

# Flexible “Glass” Sculpture Grades: 5-12

Glass as a medium for expression is increasing in popularity with studio artists. New techniques have brought glass out of the functional, factory-produced realm to incorporate it into never-before experienced sculptures of light, color and form.

This lesson plan will introduce students to the qualities that artists are drawn to with the glass medium. It also challenges them to open their eyes to the abstract form. The sculptures are arranged from multiple components that may be shaped, bent, curled, stretched and rearranged over and over until the desired balance and form is achieved. With simple, easy-to-form aluminum sculpture wire and a unique paint called Arti' Stiks, the process is relatively simple. Originally formulated for creating window clings, Arti' Stik is an acrylic paint that dries slowly to form an extremely flexible, transparent film. It has a high-gloss self-leveling surface that resembles blown or frameworked hot glass. This project will need 2 or 3 periods of class time.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will create 2-dimensional surfaces with paint, then use these paintings as the components of a 3-dimensional sculpture
- Students will assemble a free-standing sculpture that is may be viewed from any angle
- Students will be challenged to think in terms of abstract sculpture, emphasizing form, shape and balance to create a visually satisfying piece of art

## MATERIALS:

- Aluminum Sculpture Wire, 14-gauge (33400-1435), three or four 2-ft lengths per sculpture
- Pebeo Arti' Stick Window Cling Paint, assorted colors (00700-). One 500-ml bottle will make 12-15 sculptures
- Economy Camel Hair Brushes (05118-9144)
- Filex Sheet Protectors, 8" x 10" non-glare surface (16970-1020)
- Blick Sketch Board (22945-1002)
- Craft Plier Set (33064-1069)



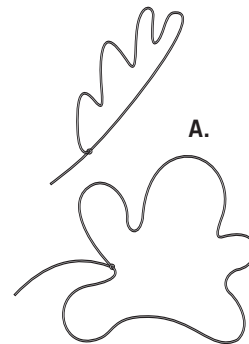
## PROCESS:

**1. Shape the pieces.** Students bend a 2-ft length of aluminum sculpture wire into a free-form shape, twisting the end to close and allowing at least 2" extra wire at the end (see Illustration A for examples of shapes). Encourage students to use variety in forming their pieces. Round nose jewelry pliers may be helpful in forming curves. Cover a rigid, non-warping surface such as Blick Sketch Board with non-glare sheet protectors. Sheet protectors can be cut open and overlapped. Place the wire shapes on the sheet protectors, making sure they lay as flat as possible.

**2. Paint the pieces.** The wire shapes will be filled with Arti' Stik Paint. Squeeze approximately 2 tablespoons of the color directly from the bottle into the center of the shape, then use a brush to move it to the edges. It is important to cover the wire with the paint. Excess can be removed with scissors after drying. Colors may be swirled together or dripped across one another to add excitement. The white, black, gold and silver Arti' Stik colors will remain opaque. The colors will appear opaque while wet, but will dry transparent. Move the pieces to a location where they can dry undisturbed. Allow to dry for at least 24 hours in normal conditions; humidity or thick applications may slow drying time. The paint is dry when it appears transparent and pulls easily away from the sheet protector.

**3. Form the sculpture.** Once the pieces are dry, they can be bent, curled and shaped to create a free-standing, 3-dimensional sculpture. Use the excess wire to join pieces together if desired, or simply position them to interact with one another. Trim excess wire away with wire snips. Excess paint can be trimmed away from the wire or left as part of the sculpture.

**4. Display the finished piece.** The finished sculpture can be displayed as a free-standing piece or hung upside down, chandelier-style. Position near a light source to enhance the transparency of the piece — place on a window sill, hang from a light fixture, arrange in a lighted display cabinet. NOTE: do not place too close to a light bulb or near a flame or sculpture may soften and become tacky.



## NATIONAL STANDARDS:

**Content Standard #1 — Understanding and applying media, techniques and processes**

- **5-8** Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques and processes to enhance communication of their experience and ideas.
- **9-12** Students conceive and create works of visual art that demonstrate an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media, techniques and processes they use.

**Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others**

- **5-8** Students compare multiple purposes for creating works of art.
- **9-12** Students identify intentions of those creating artworks, explore the implications of various purposes and justify their analysis of purposes in particular works.