

# Meltdown

## Glacial Painting



### GRADE LEVEL

2 - 8

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

Create a glacial landscape using watercolor brush technique and masking. Become inspired by the natural forms of ice captured in the arctic by the artists featured in our Melt Down exhibit.

### GOALS

Students will understand:

- How to apply close observation to creating an original work of art
- Use a variety of watercolor techniques to create an original glacial landscape
- Variety of ways artists can visually impact a discussion on climate change.

### ARTISTS

Jim Nickelson | Camden, ME  
Shoshannah White | Portland, ME  
D. Whitman | Warren, ME  
Peter Ralston | Rockport, ME  
John Eide | Portland, ME

### INTRODUCTION

How do we confront what climate strategist Jorgen Randers calls “the burden of ‘Big Grief,’” when nature is increasingly destroyed around us? The artists in Melt Down present evidence of the undeniable impact of climate change on the fragile environments off the Arctic and Antarctic. As Bruce Brown, exhibition curator states, “With increasing frequency Maine artists of all disciplines are traveling to the Arctic and Antarctic to study, observe and record the effects of climate change. Melt Down includes stunning photographs and videos by ten distinguished Maine artists whose work calls attention to one of the major ecological issues of our time.”

Through their experiences recording and responding to the visible and visceral markers of irrefutable change, they bring these physically remote places and the compelling need for action to a wider audience. Their work provides a route for inspiring awareness and response when overwhelming data and science have failed to motivate.

### LESSON

Engage in a compare and contrast exercises amongst the various photographers featured in the show. Observe the photographs of Nickelson, White, Whitman, Ralston, and Eide, thinking about what evidence the artists is showing to express climate change and what types of landscapes are being captured.

### CRITICAL QUESTIONS

How are artists making work to address change? How do artists show fragile landscapes? What makes one work stand out from another? Can you identify similarities between these artists works? What are the main differences?

### CELEBRATE YOUR WORK

Curate a hallway show or display to begin the conversation about global change. Have students write a brief artists statement about whom and how they were inspired. Set up a monitor station for the viewers to experience the Virtual Tour.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

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## VOCABULARY

masking, watercolor, wash, dry brush technique, overlap, analogous color, reflection, highlight, negative space

## MATERIALS

- 11 X 18 watercolor paper
- painters tape/masking tape
- Watercolor brushes
- Watercolors
- Rulers
- Hairdryer

## ARTIST

John Eide | Portland, ME

These photographs were made in February of 2014 while aboard a 75 foot sailing vessel exploring the Antarctica Peninsula.



## INSTRUCTIONS

### STEP 1

Have students identify the color palette used in the photographs from John Eide series *Arctic Peninsula*. Discuss what makes the photographs stand out (colors, shape, angle, use of space).

### STEP 2

Demonstrate watercolor brush technique of creating a wash and dry brush to create texture. Introduce masking technique used to keep areas of the paper white. Have students mask using tape or fluid to mark the icebergs. Challenge artists to offset their icebergs on the page.

### STEP 3

Using blue, turquoise, and grey scale watercolor palette begin painting. To speed up drying process set up a few hair dryers for students to use. Artwork should dry completely before removing masking– tip: pull tape at a diagonal to ensure preservation of watercolor paper.

### TEACHING TIPS:

- Older students can think more closely about negative space that iceberg naturally creates. Task your students to create a series of “melting” glaciers.
- Younger artists can create masking and wash ahead of time encouraging one to experiment with layering of color.