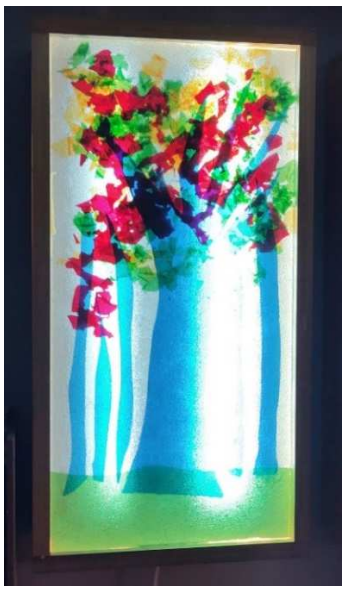
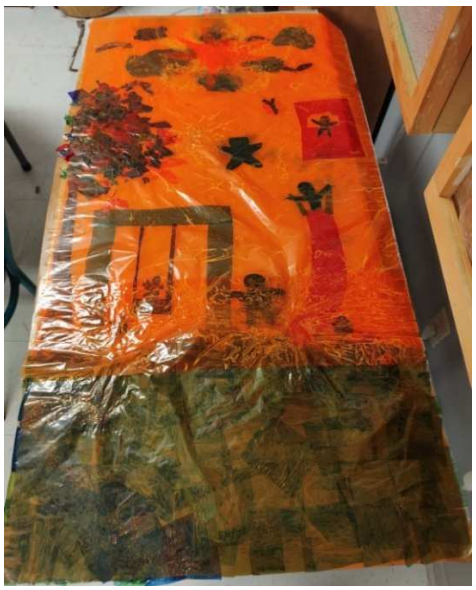
WORKSHOP: "CELLOPHANE LIGHT BOX FILTER"

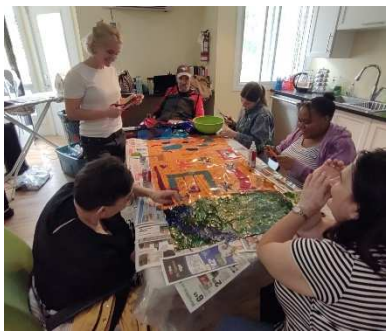
Summary: Participants create large cellophane light filters for existing wall mounted fluorescent light fixtures, designing the imagery and putting it together as a group. Participants cut up the cellophane for design elements and spray glue and heat adhere layers of cellophane together. The cellophane light diffuser is held in the light fixture by adding a flexible plastic fluorescent light cover over it. More cellophane filters can be made and changed for the season for community created and fun decoration.

Materials and Equipment:

cellophane – assorted colours
1/8" fluoro light cover 4' x 2' textured
spray adhesive E6000 low odor
scissors
large bowl
reusable gloves
safety glasses
sample artwork
instructions/ideas sheet
pencil, eraser, sharpener
sketch paper
table covers (e.g., discarded fliers/newspaper)
roll of foil
iron
ironing board
extension cord
glitter – assorted colours and shapes

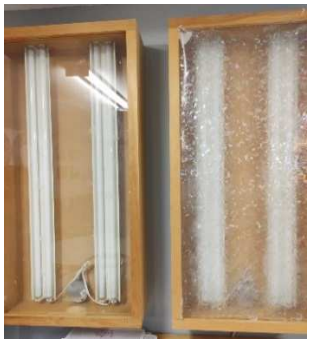
Class Plan:

1. Decide as a group on the design you'd like to make. Our group chose trees in the forest for one filter, and people from the neighbourhood playing in the community park for the other.

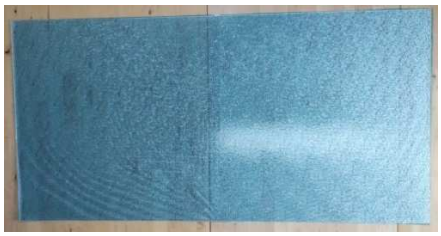


a. Participants can sketch out a design plan first if they like, or just work freeform.

2. For the light fixture, the community house we worked at already had two wall mounted fluorescent light boxes 2’ wide by 4’ high with a clear plastic cover over them.



a. We added a textured flexible plastic light cover (below, and above right) in the space over the existing clear one to help diffuse the light. The colourful cellophane filter created by the class will be sandwiched between these to layers of plastic to hold it in place.



