

# Inside Outside

## Signs of the Season

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**Time Needed:** 1-3 hours

**Arts Focus:** Visual Arts

**Age Range:** 3-8

### Mini-Lesson Description:

Learners will find small objects from their surroundings that remind them of the season they are in. Objects can be found in a home, neighborhood, nearby park, or yard. Learners will make their own Sun Prints (or Cyanotypes) using the scientific properties of sunlight.

### Key Concepts:

Seasons; Representation; Found Object; Nature; Sunlight; Photography; Observation; Telling Time.

### Materials Needed/Prep:

- One or more found natural objects that represent the season such as a leaf, flower, or blossom
- Sun-print paper (can be ordered online ahead of time or purchased from a local art supply store) OR a piece of colored construction paper
- A tray of water (such as a cookie sheet) if using sun print paper. *No water needed if using colored construction paper*
- A spot outside to work on a table or the ground for a few minutes or a very sunlit window space.
- A spot to dry paper such as a counter top or on a cookie cooling rack.

### Step-by-Step:

1. Take a moment to talk about the relationship between the sun and the four seasons. Ask learner(s): What season is it? How do you know? What do you see happening in nature this season? How strong does the sun feel? Is it covered by clouds? What can the sun's energy do? Make some connections between the sun's power and how it affects our lives by helping plants to grow, emitting Vitamin D for people, or giving us solar powered energy.
2. Explain: For this project the sun interacts with the paper (through light sensitive chemistry on the Sun Print paper) and helps us create visual records of our objects by exposing the paper to sunlight.
3. Carefully take out a piece of Sun Print paper (it is light sensitive paper so you need to work fast with learner(s) to put the objects on the paper quickly) or a piece of colored construction paper, and place on a hard, moveable surface such as a piece of cardboard or a book.
4. Place the naturally found object(s) on top of the paper and arrange them. One or more objects can be used together to create a composition.
5. Expose your paper with the objects on top to the sun by placing the board or book with paper and nature items in sunlight. If using Sun Print paper outside, expose to light for 2 minutes. If using Sun Print paper inside, expose to light for 10 minutes. If using construction paper outside, expose to light for 30 minutes. If using construction paper inside, expose to window light for 2 hours.
6. After the exposure time as passed, remove the objects from the paper and place the Sun Print paper in tray of water for one minute, then set on a surface or hang to dry. A beautiful print of your object(s) will emerge. If using construction paper, remove the objects; you are done and have a beautiful print ready to hang.

### Variations and Next Steps:

- Try exposing the paper for more time to the sun and less time in the sun to see the impact.
- Have deeper conversations about solar energy, chemistry, photography and sun sensitivity.
- FUN FACTS: Cyanotype photography is one of the earliest forms of photography. They were originally used to make copies of drawings for architects called "blue prints". A biologist named Anna Atkins created the first illustrated book with cyanotype images of sea creatures such as seaweed and starfish.