



A DAY IN THE ARTS

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HOW TO CREATE A REVERSE PAINTING ON GLASS

By Mayanne Mackay

Glass is a non-absorbent painting support which does not allow paint to easily adhere to it - apart from through the paint's own drying process.

For this reason the outlines of a subject painted on glass need to be simplified when applied to an extremely smooth glass surface. Simplifying a subject does not necessarily detract from the end result after the painting is completed and the final result can often have an appearance similar to that of naive art in relation to composition and form and a certain number of other details. Many artists may find that such simplification can actually be very appealing.

Working the paint or changing outlines without smudging the surrounding areas of undried paint may require some concentration in the beginning, as well as a certain amount of skill, but with patience and the development of their skills using this painting technique, artists will find that applying and mastering



'Leaf Composition' - Mayanne Mackay 1989 - Reverse painting on glass
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the use of glass as a support will become easier as time progresses.

MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR PAINTING ON GLASS

Glass - Choose clear un-flawed glass (or plexi-

glass) in the shape and size you wish to use. In order to begin mastering the technique of reverse painting it is advised to choose smaller sizes to begin with.

Paints - It is important to use a paint that will adhere properly to the surface of the glass. Oil based paints or acrylics are often used for this reason. There are also opaque and transparent ceramic artist colors that have been especially manufactured for using on a non-absorbent surface. Metallic colors (eg. gold, silver or copper) can also be interesting to work with. There are an increasing number of new art products available today that may be suitable for painting on a non-absorbent surface such as glass.

Paintbrushes - To begin choose a selection of small or medium-sized paintbrushes with fine, flat and pointed tips. Larger brushes can be used for working on a larger scale. Artists can also use less conventional tools for applying paint if they wish, depending on the effects obtained through experimentation that may interest them.

A penholder -

Used for outlines (if required) and finer details. It can be an advantage to use interchangeable nibs

suitable for creating both thick and thin outlines.

Ink for creating outlines on glass - The inks used need to be suitable for applying to a non-absorbent surface such as glass. As an alternative paint can also be thinned down into a more liquid form and used for creating outlines in which case attention must be given to creating the right mixture of fluidity and thickness.

A painting palette or something similar to mix your paint on.

A palette knife -(optional) for mixing paint.

Artists paint cleaner or thinner - used for cleaning or sometimes for thinning, and depending on whether oil based or water-based paints are used.

A paint-drying agent - (optional) For mixing with paints to help speed up the drying process

Paper toweling or some clean rags

A mirror - (optional) can be used to check the progress of your painting while you are continuing to work. Place the mirror in a position where it will reflect your artwork from its viewing side.

Cellotape - or a similar average-width sticking tape

An easel - (optional) to prop your work on

A glass-cleaning product

PREPARING THE GLASS

Choose a piece of clear glass in the dimensions you would like to work with and check carefully to make sure the glass is neither scratched nor flawed. It is worthwhile remembering that a flaw in the glass itself will often detract from the finished appearance of a painting and may be impossible to remove after the completion of your artwork.

The sheet of glass that is to become your artwork constitutes the following:

- (1) The 'painting side' - which is the side you will be painting on.
- (2) The 'viewing side' - which is the side you will be looking at (or through) as you progress with your work and after it has been completed.

To render the cutting edges of the glass safe take a length of cellotape that will correspond to the length of one edge. Apply it carefully along that length (ideally so that it is folded equally over each side of the glass).

Repeat this procedure for the other 3 glass edges. The edge of the cellotape will also help mark the outer limits of your artwork.

Clean the surface of the glass thoroughly with a glass-cleaning product. Use paper toweling or any cleaning material that will not leave dust or threads on your painting surface.

Store the glass where it will be safe. If placed between sheets of newspaper it will be protected from scratches and dust.

CREATING OUTLINES

Art products in liquid form that are suitable for creating outlines on glass may be readily available in some countries. Oil-based

paint, water-based acrylic and ceramic paint can also be used for this purpose. In order to create fine lines these paints must sometimes be thinned down in order to use with a pen nib or similar line-drawing tool.

To prevent lines from being effaced too easily you can use a paint that is oil based for creating the outlines of your subject if the paint you will be applying over the top of it (after it has properly dried) is water based. Reverse this procedure if your outlines are created with a water-based paint.

Always use a liquid paint product that will provide the best adhesion possible to a glass surface.

Due to pen nibs clogging relatively easily, attention must be paid to cleaning the nibs regularly.

OUTLINE METHODS

Method 1.

If you have a steady hand you can use a freehand method for applying outlines directly onto the surface of the glass.

Method 2.

Use an original subject for your painting (e.g. a drawing) and place this under the glass then copy it onto the glass surface.

Method 3.

