

Road Scholars

ART CAR KIT

studentHandbook*

**Based on the website www.artcars.com "Art Cars in Cyber Space"
and "The Orange Show's How To's of Art Cars" by Beth Secour*

to Teachers

Why would your class make an art car?

When students create art cars:

- They participate in community events (parades) and traditions, and become part of the community.
- By participating in these community events they develop a greater sense of pride in themselves, their schools, and their immediate community.
- Their concept of the world expands beyond the bounds of their immediate community.
- They learn to concentrate and pay attention to details.
- They learn to have pride in their accomplishments as a group and as individuals.
- They learn to set long-term goals and then achieve the satisfaction of reaching those goals.
- They master problem-solving skills and develop discipline.
- They discover the value of teamwork.
- They develop a greater understanding of conflict resolution and compromise.
- They learn to appreciate the freedom of expression a project of this nature provides.
- And most importantly, they gain a greater sense of self.

As an educator, you know that when students develop these skills, they can rule the world, have fewer discipline problems, take pride in themselves and their work, and become better students.

what's an Art Car?

An art car usually begins its life as an older or used vehicle (car, truck, van, bus, jeep, golf cart, etc.). The owner of the car decides that he/she wants to alter the car, not necessarily converting what's under the hood, but instead transforming the exterior/interior of the car. To what degree and how this transformation is made is entirely up to the imagination, skills, and resources of the art car artist.

There are a variety of ways to make an art car:

Some people approach the alteration of their cars cautiously and tentatively, opting to use materials of a temporary nature, such as paper and tape.

Some are satisfied with the original shape of the car and decide to simply paint it, treating the vehicle as though it were a canvas.

Some people glue thousands of similar or dissimilar objects to their car

Some decide to radically change the original structure of the vehicle so that it in effect becomes a moving sculpture—some use a destructive approach, removing things from the outside of their cars, exposing the inside.

and others employ a totally radical approach, removing the existing frame and building their car a brand new frame.

general**Tips**

Creating an art car can be quite an undertaking, so we gathered up some tips and techniques used by the best art car artists to give you a head start.

design Issues

- Cars are powerful icons in our society. There are endless ways to take advantage of that
- Car companies want you to buy new expensive cars. They spends loads of money trying to convince you that “you are what you drive.”
Oh yeah? Use this dogma to create your one-of-a-kind art car design.
- Consider what your goal is in creating this piece of art. If you want to be seen from a distance, use bold shapes, bright colors, and wild imagery. Fluorescent colors attract quite a bit of attention. If you want people to discover your your car, keep the design subtle.
- When deciding how you will transform your car, consider its shape, style, and detailing. Some cars make great flat canvases. Others just ask to be sculpted. Spend a bit of time with your car, and get to “know your car.” An artist who recognizes and works with the original shapes and lines of the cars yields an even more beautiful creation.
- Consider using exaggerated scaled, repetition, and dramatic color to highlight your design.
- Costuming for the driver and passengers can be an effective part of your presentation.
- Consider using props, sound, light, and maybe even smell as your design your car’s personality.

art car Exteriors

- " WHY' D YA DO DAT TO YER CAR?"
Get used to it! This is the most common question you will hear when you mess with the exterior of your car.
- Always prep the car before work begins. If you are painting the car, sand the original paint off first, or at least roughen the surface so the the paint will adhere. If you bypass this step, the paint will stick but probably not as long.
- Be sure you have the right tools for the job. If you don't have access to welding gear, maybe you shouldn't plan of welding a bunch of metal onto your car. Try using rivets or screws instead.
- If you are attaching objects to the outside of the car, attach them permanently. Rivets and screws are the most reliable, but not all materials can support them. Whatever the means of adhesion, it should be strong enough to keep thing from flying off even at high speeds. Imagine a 12 inch globe onto your hood at 60 mph. Scary thought, but it happens.
- Don't attach objects onto your car that you cant live without. Things will fall off, get pulled off, get smashed by a car door in a parking lot, etc. If your heart will break when your treasured object breaks, don't attach it to your car. Maybe the inside of the car is a better place- as long as your treasure won't melt.
- If you can, obtain your attachable objects in quantity. Then you will have replacements when objects are lost. Rest assured, objects will get lost.
- Keep adhesives, rivets, screws, etc. in your trunk (along with those extra objects) for quick emergency fixes. You never know who you may meet on the street.

