

Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose

The
WONDER CABINET WORKSHEETS

Spin Art

Children will be surprised by the designs they create using a simple salad spinner and some watercolor paints. Experiment with different colors to see how they blend together and with different speeds to see how the water moves.

In The Wonder Cabinet:

Today's activity is an opportunity to create a work of beauty and to experience science in action. For younger children, it can be an exploration of colors. They can name each color and watch as colors join to create new colors.

Older children can explore how the process works. The coffee filter is made of tiny fibers woven together. The filter has long, narrow, tube-like spaces in between the fibers. Water travels up these tubes drawn by air pressure. As each water molecule travels, it sticks to other water molecules, dragging them along for the ride. This process is called capillary action. When the salad spinners are set in motion, centrifugal force helps to move the paint from the center of the filter to its outside edges.

At Home:

There are many fun variations on this activity that can be done using simple materials. You may want to try attaching a circular piece of paper to a top or to a pencil. Set it spinning on the ground or between your hands to move the paint along the paper. (Make sure to do this activity outdoors!)

Another idea is to use an old record player to spin the paper. Try this: Use a crayon, marker, or colored pencil. Touch it lightly to the paper while the record player is spinning. Be sure to keep the writing implement still and let the spinning motion create the art.

Suggested materials:

- Watercolor paints, tempera paints thinned with water, pencils, markers, or crayons
- Salad spinner, old record player, pencil, or tops