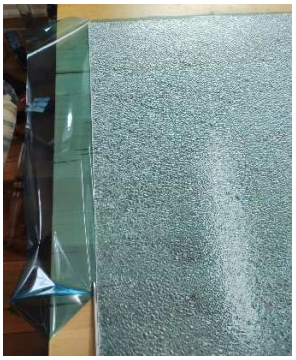
3. For materials, we used:

a. Regular weight cellophane in half a dozen colours can be bought (on sale) at an art supply store but sometimes can be found at second hand stores.

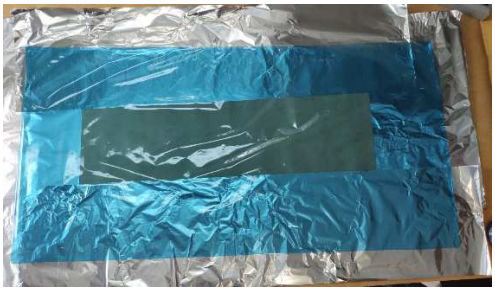
b. Assorted glitter colours, sizes and shapes can be purchased from the Dollar Store but are ideally salvaged from second hand stores and community donations to reuse plastic instead of making more.

c. Buying second hand and salvaging items for use is best whenever possible.

4. Cut two pieces of cellophane slightly larger than 4’ x 2’ with scissors. Choose a colour that isn’t too dark, so that the rest of the image will show up.
   a. To make it easy, use a textured standard fluorescent light cover the same size, as a template for cutting out the background piece of cellophane to work on.



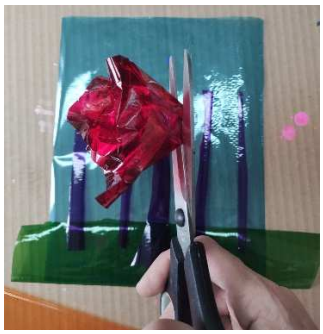
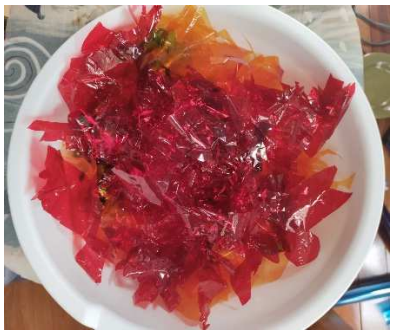
   b. Use the other large piece of cellophane as the top layer holding it all together.
5. Cover your work surface with cardboard, discarded newsprint and a layer of foil.



6. Cut out pieces of cellophane to make each element of the design. We made two light covers. The first one is as scene of trees. To make this cover we pre-cut the main pieces of the design. You can glue then on as you go if you prefer (see below for information on gluing).
   a. Cut a wide section of green cellophane for the bottom.

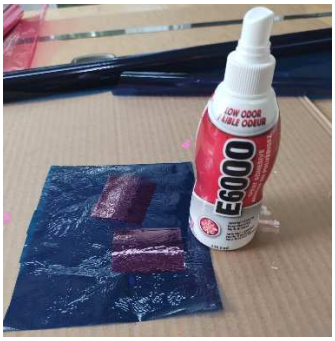
   b. Cut long tapering rectangles with irregular sides to look like tree trunks.

c. A fun way to cut up leaves for the trees is to scrunch up cellophane scraps and cut them into small pieces into a bowl. Then pour the shredded leaves onto the background for leaves.

d. Add leaves to the trees. Do this by pouring them on from the bowl onto the background after it has been sprayed with glue.

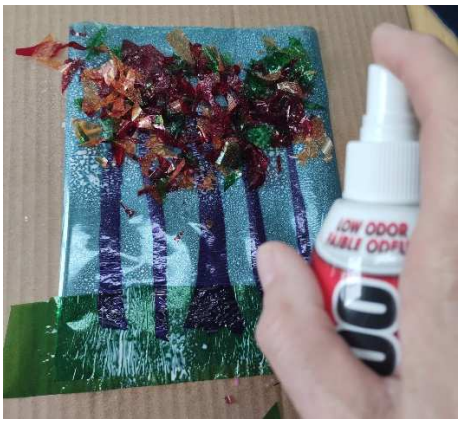
7. If you prefer, you can stick on each element as you cut, instead of pre-cutting all the pieces. Cellophane is very prone to roll up and stick together with static, that gluing as you go is definitely easier on smaller pieces as least.
8. We used E6000 pump spray glue, which is generally sold at art and craft supply stores or online.



