How to Make a Rainbow Mosaic Suncatcher

Have you ever wondered where colors come from? Well, science has the answer! We can see color because light waves, like those given off by the sun, reflect all the colors of the rainbow. Each color has a different wavelength, and when they are seen all together, they make white light. When it rains, the water droplets in the air act like a prism and make it possible for us to see the colors that make up white light. An artistic way to recreate this effect is to make a suncatcher. When light changes throughout the day and passes through a suncatcher the colors you see will also change.

For an artist, color is important to consider when creating art because it can have many effects on how the picture is perceived. For example, in this painting the artist uses all the colors of the rainbow. What shapes do you see being made by these colors? Do you see a half circle rainbow coming out of a yellow sun? How does the color in this painting make you feel? Are you happy? Energized? Does it make you feel safe and at home?

One tool an artist has to help determine what colors to use is called a color wheel. By combining basic colors in a color wheel, an artist can create new colors. They can also “set the tone” or mood for the feelings people may have as they look and reflect on the art.

Before we make our suncatcher let’s learn about the color wheel!
The Color Wheel and Basic Color Theory

Basic Color Terms:

**Primary Colors:** The main colors on the color wheel, that when combined, create secondary colors.

**Secondary Colors:** Colors that are created by combining the primary colors.

**Warm Colors:** Colors that are associated with heat and can express emotions such as excitement, happiness and confidence.

**Cool Colors:** Colors that are associated with cold and can express emotions such as peace, harmony and calmness.

How to use primary colors to create secondary colors.
Let's Make A Rainbow Mosaic Suncatcher!

Supplies

In the kit:  
- Paper circle  
- Watercolor paint  
- Paint brush  
- Black crayon  
- Pencil  
- Piece of yarn

Additional supplies:  
- Ruler or straight edge  
- Cup and water  
- Clear tape  
- Paper towels or old rags

Step-by-Step

1. **Prepare your workspace:** Before you begin painting, prepare your workspace by laying down scrap paper or old newspaper to protect your work surface. Next, lay out all your supplies.

2. **Create your mosaic shapes:** To create your mosaic shapes, take your paper circle and draw straight intersecting and parallel lines using a ruler and pencil. The more lines you draw the more shapes you will create.

3. **Let's get painting!**  
   A. To paint your mosaic shapes, we are going to use the dry brush method of watercolor painting. To do this, dip your paintbrush in your cup of water and begin moving water over to the paint color (cake) you are using. As you work you will need to continue this process to keep your paint moist.  
   B. Once the paint has a thin layer of water, take your brush with some paint on it and begin applying paint to your shapes. I recommend working from the outside lines in towards the center.  
   C. Occasionally, feel free to add a little water directly to your suncatcher paper on top of the paint you have already applied. This will help blend your paint strokes together.  
   D. Before moving on to your next color, clean your brush in your cup of water and make sure paint is completely removed by drying your brush on a paper towel. Wait for your painted sections to dry before moving on to your next color! If your paint is still wet, you run the risk of your colors running together. This is sometimes a fun look that you can always experiment with too!
4. **How to make violet/purple:** You may notice that your provided palette does not have the color violet. No problem! Remember our color wheel? Combine blue and red in one of the empty center paint wells by using the same method as step 3A. However, instead of brushing the paint onto your paper you are going to dab the paint into the well. Repeat this process with the second color until you achieve the violet color you are looking for.

Test the color! Before applying it to your project, use a paper towel or scrap paper to test that the color is the shade you want. If it isn't, continue combining the two colors until you are satisfied. Repeat this process if you run out of purple paint.

5. **Continue painting your shapes until they are all colored!**

6. **Flattening your paper:** Once your paint is completely dry you may notice that your paper circle has become crinkly. To flatten it, place the paper under a heavy stack of books. You may need an adult's assistance to move the stack of books. Let the books sit on top of the paper overnight for best results.

7. **Making the black lines:** Once your paper is completely flat it is time to create the black lines that go between the shapes. Simply draw over the pencil marks you made in step 2 using your ruler and black crayon.

8. **Attach your string:** Use pieces of tape to attach each end of the string to the back of your mosaic painting.

9. **Hurray, you made a suncatcher!** Congratulations, your suncatcher is now ready to hang in a sunny window. Use another piece of clear tape to attach your rainbow suncatcher to a window. You can also use suction cup hooks, a Command strip hook or hang it from a curtain rod.

**Reflecting on Your Art.**

Now that you have completed and hung your new suncatcher, take a moment to see how the colors change with the sun, time of day and weather fluctuations. Are the colors less vibrant on cloudy days when the sun is hiding? Are they brighter on a sunny day when the sun is hitting the window directly? Also, think about how your suncatcher makes you feel. Does it make you feel happy? At peace? There is no correct answer. Art is meant to make you feel a variety of emotions and everyone has a different perspective!