

Squish Mâché



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Mixes instantly and finger-sculpts beneath a plastic film cover.

Satisfyingly tactile!

Mention paper mâché and some people will shake their heads, perhaps imagining drippy strips of paper and sticky fingers. It has an undeserved reputation for mess-producing and slip-shod crafting.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Paper mâché has many traits as a sculpture medium, and sloppiness is not one of them.

Instant mâché does not require paper or glue. Simply mix with water and it forms a ready-to-use, clay-like dough. It's lightweight, inexpensive, and non-toxic, and some application methods require very little hand-to-product contact.

For instance, the technique explained in this project: maneuvering mâché through a plastic wrap covering, using texture plates, fingers or tools to form, sculpt, and shape the material. It's an enjoyable and satisfying tactile experience to feel the mâché sliding beneath wrap while hands stay clean and dry. The plastic pulls away from the surface, leaving a beautiful texture that can be painted or enjoyed in its natural state.

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

Materials (required)

Activa Fast Mâché, 4 lb bag (33116-1004); share one across class

Blick Studio Palette Paper, 9" x 12", 50 sheets (03063-2023)

Natural Burlap, 10 oz, 46" wide (63202-1436); share one yard across class

Richeson Student Clay Modeling Tools, canister of 35 (30387-1035); share one across class

Disposable Plastic Gloves, box of 100 S/M (04982-1020); share one across class

Richeson Plastic Squeeze Bottle, 6 oz (04916-1006); share six across class

Cedar Canyon Rubbing Plates, pkg of 6, 7" x 7", assorted textures (62108-)

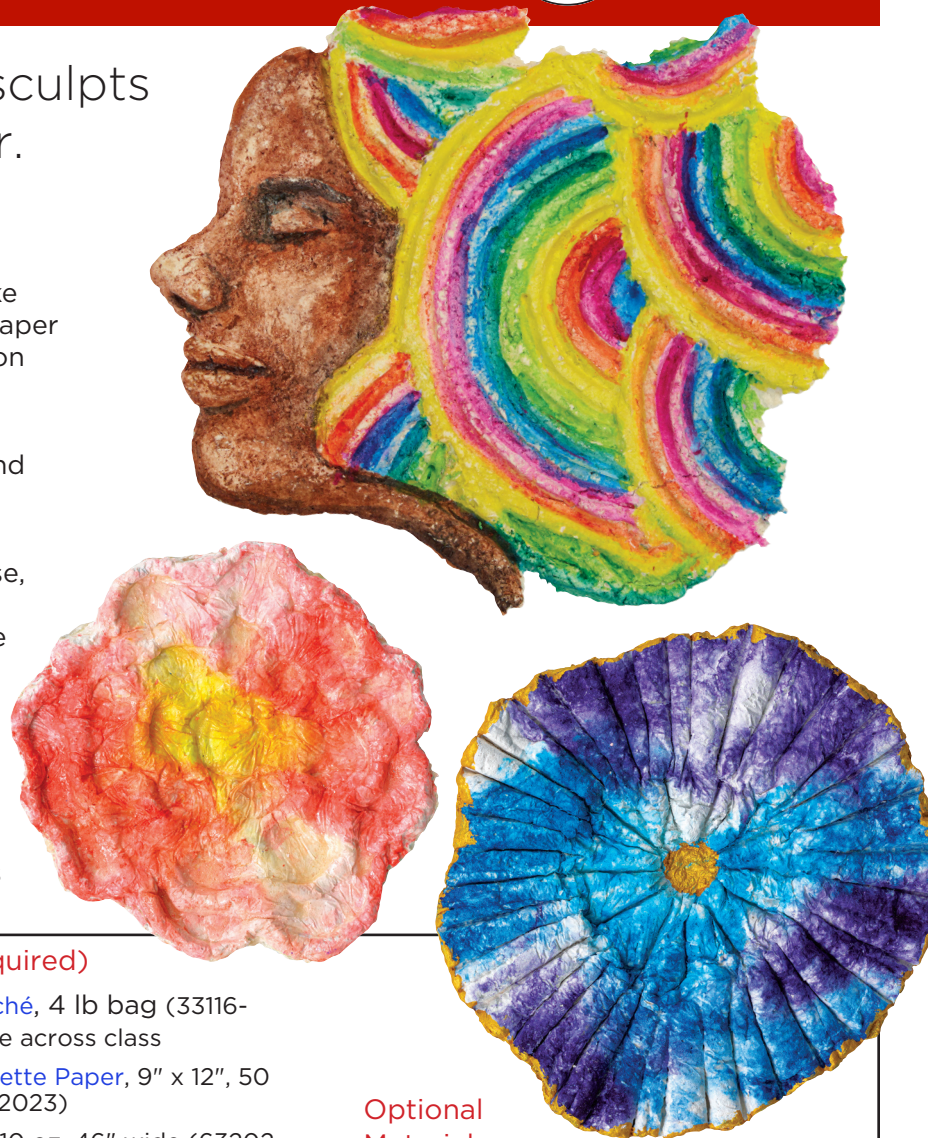
3M Production Sandpaper, pkg of 10 sheets, fine grit 120 -C (34916-1303)

