

**GEL PLATE PRINTING WORKSHOP**  
**The Creativity Curator**  
**KITCHEN TABLE ART WORKSHOP**

**Sponsored by the Franklin Public Library**  
**Sunday, September 27, 2020 at 3 PM**  
**On Zoom by invitation**

**WORK SPACE:**

Set up a work area that includes a smooth, flat, hard non-porous surface. I use a piece of glass or plexiglass on top of my kitchen counter or table. You can also use a baking tray or Teflon baking sheet.

Set up an additional flat space to put your prints to dry – generally they dry quickly - a cookie rack is good.

You might want access to water for clean up, a kitchen sink is good.

Prepare to sit in a comfortable chair or spot to meditate.

**PLEASE GATHER THE FOLLOWING SUPPLIES – EVEN IF YOU RECEIVED A KIT:**

- A small collection of green leaves/plants, or feathers (that can be pressed to lie flat, such as a maple leaf or herb).
- 1-2 paper towel and/or a tissue cardboard tubes. Or small acrylic or wood rolling pin.
- Tape: re-positional works best, such as painters tape or washi or stencil tape.
- Antibacterial gel or liquid
- More acrylic paint, besides what's in the kit, if you have it in case you'd like to use it.
- All-purpose glue that dries clear.
- Palette knife or dinner / butter knife.
- Scissors or craft knife.
- Pencil
- Paper towels or wipes for clean up.
- Optional: something with a smooth circular base like a printers baren, an old credit card, a spoon, or a glass jar that can be used to burnish the paper on the plate. You can (and will) also use your hands.

## **Tools & Materials Descriptions:**

**1. Gel Plate** - a gel plate is usually made from a plastic that contains mineral oil.

SIZE: 5x5 or larger. In the workshop we will print with a 5x5 plate, but you may purchase a larger one. You will be able to use a larger sized plate in the workshop

SOURCES: All of the sources below sell gel plates. The makers are Speedball, Gelli Arts, and Gel Press. Check Amazon Prime for Gelli Arts brand plates that can be delivered quickly. Check online for the stock at the craft stores for curbside pick up or in-store purchases. (Michaels had brayers and gel plates in stock, Hobby Lobby did not.)

Amazon. Here are two links, but you can also search for “gel plate” for all sizes and “tools for monoprinting”.

[https://www.amazon.com/Gelli-Arts-Printing-Student-Plate/dp/B018NKU81O/ref=sr\\_1\\_31?crd=2GO1N6DGWD3MT&dchild=1&keywords=gel+printin+plate&qid=1599881480&srefix=gel+print%2Caps%2C177&sr=8-31](https://www.amazon.com/Gelli-Arts-Printing-Student-Plate/dp/B018NKU81O/ref=sr_1_31?crd=2GO1N6DGWD3MT&dchild=1&keywords=gel+printin+plate&qid=1599881480&srefix=gel+print%2Caps%2C177&sr=8-31)

[https://www.amazon.com/s?k=gel+printing+plate&crd=2GO1N6DGWD3MT&srefix=gel+print%2Caps%2C177&ref=nb\\_sb\\_ss\\_i\\_1\\_9](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=gel+printing+plate&crd=2GO1N6DGWD3MT&srefix=gel+print%2Caps%2C177&ref=nb_sb_ss_i_1_9)

**2. Brayer** - A brayer is a hand roller that is used in printmaking and can be used to ink rubber stamps or apply paint to a plate. For our use, they are made from rubber or similar materials.

SIZE: In the workshop we will use a 4” soft rubber brayer. I recommend one that snaps off from the handle for easy cleaning. If you have a hard rubber or different sized brayer it can be used for our workshop projects.

SOURCES: Check stock online and in stores listed in the sources. Here are two Amazon links

[https://www.amazon.com/Gel-Press-Brayer-Multicoloured-4/dp/B07H64TMPK/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?dchild=1&keywords=gelli+arts+brayer&qid=1599884391&s=arts-crafts&sr=1-4](https://www.amazon.com/Gel-Press-Brayer-Multicoloured-4/dp/B07H64TMPK/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=gelli+arts+brayer&qid=1599884391&s=arts-crafts&sr=1-4)

[https://www.amazon.com/Speedball-Pop-Soft-Rubber-Brayer/dp/B0007ZJ8T2/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?dchild=1&keywords=4+inch+speedball+brayer&qid=1599885621&s=arts-crafts&sr=1-5](https://www.amazon.com/Speedball-Pop-Soft-Rubber-Brayer/dp/B0007ZJ8T2/ref=sr_1_5?dchild=1&keywords=4+inch+speedball+brayer&qid=1599885621&s=arts-crafts&sr=1-5)

