BLICK art materials

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Masking Tape Window Masterpieces

Stuck for an inexpensive, yet highly creative art-making idea? Try THIS!

Is masking tape suitable as a fine art medium? Not at all; it's too unstable.

Is it suitable for creating installation art, temporary art, or graffiti? Definitely!

Just launch a search engine and look at art that is currently being created using masking tape and colored masking tape. You have to see it to believe it.

Dutch artist Max Zorn has become well recognized via YouTube. He makes incredibly detailed sepiatoned paintings using only translucent masking tape. These range from huge, full-window works to small ones that he displays on public street lights.

Australian artist Buff Diss has become globally recognized for non-destructive graffiti created with masking tape. He often creates large human hands that interact in whimsical or thought-provoking ways with their environment. The pieces are temporary and could arguably be considered vandalism ... but no one wants to remove them!

Masking tape was invented in 1925 for the automotive industry. Today, with such a variety of intended uses, adhesive strengths, and colors, it's more of an umbrella term for many different tapes.

This simple and straightforward project takes a serious look at the creative capabilities of a utilitarian medium. On a piece of clear film, many different sizes of masking tape can be layered, bunched, cut, torn, and twisted to achieve a variety of values and textures. Backlighting the project using a light table or a window reveals the artwork as it is built from a single, translucent layer to darker layers that completely obscure the light. Displayed in a window, it will reveal itself in the daytime from inside the room, and at night from the outside looking into the lighted interior.

GRADES 2-12 Note: Instructions and materials are based upon a class size of 24 students. Adjust as needed.

Preparation

- In order to distribute multiple sizes of tape across an entire class, wind a section of tape onto an aluminum can or plastic bottle.
- Backlighting is necessary to do this project. If a light box or light pad is unavailable, a window will work. Glass temperatures less than 50°F (10°C) may decrease the adhesion of the tape. It is recommended that the tape not be applied directly to the window. Apply it to a piece of clear film. Many ideas for DIY light boxes are available through online search.



Above: Example shown with backlighting. Right: Same example shown without



Materials (required)

Grafix® Dura-Lar™ Clear Acetate Alternative, .003", 25-sheet pad, 11" x 14" (55506-1005)

Masking Tape, assorted widths from 1/2" to 3" (24126-); share multiple rolls across class

Artograph® Lightracer Light Box (55315-1003) or other source for backlighting

Optional Materials



Process

- Create preliminary value sketches or digitally posterize images. Careful planning will increase the likelihood of success. Younger ages may simply create patterns with overlapping pieces of tape.
- 2. On a 12" strip of transparent film, make a value scale by layering and labeling masking tape. Leave one section open, without tape, and layer 9-10 pieces of tape, each one shorter than the previous one, see below. Note that after 8-9 layers, masking tape becomes opaque and reaches the darkest value. The number of layers that still show some translucence (probably 6 or 7), is how many value layers are available to create the image.



Tape the film down first to hold it in place, then begin building up the image in layers.

The lightest value will be open, untaped film. Start with the second-lightest value — a single layer of tape. Using the widest tape available, cover the background and leave open areas of clear film. Work one layer at a time, building up values with the tape.

Here are some suggestions:

- Work from wide to small widths of tape.
- Create texture by tearing, cutting, twisting, bunching, wrinkling, folding, or wrapping tape.
- Tear tape to create soft edges.
- 3. Once the image is complete, it may be laminated with a piece of Protecto Film to keep it in place.





Step 1: With the assistance of backlighting, build the image beginning with the lightest value (a single layer of tape).



Step 2: Continue until the darkest value is reached (several layers of tape).



Step 3: As an option, the finished artwork may be laminated with clear, adhesive film.

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.

Anchor Standard 3:

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.