

Confetti Bowls

These easy-to-make, soft, catch-all containers offer a colorful way to recycle paper scraps into something useful

(art + history)

It showers from the rooftops over parades and is shot from cannons after sporting events. It blankets tables at wedding receptions and can be purchased in custom shapes to fit just about any party theme. We love to look at it, but hate it when we're finished with it. Confetti!

The tradition of throwing confetti can be traced to ancient times, when rice was thrown on newly married couples to symbolize fertility. In various cultures, confetti has been made from nuts, seeds, flower petals, or candy. In fact, the word "confetti" comes from the word that describes a candy-coated almond from Italy. The wide use of paper confetti has only taken place in the last century.

3,000 pounds of biodegradable confetti is dropped in Times Square each New Year's Eve. One source lists 50,000 quarter-inch dots in a pound of confetti. That's roughly 150 million pieces of paper!

If you've ever scooped confetti into the trash and wished it didn't have to be wasted, here's an idea for putting it to use — turn it into an intriguing, artistic bowl or plate. Find a glass, plastic, or ceramic form, gather leftover confetti, and embed it in clear acrylic medium. When dry, it peels away to form a fun and functional piece.

GRADES 3-8 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

1. Gather confetti or create your own by cutting, tearing, or punching paper into small pieces. Be creative in sourcing your own: look for interesting pieces in the paper shredder, clear out the paper punch catcher — even the smallest scraps can be used for this project!

Process

1. Distribute gel medium on small plates. Use a bowl or plate that is either glazed ceramic, smooth-sided plastic, or glass — nothing porous or textured.
2. Work a small area at a time. For small pieces of confetti, brush a single coat of gel medium onto a section of the bowl, then sprinkle confetti into it. For larger pieces, brush gel medium directly onto the paper and position it on the bowl, then brush more gel medium over the back side. Suggestions:



Materials (required)

Blickrylic Gel Medium, half gallon (00711-1018); share across class

Blick Scholastic Short Handle Ox Round, size 8 (05866-1008); one per student

Fiskars Lever Punches, assorted shapes (57613-)

Blick Construction Paper, package of 50 assorted colors, 9" x 12" (11409-1003); share one package across class

Bowl or plate. Use glazed ceramic, smooth plastic, or glass for best results.

Optional Materials

Fiskars Hand Punches, assorted shapes (58923-)

Martha Stewart 3 in 1 Craft Punches (77222-)

Blick E-Z Grip Knife (57419-2980)



Process, continued

- Gel medium will look white and opaque, but will dry clear.
 - Allow areas of negative space without confetti to form. These will be transparent when the gel medium dries.
3. Repeat until the bowl is covered. Add a second layer. It is not necessary to allow the first layer to dry before creating the second layer.
 4. More layers can be applied, if desired. Adding layers will increase the strength of the bowl, but decrease the transparency. Some confetti may provide more strength than others as well. For instance, if confetti was made by punching shapes from construction paper, it will provide more strength than confetti created from tissue paper.
 5. Dry overnight or until the gel medium is completely clear. Beginning at the top, peel the dry medium away from the bowl form in one area, then turn the bowl until the top part is pulled away. Continue to pull the medium away from the bowl in a circular manner until it releases. Pulling away from just one side may result in a tear. A craft knife blade may be useful in helping the medium to release.
 6. Use scissors to trim the top or leave as is. The medium will have a very smooth surface where it dried against the bowl form; however, the inside, where the medium was brushed on, will have a bit of texture. Some bowls may be turned inside out so that the smooth side is most visible.
 7. The Confetti Bowl will remain flexible and makes an excellent catch-all container for coins, paper clips, tacks, etc. For best results, keep it away from sources of heat and out of direct sunlight. Not considered a food safe container.

National Core Arts Standards - Visual Arts

Creating

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

Anchor Standard 2: Refine and complete artistic work.

Presenting

Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Responding

Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Anchor Standard 9: Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.

Connecting

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

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

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

K-4 Students describe how different materials, techniques, and processes cause different responses.

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.

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions.

K-4 Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses.

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



Step 1: Brush gel medium on the side of a non-porous bowl or plate and add confetti.



Step 2: Add layers of gel medium and confetti, finishing with a smooth layer of gel. Allow to dry.



Step 3: Pull dry Confetti Bowl away from the bowl form and enjoy using it!