## ESSENTIAL TOOLS AND MATERIALS:

**Do It Yourself KIT – if you did not receive a kit, please try to put one together yourself with the following:**

1. **Gel Plate:** purchase one (see sources) or use a piece of plexiglass or glass (cover the edges with tape so you don't get cut) - you can use glass from a picture frame.
  - a. Or try making your own gel plate. Sometimes they turn out great, other times it takes a couple of tries. See two recipes below, one is made with glycerin, the other is not. If you have glycerin or can get some glycerin go with that recipe since the plate will be firmer and last longer.
2. **Brayer** to roll paint onto the plate: to purchase one see the resources below. Or try alternatives such as a palette knife, old credit card or a smooth silicone scraper.
3. **Acrylic paint.** Any brand. Tubes or bottles. Your choice of colors. We won't use a large amount of paint, just dabs. (A palette knife, if needed to transfer paint, alternative palette knife: dinner/butter knife or wooden popsicle sticks).
4. **Non-glossy paper:** For printing - computer/printer paper, heavier cardstock or watercolor / mixed media / Bristol paper at least ¼ inch larger than your gel plate.
  - a. Misc. paper - newsprint and/or paper shopping bag for your workspace.
5. A collection of **found objects** for mark making, such as, bubble wrap, open weave fabric (such as canvas or tulle or cheesecloth), mesh, plastic wrap, a medicine bottle, twine, ribbon, rubber bands, corrugated cardboard, foam sheet or packing, wine cork etc
6. **Other materials:** soft or rubber tipped tools. Plastic wrap. Q-tips or swabs, comb, paint brush, stencil(s), or stamp(s), or punchinella (sequin waste). Jewelry findings, such as, earring wire hooks, or pendant tray, or pin backs- etc.,

## SOURCES:

Below are links for places where you can purchase the tools and materials we will use in the workshop:

Amazon <https://www.amazon.com/>

Gelli Arts <https://www.gelliarts.com/>

Michaels <https://www.michaels.com/>,

Jerry's Artarama <https://www.jerrysartarama.com/>

Dick Blick Art <https://www.dickblick.com/>

Hobby Lobby <https://www.hobbylobby.com/>

Speedball Art <https://www.speedballart.com/>

Gel Press <https://gelpress.com/>

Joanne Fabric <https://www.joann.com/>

Gel Plate Printing Supply List  
The Creativity Curator  
Kitchen Table Art Workshop

**Supplied KIT contents.**

Gel plate

Brayer

Acrylic Paint: red, yellow, blue, green, white, metallic. Wooden palette sticks.

Non-glossy paper: watercolor paper, black card stock and envelopes for card making, book pages. Paper shopping bag and newsprint.

Found objects:

Bubble wrap

Corrugated cardboard

Fabric – hessian / canvas

Yarn

Foam peanuts

Rubber bands

Other objects:

Punchinella

Stencil

Jewelry findings

Doodle cards

## **How to make a Gel Plate - WITH GLYCERIN**

### **Timing**

Allow two plus hours for the first setting and an additional 3-4 hours for a final set in the refrigerator. Then allow it to rest in the refrigerator overnight.

### **Ingredients and Equipment:**

12 ounces of glycerin. Usually found in the baking section of big box stores and some supermarkets.

Seven (7) packets of Knox unflavored gelatin. Available at your supermarket.

One and a half cups of boiling water

Microwaveable bowl or measuring cup.

Rubber spatula.

One 8" by 8" level pan with a smooth bottom.

You can divide the mix between smaller containers. Alternately, after it sets you can cut the plate into smaller sections. A glass 8" x 8" pan works well, but you can also use a Teflon or metal container – you will want your finished plate to be at least one-quarter inch thick (thicker is better) and smooth.

See note below regarding whether to grease the container. \*

### **Recipe:**

- Break up any lumps in the packets of gelatin.
- Pour room temperature glycerin into a microwavable bowl/measuring cup.
- Sprinkle gelatin into the glycerin and slowly stir to minimize bubbles.
- Make sure there are no lumps of gelatin - keep stirring and squish them.
- Pour the boiling water into this mixture. Stir slowly to minimize bubbles.
- Let it sit for 1 minute. If you notice any large bubbles, try to pop them with a toothpick.
- Place in the microwave on high (100%) for 45 seconds.
- Pour into pan and allow it to set up on a level surface.
- Rip a piece of paper towel to fit the eight-inch pan and slowly drag it across the top (or newsprint strips).  
This will clean the top of any foam or bubbles.
- If you cannot rid the plate of bubbles or lumps, try to move them to the side and when the plate is set you can cut them out. The reason for avoiding lumps and bubbles is that they may show up in your prints.

