

A Free Tutorial for our Members



Costuming!

Tips and Techniques:

Using Silk and Mulberry Paper

By Deb Wood

*A unique process for
costuming your sculptures-
Easy and FUN!*

Supplies: Mulberry paper; various patterns, (I buy white and then tint it) available at art supply stores and online. Silk fabric, sheer. Fabri-Tac Glue, Crafter's Pick The Ultimate Glue, glitter glaze, glitter paints, glitters, microbeads, opt. Matt acrylic varnish, (Delta Ceramcoat is great for this.) Alcohol. Plastic wrap. Tape.

**Acrylic paints, colors of your choice. Acid dyes.

Tools: paint brushes, needle tools, heat gun. Scissors.



To the left, you see small pieces of mulberry paper torn from the larger piece. The paper is white, and by 'staining' it with diluted acrylic paint, you can get any color you need for your costuming! This sample is dry, but to accomplish this, wet the paper with a mist of water, then mix acrylic paint with water and dab onto the wet paper. It will bleed, like water colors. I use acrylic because once it's dry, it doesn't bleed like water colors would. Do this on a safe surface, like glass. Once dry, dip your paintbrush in water again, draw a line in the shape you want to tear, and while it's still wet, gently tear those pieces away from the main paper. It tears easily and you get those fabulous frayed edges to work with. You are now ready to apply to the figure.

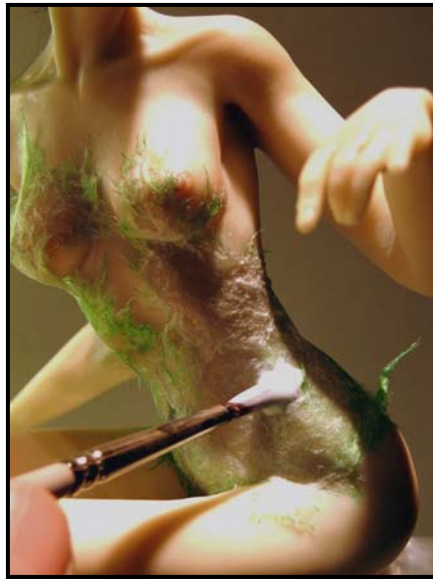
Below, you see the bits of paper applied directly to the doll's body. Use a damp paintbrush to dab into place.



Once you're happy with the placement, dry on warm with your heat gun or hair dryer. Hold it away a bit so it doesn't blow the pieces off again.



Heat Gun



After the pieces of mulberry are dried and shaped like her body, you can now apply them permanently using glaze because it will soak right through the paper. The glitter glaze serves two functions, it glues the paper down and gives a nice finish- tiny bits of glitter reflecting on the surface. If you don't want glitter, use a matt glaze. Notice the plastic wrap covering the base. Do this to protect the surface from drips.



Now for those tendrils of fabric. Earlier, I took a piece of silk fabric, and taped it down to my glass surface. Using rubbing alcohol and acid dyes, I wet the fabric with alcohol, and applied diluted dyes to the fabric.

I put spots of color down, not dyeing the whole fabric. Again, dry with your heat gun set on low. After the fabric is dry, cut thin strips, tapering down to points. Cut several in different lengths. Starting at one side of her waist, apply Fabri Tac glue and press the top of the strip into the glue, continuing on around her waistline. Apply a second layer if you want a fuller skirt.

A Tip To keep the glue from sticking to your fingers, slightly moisten your fingers when pressing the fabric into the glue. Your fingers won't stick quite as much....

PLEASE NOTE: An image with all my favorite supplies and tools is shown on the last page.



Here you can see the strips starting to fill in around her. In applying the last layer, I do this with the top of the strip pointing down, so when it's folded back down you can't see the raw edge of the strip.

So by continuing around her waist, and placing the last layer with the tops tucked under, there is a nice finished edge. I will be applying microbeads and glitter, but I still want that edge to be finished. As the last pieces are added, using a needle to press the strips into the glue is helpful. You will notice a few tiny strips were added to the front of her garment, pointing up toward her bodice- this is just to give a little extra detail. Once all the strips are in place and the glue is dry, I prepare for adding glitter and microbeads.



When it's all finished, and the glue is fully dry, a spritz of clean water in a sprayer (top right picture) will cause the silk fabric to crinkle back up again. **A TIP:** Even though we used acid dyes, it's a good idea to wrap your sculpture's legs in plastic wrap before costuming, so no excess dye stains her skin. (I learned this one the hard way.)



Now for the REALLY fun part!

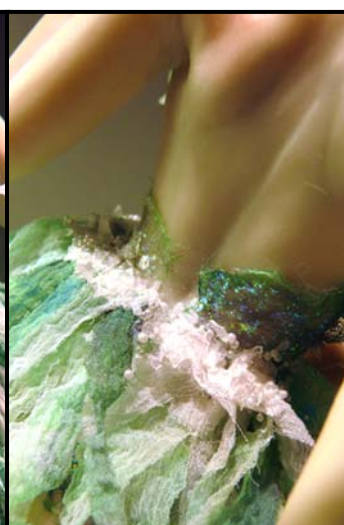
Embellishing.

I LOVE THIS PART. My FAVORITE!
In the top photo you can see me adding a bit more glitter glaze to her front waist area. While that is still wet, sprinkle on the glitter. When the glitter is dried, using a toothpick to pick up dots of white glue, dab areas of the surface and sprinkle on the microbeads. You can do this in a random design, or create a specific pattern if you wish.



Continue around her waist, finishing the top of her skirt around the back as well.

A TIP: *To make the skirt tendril tips stay 'curled', wet your fingers with a bit of 'Stiffy' or even the glaze will work for this. Twist and roll the ends tightly between your finger and thumb. (Lower left photo.) The glaze will dry and the point will hold it's shape.*





Here you can see the back of her skirting, all dried and finished nicely. In the second photo, her skirting appears to be flowing back from her body- draping nicely on the base. This is accomplished by using a brush to hold the tendrils back while drying them with the heat gun. It's like they are blowing in the wind- because, they sort of ARE. Her hair is swept up and clipped in back to hold it out of the way while she's being dressed. When she's all ready, down it comes- a bit of mousse to make it lay nicely and she's ready for her tiara!

This Snow Queen, "Astra" #570 was used on the main gate poster at IDEX 2011. I was tickled to see her featured!

I hope you enjoyed this tutorial, if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. You can reach me at:

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Favorite Supplies:

Micro Fine Glamour Dust Glitter
 Glitter Glaze / Sparkle Glaze
 Glitter paints for fabric
 Other glitters and microbeads (not shown)
 Stiffy for stiffening fabrics (or diluted white glue)
 White Glues: The Ultimate, Gem Tac
 Fabric Glue: Fabri Tac (the best)
 Super Glue: Loctite gel super glue (Walmart)

Tools:

Brushes, scissors, hemostats, scalpel, tweezers, needle nose pliers, wire cutters, heat gun, Dremel, soldering iron. Needles, plastic wrap, tape. (not shown)

I hope you've enjoyed this mini session on costuming. I hope to add more tutorials in the near future, so be watching!



Most products mentioned in this tutorial can be purchased from Judy at: www.ooartistemporium.com