

Paper Tissue Art (Advanced)

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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis



Cardboard, colored tissue paper, and glue.

What comes to mind when you think of tissue paper? Maybe your thoughts go to its fragility or how it is used in stores to wrap a delicate item so that it makes it home safely. Tissue paper has many uses from an added colorful touch to conceal the contents of a gift bag, to making crafts such as flowers, pom poms, and hanging lanterns. Or did you think of a piñata dangling from a tree limb in the backyard during a birthday celebration? The artist Justin Favela uses techniques from piñata making to create large elaborate murals about places and people of Latinx historical and cultural significance. In this art activity, you will create your own smaller scale cut-paper artwork.

Ages: Grades 4–Adult (9 years +)

Time It Takes: 2+ hours

What We Are Going To Do:

- / Design
- / Draw
- / Use piñata tissue paper techniques

You'll Need:

- / Pencil
- / Cardboard (recommended to be smaller than 12" on any side)
- / Glue
- / Colored Tissue Paper (various colors)
- / Scissors

Before We Start:

Let's look at images of Justin Favela's *Ruta Madre* (2023), a site-specific artwork created for CAM's 60 foot long performance space wall. Take a slow look and closely examine the mural. Favela's murals often recreate or reference works created by other artists, especially by Latinx creators. This mural combines iconic places, images, and objects found along Route 66, one of the most famous highways in the United States. Route 66 is nicknamed "Mother Road," which translates into Spanish as "Ruta Madre," because it runs from Santa Monica, California to Chicago, Illinois. Favela includes references to murals, restaurants, and people of Latinx origin across Route 66, including a reference to its passage through St. Louis. While looking at the artwork, think about the questions below.



Justin Favela, *Ruta Madre* (installation view and details), 2023.

Think About

- / As you look, what thoughts, messages, or words come to mind?
- / What might be the theme or subject of this mural?
- / What makes this mural different from conventional painted murals you have seen?
- / What areas are your eyes drawn to in the mural?
- / If this mural could have a permanent location, where do you think it could be located and why?

Art Activity

1. Decide on an image that you would like to recreate or come up with your own. Try to keep it simple, such as one item or thing. The broken heart emoji was used for this example.



2. When you have your item in mind, draw it on a piece of cardboard. The size used for this project was 12 ½ by 11 ½ inches. Note: The tissue paper will hang, so draw your composition slightly higher since the finished result will appear approximately a ¼ inch lower.
3. Now label the areas on the cardboard with the color of tissue paper that will be used there. This will help you keep track of what color goes where and also help you estimate how much color of each tissue paper that will be needed.



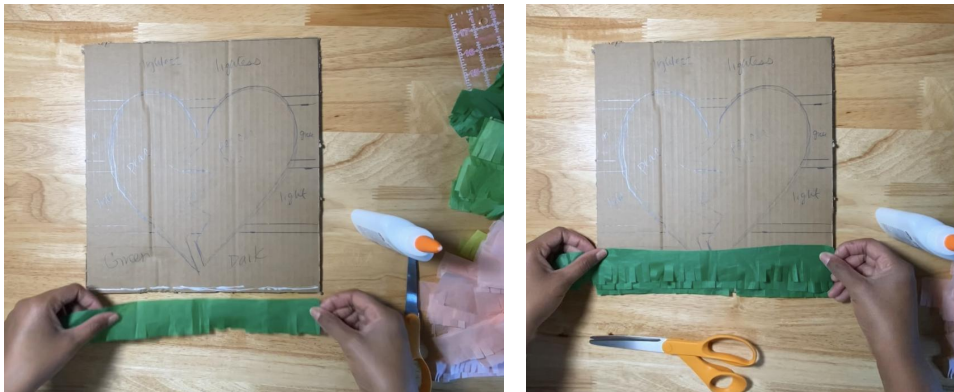
4. Starting with the color you need the most, take a ruler and measure 1 ½ inch in width. Make marks on the sheet of tissue paper, and cut the strips.



5. Take the strips of tissue paper and fold in half a couple of times. Then take scissors and cut slits (fringe) at the bottom of the folded strip, but do not cut all the way through. The slits (fringe) should not be too close to the top. Do this for all the colors of tissue paper that you need.



6. Take the glue and begin gluing a line of tissue paper at the very bottom of the cardboard. Use the uncut area of the strip of tissue paper to glue to the cardboard. For this project you will start at the bottom and work your way to the top. You will add the fringed tissue paper row by row.



7. Continue this process of gluing the tissue paper. When there is a color change in the row, before gluing, remember to measure out the amount of fringed tissue paper needed for that area and then cut. This is when labeling the colors on the cardboard will be very beneficial.



8. Fill up the cardboard with tissue paper and cut away any excess or overhanging tissue paper. Give it some time to dry. Congratulations, you have a new cut-paper design!

