

## Facepaints

Facepaints are safe, straightforward to use, and available in a wide range of saturated colours. They can be used on a variety of surfaces with different applicators and can support and reinforce the thematic content of many creative sessions. Choose facepaints that are FDA and EU compliant, completely non-toxic, water-based and safe for all ages. When planning an activity using facepaints, consider the following:

- Have several small bowls of water available. You don't need much and this avoids big spillages, especially when sharing.
- Choose colours carefully to fit in with and to reinforce the theme of the session. White is useful in any palette as it brings out the other colours.
- Offer a variety of other objects to paint on, for example decorating stones, paper plates, pieces of cloth, again to support the theme of the session.
- Painting on small, mobile mirrors is another option - they are smooth and easy to paint on, double the image, can be worked on by one or more people at the same time and when held up to a light will reflect the patterns onto walls and ceiling.
- Give 'painting' options – using fingers or small, soft paint/make-up brushes and/or bits of sponge if participants don't like getting messy.
- UV paints are now available and look stunning when revealed in UV light.
- Do you need permission to use facepaint on someone's skin? In schools this is usually known, but in other scenarios it may not be.
- Having mirrors available enables participants to see what they are doing to themselves...and you.
- Cultural links between the activity and the overall theme - many cultures use body paint as part of rituals, or wall/cave painting to record historical events.

Facepainting directly onto skin is an activity participants either love or refuse. However, with careful facilitation, even the most ardent anti-facepainter can begin to enjoy the activity, once they have learned to trust that it will not be imposed on them. There are many other ways of engaging and including people in facepainting, as the examples below will demonstrate. Once achieved this engagement will promote focused 1-1 interaction, tactile experience, visual creativity and fun.

During the activity there are several strategies that may help engage participants:

- If a client is unsure, allow them to paint on you - this is always amusing and gives power and control to them.
- Paint on parts of participants' bodies that they can see, their legs, hands, arms for example.
- Encourage participants to work together, perhaps painting each other.
- Encourage the use of simple motifs that reinforce the theme - linking to flowers is a favourite as petals are easy and with a dabbing motion you can cover large areas!
- Finger and hand printing offer other ways of making patterns.

## Links

Mirrors (Prop)

Visual Art (Activity)

Workshops - Temping in Tokyo, Magic Garden, Hindu Wedding, Starry Night

## Videos

Facepaints