art car Interiors

- If you are wondering whether or not you can handle the public's reaction to your art car, try starting with the interior of your car instead of the exterior. People won't notice the interior work as often, and you will get a chance to see how you like the experience without totally committing yourself and your car.
- When gluing things inside the car, be sure your area is well-ventilated, don't expect to drive your car with the windows up for several days after gluing. It takes time for all adhesives to cure. This process usually results in dangerous fumes, so watch out!
- Certain objects will melt inside your car. Keep this in mind when permanently attaching objects. Anything stored in the rear window should be able to withstand sustained high heat. Many plastics (like PEZ dispensers) will melt.
- Melted objects can make for some very attractive art. If you like the look of melted plastics, try working with them as a medium. If you don't want to wait for nature to do the melting, try a hair dryer.
- Be careful what you glue onto your dashboard. Many art car artists have learned the hard way that anything highly reflective (like gold paint or a mirrored surface) will make it difficult to see through the windshield on a sunny day.
- The inside of your car makes for a very curious canvas. Try mixing media. Glue a bit here and there, add a little paint, try a bit of sculpting. Consider your passengers when planning your design. Your car should become a rolling torture chamber (Ohh, what a thought!)
- Don't forget sound. Install special sound equipment to give your car a voice. If you plan of spending a fair amount of money for sound, be sure to disguise it as well. People will inevitably be hanging out around your car. Don't tempt.

art car Mechanics

- Learn how to be an auto mechanic or get to be good friends with one. Once you transform your car, you probably won't ever want to get rid of it, no matter how many times it breaks down.
- Once an ordinary car becomes an art car, it may develop the tendency to break down. It will, at the very least, develop an "attitude."
- Owning an art car doubles your maintenance requirements since you have to maintain the "art part" of the car as well as the car itself. If you are planning on purchasing a car solely for the purposes of transforming it, buy the best car you can afford. You will enjoy driving your art car more if it breaks down less often.
- If you drive your car only on special occasions, be sure to start it up once or twice a week. Better yet, drive it around the block, and give your neighbors a treat. And don't forget to check the gas gauge. Art cars are notorious for running out of gas.
- If you despise the concept of classic cars, break out in a sweat at the thought of actually washing your car, and truly enjoy that "Mad Max" sort of look, don't do anything to take care of your car. It'll probably run for awhile—maybe forever—without any interference from you. Besides, art is not eternal. Neither are cars.

art car Paint

ONE SHOT™ SIGN PAINT

- Best all purpose vivid paint around
- Lead-base makes it fairly toxic
- Comes in a variety of colors including fluorescent and metallic colors
- Expensive but available in varying size containers
- Best results in 50-70 degree environment
- Use the best brushes you can afford (Gesso 1" Flat End Hollow Inside)
- Apply in one or two thin coats to a well sanded surface
- Spread the paint in very thin coats as it has a tendency to run
- Clean car well before and in between paintings
- Let each coat dry before adding another
- If working indoors, work in a well ventilated area
- If working outdoors, work in the shade
- Read the instructions (and cautions) on the paint can before using it

ACRYLIC PAINT

- Good all purpose non-toxic paint
- Easy to work with and cleans up with soap and water
- Inexpensive and readily available in many sizes and colors
- Not as durable as One Shot and my dull with age
- When painting is complete, apply one or more layers of clear coat to seal

Other Paint Options

EPOXY PAINT

- Often used to paint bath tubs and sinks
- Not easy to work with
- Forms a very hard durable surface
- Available in bathroom colors like white and beige

SPRAY PAINT

- Easy to work with
- Inexpensive
- Readily available in a wide variety of colors
- Can be used with stencils and masking to created more detailed work
- Can be easily applied over sculpted materials like foam

AUTO PAINT

- Available at auto parts stores
- Sold in small and regular size spray cans
- Most often used for touch up work like disguising things
- Expensive if you plan to cover large areas
- Available in all standard car colors

common sense Tips

Self evident truth #1: There are no rules.

