

A Brilliant Idea

Gaynor Hytrek

Going Green" is a phrase that people use a lot in this day and age. However, art teachers have been recycling for years in the form of egg cartons, plastic bottles, wallpaper paste, bits of yarn, and so on. In the past, this practice was done out of necessity to stretch the budget. In reality, used items simply make great art!

In the artroom, it is a good idea to have as many as possible interesting and manageable materials on hand. A range of materials can encourage students' ideas and imagination. This lesson starts with an old-fashioned light bulb (one per student). You will need 3 oz. plastic mixing cups, masking tape, strips of plaster gauze, shallow bowls to hold water, scissors, light-bulbs, paint, brushes, and materials to embellish the work.

Preparation

Some teacher preparation is required at first. For each student, place a piece of masking tape inside a plastic cup to provide a place for the student to write his or her name. Cut an X in the bottom of the cup with a craft knife, turn the cup upside down, and carefully insert a light bulb into the X. You may need to cut away some of the bottom of the cup around the X to get the light bulb steady. (At this point, students could apply masking tape to secure the light bulb to its base or you



could do it.) Cut the plaster gauze in a couple of sizes, about $\frac{3}{4}$ " (1.9 cm) wide and 4" (10 cm) long.

The Process

Prepare and distribute materials for each table and guide students to follow you as you demonstrate. Put warm water in small bowls that two or three students can share. Dip the strip of plaster gauze in the water and run it through your thumb and forefinger to fill in the tiny holes. Lay the

gauze on the light bulb and smooth it down. Slightly overlap the next piece of wet gauze over a bit of the first. Encourage students to strive for symmetry so that it is even all around.

Have students be sure to secure the light bulb to the base with the plaster. When the bulb and base are completely covered, they can add bits of wet plaster for a nose or ears, or whatever they like. Let the pieces dry, then they can be painted. All sorts of odds and ends (feathers, sequins, found objects) can be added before or after the paint. ☺

Note: Do not let any plaster or plaster water go down the drain. Students can wash their hands if need be in a bucket of water.

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NATIONAL STANDARD

Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas.

WEB LINK

unmailgemsblog.blogspot.com/2008/07/recycled-light-bulbs.html