

Mosaic



Workshop

All the basics you need to be inspired, skilled and confident enough to embark on any mosaic project, and teach yourself with each new project

(Seal) the base

The base we use in the workshops are MDF board, in a "canvas" sized 30x30 centimetres. I cut up larger "shelving" which I buy at Mitre10 with a jigsaw; the shelving is a standard 30cm wide and can be obtained at different lengths.

Alternatively, use 12mm plywood, or try a 3D base such as a terracotta planter or pot. Both the MDF board and the alternatives (plywood or terracotta) can be sealed in the same way, with PVA glue and water in equal measure (50% PVA and 50% water), applied with a brush. If you want to exhibit your mosaic outdoors, make sure your PVA is the "exterior" version.

Tools

The charm of making mosaics is that the selecting, creating and applying of tesserae and grout are done manually, and you only need a few basic tools:

A hammer and mosaic tile nippers, in addition you can invest in wheeled (glass) nippers. Find these tools online at aliexpress.com or from The Glassroom in Christchurch who sells on TradeMe (trader name "bobabout"; search for "glass" and you will find their listings).

"Disparate pieces attract, influence each other, and

1

GROUT COLOURS

For starters, it is easiest to choose medium grey or charcoal grey as your grout colour.

2

NIPPERS

Hold the handles of the nippers as low as possible. Take only a tiny bite

3

HAMMER

Always place the plate or cup you're breaking with a hammer in a towel



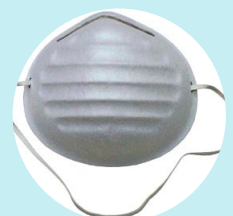
Safety glasses

Prevent small ceramic or glass shards from getting into your eyes.



Safety gloves

Prevent blisters, cuts and dry skin. Choose thin ones so you still feel what you're doing.



Dust Mask

Always wear a dust mask when working with grout, cement, oxides and powdered glues.

miraculously become inseparable”

~ Ilana Shafir, mosaic artist (1924-2014)”

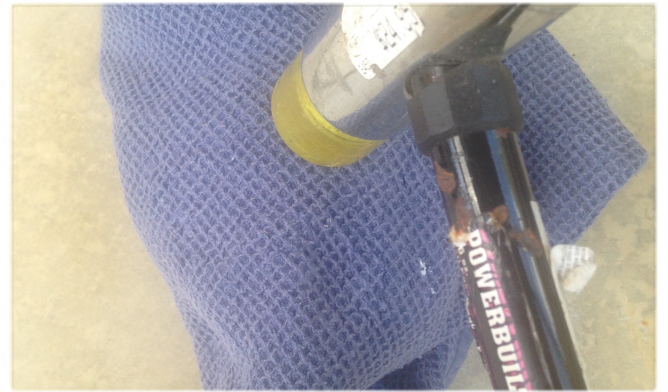
Design

Make a drawing first or use a picture (cell phones are great for taking and storing images of motifs and designs you want to use or adapt). Transfer onto your base. Nine inspirations to start off:

1) a colour, 2) a natural form (leaf, flower, trees, ocean, clouds, animal shape, landscape, human bodies, faces), 3) architectural shape, 4) a mood or feeling, 5) one of your tesserae*, 6) a famous painting, 7) persian carpet or fabric, designs 8) a photo you've taken, 9) sketching a few (flowy) lines on your base and started filling them out with tesserae*.

*) Tessera: any piece of material used in a mosaic. Plural: tesserae

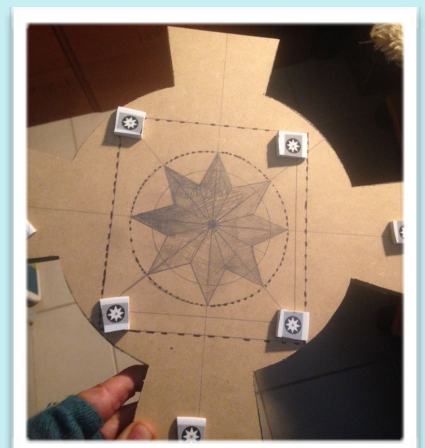
NOTE: Seal any plastic or porous tesserae (such as beads or shells) with marine grade varnish, matte or gloss, or with PVA (undiluted for gloss)



TO DRAW OR NOT TO DRAW...

If you feel you can't draw, you can simply sketch some interesting lines or waves on your "canvas". Or you can buy some carbon paper (from Warehouse Stationary) and copy templates from mosaic books (check you're not infringing on any copyrights. Slightly alternating the design usually solves this) or from your own photos.

You can also place a drawing under glad wrap with fibreglass mesh over the top, the size of your board/canvas/shape and stick your tesserae directly onto the mesh, and when finished transfer the mesh onto the board covered in wall fix adhesive or wall & floor adhesive.



Creating/Glueing

Once you've decided on the design, select and or cut/smash your tesserae, tiles and start glueing on your pieces. We used premixed wall adhesive. It's easy and economical to work with and works on most surfaces. I buy it from Mitre10. Use in small batches so it doesn't dry out. If you seal the tub well, it lasts about a year. If working on a piece for outside, make sure the adhesive you use is exterior-proof. Always read the label.



FINISHING TOUCHES

Let your glue dry ("cure") for 16-24 hours before grouting. Grout from DIY stores comes in 1.5kg and 5kg boxes. Read the tips on page 1 about the grout colour and experiment. Wear rubber gloves and a mask.

The consistency of the grout should be toothpaste-like or "icing-sugar". Thicker is better than thinner. Mix the water carefully and slowly, not to put in too much water.

Clean excess grout with a sponge, wash out in a bowl with water. Let grout dry for about 30 mins, then polish the mosaic with a rag or kitchen paper.

You can paint the back and sides of your mosaics with an acrylic or water based enamel paint, either a neutral grey or black, or a colour matching your design.

Screw in a D-ring at the back of your mosaic. A mosaic this size does not exceed 3.5 kg in weight. The D-ring is strong enough to hold 5kg.



It's up to your preference whether to put the glue onto the surface and then stick the tesserae down, or put a blob on the back of the tesserae before sticking it down. If you are filling in a larger area like a background with one colour, it is faster to paste the glue onto your board first. Complete that area within about 20 minutes to half-an-hour before the glue hardens too much. Where you

need more precision and care, it is easier to "butter" individual tesserae with the adhesive.



Email me if you have ANY questions regarding mosaic making! Or connect through the mosaics.gallery Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/sitaramosaics>

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PAUSE TIP

Step away from your mosaic work to be able to look at it afresh before continuing

5

FLOW TIP

Remember the effect of size and flow of the spaces between the tesserae

6

NIP TIP

Press with thumb and index finger on the spot you want a plate or tile to break toward

7

CLEANING TIP

Use paper towels, a dust buster or vacuum cleaner and baby wipes to work cleanly