Self evident truth #2: There are only suggestions.

- When transforming your car, keep in mind that it is still a car—especially if you plan on driving it on the road. Sooner or later, you will need to have access to the engine for repairs. Your cooling system will need air flow to work properly. All of your lights should still function according to law. Not that the laws relating to lights on vehicles vary from state to state and may be quite restrictive. Find out what they are, and regard or disregard them accordingly.
- Plan ahead as much as possible, but evaluate the plan as you go along. Change it if it isn't working out like you thought.
- Transforming a car is like solving a puzzle—you don't know what the final outcome is until the puzzle is complete. Watch out though, because an art car is rarely ever complete.

art car Steel and Foam

Self evident truth #3: Don't touch steel when it is hot.

Self evident truth #4: Don't touch foam when it is wet.

- Spray insulation foam makes for a versatile and relatively easy to work with sculpting material. There are basically three kinds of foam available:
 - Spray cans available at most hardware stores
 - Industrial foam sprayed through special machines
 - Two-part foam you mix by hand
- The foam can be sprayed directly onto the vehicle or sprayed upon steel frames covered with screen.
- Once the foam dries, it can be shaved or carved with a small saw.
- If you are building steel frames, design the structure first. Be sure to include enough reinforcement to make the structure solid.
- If you are planning to weld, be sure you know how to weld first! For light steel and car bodies, try a 110 volt wire fed mig welder. This should be good enough for most art car projects, and it is affordable, too.
- Add reinforcement welds in key areas. Weld the steel frames with good clean welds. Gorilla welds not allowed. If your welds are embarrassing, go back to school ASAP.
- When attaching the frames to the vehicle, try to select the strongest possible foundations. If you want to attach a frame to a weak point, reinforce the area first by screwing another piece of metal on top of it.
- Carry some extra foam and pant in your trunk. You never know when some curious onlooker or a low hanging branch may choose to grab a hunk as a souvenir.
- Once you have foamed, you may find yourself wanting to foam everything. If so, you are ready to join the *Family of Foamed Vehicles Association*.

art car Paper Mache

Self-evident truth #5: Paper mache is the same stuff you used in second grade art class.

Self-evident truth #6: Your second grade art class probably didn't know about art cars.

Self-evident truth #7: Your art car can be part of a second grade art class project.

- Paper mache is made by mixing paper with adhesive. Newspaper is the most common paper used, but any paper will do. When selecting an adhesive, keep in mind that critters may eat paper mache made with food stuffs like flour or corn starch. Of course, you may want critters to consume your car. We call that performance art.
- Paper mache can be done by layering pieces of paper on top of each other until the desired shape is achieved. This is often time consuming, but yields a relatively even, smooth surface.
- Another more expedient method involves shredded paper or paper mache mix (available at most arts and crafts stores) that is molded or shaped by hand. It is pretty sticky and usually results in a rough surface.
- Paper mache and cardboard construction are more often used for floats due to the temporary nature of the materials. If you use these methods but want to achieve a more permanent result, coat the surface with sealer, and store the car in a dry garage.
- Paper mache can get damaged fairly easily and will require frequent attention to stay intact.

art car Rivets and Screws

Self evident truth #8: When glue won't do and welding is too much, rivets and screws are the perfect touch.

Self evident truth #9: When a screw comes loose, there is a screw on the loose!

- Rivets are made of steel or aluminum.
- To construct with rivets, you will need a drill and a rivet gun.
- There are a variety of screws you can use, but we recommend hex head self-drilling machine screws. They are great for sheet metal and car bodies although they may loosen over time.
- If you are planning on attaching found objects onto your car, you may consider using rivets and screws instead of glue. If the found objects are made of a durable material (i.e. probably not plastic), rivets and screws will attach them permanently.

art car Adhesives

WARNING! WARNING! GLUING THINGS ONTO YOUR CAR
INVITES PEOPLE TO TRY TO PULL THEM OFF.

