

## MOSAIC SHARD ART – by Hilary Stephens



If you've always wanted to create glass mosaic art but didn't want to fuss with all that sharp, broken glass, here's an easy and fun method of creating your own glass-like mosaic shards using EasyCast epoxy resin as the "glass" mosaic material.

This project will require at least two working sessions: one to make your colored resin pieces and the second session to do the mosaic artwork. We will describe two similar methods of creating a resin mosaic art piece.



### TOOLS and MATERIALS

Castin' Craft brand EasyCast Epoxy Resin 16 ounce kit (enough for 11 x 14 piece)

Castin' Craft brand Transparent Dyes and/or Opaque pigments and/or

Jacquard brand Pinata Alcohol Ink

A design on paper to use as a pattern

Wood plaque (trays, box lids, tabletops and other surfaces may be used)

Acrylic craft paint

Plastic sheeting or zip loc bag

Mona Lisa brand Metal Leaf Adhesive Size

Sharpie brand permanent marker

Rubbing alcohol

Q-tips

Fiskers brand Quick Release Multi Snip tool (buy at hardware store)

Several mixing cups and stir sticks

Foam or sponge craft brushes

Several small disposable drink cups

Gloves and eye protection

Heat gun or hair dryer



### INSTRUCTIONS

- a) Cover your work surface with heavy plastic sheeting. Tape the picture onto the plastic sheet and cover it with a piece of clear plastic; sandwich like. Or use a heavy Ziploc bag; seal the picture inside the bag if it fits!





- b) Mix about six ounces of EasyCast. Pour portions into small cups and add between 3-6 drops of dye to each; blend completely. Example: if the picture has about four colors, prepare a cup for each color.

TIP: six ounces of mixed epoxy spread over a one square foot will make the perfect thickness for the epoxy shards. If the epoxy is too thick it's much harder to trim into shape. Too thin a layer will result in shards that lack color density.

- i) **Method #1 Pouring on top of a picture:** Find a simple poster or picture that you like. We chose a sunflower design because the flower was bold and didn't have a lot of small, individual details. If possible, make photocopies of your design as copies may come in handy later. Pour each colored epoxy onto the appropriate color of your plastic protected picture. The epoxy will spread and merge with other colors but don't be too concerned because you'll be trimming out the epoxy pieces anyway. You can combine cups of color to make additional colors. Let the epoxy dry in place for 10-18 hours. The longer the epoxy sheet cures the more rigid and difficult it can be to snip into pieces, particularly shapes that are rounded.
- ii) **Method #2 Free form without the picture:** Mix about six ounces of EasyCast. Divide portions into small cups and add between 3-6 drops of dye to each; blend completely. Make as many colors as desired. You can also combine cups of color to make additional colors. Pour the epoxy onto the sheet to create the "glass" mosaic material. If desired, allow the colors to blend together on the plastic sheeting to create additional shades. Let the epoxy dry in place for 10-18 hours. The longer the epoxy sheet cures the more rigid and difficult it can be to snip into pieces, particularly shapes that are rounded
- c) Meanwhile, apply two layers of paint to the plaque surface and let dry. The paint will be the background color and will look like grout in between the mosaic pieces. Consider using a light colored background especially if the epoxy is transparent. Dark colored backgrounds may make

the transparent colored epoxy much darker. Scrapbook paper may be used in place of the paint; remember that any design on the paper will show through the shards so take a few pieces of the shards to test with when purchasing paper. Lacy designs create an interesting visual texture.

- d) Peel the epoxy from the plastic sheet. If the epoxy is transparent, place it on top of the picture and trace the pattern onto the epoxy sheet with the Sharpie marker. If the epoxy is opaque or solid colored, you'll need to first cut out the various pieces of your picture and use them as a pattern or template. This is when one of the photocopies may come in handy!

TIP: use a small heat gun or hair dryer to warm the mosaic pieces before trimming!  
The heat will soften the thin shards of epoxy so that cutting is easier and more accurate.

- e) Using the snip tool, trim the pieces from the sheet of epoxy. Then, if necessary, use alcohol and a Q-tip to remove the marker ink from the edges of the pieces. The easiest method of keeping track of the individual mosaic pieces is to lay them back onto the picture; use one of the photocopies for this purpose. Once all major pieces of the mosaic are cut out, you're ready to assemble the mosaic.
- f) Brush two layers of the metal leaf adhesive on the plaque. Each layer of adhesive will become tacky after a few minutes. This adhesive will remain tacky over several days so no need to rush; just reapply the adhesive if it seems too dry. The adhesive is used just to hold the mosaic pieces in place but will not actually glue them to the project surface so be careful if the project must be moved before it's coated with EasyCast. Position the mosaic shards in place on the plaque, leaving a small space between the pieces to create the illusion of grout lines. Trim and shape the pieces as needed. Once the major portions of the design are in place on the plaque, then begin to snip additional pieces to fill the background. Do not allow the edges of the shards to meet or overlap the edges of the plaque; leave a narrow area along the outside edges to achieve a more finished appearance.
- g) To complete the mosaic project, place the plaque onto four small disposable drink cups. Mix another batch of EasyCast. To determine the amount of EasyCast needed, refer to the coverage chart printed in the instruction sheet. Pour EasyCast over the plaque, starting in the center and pouring in circles until the project is covered with coating. If necessary, very carefully spread it using a foam craft brush. Use the heat gun or hair dryer to remove the bubbles in the EasyCast layer. Wait two hours and using a clean stir stick, scrape the excess drips from the underside of the plaque and allow the mosaic to cure for about 24 hours. If mosaic pieces are sticking up through the EasyCast layer, sand the surface flat and smooth with coarse sandpaper and apply another thick layer of EasyCast.

TIP: Designs for mosaic projects may be found in mosaic or stained glass pattern books, coloring books, and stencil books.