Create Your Own Crushed Can Artwork

Charles Kaufman is an American cartoonist who began painting in 1990 and today has art displayed in galleries across the United States and Europe. In his series *Crushed Can Art*, he takes old aluminum cans and flattens them, then paints them with an original design. Inspired by Charles Kaufman's crushed cans, this activity lets kids make their own unique works of art using, you guessed it, crushed cans and paint! Not only is it fun, different, and eco-friendly, but it's a great way to let your kids try their hand at painting without spending money on a costly canvas.

What You Need:

- Acrylic paint
- Paint brush
- Bowl of water for rinsing the brush
- Rag
- Aluminum soda can, washed and dried
- Newspaper
- Permanent marker
- Internet access (optional)

What You Do:

1. Before he starts painting, take a look at some of Kaufman's crushed can artwork with your child to help him gain inspiration for his own design (click here to go to Kaufman's site). Notice how Kaufman uses the form of the crushed can to inspire the shapes he paints on them.
2. Now crush the can. Carefully help him use his shoe or a heavy book to thoroughly crush and flatten the aluminum can. Be careful of sharp edges!
3. Prepare a work surface by spreading newspaper over a table to protect it from damage or paint stains.
4. Now paint the can. Before he begins his design, have him paint a base layer over the whole can. This helps create an even surface for painting. Let dry.
5. If the first base coat looks a little thin, have him apply a second base coat. Let dry again.
6. Once the base coat is applied and dry, help him draw an outline of his design on the can with permament marker.
7. Now invite him to paint his design on the can, using the marker drawing as a guide. Acrylic paint dries quickly, so be sure he dips the paint brush in water between uses and washes the brush thoroughly before switching to a new color.
8. Once he finishes painting, let the can dry.

Now that his crushed can artwork is complete, it's time to display. Charles Kaufman frames and hangs all of his crushed can artwork: what will you do with yours?

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