end of a pen, paint brush handle) scratch your design of bark or trees. The colours from the bottom layer should show through as you scrape off the top layer.



Activity 6 - Imaginative work

Many wonderful children's stories and poems are based in or around trees. I would like you to have a go at designing a magic tree!

I have used an A4 piece of paper. I drew the tree first and made 3 doors. I cut the doors so that they would open and close. I stuck paper over the holes at the back using sellotape. You can use a mix of art materials to make a wonderful imaginative scene. Inside each door should be a surprise. Who lives in your tree?