Optional Materials

Blick Washable Tempera Paint, 16-oz, assorted colors (00135-); share at least three colors across class

Blick Studio Acrylics, 8 oz tubes, assorted colors (01637-); share at least five colors across class

Mod Podge Clear Acrylic Sealer, 12 oz matte (02916-1018) or gloss (02916-1107); share two across class



Ready to order materials?

Go to www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plan/squish-mache to access a product bundle for your convenience.



Preparation

1. Cut burlap, canvas, or cotton fabric slightly larger than the size intended for the finished piece. Artwork will be semi-flat and can be made small enough to use as ornaments or large enough to be wall art.

Process

1. Wearing gloves is recommended when mixing. The mâché is non-toxic and safe, but it is very absorbent and may cause irritation due to dryness.
2. Scoop instant mâché into a bowl. Plan on 1/2 cup to cover a 5" x 7" area and adjust amount as needed. Slowly add water. Using a squeeze bottle will allow more control than pouring. Mix with fingers. Mâché will work best if it's about the consistency of clay or cookie pizza dough: slightly firm, yet pliable. Make sure water is thoroughly mixed with pulp by pressing against the sides of the bowl and by working between hands until smooth.
3. Place fabric piece on a piece of palette or waxed paper and moistened instant mâché pulp on the fabric.
4. Tear a section of food-grade plastic wrap large enough to cover the fabric with plenty of extra on all sides. Place over mâché and press down, smoothing with hands in each direction until fabric is covered with a layer of the mixture approximately 1/2".
5. Use fingers or tools to press through the plastic film and manipulate the mâché. Sculpt a shape or recognizable form, or simply create textures. Pinch into ridges, push down to the fabric, and allow the plastic wrap to bunch and fold. Use rounded-edge tools to form details. Press pre-formed texture plates or textured items against the film. Use a ruler to make the edges of the mâché straight or allow them to remain free-form.



Step 1: Mix instant paper mâché and place on burlap or fabric.



Step 2: Place plastic wrap over surface and manipulate with fingers, tools, or texture plates.



Step 3: Allow to dry, then seal or paint if desired.

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6. When finished maneuvering the mâché, leave the plastic wrap in place, but lift the edges so that air will reach the moist pulp and drying will begin. To speed the process, place in front of a fan or use low setting on a hair dryer.
7. After the mâché is set on the edges. Gently pull away plastic wrap and allow to dry overnight.
8. Finished pieces can be sanded and painted or left white and sealed with a clear coating, such as Mod Podge. Use a matte finish to keep the look of mâché or a gloss to give it shine.

Options

- To make ornaments or hanging artwork, create a small opening in the top of the piece while semi-dry. Once dry, tie a string or ribbon through the hole.
- As an option for adding color, apply a few drops of liquid watercolor or washable tempera to the wet pulp and blend as part of the manipulation process.

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.

Connecting

Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experience to make art.

Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works to societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