Place a layer of carbon-paper on top of the glass then place your drawing on top of the carbon paper and with a pointed object trace the subject onto the glass. Be careful not to damage your original image (the image being copied) when using a pointed object.

Method 4.

A tracing table can be used for creating outlines. This is a table with a sheet of clear glass inserted into the top and with an electric light source situated beneath it. For those who frequently need to trace their work a tracing table can be very practical and useful.

Method 5.

You can omit outlines altogether.

APPLYING THE PAINT

Most artists have a preference for how to work when creating an artwork. Once it has been decided whether to work on a table or use a table-easel or a standing easel, it will be necessary to view the artwork regularly from its observation side in order to see its progress.

Some artists simply take the glass in their hands and turn it around to look at it directly from the observation side. Others prefer to use a mirror placed directly opposite their working area so that they can observe their progress while they paint.

Mixing and blending

If you are blending colors always do so on a palette or similar flat object before applying them to the glass. If colors are not well blended or mixed the result will be a streaky appearance in the paint on the observation side of the glass.

Avoiding smudges

When creating a reverse painting on glass it is important to watch out for smudges or particles of dirt or dust that may accidentally be transferred onto unpainted areas of your artwork

as you are progressing. Unless removed these may appear as flaws that will show when viewing the artwork from its observation side. If they are also inadvertently covered with a layer of paint removing them afterwards may become very messy and difficult. When lifting off any smudges always be careful not to damage outlines or other areas of paint you have already applied.

Applying the paint

Once the outlines of your subject have thoroughly dried you can begin to apply paint to fill in the remainder of your artwork. Begin with the smallest and most detailed or intricate areas first e.g. eyes, faces, small figures or objects etc - and always keep in mind that your artwork will be observed from the opposite side to the one your painting on and that you are painting in reverse and that therefore foregrounds precede backgrounds.

When applying the reverse painting method it is a good policy to reflect carefully on the sequence in which your painting will develop before beginning to apply your paint. This will create a methodical attitude that is essential for this particularly interesting but also intricate painting technique.

Wishing you many pleasant hours of reverse painting! 🐾

Extract from "A guide to reverse painting on glass" at <http://www.mayannemackay.com>
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Photographer Don Durfee



Don Durfee has some amazing wildlife photos (and others) on his flickr site. Truly, there are so many exciting photos there that it was difficult to choose just two. Durfee explained how he captured my favorite, below, "Bass Master 4": *I was fortunate enough to notice this osprey about to dive for a fish as I was driving around John Prince Park. I guessed which trees he would fly to, took my camera down to the water and waited for him to approach.* Visit his flickr site to learn more about his work. 🐾

<http://flickr.com/photos/durfeefl/>





ART NEWS



Jacques Sarazin (Noyon, 1592–Paris, 1660), “Louis XIV at the Age of Five”, Paris, 1643, Bronze bust; Paris, Musée du Louvre

MET EXHIBITS

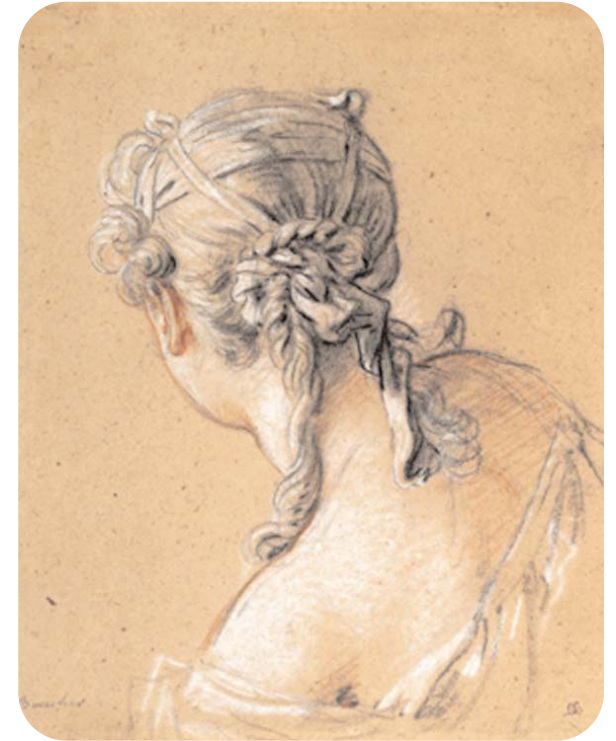
The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is featuring the exhibit **Cast in Bronze: French Sculpture from Renaissance to Revolution**, February 24–May 24, 2009. Beginning in the 16th century, a tradition of bronze sculpture developed in France that was influenced by

achievements of the Italian Renaissance but soon revealed its own distinct force, refinement, and panache. Even though French bronzes were among the glories of royal châteaux, including Versailles, and were always collected eagerly by connoisseurs, they have received relatively little public scrutiny. Evolving from a decade-long collaborative study among scholars, this is the first exhibition to address the subject in 40 years. Approximately 110 of the finest statuettes, portrait busts, and monuments proclaim the French genius for bronze from the late Renaissance through the times of Louis XIV, Louis XV, and Louis XVI.

