

DECEMBER: Aurora Borealis with Oil Pastels

Art Appreciation with Tom Thompson

Essential Question: How can I learn about warm and cool colors with art?



Supplies Needed:	Art Vocabulary:	Learning Target:	Meets WA Learning Standard:
Black or white construction paper	Analogous	Students will understand how warm colors or cool colors are analogous and can blend together.	VA:Cr2.1.K
Oil pastels	Cool Colors		
Optional: white paint & toothbrush/paintbrush	Warm Colors		
Optional: construction paper & glue stick to frame finished art	Landscapes		
	Silhouette		

Instructions:

Show students examples of the [Aurora Borealis series](#) by Canadian artist [Tom Thompson](#). Have students discuss what colors they notice, and what kinds of landscapes they see. Where is the artist Tom Thompson from? Where is Canada in relation to where you are? Why is it important to think about/know about our northern neighbors?

Show students this 2 min [video](#) to learn more about the Aurora Borealis. Talk about how and where the Northern lights occur. For older learners, talk about the different gases in the sky and the colors they make.

Talk about warm colors and cool colors. Show them a **color wheel** and talk about how warm colors (red, orange, yellow) and cool colors (purple, blue, green) will blend together (and not turn brown). Warm and cool colors are called *Analogous* (this means next to each other on the wheel) and blend nicely.

Give students a piece of black or white paper and either warm or cool colors.
Do not give them black oil pastel until they are done with the sky.

Ask students to draw a horizon line (where the earth meets the sky). Then ask students to create a swerving line to indicate the northern lights. Make sure students use the lightest colors (yellow or green) and then add and repeat white to emphasize the brightest spots. Have students blend the colors together and smear the oil pastel with their fingers or white oil pastel.

Next, give students the black oil pastel and have them add the silhouette on the horizon line (city buildings, trees, mountains, etc) and reflection on the water.

Optional: Mix water with white tempera or acrylic paint and have students flick paint white dots/stars on the top of the black part of the sky. Use leftover paper to cover up the horizon line and below while flicking stars.

Pro Tips For Success:

- For teachers with limited time (20 min) give students smaller sized paper
- Don't give students the black oil pastel, use black paper instead.
- To make the stars, mix white tempera paint and water to a liquid consistency.
- You can use a toothbrush (or tap two brushes) to flick the stars.
- You can use scraps of paper to block out/protect where you don't want stars.