

Glow Paper Mosaics



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Bright in the daylight, luminous under UV light—these mosaics count on contrast for maximum effect.

Fluorescent paint is bright and exciting on its own, but surrounding it with areas of flat, black color makes it practically sizzle. We're naturally drawn to this combination—but why? The appeal comes from a mix of art and science.

In art, **contrast** is one of the seven basic principles that can make a work more compelling. Contrast is achieved by intentionally placing elements that are unlike or opposite one another together. Light and brilliant colors surrounded by dark, flat black produces a striking sense of drama and intrigue.

Science demonstrates that a physical energy is created by this contrast. Fluorescent colors contain phosphorus pigments that are stimulated by light that's beyond the range of human vision. This invisible ultraviolet (UV) light is what makes fluorescent paint appear to glow, even in daylight. When illuminated by a source that emits UV light—a "black" light—the energy within these pigments intensifies. We can't see the UV light itself, but we can see its impact in the form of vivid colors.

In contrast, the color black absorbs UV light and reflects very little. When black is placed next to the phosphorus pigments, the energy of the invisible light slows down slightly and becomes visible—that's the glow we see.

You can achieve this luminous effect by creating fluorescent paper mosaics. Paint fluorescent colors on white paper, then cut and arrange the pieces on black paper, leaving plenty of negative space between them. Aim for a variety of contrasts: not just light and dark, but contrasts formed by alternating shapes, sizes, colors, directions, etc. As an option, add contrasting lines with a black marker. Enjoy the brilliance of the mosaics in daylight or indoor lighting, then shine a UV light on them in a darkened room. Get ready for the "oohs" and "aahs"!

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



Required Materials

Blick Student Tempera Paint, pints, assorted fluorescent colors (00018-); share 6-8 across class

Pacon Art1st Mixed Media Paper, 500-sheet pkg, 12" x 18", 80-lb (09701-1006); share one sheet between 2 students

Blick Premium Colored Art Paper, Black, 9" x 12", 50-sheet pkg, 76-lb (11409-2003); share one pkg across class

Blick Scholastic Pony Brushes, bright, size 14 (05864-1014); need one per student

Maped Sensoft 3D Scissors, 5", right handed (58468-1105) or left-handed (58468-1005); need one per student

Blick Glue Stick, 1.3 oz, White (23895-1048); need one per student

Pilot Extra Fine Point Permanent Marker, Black (22107-2050); need one per student

Speedball UV LED Exposure Lamp (48927-2023); need a minimum of one

Optional Materials

Sakura Pen-Touch Paint Marker, Ultraviolet, assorted widths (21326-)

Sharpie Twin Tip Markers, set of 4, Black (21373-2004)

Micador Dark-Arts Magic Black Light (02654-1000)

Ready to order materials?

Go to www.DickBlick.com/lesson-plan/glow-paper-mosaics to access a product bundle for your convenience.

Preparation

1. Paint papers that will be cut and used as mosaic pieces. Papers may be created beforehand or in a preliminary session. They can be painted a single color, or a mix of two harmonious colors. For example: Pink and Violet, Blue and Green, or Yellow and Orange. Avoid painting two complimentary colors together.

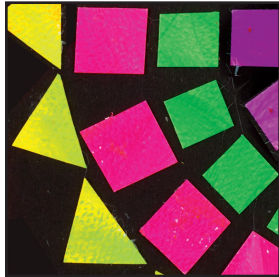
Allowing brush strokes to remain visible can create a textural contrast, so refrain from blending colors smoothly together.

2. Make a list of contrast strategies that an artist might thoughtfully choose to bring contrast into their work. Place the list where it can be easily viewed.

Here are a few examples:



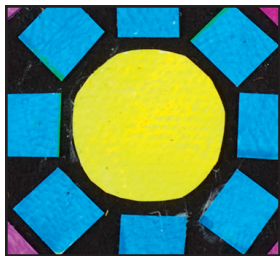
Color Contrast: using complimentary colors, or colors that are opposite one another on the color wheel.



Value Contrast: incorporating areas of light and dark.



Size and Scale Contrast: having both large and small elements.



Shape and Form Contrast: including shapes that are organic with geometric, or soft-edge forms with elements that have sharp, or hard edges.



Textural Contrast: using smooth and rough samples; solid color and broken color.

Contrast can be created in many ways—add more ideas to the list as they develop. Challenge students to use as many expressions of contrast as they can while making their paper mosaic.

Process

1. Refer to list of contrast ideas, above, and cut painted papers into pieces. Cut paper into various sizes and shapes. Save all scraps, every piece can be useful.
2. Select a few pieces of strong interest and arrange them onto black paper. Leave space between. Use a glue stick to secure them.
3. Build mosaic one piece at a time from the starting point, keeping the goal of contrast in mind. For example, if adding pieces of orange or yellow to one area of the mosaic, add pieces of blue or violet in another area. If adding large pieces, remember to place small ones as well. Contrasts can take place side by side or on opposite sides of the paper.

Rotate the paper often to look at the mosaic from different views.



Step 1: Paint white paper with assorted fluorescent colors.



Step 2: Cut paper into a variety of sizes and shapes.



Step 3: Arrange and glue to black paper in a mosaic fashion, leaving space between pieces. As an option, use a black pen to create lines or an ultraviolet pen to add "hidden" words and designs that are revealed by UV light.

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Process, continued

4. Fill page with mosaic pieces. Spaces between pieces do not need to be consistent—there can be contrast created by leaving thin space and thick space. Pieces can extend past the edge of the page and be trimmed off once glue has set.
5. Painted papers can be pre-cut into shapes so that younger students can enjoy arranging them on paper using glue sticks. Older students can test out the options below to continue exploring contrast and building the mosaic into a piece that is as intriguing when viewed in the daylight as it is with a UV light.
6. Paper mosaics can be made in the daylight, then viewed under UV light or created as a hands-on art experience at "black light" parties and events.

Options

- Use markers of varying widths to make lines, patterns and drawings on mosaic pieces. Create contrast with thick and thin lines, curved and straight, dotted and solid, etc. Draw lines on each piece individually or lines that cover the entire mosaic.
- Make "secret" messages and hidden drawings using an ultraviolet pen. The ink is milky as it flows from the pen, but dries quickly so that it is invisible on paper. Shine a UV light on it and the message appears and glows.

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.

Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.