- Let it sit for several hours on a level surface. Do not move the tray until it is set. After several hours (usually two) you can move the tray to the refrigerator for a 3-4 hour or overnight rest. The plate will shrink in the refrigerator, which helps to get it out of the container, but you do not want it to shrink too much.

To release the gelatin from the container, pull the edges away from the sides with your fingers and the plate will drop out when the air gets under the plate. Drop onto a clean plastic acetate sheet and place another sheet over the top to store. Do not use saran/cling wrap or aluminum foil since the wrinkles from them will etch into the plate. If you do not have an acetate sheet use a top and bottom sheet of stiff hard plastic that is non-porous and smooth.

If for your plate tears or is not smooth surfaced cut it up and put it in a micro safe bowl and reheat until melted, about two minutes - start with small amounts of microwave time and keep a close watch on it as it starts to re-melt. Then pour it back in the same pan. Or melt it over the stove. You can also re-melt your plate if it has lumps or large bubbles. The lumps may not dissolve, if you pour slowly you can try pouring it through a strainer when returning it to your pan. Be careful since the gelatin is hot.

**\*Should you grease the container for easy release:** if you plan on using your gel plate with a water based paint or ink, such as acrylic or alcohol ink, cautiously grease container since the oil and water based medium may not play nicely together.

### **What to do if you plate does not slip out of the container easily:**

Dip the bottom of the mold into warm (not hot) water for about 5 seconds.

Carefully loosen the mixture by running the tip of a sharp knife around the edges. Place a smooth surfaced tray on top; flip over and holding firmly, shake gently until the gelatin slips from the mold onto the tray.

### **Care and Storage**

The plate does not need to be stored in the refrigerator. It will continue to shrink if it is stored there.

Storage: The sides need to be covered too so store it between the acetate sheets/plastic in a plastic container. Or between two sheets of plexiglass in a box. Or sandwich it in between the sheets and wrap in saran/cling wrap – just make sure the wrap does not touch the plate or it may leave marks.

This DIY plate works best with acrylic paints or watercolors. Remove excess paint by rubbing it with a clean sheet of paper. You can also try cleaning it with baby wipes, but carefully since it may be more fragile than a commercially made plate. Do not run it under soap and water. Test a corner to see if it can be cleaned with antibacterial gel.

## **How to make a Gel Plate – WITHOUT GLYCERIN**

Please note, this method of making a gel plate without gelatin may not set up as firmly as a plate made with gelatin and not last as long.

### **Ingredients and Equipment:**

1 box (4 packets) Knox Unflavored Gelatin. Usually found in the baking section of big box stores and some supermarkets.

1 cup water, divided

5" x 7" container with a SMOOTH BOTTOM

This is a good size plate, but you can divide the mix between smaller containers. Alternately, you can usually cut the plate into smaller sections once it is set. A glass container works well, but you can also use a Teflon or metal container – you will want your finished plate to be at least one-quarter inch thick and smooth.

See note below regarding whether to grease the container. \*

### **Recipe:**

- Break up any lumps in the packets of gelatin.
- Put 2/3 cup room temp water into your container.
- Sprinkle in ALL FOUR PACKETS of the gelatin.
- Slowly stir it with a fork or spatula- it will start thickening immediately.
- Pour in 1/3 cup HOT water and slowly stir to dissolve.
- Place in the fridge for 2-4 hours.

Drop onto a clean plastic acetate sheet and place another sheet over the top to store. Do not use saran/cling wrap or aluminum foil since the wrinkles from them will etch into the plate. If you do not have an acetate sheet use a top and bottom sheet of stiff hard plastic that is non-porous and smooth.

### **What to do if your plate does not slip out of the container easily:**

Dip the bottom of the mold into warm (not hot) water for about 5 seconds.

Carefully loosen the mixture by running the tip of a sharp knife around the edges. Place a smooth surfaced tray on top; flip over and holding firmly, shake gently until the gelatin slips from the mold onto the tray.

**\*Should you grease the container for easy release:** if you plan on using your gel plate with a water based paint or ink, such as acrylic or alcohol ink, cautiously grease container since oil and water based medium may not play nicely together.

### **Care and Storage**

If possible, store it in the refrigerator. The sides need to be covered too so store it between the acetate sheets/plastic in a plastic container. Or between two sheets of plexiglass in a box. Or sandwich it in-between the sheets and wrap in saran/cling wrap – just make sure the wrap does not touch the plate or it may leave marks.

This DIY plate works best with acrylic paints or watercolors. Remove excess paint by rubbing it with a clean sheet of paper. You can also try cleaning it with baby wipes, but carefully since it may be more fragile than a commercially made plate. Test a corner to see if it can be cleaned with antibacterial gel. Do not run it under soap and water.