

Liquid Glitter Painting

How can you make glitter less messy? Liquify it!

Humans are naturally drawn to things that shine and sparkle. History proves that wealth, honor, and reverence are assigned to the materials that have the most luminous qualities: precious metals, gemstones, silk fabrics, glass, and glazes. It's not a new concept that dazzling things are desirable, or that they are associated with high culture and fine art.

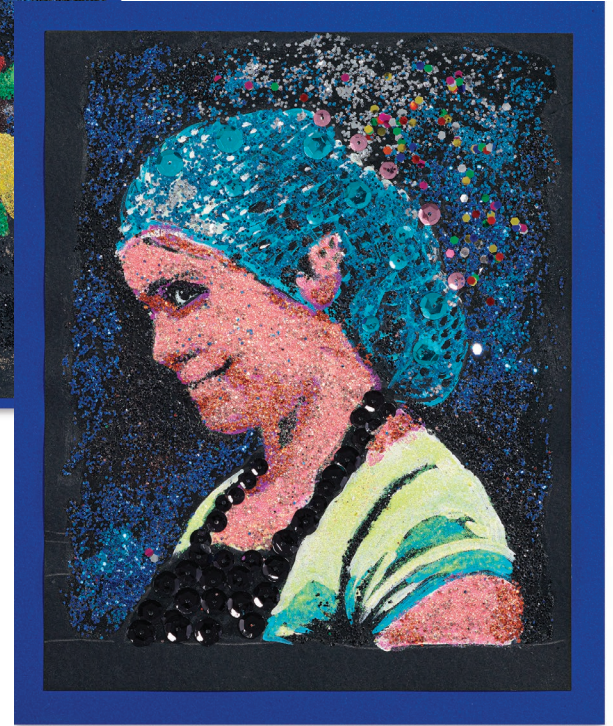
Modern glitter, however, is not.

Glitter can evoke a response that varies from excitement to a shudder, but most can agree that glitter isn't usually associated with art galleries and museums.

Artist Mickalene Thomas is just one of many artists who see glitter in a very different light. Thomas associates it with glamor and charisma, so to create a portrait with sequins and glitter presents the subject as highly validated, bold, and worthy of recognition. Thomas is also interested in breaking down real and imagined barriers that have been historically part of museums and galleries and engaging those people in art who normally might not be. "It's about inclusivity," she says, "Making everyday people feel comfortable coming through the door."

Glitter can be controlled. When suspended in paint, ink, or glue, it loses its viral qualities and becomes as restrained as any other art material. This lesson plan introduces "liquid glitter" — a mixture of a clear medium and glitter that is easily combined and applied like a thick paint. Students identify a person or everyday object and assign value and significance in a visual manner by painting it with sparkle and shine.

GRADES 5-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.



Materials (required)

[Darice Glitter Sets](#), assorted glitter sets (62157-); share one set across class

[Blickrylic Polymer Gloss Medium](#), quart (00711-1027); share one across class

[Blick 140 lb Premium Cardstock](#), size 18" x 24", Black (11408-2009) or assorted colors (11408-); share one sheet among 4 students

[King Art Graphite Transfer Paper](#), size 9" x 13", package of 25 sheets (10540-1001); share one package across class

[Bic Velocity Bold Ballpoint Pen](#), set of 8 assorted colors (22518-1008); share 3 sets across classroom

Opaque Paint, recommend:

[Blick Premium Tempera](#), assorted sizes and colors (00011-); share a minimum of 6 pints across class

[Talens Art Creation Gouache](#), set of 12 (00894-1129); share one set across class

[Royal Langnickel Scholastic Choice Classroom Assortment](#), set of 72 golden taklon brushes (06074-1072); share one across class

[Creativity Street Craft Sticks](#), package of 150 (60401-1500); share one across class

[Loew-Cornell Storage Cups](#), package of 8, 2" (04824-1002); share 3-4 across class

Materials (optional)

[Elmer's Washable Clear Glue](#), 32 oz (23810-1060)

[Fredrix Value Series Cut Edge Canvas Panel](#), Black, package of 25, size 8" x 10" (07026-2022)

[Creativity Street Sequin Mixes](#), 4 oz (60718-1004)



Preparation

1. For middle school students and first-time painters, it may be best to make multiple colors of liquid glitter ahead of time and store them in airtight containers until ready to use. Liquid glitter consists of a medium — either an acrylic medium or clear glue — and a high concentration of glitter. Place the desired amount of medium in a jar and add glitter until it is saturated throughout. Mix it with a craft stick or plastic spoon.

Note: if using an acrylic medium, the mixture will appear milky while wet but will dry clear.

2. Cut paper to 9" x 12" pieces.

Process

1. Using a web search, magazines, or photos, select an image of a person, place, or thing that would not be celebrated or considered beautiful by the average person. Everyday objects found in advertisements (think Andy Warhol's soup cans), commercial buildings, or behind-the-scenes people might be considered.
2. If desired, use a digital photo application to make the photo black and white and posterize it to 3-4 levels. This will make it easier to imagine as shapes instead of an overall image. Size the image to fit on a letter-sized piece of paper and print it.
3. Trace the image onto a piece of paper or canvas panel. Place transfer paper face-down on the background paper and the photocopied image right-side-up over that. For best results, use masking tape to secure the paper to the tabletop so the image doesn't move. With a ballpoint pen, trace over a few lines of the image, then lift the tape and check to make sure the transfer is working. Trace the main outlines of the image. If necessary, simplify areas that are overly detailed.
4. Remove the tape, photocopy, and transfer paper. View shapes that have been created by the tracing and plan areas of liquid glitter. From this point forward, think of the composition as a grouping of shapes, much like a paint-by-number set.
5. Paint areas of color and white with tempera or opaque watercolor first. This will provide color in areas between the glitter particles and make the glitter more visible. Use opaque paint and fill areas with solid color, leave a little of the black page showing through between areas of color so there is still some separation between the spaces. Shadows can remain unpainted so the black of the paper will create the darker areas.
6. While the paint is drying, prepare the liquid glitter. If using a prepared mixture, stir and either distribute it on palettes or use it straight from the jar. As an option, older students and experienced painters can work from a palette and mix the liquid glitter directly. Place a spot of glitter on the palette and a spot of glue or medium about half the size of the glitter spot next to it. Mix thoroughly with a brush, then transfer it onto the painting.
7. Fill shapes as desired with liquid glitter. This mixture can be applied to the drawing using a craft stick, a plastic tool, or a brush. A small amount of water can be added to the mixture to make it more brushable, if desired. Colors may be mixed and blended — just like paint! Brushes and tools clean up with soap and water.
8. When dry, mount to matboard if desired, and hang for an attention-getting display!

Option

- Sequins and small beads may also be used, either mixed in the liquid glitter solution or placed on top while still wet.



Step 1: Make liquid glitter paint by mixing a high concentration of glitter with acrylic medium or clear glue.



Step 2: Digitally posterize an image to two levels, then print it and use transfer paper to copy it to card stock.



Step 3: Using the shapes formed by the posterization as guidelines, fill in with opaque paint and liquid glitter paint.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.