

# Product Packaging Painting

by Gary Kohl

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

### Middle-school students will...

- apply elements of line, shape, form, color and design.
- understand the importance of design in product packaging.
- apply both flat and blended color techniques based on original package design.
- apply theories of size and scale through grid systems.
- learn about realist and super-realist artists

## NATIONAL ART STANDARDS

- Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes.
- Using knowledge of structures and functions.
- Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others.
- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines.

## MATERIALS

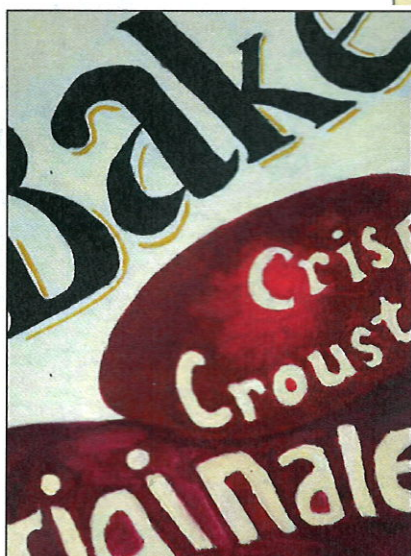
- Small canvas boards (canvas paper or cardboard also works)
- Foam trays or plastic containers with lids
- Permanent markers
- Empty product packaging
- Rulers, pencils
- Acrylic paints or gouache
- Paintbrushes

Looking for a challenging way to combine several objectives into one fun project, I decided to blend lessons in line, shape, scale, design and color. As part of a media class, we had been discussing product packaging, so students were familiar with examples we had been using there.

Each student chose a package that appealed to them through both its design and its color. Using viewfinders they made from scrap paper, students shuffled around the packages to locate their design focus. The viewfinders blocked out visual distractions, and allowed them to see how lettering would look when cropped off. Students were allowed to use the edges of packages as long as the color used in the empty space enriched the final painting, as seen in Tina's "Häagen Das" composition, above.

We reviewed and discussed the importance of accuracy and measurement in realist paintings. Students were to precisely draw what they saw and paint colors exactly as they appeared on the original packaging. We also reviewed techniques to create a sense of light and shadow.

Once students located their desired package sections, roughs were sketched in their art journals. Many drew grids on their packages, which allowed for more accurate place-



Clockwise from above: Tina, Jennifer and Annabelle.

students also found the grids helped with scaling.

Before students began painting, I

demonstrated brush techniques that would help them achieve smooth edges. Each student was given one small brush and one *very* small brush with a fine edge. Palettes were foam trays or plastic containers with lids. The advantage of the containers was that the paints remained moist for weeks, so students could return to class and pick up exactly where they left off. Permanent black markers were used by some of the students for fine lettering and other fine details.

The final paintings looked super, and a lesson about realist and super-realist artists followed. When the artworks were finally displayed, the compliments kept coming. ■

Gary Kohl teaches sixth- through eighth-grade art, as well as