

WORKSHOP: "BUTTON COLLAGE"



Summary: Participants create a collage on canvas board using papers, buttons, burlap ribbon and found materials. Paint, embellishments and found objects can be added. Collages can be a flying balloon interpretation, from a photograph or follow a theme like meeting in a café.

Materials and Equipment:

acrylic paints assorted colours
gel medium
2 canvas boards
buttons assorted sizes and colours
fancy paper
foam brush
scissors
glue gun and glue
cardboard for under glue gun
coated gloves
optional: yarn
optional: carbon paper
optional: found objects (not provided)
instructions/ideas sheet

pencil, eraser, sharpener
sketch paper
ruler
assorted paint brushes
palette knife
t-shirt scraps
plastic lids for palettes
plastic container for water
pliers/cutters
coarse sandpaper
optional: fabric scraps
optional: wire hanger to make a stand
safety glasses
roll of hockey tape

Class Plan:

1. Plan your design or work spontaneously.
 - a. Decide the order of layers you would like in your design and work from the background upwards.
2. Paint any part of your background you want painted first or decide to leave it plain.
 - a. You could use 2-3 colours painting them on at the same time, same brush without mixing them first. This gives a nice incomplete blend of colours covering all or part of your surface.



3. Apply paper to your background or decide to skip this step.
 - a. If you are covering your entire background with paper, cut out your paper by tracing your canvas board, apply a medium thick coat of gel medium to your canvas board. Press your paper into your gel medium, and roller from the centre out to the edges.



- b. If you are only covering a section of your board with paper, cut out the shape. Apply gel medium to the back of your paper in this case spreading it medium thick but smooth with a foam brush. Apply your paper section to your canvas board, pressing gently from the centre out to the edges.



- c. Allow to dry.
4. Optional: Apply a coat of gloss or semi-gloss gel medium to the entire surface of your canvas board.



5. Plan your button placement design.

- a. Two sketches (butterfly and dress) are provided to use as a guide if you would like to use them. You can fill the shape with buttons by either transferring the outline onto your canvas board with carbon paper, or just using it as a general idea.



- b. You can work out your own design using the button and paper provided for inspiration if you prefer.



- c. You could fill your entire canvas board surface with buttons as a pattern working free form.
 - d. You could replicate a picture with buttons by printing it out and attaching it to your surface first.
6. Planning your design:
- a. Consider button colour, size and texture/shine when filling your design. Larger things that stick out like cloud tops suit large buttons, with rows of smaller buttons underneath to make them look fluffy.



- b. Detailed sections would suit smaller buttons to allow more defined colour changes.
- c. A highlight different colour button in a section entirely made of another colour can achieve an effect like the sparkle in an eye.
- d. Arranging the buttons in rows (below right) produces more definition than random placement (below left).



- e. You can layer your buttons to add dimension, gluing the bottom layer first then adding more on top when the glue is dry.
7. Attach buttons to your canvas board in sections to fill in your design.
- a. Apply a small amount of hot glue for each button one at a time and place the button before it dries. We recommend wearing gloves for doing this.



- b. Use pliers to gently press buttons into place to avoid burning your hands.



- c. For very small items, hold the items with pliers in one hand and apply hot glue to the back of it with the other hand. Place the item without touching it directly, using the pliers.



- d. Hot glue will come through the holes in the buttons so avoid pressing them in place with fingers and be aware hot glue can squeeze out around the edges of an item too.
8. After all the hot glue has dried, remove glue threads with pliers, by hand and with masking tape.
9. Optional: Add embellishments and found objects to finish your design using gel medium or hot glue depending on the weight of the objects being added.
- a. For example, cut out a small piece of burlap ribbon to make a basket for a hot air balloon by coating the back of it this gel medium spread on with a palette knife.
- b. Small pieces of yarn can be dipped in gel medium and attached to your canvas board to make the ropes attaching a basket to a hot air balloon created with buttons.
10. Optional: Make a coat hanger wire stand for your picture:
- a. Cut the hook part off of your coat hanger at the base on each side and bend the hanger into shape.



- b. Start with a bend the tree sides of a square working from the middle. Leave a wide space for the artwork to sit in and bend another three sided square shape for the back. Overlap the cut ends so they don't pull apart.
- c. Wrap black hockey tape around your entire wire stand.



11. Happy creating, and please share pictures of your creations if you feel comfortable.

Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:

- Fill all the space around your design instead of filling the design itself.
- Use extra buttons outside of your design to highlight areas like a line of small buttons along the horizon.
- Create depth by making a sudden change from light to dark colours in rows.
- Transition in small colour changes from one colour to another to create a softer image.
- Add other objects in your creation like metal studs, washers or found objects for interest.

Trouble Shooting:

- If your canvas board warps, try coating the back with gel medium too, to balance the surface tension.



- If you have trouble getting your buttons to stick or to stay stuck, try sanding the back of the button with a very coarse piece of sandpaper. The rougher surface will help the glue grip.