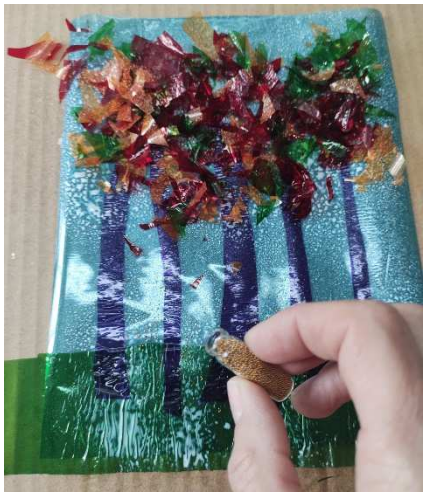
a. This glue sprays as a pump and is not pressurized. Look for the pump spray kind, because there are other kinds in tubes and pressurized.
b. It is described as no odour but we would call it low odour.
c. It dries translucent, cleans up with water, works on a variety of surfaces including cellophane, is strong and reasonably priced compared to other options.

9. Spray E6000 glue on the background cellophane and add the cellophane cutout pieces one at a time, pressing them into place. Wear reusable gloves to protect your hands. Safety glasses are also a good idea with spray glue.
   a. If the pieces overlap, spray more glue on the layers in between to stick them all together.

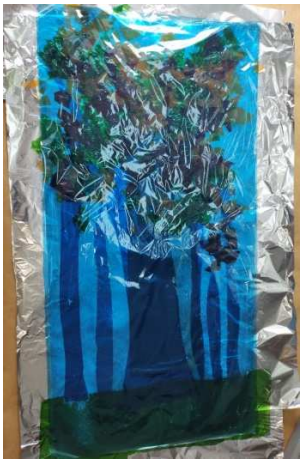




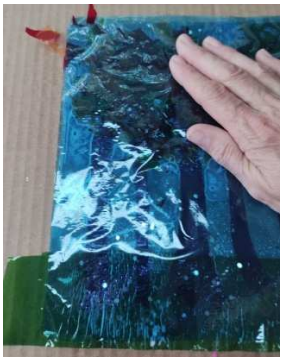
10. Add glitter in fun shapes and sizes by sprinkling them onto a background already sprayed with wet glue.



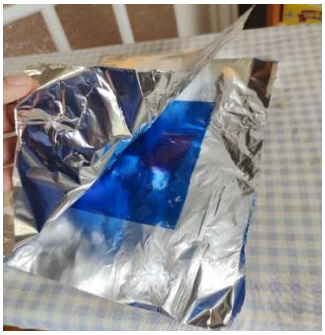
11. When you are finished adding design elements, spray any areas that do not have wet glue on top of them.
12. Place the top 2’ x 4’ layer of cellophane on top of the background 2’ x 4’ cellophane, sandwiching the cutout design pieces of cellophane in between them.



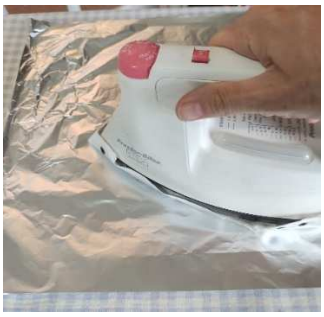
    a. This is a large piece of cellophane and it can’t be repositioned after it touches the glue.
    b. To help, try having one person on each corner of the top piece of cellophane and lower it as a group matching the corners.
13. Press the top cellophane in place with your hands working from the centre outward, so any trapped air bubbles can escape.



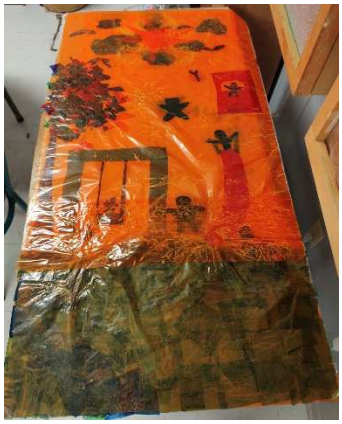
    a. If you end up with large trapped air bubbles, cut a tiny hole in the top layer of cellophane with an x-acto knife so they can escape.
14. Sandwich the cellophane light filter you have created between two layers of foil.



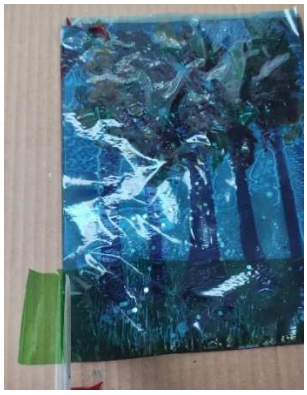
15. Iron the cellophane filter working on the foil sandwich. Use a medium-heat no-steam iron setting and work on an ironing board or ironing table if available.



    a. DO NOT iron directly on the cellophane, because it will likely melt. Also, if the cellophane melts without foil protection, then it is a lot of work to clean the iron and board.
    b. DO NOT reposition the foil to continue ironing. Use new sections of foil as your work your way down, ironing the cellophane filter. Some glue will squeeze out the side edges, particularly if you have too much glue. If you reposition the foil, then it can get glue on the outside surface of your cellophane.
16. Leave your cellophane light filter to finish drying on a flat surface for a few days if it is this large.