Also at the Met: **Raphael to Renoir: Drawings from the Collection of Jean Bonna**

January 21, 2009–April 26, 2009

This will be the first comprehensive exhibition dedicated to the European old master and 19th-century drawings from the distinguished collection of Mr. Jean Bonna in Geneva, Switzerland. Many of the 120 drawings on display are masterpieces, ranging through 500 years of art history, from the Renaissance to 1900, and representing a diversity of artistic schools in Italy, Northern Europe, France, and Great Britain, among other regions. The selection will include works by famous artists—such as Carpaccio, Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Parmigianino, Canaletto, Rembrandt, Claude Lorrain, Watteau, Chardin, Boucher, Fragonard, Goya, Ingres, Gericault, Delacroix, Manet, Burne-Jones, Whistler, Degas, Cézanne, Renoir, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Seurat—as well as superb and poignant drawings by others less well-known.



François Boucher (French, 1703–1770), Bust of a Young Woman in a Shift with Her Hair Tied Up, Seen from Behind, ca. 1740, Black, red, and white chalk on fawn paper. Collection of Jean Bonna, Geneva

NEW AUDIO TOUR FOR FAMILIES!

Artful Stories: A BMA Family Tour

The Baltimore Museum of Art now offers one of the only museum audio tours with a dog leading the way! Matisse's perky schnauzer Raoudi (pronounced “rowdy”) is the voice on the Museum's imaginative new Artful Stories family tour of 20 objects in the collection. This random-access tour uses a special handheld audio device that allows families to discover fascinating details about the art at their own pace or pause for thought-provoking questions designed to engage young visitors. The Artful Stories audio tour and

map are available free of charge and can be picked up at the BMA Box Office. Available in English only. You can hear a sample of the tour here: <http://tinyurl.com/al3moz>



AUCTION SCANDAL

Cai Mingchao, an antiques collector and Chinese government adviser, bid 31.4 million euros (\$40 million), at the Feb. 25 Christie's International auction for the bronzes owned by Yves Saint Laurent but is now refusing to pay for the items. You may have heard that there was some controversy over the pieces and that many people felt they should be returned to China. They were taken from China in 1860 by French and British troops from the Chinese Emperor's Old Summer Palace. Dealers said Cai's action made a political point about artworks that China sees as looted. <http://tinyurl.com/cdrhgd>

1934: A NEW DEAL FOR ARTISTS

In 1934, Americans grappled with an economic situation that feels all too familiar today. Against the backdrop of the Great Depression, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration created the Public Works of Art Program—the first federal government program to support the arts

nationally. Federal officials in the 1930s understood how essential art was to sustaining America's spirit. Artists from across the United States who participated in the program, which lasted only six months from mid-December 1933 to June 1934, were encouraged to depict "the American Scene." The Public Works of Art Program not only paid artists to embellish public buildings, but also provided them with a sense of pride in serving their country. They painted regional, recognizable subjects—ranging from portraits to cityscapes and images of city life to



"Flop House", 1937, Edward Millman
Smithsonian American Art Museum

landscapes and depictions of rural life—that reminded the public of quintessential American values such as hard work, community and optimism.

ARTS MONTH IN PHOENIX

Phoenix Mayor Phil Gordon has made March Arts Month during which the city will host art walks and festivals every weekend. <http://www.phoenixartsmonth.com/>

WORD OF THE DAY

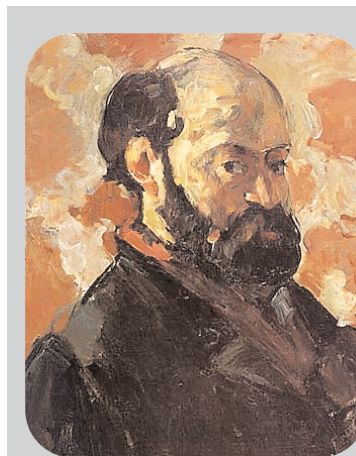
BRONZE

1. Any of various alloys consisting essentially of copper and tin, the tin content not exceeding 11 percent.
2. Any of various other alloys having a large copper content.
3. A metallic brownish color.
4. A work of art, as a statue, statuette, bust, or medal, composed of bronze. ➤
(Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/>)

ART AEROBICS

Practice your drawing skills

Draw your own hand holding a piece of fruit. Fifteen minutes. ➤



The Louvre is the book in which we learn to read. -Paul Cézanne