



Acrylic “Skins”

Typically, acrylic paint that isn't used is discarded once it's dry. But, rather than waste leftover paint, why not include it in the next piece of art?

When acrylic paint dries, it forms a flexible “skin”. If the skin is formed intentionally, so that it can be lifted, it can be used in a variety of ways in painting, collage, mosaics, jewelry-making, etc.

Grade Levels K-12

Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

PROCESS for making Acrylic Skins

- To create a basic skin, use a non-stick surface. Silicone-treated paper such as Baker's Parchment paper works well and is available at supermarkets. Spread the paper out on a tray or piece of rigid, corrugated cardboard. If using paper, expect a wrinkle texture to form in the skin as the paint dries and shrinks. For perfectly smooth skins, use a non-stick palette, designed to allow paint to peel off smoothly.
- Spread acrylic paint across the surface using a spatula or a piece of scrap cardboard. Ideas:
 - Swirl colors together with a brush or wooden craft stick, leaving enough separation between shades for intriguing patterns to form.
 - “Marblize” colors by spreading a dominant color first, then dropping small amounts of colors into it. Use a wide-tooth comb to drag colors in controlled patterns.
 - Use metallic colors, glitter paint, texture mediums or mix-ins such as crushed eggshells, sand, beads, string, etc. to add texture and create special effects.
- Allow the paint to dry completely. Time required will vary according to paint brand, thickness of paint, humidity and other factors — allow at least 24 hours. Decrease time by placing in a sunny location or in front of a fan. Once paint is completely dry, it will peel off easily in one sheet. Parchment paper may be reused to make another skin.

IDEAS for using Acrylic Skins

1. Collage or “Shingles”

Cut shapes and pieces to use for collage. The “Shingles” piece in the upper right corner is made with pieces of acrylic skins cut and glued to a piece of matboard. They overlap, like a shingled roof. Add skins and pieces of skins to various kinds of mixed-media collage.



Acrylic “Shingles”

Materials

Blickrylic® Student Acrylics, assorted colors (00711-); need approximately 3 half-gallons to share across classroom

Non-stick surface, use Baker's Parchment Paper or **Mijello Peel-Able Paint Palette**, 9" x 12" tray (03096-1040)

Optional Materials for Special Effects:

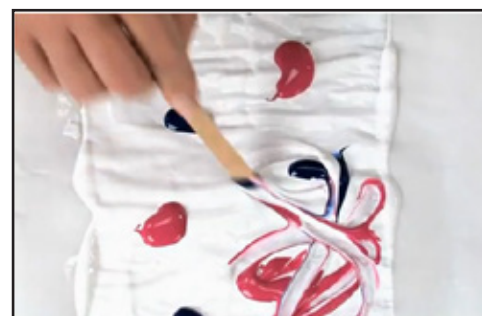
Sargent® Metallic Acrylics, assorted colors, 8-oz (00730-)

Sargent® Acrylic Glitter Glaze, 16-oz (00704-1006)

Liquitex® Texture Gels, assorted styles (00609-)



Step 1: spread paint over a non-stick surface such as baker's parchment paper.



Step 2: swirl colors together and allow to dry



Step 3: peel dried “skin” away and create!



Acrylic Jewelry



Stitched Jewelry

2. Jewelry Design

Cut small pieces from the skin and use them as beads for jewelry-making. They can be easily pierced and wrapped with jewelry wire, findings or string and assembled together to make some unique jewelry creations.

3. Stitched Pieces

Stitch pieces of acrylic skins together, using a needle and embroidery floss. Make book covers, jewelry, wallets and more.

4. Surface for Artwork

Use a full size acrylic skin as a surface for further painting, printmaking, even pen & ink drawing.

such as glassware, clear plastic film, glazed ceramic tile - even some plastics and metals. It will remain there long enough for the complete design to be created on the surface.

Mosaic pieces may be peeled up and repositioned. They can also be stretched and curved around dimensional surfaces. Leave a small amount of space between each piece.

NOTE: If pieces don't stick well, try warming them by creating friction between your fingers or hands or placing in a sunny location.



Step 1: create transparent "skins" using polymer gloss medium (clear acrylic)



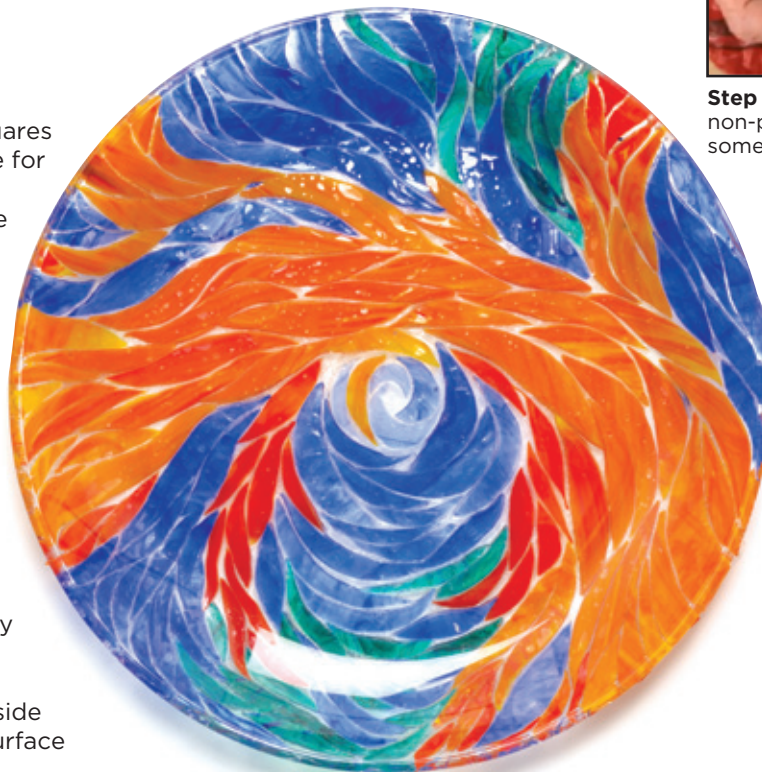
Step 2: press pieces, smooth side up, to a non-porous surface, such as glass. Leave some space in between pieces

ACRYLIC MOSAICS

1. Cut acrylic skins into squares and other shapes to use for mosaic tiles. To get the look of real glass, create transparent skins using the process described above, only changing it to use polymer gloss medium as the predominant paint.

Gloss medium appears white when it's poured, but dries transparent. Add very small amounts of color to keep it transparent.

2. Skins will dry with a very smooth surface on top. Cut the shape needed, then press the smooth side against a non-porous surface



Step 3: coat the back side with more polymer gloss medium to act as grout and permanently set the pieces.



ACRYLIC MOSAICS, continued

Metallic colors or inclusions will decrease the tackiness of the polymer medium. If you find that the pieces will not stick to the styrene at all, use a small dab of the polymer medium as a glue to adhere the piece to the surface.

3. Once the design is complete, seal the mosaic in place by coating the back side of the entire piece with two coats of polymer gloss medium, taking care to fill between the pieces. For a again or for a thick, grout-like fill, use **Blickrylic Gel Medium** (00711-1007).

Options

1. Have elementary age students cut squares and rectangles to use as mosaic pieces. The pieces could also be pre-cut.
2. Display finished mosaics by placing on a window sill or in a well-lit place.



Example of element-level mosaic squares, cut and assembled on a plastic sheet



National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard # 1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes

- K-4 Students use art materials and tools in a safe and responsible manner.
- 5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas.
- 9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

- K-4 Students use visual structures and functions of art to communicate ideas.
- 5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas.
- 9-12 Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.