

Light Painting

You can make a light painting with a light source, a darkened room, and a digital camera. Light paintings may be literal representations or impressionistic, color-filled images.

Light Painting was inspired by **Walter Kitundu**



who created light paintings with his cell phone and a penlight.



TRY IT! Collect these things:

A digital camera with a long exposure shutter setting

A variety of light sources (flashlights, LEDs, toys with lights, etc.)



PIE Institute shares a playful and inventive approach to teaching science, art, and technology.

Find a darkened room and a friend to take the picture.



Set your camera to take long exposure images. Many digital cameras are capable of taking a ten-second or longer exposure. This is sometimes called a “Shutter Priority” or “Bulb” setting. Check your camera manual to find out if yours can do this.

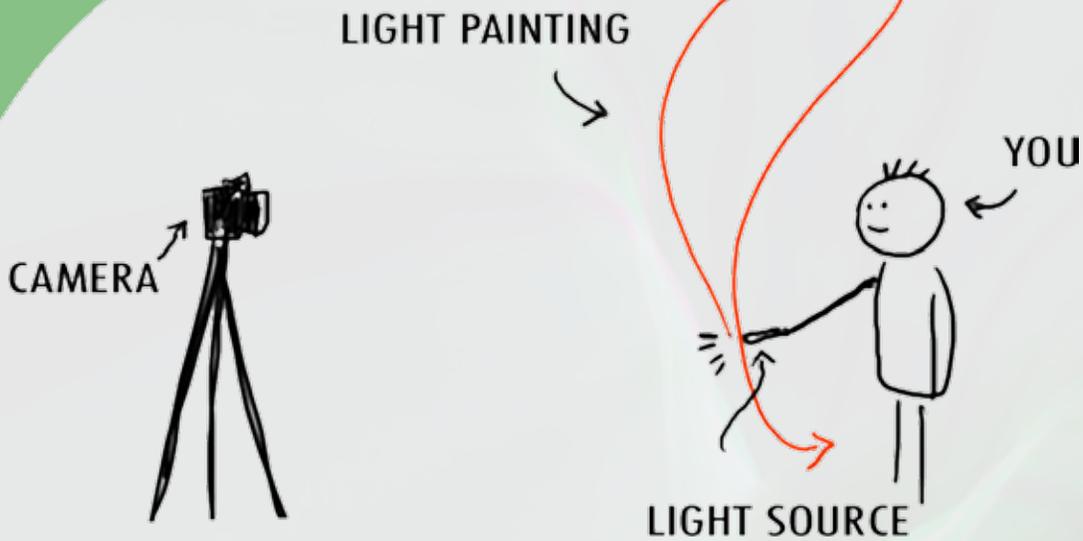


Collect or make a variety of light sources to paint with. You might use a flashlight, multi-colored LEDs, a toy with moving lights, a cell phone, or electroluminescent wire (you can get some from www.coolneon.com).



Tip: Try changing the way the light looks by adding waxed paper, foam, or other translucent materials to the light source.

Set up the camera in a room that can be darkened.



Turn out the lights, have someone press the shutter release button on the camera, and make a light painting!



TAKING IT FURTHER

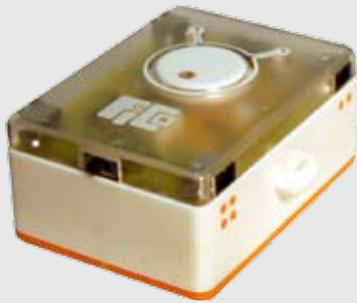
Use a HP Photosmart® printer to print your light paintings. This compact printer is a good addition to the activity when museum visitors are making light paintings during their visit and want to take one home.



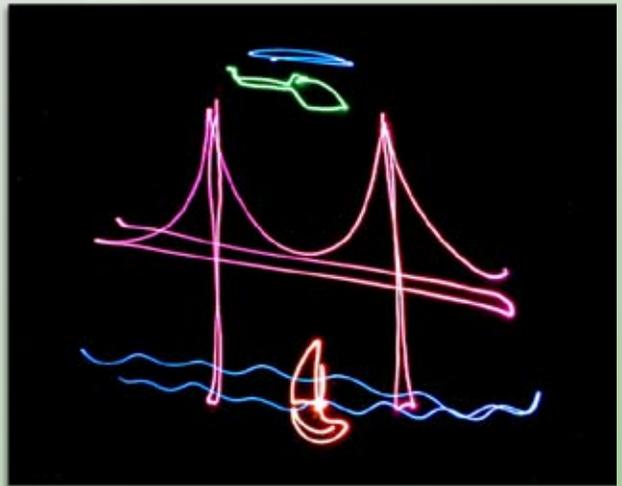
Use a PicoCricket...



www.picocricket.com



a switch, and a colored light to make a light wand. Program the PicoCricket to change the light color when the switch is pressed to make a drawing using a variety of colors.



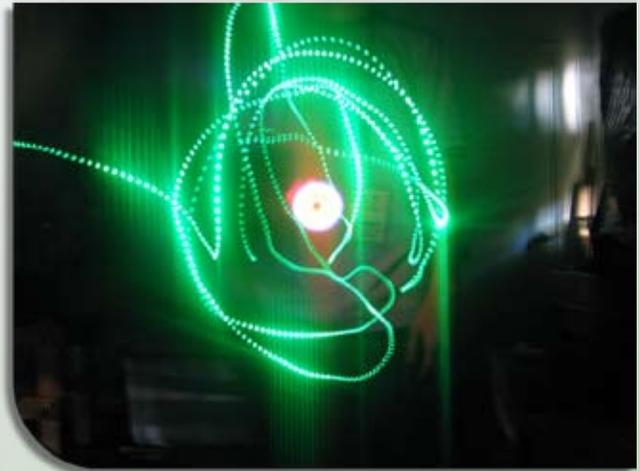
WHY IS THIS A PLAYFUL AND INVENTIVE EXPLORATION?

Generating Interest and Raising Questions

It is easy to make a first light painting, and the digital camera provides immediate feedback to inspire making more. Each new painting is often started by something more surprising the painter noticed, or a question the painter had from a previous attempt.

Artistic Expression

This is an activity that allows you to creatively express ideas by experimenting with the color and qualities of the light source, and other elements that effect the aesthetic qualities of the light painting.



Learning From Each Other

Watching others make their light paintings often generates new ideas and questions.

High Tech/Low Tech

This exploration is a good example of a low-tech activity that works well on its own, but can be made more complex and interactive utilizing the PicoCricket and programming.

RELATED IDEAS

Capture long exposure images of the cityscape, planes flying overhead, the stars and moon moving through the sky.



Picasso and other artists have explored the idea of light painting in their work.



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