

FINISHING YOUR PLASTER SCULPTURE

- *Before you apply any surface treatment make sure the plaster form is dried, sanded (as desired), and wiped free of dust and debris.
- Choose your desired surface treatment; i.e. color scheme, texture surface or naked finish.

COLOR: The visual spectrum of light reflected on the surface of any material is perceived as color.

- **HUE:** A single undiluted color
- **VALUE:** Amount of lightness or darkness of a color
- **TINT:** A lighter value of a color (a color plus white) that advances to act like implied highlights.
- **SHADE:** A darker value of color (a color plus black) that recedes to act like shadows.
- **INTENSITY:** Purity of a hue unpolluted by other hues; also referred to as saturation.
- **TEMPERATURE:** Colors which are perceived as Warm or Cool
 - **Warm Colors:** Red, Orange, yellow
 - High energy colors that advance and can be used to create areas emphasis
 - **Cool Colors:** Blue, Green, Violet
 - Low energy colors that recede and can be used to create areas of subordination.

COLOR SCHEMES/CHART: Are used to determine the desired colors used in any work of art.

- **PRIMARY COLORS:** Primary colors are red, blue, and yellow. These three colors can be mixed together to create all the other colors on the color wheel (i.e. a Children's color Theme).
- **SECONDARY COLORS:** Secondary colors are the colors made when mixing different combinations of Primary colors: Green (blue & Yellow), Orange (red & yellow), purple (red & blue).
- **COMPLIMENTARY COLORS:** Are opposite colors on the color wheel. They tend to contrast and fight for attention. Complementary colors are always found in the shadows of its opposing color.
 - Yellow = Purple
 - Red = Green
 - Orange = Blue
- **MONOCHROMATIC:** This color scheme uses a single color (plus tints & shades or values of that color) in a composition.
- **ANALAGOUS:** This color scheme uses 2-4 colors, that lie next to each other on the color wheel, in a composition, i.e.:
 - Purple & Blue
 - Blue, Green, Yellow
 - Green, Yellow, Orange, Red
 - etc.

SURFACE TREATMENTS FOR PLASTER

PRIMING

- Before applying any primer, the plaster must be dried, and wiped free of any dust or particles.
- Applying an acrylic gesso or spray primer allows the application of paint to adhere to the surface of the plaster without cracking or peeling.
- Primer must be applied before any type of painting with the exception of staining or encaustic.

PAINTING: Almost any type of paint can be used on plaster.

- **Acrylic Paint:**
 - **PRIMER:** Before you apply paint you must first PRIME the plaster using an acrylic gesso or spray primer.
 - **COLORS:** There are a rainbow of colors, they are inexpensive and can be bought at any hobby or craft store/department; be sure to purchase enough to cover your piece.
 - **APPLICATION:** Acrylic paint is easy to apply with brushes, dries quickly, and can be thinned with water to use as a wash.
 - **SEALANT:** You must seal the Acrylic paint using a clear acrylic sealer that dries fast. Please keep in mind that clear sealers come in several finishes:
 - Glossy, Satin, Matte, etc.
- **Oil Paint**
 - **PRIMER:** Before you apply paint you must first PRIME the plaster using an acrylic gesso or spray primer.
 - **COLORS:** There is a rainbow of oil paint colors. They are more expensive and can be bought any hobby or craft store; be sure to purchase enough to cover your piece.
 - **APPLICATION:** Oil paint is more difficult to use and does not dry quickly.
 - **SEALANT:** Oil paint does not require a sealant due to its oil base.
- **Encaustic Paint**
 - **PRIMER:** Does not require a primer.
 - **COLORS:** There are a rainbow of dried pigments that can be added to clear melted wax (beeswax or encaustic wax) medium. This type of paint is expensive. Materials can be found online, at hobby or craft stores, candle suppliers or beeswax from local bee keepers. Be sure to purchase enough to cover your piece.
 - **APPLICATION:** Encaustic requires a heating element to melt and keep the paint warm. It is difficult to apply because it dries quickly and uses flash heat (do not overheat) to meld the layers of wax applied. It does give a unique surface treatment with an element of aromatherapy if using beeswax as the medium for pigment.
 - **SEALANT:** Any wax based material does not require a sealant as wax is a natural waterproof sealant and has a crystal based formation that allows light to refract creating a luxurious sheen.

PROJECT #1 - NON OBJECTIVE SCULPTURE

- **Watercolors**

- **PRIMER:** Watercolors do not require a primer as the material penetrates and is absorbed into the plaster creating a deep bond.
- **COLORS:** There are a rainbow of colors, water colors give a translucent effect and range from cheap (kids watercolor sets) to expensive. They can be bought at any hobby or craft store; be sure to purchase enough to cover your piece.
- **APPLICATION:** Watercolors are relatively easy to apply but should not be used if you desire an opaque (solid) finish; see acrylics or oils.
- **SEALANT:** You must seal water color paint using a clear acrylic sealer that dries fast. Please keep in mind that clear sealers come in several finishes:
 - Glossy, Satin, Matte, etc.

STAINING:

- There are numerous materials that can be used as a stain. STAINS DO NOT REQUIRE A PRIMER as they need to penetrate into the plaster to adhere. Apply the material in thin watery layers and let it soak in and allow the plaster to dry before applying sealant. Materials that can be used as a stain include:
 - Wood Stains
 - Watercolor
 - Food Color
 - Organic Material (fruit, charcoal, rust, etc)
 - Research Natural Homemade stains.
 - Any watered down paint.
 - **SEALANT:** You must seal in stains using a clear acrylic sealer that dries fast. Please keep in mind that clear sealers come in several finishes:
 - Glossy, Satin, Matte, etc.

SEALING

- To protect your sculpture regardless of the paint/stain used you **MUST SEAL THE PLASTER.**
- There are many commercially available sealants:
 - **CLEAR ACRYLIC SPRAY:** This sealant is inexpensive, fast drying and comes in several finishes (matte, satin, glossy).
 - **POLYURETHANE:** This sealant has a high sheen, is heavy-duty, and very little yellowing.
 - **SHELLAC:** This sealant is a natural product used also in the coating of candy (Skittles), it dries hard and glossy, and has a slight yellowing.
 - **PAST WAXES:** This type of sealant creates a beautiful finish, it is a time intensive application but worth the polished stone finish. To Apply: wipe on material with a sponge/dry rag, let dry, then wipe off; repeat as necessary to achieve desired finish.
 - **SHOE POLISH (WAX BASED):** This can also be used to achieve interesting results.