

Layered Fabric Collages

Project 5

Supplies and Tools

brushes
carbon paper
markers
pencils
poster board
rulers
scissors
white glue

Materials

embellishments
fabric scraps
found objects
paper scraps
resource pictures or original drawings

Step 1: Choosing Your Picture

Have participants choose a picture from the group you've supplied, or have them draw their own. Remember to share the guidelines on what makes a good image for this project to avoid frustrations later, and make sure participants follow them.

Step 2: Collecting Materials

After participants choose or finish designing their picture and listen to your basic instructions and explanation of the project, give them time to do a preliminary rummage at the materials table. They should pick out their main fabrics, and if they see some found pieces they absolutely have to use, they can lay claim to them.

If you're tight for space, you may have participants rummage two or three at a time. In the meantime, those at the main table can be planning how they want their finished piece to look.

Step 3: Building the Background

Using the carbon paper, trace the basic background lines of your picture onto the poster board. You don't need to trace the entire picture just yet.

Once you have the background lines (if any) in place, choose your first layer of fabrics. Clip the fabric scraps to fit your background. As you're working with the background, play around with textures or tones. A sky can be made of various tones of blue, white, and gray, or grass can be suggested in a fabric's texture or pattern. Be sure to plan carefully before gluing. Try moving things around or placing them at different angles.

Once you have your fabric where you like it, brush on a light coat of glue and stick the fabric down.

Step 4: Building Up

Once you have your background glued down, any details of your picture are now covered in fabric. *Don't panic.* This is why you have more than one copy. Looking at your picture, decide what the next layer of the picture

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is. This layer should be the larger objects in your picture that are going to be fabric (e.g., houses, words, characters, etc.).

There are two ways to transfer these objects onto your background. You could use the carbon paper and trace the image directly onto the background. Once you have the image traced, cut out your fabric scraps and glue them into place. Or you could trace the image on the fabric scrap(s) you are creating the objects from, cut them out, then glue them onto the background. Allow the piece to dry for a few minutes between layers.

Repeat this layering technique until you have finished all the pieces of your collage that you want to create in fabric. Building up the layers adds texture and dimension to the finished piece. All the main lines of your objects should be fabric.

Step 5: Embellishing

The smaller details of the collage can now be created with embellishments. Create signs with pictures or words cut from magazines in your paper scrap; fashion clock faces with watches. Beads in any color can be used to highlight and add dimension. You can also use markers to write messages.

Adaptations

This project can be adapted for different types of groups by changing the materials you make available. Younger kids or patrons with developmental disabilities can work well with this project if you provide them with a larger poster board and give them more hands-on help with cutting and gluing.

If you want to frame this project as a truly group endeavor, have your teens work on one large piece to use as a display for the teen area or as an art piece for the library in general.