Painted Muslin Pillow

This is a two-part project. Real leaves and live plants from the garden or gathered on a walk in the country are the basis for this project. The plants can be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator until you are ready to use them. I like to spread everything out in the middle of a table, giving my clients a chance to enjoy the foliage by smelling and touching each leaf, stem or flower.

Paint one side of each leaf and print it's image onto white fabric. Once the prints have dried the fabric is then glued together, and stuffed to create an incredible pillow, suitable for any room décor.

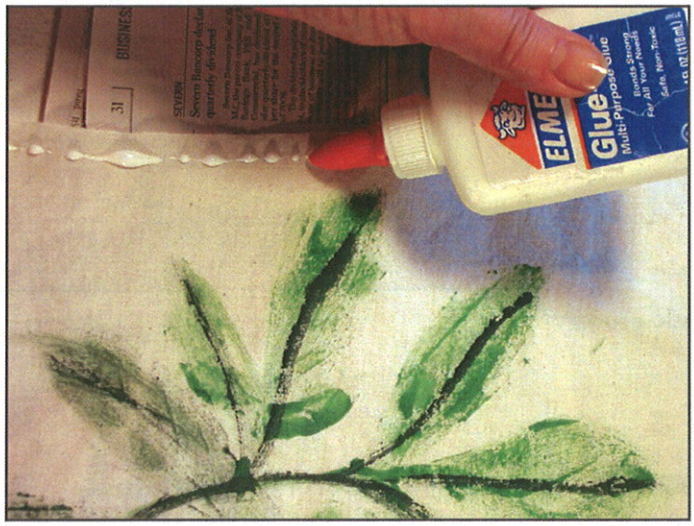
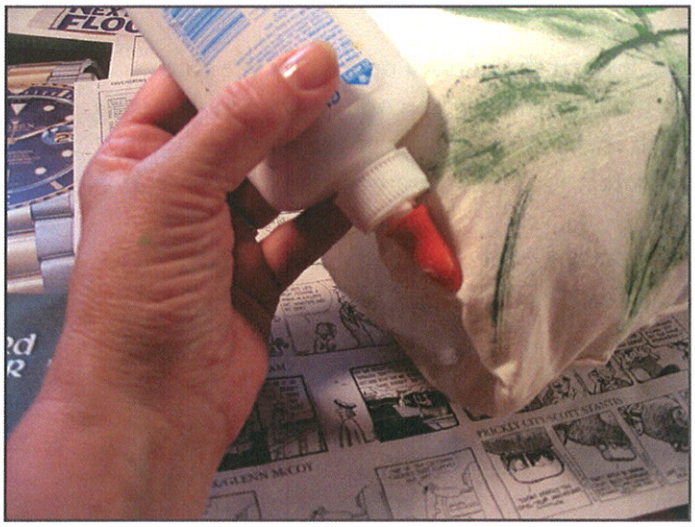
Facilitates

eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, tactile stimulation, problem solving, grasping, color discrimination, pincer grasp, environmental awareness, daily living skills, outdoor and nature appreciation.

Materials

- ½ yard of unbleached muslin—can be found at fabric stores for about 1 dollar a yard or you can use an old white sheet, old white men's handkerchiefs, or cloth napkins
- A variety of live plant materials: leaves, flowers, small branches, pine cones, berries, etc.
- Scissors
- Elmer's glue (you have to use Elmer's)
- 1 medium bag of polyfiber fill per pillow or use small plastic grocery bags instead
- A selection of non-toxic tempera paint
- Several ½ inch paint brushes
- Coffee can for holding water to clean out brushes
- Newspapers to cover the work surface
- Microwave
- Paperclips

Instructions

1. Cut two pieces of material the same size: 15 inches by 20 inches. Set one aside for the back of the pillow. Spread one piece out on a flat surface.
2. Selecting one leaf at a time begin to paint one side with the tempera paint. (I like to use a variety of greens or tans for Summer, orange, brown and red in the Fall)
3. Place the leaf, painted side down, onto the fabric and press firmly before lifting off the fabric. Continue in this manner until you have reached a desired "leafy" look. Note: you can always paint in stems or veins in the leaf prints for a more realistic effect.
4. Allow the fabric to dry completely before gluing.
5. Lay the printed fabric face up and run a bead of Elmer's glue around three sides. Carefully place the other unused piece of fabric over the printed piece and press around the edges and let dry completely. (You can speed up the drying process by placing the fabric into the microwave for 15 seconds on high)

6. Turn the fabric inside out so that the printed side shows and stuff with the polyfiber or plastic bags until quite full.
7. Glue the unfinished side and hold in place with paper clips until dry.