- We recommend a few solitary moments of contemplation before embarking on the “glue everything including the kitchen sink onto your car” odyssey. These things are true: *People will ask questions; people will yank and pull; people will tug and turn and ask, “How is this attached?” Things will fall off, perhaps even some of your most cherished treasures.*

THINK BEFORE YOU GLUE
FOR IT IS VERY TRUE
THAT ONCE YOU BEGIN TO GLUE
ALAS, YOU MAY NEVER BE THROUGH.

E6000™

- Good for all purpose gluing including beads, glass, and most small objects.
- Fairly easy to work with.
- Bonds with most surfaces including clothing.
- Best bonding in cooler environment.
- Becomes rather gooey in warmer environment.
- Does not dry immediately and takes 24 hours to set completely.
- Quite smelly—and takes days for the smell to dissipate (*go away*).
- Has a tendency to dull with age.

Product: E6000™
Manufacturer: Eclectic Products, Inc.
Pineville, LA
1.800.767.4667
Availability: Most arts and crafts stores
Pricing: 3.7 fl. oz. tube \$3.95

Marine GOOP™

- Good for all purpose gluing of small- to medium-sized objects.
- For best results, roughen the surfaces to be glued first.
- Apply glue to all surfaces.
- Fairly easy to work with.
- Dries fast.
- Bonds with most surfaces with a flexible rubber seal.
- Requires 24 hours to dry completely.
- Dries clear and can be painted.
- Allegedly superior for surfaces exposed to the elements—like a car.
- Available in small tubes and, in some parts of the country, caulking tubes.
- Other GOOP™ adhesives include Household GOOP™, Plumber's GOOP™, and Automotive GOOP™.

Product: Marine GOOP™
Manufacturer: Eclectic Products, Inc.
Pineville, LA
1.800.767.4667
Availability: Most hardware stores
Most arts and crafts stores
Pricing: 3.7 fl. oz. tube \$4.95
10.2 fl. oz. caulking tube \$9.95

100% Silicone

- Good for all purpose gluing of medium- to large-sized objects.
- Available in small tubes and caulking tubes for power-gluing sessions.
- Bonds with most surfaces.
- Appears dull when dry and is not paintable.
- Available in three colors: clear, white, and black.
- Works well under most environmental conditions.
- Tends to be less expensive by volume than other adhesives.

Product: Silicone II Household Glue and Seal™
Manufacturer: GE Silicones
Waterford, NY
1.800.626.2000
Availability: All hardware stores
Pricing: 2.8 fl. oz. tube \$3.00
10.2 fl. oz. caulking tube \$8.95

EPOXY

- Not easy to work with, but is very effective.
- Involves mixing two components: a resin and a hardener
- Binding occurs when these two components react chemically.
- Bonds with most surfaces and is particularly good with hard-to-stick materials like metal.
- Setting times vary depending upon materials.
- Tends to be expensive.

art car **Materials**

art car **Short Course**

art car Key Project Personnel/Consultants

- **Theresa Segreti**

American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, Director of Design and Education
Responsible for educational materials for teachers and the general public as well as the creative direction, design, and production of museum publications and exhibition graphics.

- **Harrod Blank**

Author, photographer, and documentary filmmaker of *Wild Wheels* and *Driving the Dream* and an art car artist who has created two art cars: *The Camera Van* and *Oh My God!*
Responsible for many art car educational programs, seminars, parades and exhibitions around the country.

- **Rebecca Bass**

Art teacher, Bellaire High School, Houston Texas
For eight years has been teaching a course called "Art Car" as one of her regularly scheduled classes in a number of middle and high schools in the Houston area For those eight years, she and her small group of students have won top awards for their art cars in the largest national Art Car competition and parade, "The Houston Road Show."

- **Beth Secour**

The Orange Show, Houston Texas, Director of Educational Programs, author of "The Orange Show's How To's of Art Cars" and contributor to the web site "Art Cars in Cyber Space."
Responsible for organizing and executing student and adult programs and community involvement in the The Orange Show, a folk environment in Houston, Texas and special outreach programs for participation in the art car movement.

- **Mark Ward**

The American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, Director of Exhibition Design and Mechanical Consultant for the Road Scholars program.
Responsible for acquisitions, maintenance, and display of art cars in The Road Scholars program at the American Visionary Art Museum.