

Transparent Banner Paintings



Painting on a transparent medium not only allows the interaction of light within the painted surface, it also projects colorful cast light and shadow onto walls, floors and surrounding objects. The lightweight polyester film Dura-Lar™ responds to air currents, so that color and reflection are in constant motion.

Although this project will create beautiful individual paintings, approaching these paintings as a group project is a perfect introduction to public art installation. Hang banners in a well-lit hallway or beneath fluorescent light fixtures to capture light and air.

Grade Levels 3-12

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

Objectives

- Students will mix and layer colors on a transparent surface, developing an understanding of color interaction undiscovered in painting on a flat, opaque surface
- Students will develop areas of transparency and opacity within a single painting

Historical/Cultural Relativity

- Painting on glass began in the 13th century in Italy, as stained glass artists searched for ways to enrich detail and expand their color palette without sacrificing transparency. Reverse glass painting became popular in Federalist America, usually incorporated with decorative items such as furniture and lamps. With the development of acrylic paint and plastic surfaces such as Plexiglas and Acetate in the last century, many artists have experimented with transparency in painting and sculpture.

Materials

Dura-Lar™ Clear Acetate Alternative, .003", (55506-1107) pad of 25 sheets, 14" x 17", need one sheet per student

Blickrylic Student Acrylics (00711-1039), mixing color set of 6 pints: Chrome Yellow, Magenta, Ultramarine Blue, Phthalo Blue, Mars Black and Titanium White. This color selection is important for transparency and maintaining clean, bright colors.

Blick Scholastic Pony Hair brushes, size 12 rounds (05865-1012) and size 16 brights (05865-1016), need one each size per student

Blick All-Purpose Newsprint, (10311-2019) pad of 50 sheets, size 18" x 24", need one sheet per student

Aluminum Sculpture Wire, 12 gauge (33401-1014), 350-ft coil, need one 22" length per student

Paper Punch, (58904-1005), 1/4" diameter hole, share two across classroom

Blickrylic Polymer Gloss Medium (00711-1028), share one half-gallon across classroom

Optional Materials

Krylon® #1305 UV-Resistant Clear Gloss Coating (21703-1002)

Process

1. Students will first create opaque artwork on the front of the banner. Prepare an image to transfer to the Dura-Lar using one or more of these options:
 - Have students create preliminary line drawings on the newsprint. This option creates the most personalized banners
 - Use clip art or photocopies enlarged to ledger-size paper. This is especially useful for creating school logos or specific types of images on all the banners
 - Incorporate new media by having students use images of themselves or other photo icons printed from a computer. Use a photo editing program such as Photoshop to create a black and white image by adjusting posterization, threshold, or levels. Higher level classes will find this option most challenging

Place the prepared image beneath the Dura-Lar banner and trace with Blickrylic Mars Black or Titanium White. Leave large areas of negative space. If an error occurs, simply wipe the affected area away with a wet paper towel and try again. Allow to dry. Apply a second coat of opaque paint, if desired.

2. On the reverse side, apply the colors, quickly working one area at a time with a thin coat of paint. Paint may be thinned with water, but Gloss Medium will provide superior adhesion and color integrity. Mix 1 part medium to 1 part paint to increase transparency of color. Brushstrokes are unavoidable and should be viewed as an inclusive part of the painting, creating textures and lines. If desired, areas of the Dura-Lar may be left clear.

NOTE: Avoid reworking areas of paint that have already started to dry. The paint may pull away from the Dura-Lar.

3. The final step is to create a means by which to hang the Dura-Lar banner. Lower grade levels may wish to simplify with yarn or fishing line. Higher grades will punch 5 evenly-spaced holes 1/2" from the top edge of the banner, then thread sculpture wire through the holes. Curl or bend the excess wire as desired, (see examples on page 1).

Options

- Eliminate Step 3 and apply painting directly to a window surface using clear tape.
- Higher grades may be challenged to cut the edges of the banner to create shapes or to add a 3-dimensional quality to the piece by using multiple layers of Dura-Lar.
- Coat both sides with UV-resistant clear spray to make banner outdoor safe.

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National Standards

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

- **K-4** Students use different media, techniques and processes to communicate ideas, experiences and stories.
- **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 #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

- **K-4** Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of art.
- **5-8** Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art.
- **9-12** Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes and justify their analysis of purposes in particular works.