

Adam Names the Animals

How to Do Tissue Paper Collage

Tissue collage is a great art form and it's really fun to see what the end results are!

Materials:

Surface - should be sturdy so it doesn't buckle:

- If you're playing and experimenting you could use a heavy weight card stock, or play with painted or unpainted cardboard.
- If you want something strong and long-lasting you might want to use canvas board. For my illustrations I used 11" x 14" boards and I liked the texture too.

Tissue Paper - you can use all sorts of colors:

- Playing and experimenting again: use run-of-the-mill tissue paper that you buy to wrap presents. I used some and when I was gluing it started 'bleeding.' This was not good for my illustration designs, but it was fun to see these 'accidents' and see what I could make from them.
- Arts and craft stores sell craft tissue paper. This is what I used and I was happy with the results. You can also buy packets of custom paper scraps, some are semi-transparent like tissue paper and some are thicker.

Glue:

- Good ol' Elmer's School Glue/Glue All
- OR an archival quality glue like LineCo Neutral pH Adhesive for longer lasting quality. (Different art/craft stores might carry different brands, so be sure to ask.)

Water, containers, brushes, scissors, pencils, erasers, paper towels: I used flat brushes about 1/4" - 1/2" wide. Bristle brushes are sturdy but often tear the paper. Find a brush that's not too soft, not too stiff, just right! (Where have I heard that before?)

Getting to work (play):

- Prepare the papers: rip and/or cut shapes.
- If you want a specific design, lightly pencil it onto the surface.
- Mix glue and water in a container. I used 1:1 ratio. About 3 tablespoons of each to start. The glue should be milky but not too runny/watery. After a while you'll get the hang of the consistency.
- 'Paint' some of the glue on the surface first, then add a piece of the paper. Paint over the paper, then add another piece of paper (be sure there's always glue on the surface where you'll add the next paper) - overlaying where you want. Continue this process until the surface is covered. If you're using a paper surface, wait until all is dry and carefully cut any tissue that's hanging over the edges. If you're using the canvas board, glue over the edges as you go. The glue may look milky during application but will dry clear.
- You can get even more creative! Wait for the collage to dry, then you can paint on it (acrylic paints are good for this), use markers, or do what I did, and make/paint characters and shapes from card & Bristol stock and glue onto the surface. It's also fun to try out different materials for your collage. I used cork board, printed paper, shiny 'stick-um' stars, and custom papers in addition to the cut-out shapes.

Eric Carle is one of the most famous (and one of my favorite) children's authors/illustrators using tissue collage. Other famous artists who used collage (not necessarily tissue paper) are Ezra Jack Keats and Leo Lionni. Who are your favorites?