Art at Home: *Painted Tea Bags!*
~Marika Hahn, Hospital Artist-In-Residence, Mount Sinai Chelsea

Painting on dried tea bags is delightful! It’s a delicate looking, yet strong, surface that lets watercolors or food coloring bleed and feather in a wonderful way. If you want more control of your painting, however, use acrylics or gouache, which won’t bleed. The paintings above are done with a combination of liquid watercolors, acrylics and a permanent pen. Experiment and play!

**Materials needed:**
- tea bags and a cup or pot to brew the tea
- watercolor paper or a strainer (to dry the tea bags)
- scissor
- inks, paints, pens
- brushes
- palette (s)
- something to cover the work surface
1. Brew very strong tea (five or more tea bags to about one cup of boiling water). Leave the tea bags in the water 15-20 minutes so they get a lovely tint and squeeze out the water remaining in the tea bag.

2. Dry the tea bags either on watercolor paper or in a strainer, for good air circulation. The watercolor paper will get nice patterns and I also splash additional tea to add a design. Expand on this “instant painting” later by adding more color and lines if you wish. Set aside.
3. If the tea bags have a small stitch at the top (closure) of the bag, snip it. If there is a staple, carefully remove it so the tea bag doesn’t tear.

4. There is a tiny double fold in the flat center of the tea bag, gently open it with your finger tips and remove the dried tea. Flatten the tea bags with your fingertips.
5. Start painting!! Tea bags are like tiny canvases just waiting for an image. It's fun to combine different mediums. For more ideas: [https://www.pinterest.com/artforall/tea-bag-art/](https://www.pinterest.com/artforall/tea-bag-art/).

HAVE FUN!!