

Painted “Glass” Light-Catching Rings

Create glass-like paintings
that are clearly amazing!

The stained glass found in European architecture from the Middle Ages (c. 1100-1453) and the Renaissance (15th and 16th centuries) was often created for the purpose of visual storytelling. In times where relatively few people were literate, important religious stories, events, and family history could be depicted on glass in a highly compelling design. Stained glass artists developed paint for creating minute details such as facial features, hair, and drapery that could be applied to the glass surface in much the same way as a canvas. The glass was then kiln-fired to permanently affix the painting to the surface.

The beauty of a painting lit from behind was compelling and unforgettable in the Middle Ages and still is today.

Rather than using fragile glass or vitreous paint, this project introduces a means of creating transparent images using acrylic paint and medium. A painting is created on a piece of film, then lifted away as an integral part of a new surface. It's similar to monoprinting, but in a clearly unique, unforgettable way.

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

Preparation

1. Each student will need a ring. A welded macramé ring provides a polished frame and no preparation. For a less expensive option, create rings from various lengths of flat reed. Join the ends of the reed with wood glue, and clip them in place to dry.

Process

1. Begin with preliminary sketches. Trace the outside of the ring on paper and create a pencil sketch.
2. Place the sketch on a sturdy piece of corrugated cardboard or heavy chipboard that won't bend. Cover the sketch with a clear plastic sheet protector and use masking tape to hold it in place.
3. Paint an image directly on the film, using the sketch beneath as a guide. While the paint is drying, the reed ring may be painted with acrylic colors or markers, if desired.
6. When the painting and ring are both completely dry, position the ring over the painting. Brush a heavy coat of gloss medium over the entire painting, making sure it comes in contact with the ring as well. Allow to dry on a perfectly level surface for several hours or overnight.



Materials (required)

Blickrylic Student Acrylics, assorted colors, pints (00711-); share across class

Blickrylic Polymer Gloss Medium, quart (00711-1027); share across class

Clear sheet protectors, available at an office supply store

Rings, use either

Natural Reed, Flat, size 1/2"x 200 ft coil (60961-1336); plan on 12" to 15" per student

Gold-Tone Welded Macramé Rings, 5" dia (66909-9005); one per student



Process, continued

7. Gently pull the plastic film away. The painting will remain on the medium, not the plastic.
8. To hang, determine the upright position of the ring. Thread a needle and push it through the top of the painting, near the ring. Pull through and tie the ends of the thread together to form a loop.
9. Display in a sunny location where light can filter through the painting and create a glow.



Options

1. String multiple light rings from a dowel to create a mobile.
2. After paint has dried on the plastic, use a pointed tool to scratch away and reveal clear areas.
3. Include natural materials (leaves, petals, sand, salt, etc.) or small items such as string, seed beads, or torn paper to add interest and color.

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.



Step 1: Create a ring from a piece of flat reed, securing the ends with wood glue. Or, use a fabricated ring.



Step 2: Trace the ring size, prepare a sketch, and tape a plastic sheet protector over the surface.



Step 3: Create a painting on the plastic and paint the reed ring to complement.



Step 4: Cover the painting with gloss medium. When it is dry, pull the plastic away. The paint will remain with the medium.