Paint Your Own Sunflower

Would you like to decorate your own room with a brightly colored sunflower? It's easy to recreate van Gogh's bright colors and simple lines. You may have to work on the lighting a bit to come close to his mastery of light and shadow. You can also download and print this project using Adobe.

What You'll Need

- A small painting canvas
- Oil paint in bright colors like school bus yellow, burnt orange, red, and blue. (Note that you can also use acrylic paint, but these paints were not available when van Gogh was alive. However, you may find them easier to work with and easier to clean up.)
- A round paint brush
- A fan paint brush
- A jar of water
- A rag for drying off brush after cleaning off color in jar of water
- A paper plate to hold globs of paint
- A pencil

How to Create the Sunflower

Start by outlining a sunflower on the canvas with your pencil. In the sample at the top of this page, one large sunflower is featured in the corner. You could also draw a vase with sunflowers or several sunflowers, depending on your drawing skills. Beginning artists will find it easiest to draw one large flower with big petals.

Once you've drawn your flower, follow these steps.

1. Fill in the background around the sunflower with a solid color. The attention should be on the flower, so a dark blue or black works best here.
2. Fill in each petal of the flower with a bright color.
3. Outline the outsides of each flower with gold or light brown.
4. Use the fan brush to dab dark brown paint onto the center of the flower. Keep dabbing until the entire center is filled. It takes time, but this technique provides the look and texture a sunflower has in the center where the seeds are.
5. Use the fan brush to very lightly pull a bit of brown up from the center onto the bottom of each petal.
6. If desired, dab some gold in the center of the flower to create more texture and light.