

Canvas Dinnerware

A Whimsical Makeover for Discarded Dishes

Inexpensive, diverse and unmatched pieces of china or plastic dinnerware from thrift stores, garage sales or recycled from cupboards, basements and attics are recycled into contemporary sculptures in this project. Pieces of cut or torn unprimed canvas are layered on the surface of the dinnerware pieces. Additional fabric textures such as cotton warp, jute and other natural flexible materials can be applied to enhance the shape and form. Then, paint the pieces with Blick Matte Acrylic for a dash of color!

As an option, center the dinnerware design around a theme, as Judy Chicago did in her 1970's installation piece "The Dinner Party". She designed 39 place settings, each honoring an important woman in history. Another theme idea would be to have students design a place setting for a particular artist; incorporating colors, images, styles and objects that would describe their vision.

NOTE: these pieces are intended for visual display, not for actual dinnerware. Not recommended for contact with food or water.

Grade Levels 5-12

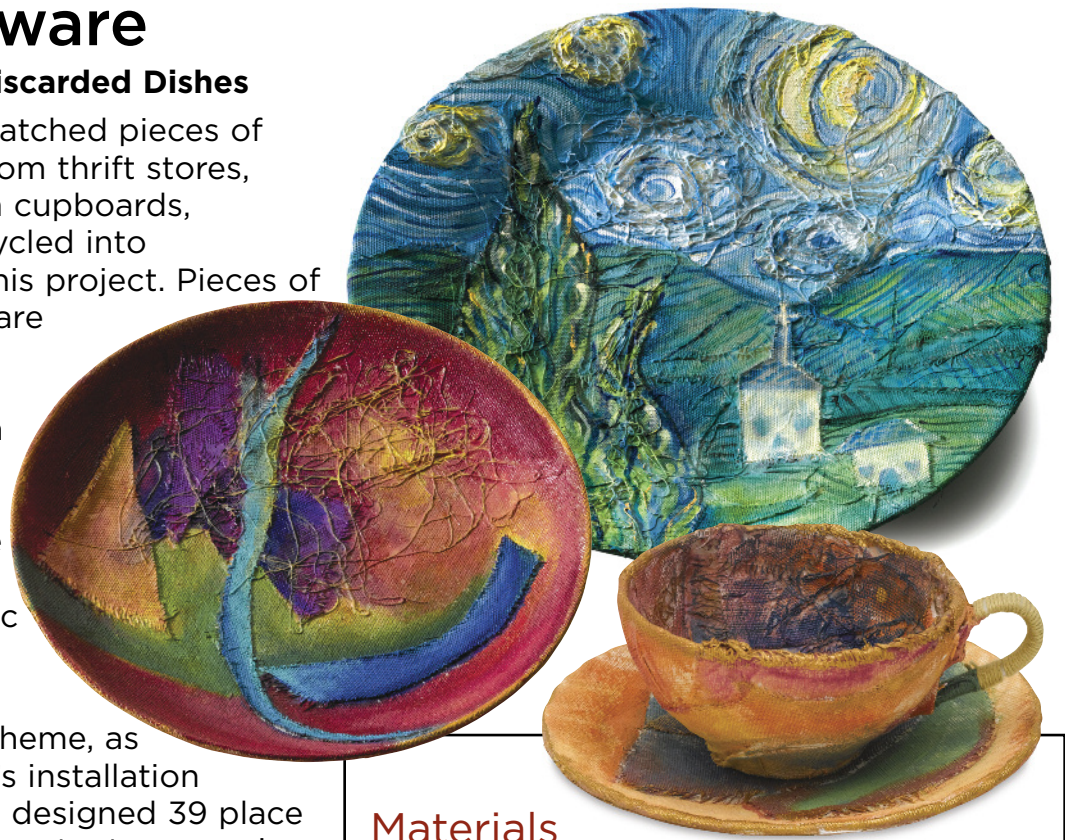
Note: instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Collect an assortment of cast-off dinnerware or purchase pieces from flea markets, thrift stores, or garage sales.

Process

1. Students select 2-3 items to combine into one sculptural piece: a cup and saucer, 2 cups, three small plates, a bowl plus plate and cup, and so on. Cracked, chipped, and broken pieces add to the design possibilities. If desired, imperfections can be completely hidden by the raw canvas while still retaining their shape.
2. Raw or unprimed canvas works well as a "wrap" because it is pliable and can be formed around objects. Most items can be covered with a 12" x 12" piece. Tear or cut



Materials

Various pieces of china or plastic dinnerware: 3 items per student makes a good sculptural grouping

[Blick® Medium-Weight Canvas](#), unprimed, 62" wide x 1-yd (07309-1062); share 2-yds across class

[Blick® Matte Acrylic](#), asst. 2-oz colors (00727-); share 8-10 bottles across class

[Weldbond® Universal Adhesive](#), 8-oz bottles (23819-1105); share eight across class

[Blick® Economy White Bristle Brights](#), 72-piece class pack (05170-0729); share across class

[Tonic Studios® Plus Scissors](#), 3-1/2" cut (57079-1008); for cutting canvas in preparation

Optional Materials:

[Maysville Cotton Warp](#), assorted colors (62800-); share four 800-yd spools across class

[Blick® Matte Acrylic Varnish](#) (00727-1035); share three 8-oz bottles across class

[Blick® Economy White Bristle Flats](#), set of 6 (05175-0069); share 2 sets across class

Process, continued

unprimed canvas. When covering curved areas such as cup handles or bowls, smaller strips will work well. Wider pieces can be gathered or folded to conform to the shape of the items and to add textural design. Use all scraps or trade with other students for suitable size canvas pieces.

3. Apply glue to either the dinnerware or to the canvas. Use glue full strength to create a hard bonded surface; do not dilute. Then wrap canvas around objects.
4. Paint canvas with Blick Matte Acrylics for opaque coverage and a moisture resistant finish. Painting may begin even before the glue is fully dry. When applying colors, choose shades that will highlight the shape of the pieces and how they interact with one another. For instance, when dishes are stacked on top of each other consider dark and light areas.
5. Cotton warp or other string may be used to cover small areas and crevices, add design on unpainted canvas, and add texture under the acrylic paint on flat areas. Take advantage of the colors of the fiber when wrapping around a handle.

Options

1. Cover spoons, forks, or glassware with canvas to add to the dinner service sculpture
2. Use natural materials such as raffia or twigs to enhance the artwork's texture
3. Place the sculpture on a canvas tray or wooden block
4. Dinnerware may also be covered with decorative papers instead of canvas
5. Add a finish coat of Blick Matte Acrylic Varnish to seal colors and fibers

National Standards

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

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

9-12 Students apply media, techniques, and processes with sufficient skill, confidence, and sensitivity that their intentions are carried out in their artworks

Content Standard #2 Using knowledge of structures and functions

5-8 Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work

9-12 Students evaluate the effectiveness of artworks in terms of organizational structures and functions

Content Standard #5 Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

5-8 Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry

9-12 Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes, and justify their analyses of purposes in particular