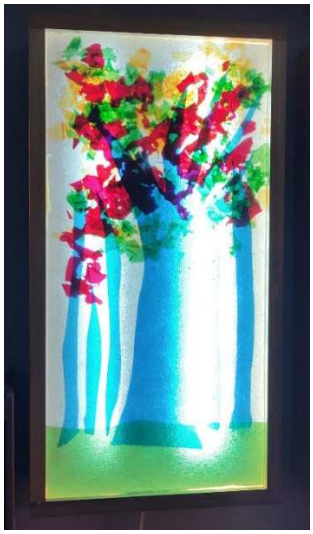


    a. Ironing the filter pressed the cellophane layers together so it is flat, but doesn't completely dry the glue. The glue drying takes time.
    b. If your cellophane filter is very large it could take a week or more to finish drying.
17. Lay your dry cellophane filter over the plastic diffused fluorescent light cover, and trim around the edges to the exact size with scissors.



a. Cellophane does not cut easily with an x-acto knife. We found scissors work much better.

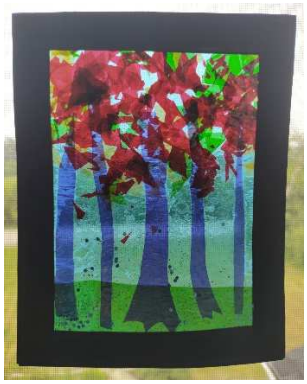
18. Insert the cellophane light cover made by the group and the diffused plastic 4’ x 2’ standard fluorescent light cover into the front of the wall mounted light box. Sandwich the artwork between the diffused light cover and the existing clear light fixture cover to hold it in place.
19. The cellophane light cover can be changed with the season and to show artwork created by different creative groups in the community.
20. Turn the fluorescent light on and enjoy the artwork illuminated.



21. Happy creating, and please send us photos of your creations if you feel comfortable sharing.

Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:

- Working as a group helps everyone of all abilities to participate. The project can be divided into tasks and each participant can choose something they feel able to do. In our group this included design suggestions, placement of cutout pieces, shredding cellophane for leaves, gluing and working together to apply the surface cellophane cover.
- Pairing participants so their abilities complemented each other worked well. A participant who didn’t know what shapes to create benefitted from another sharing their ideas. In return, the participant with shape ideas benefitted from the other’s ability to cut out the items precisely.
- Unlike an incandescent bulb, a fluorescent bulb takes several minutes to warm up and does not become as hot, making it a great choice for cellophane filters. Ensure there is space between the light bulb and the filters, because cellophane can melt if it gets too hot.
- We added a textured polyester plastic sheet 1/8” thick to diffuse the light from the fluorescent bulbs behind it.
- Colourful cellophane panels can be changed between the existing plastic sheet over the light and the added plastic light diffuser. The cellophane filter can be changed by season and event, for fun and easy decoration.
- Trying doing a small take home version of the project for participants, framing it with a construction paper cutout square to hang in a window.



- We don't recommend using a glue stick on the cellophane. We found it didn't stick well. It was messy and hard to keep the cellophane in place.

Trouble Shooting:

- Do not use parchment paper to wrap around your cellophane for ironing instead of foil. It is heat resistant and will stop the layers from flattening properly.
- Do not use wax paper to wrap around your cellophane for ironing instead of foil. The wax will melt onto your project or your iron depending which way up the wax paper is and is not recommended because it is messy and dulls the cellophane colour.
- Parchment paper and wax paper are not interchangeable for reference on other projects. Parchment paper is heat resistant and waxed paper is not.
- Do not turn your iron up too high or iron for very long because the heat can melt your cellophane. Test on a few scrap pieces before working on your creation.
- Never iron your cellophane without covering it with foil first. If it does melt, your iron and ironing board are still ok with the protection. Test your heat setting on scraps before using it on your finished project.
- Iron cellophane with foil under and over the package. Don't reposition the same foil because extra glue that comes out the sides onto the foil, will get on the front of the next section ironed.
- Make sure there is always a space between the fluorescent light bulbs and filters of any kind, to avoid plastic and cellophane melting.

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