



TECHNICAL ARTICLE

Acrylic Used for Nail Enhancements as a Decoration Medium for Metal Pieces

The following article is by Mariadel Pilar Zornosa, who uses common beauty supplies in new and creative ways that are directly related to concepts explored in her locket series, "Paradox of Beauty." Through her research and experimentation as a graduate student at the University of North Texas, Ms. Zornosa discovered a perfect connection between the colorful and textured application of acrylic nail enhancement materials to jewelry pieces that comment on a variety of perceptions and contexts of beauty in society.

I'm sure that there is a myriad of creative experimentation being done by jewelry and metalsmithing students everywhere. I encourage teachers and students alike to share these innovations with our larger community by submitting an article. Don't hesitate to contact me about any possible ideas for future articles.

-James Thurman

Acrylic Used for Nail Enhancements as a Decoration Medium for Metal Pieces



The following article will explain how to use acrylic used for nail enhancements as a decoration medium for metal pieces.

This form of acrylic is a two part reaction between a solid or powder acrylic commonly called Bonding Acrylic Powder or poly(methylmethacrylate) (PMMA), and a liquid acrylic called Monomer (Methacrylate) that when mixed together form a paste. Both PMMA and Monomer can be purchased at a beauty supply store.



Execution and instructions follow on the next page



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Execution:

1 - Create a design to sculpt or wetpack in a bezel cup or metal locket.

2 - Mixture of pigments with base acrylics

Pigments allow artists to create vibrant colorful designs with Bonding Acrylic Powders. Supplies for acrylic pieces are available to purchase at art supply stores as well as beauty shops. (I prefer to use powder pigments over liquid pigments).



In order to successfully mix pigments with a base color of Bonding Acrylic Powders, both agents must be at their solid stage (powder stage). For an opaque color, the mixture should be made of white base of Bonding Acrylic Powder with no more than the base quantity of pigment. If the amount of pigment were to exceed the amount of Bonding Acrylic Powder, the mixture will not set properly. However, if the intention is to create a transparent color, then the mixture should be made out of clear Bonding Acrylic Powder instead of white.





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3 - Preparation of metal

To prepare the inside surface of your bezel cup/locket, it should either be textured with a scribe or sandblasted.

This will create teeth for the acrylic to have better adhesion to the metal surface.



4 - Application of acrylic into metal (*right*)

Following preparation of the metal, dip a brush into the Liquid Monomer solution until saturated and gently place it onto the Bonding Acrylic Powder. By doing so, the Acrylic Powder will stick to the tip of the brush forming a pebble of the liquid and powder solution.





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4 - Application of acrylic into metal, *continued*

After picking up a pebble of acrylic with the brush, quickly place it onto the metal surface, in order to shape and sculpt the acrylic piece into the desired form while the paste is fresh.



The mixture should take between 5-10 minutes to harden. Be aware that in high humidity, it is recommended to place the piece directly under a fan to speed up the drying process. This does not mean the acrylic is entirely cured; as it can take up to 30-45 minutes. Once the piece is cured, different finishing textures can be applied to the acrylic.

5 - Finishing textures

Finishing options for this type of acrylic could be its original look, which is matte and grainy (no polishing is needed).

A sandblasted finish is achieved through very low pressure of sandblasting onto the piece (50 psi or less).

A satin finish is obtained through the use of emery sticks or sand paper up to the desired grit (800 to 1000 grit).

To achieve a high polish finish, first sand the surface to a satin finish, then use flexible shaft polishing tools for non-ferrous metals. It is imperative to take your time in this step of the process since too much heat from polishing could melt the acrylic.

The last step for high polishing is the application of Acrylic Nail Buffing Cream with a chamois. A chamois could be in the form of a stick, a cloth, or an attachment for your flexible shaft. (The Acrylic Nail Buffing Cream can also be found at a beauty supply store.)



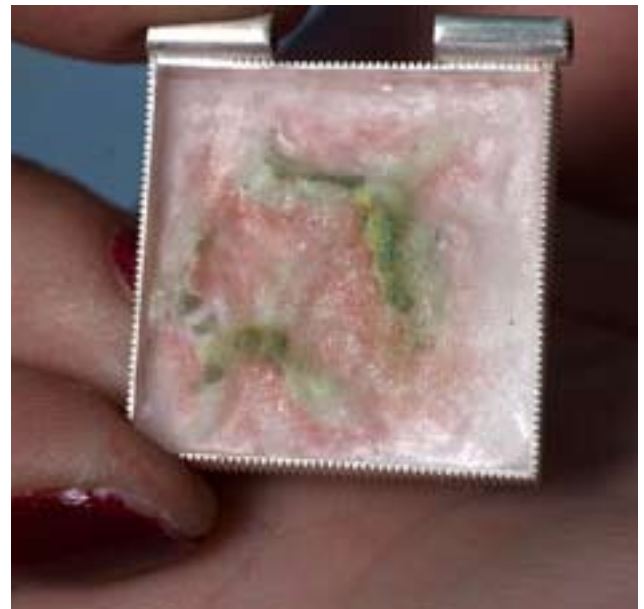


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The following are different finishes I have used in pieces of mine:

Matte (acrylic's original look)



Satin





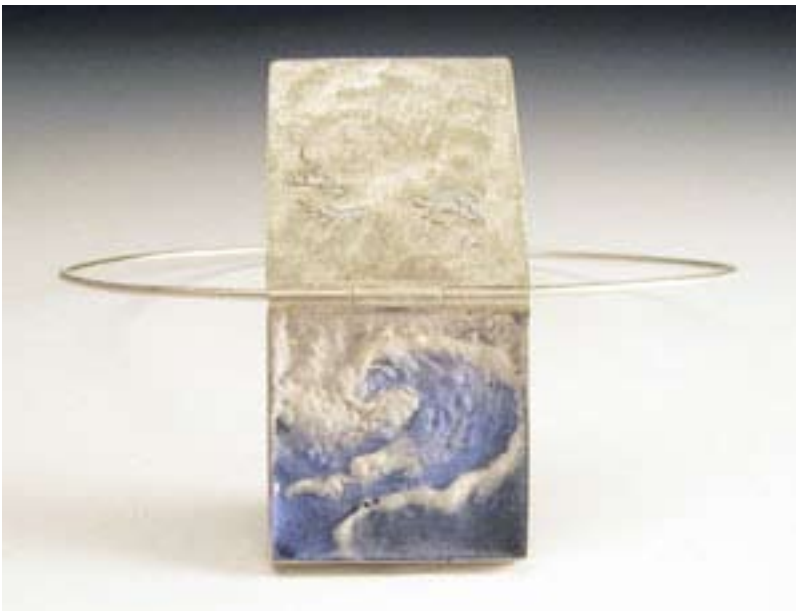
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High Polish



Sculpted and Sandblasted



Tips and Notes from the Author follow on the next page.



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Tips and notes from the author:

A thorough cleansing of brushes and instruments is possible through the use of acetone. With that being said, you should be aware of keeping your finished pieces from acetone-like solutions to prevent damaging them.

Didn't like what you made and want to start over, or save your metal?
Just immerse your piece in acetone and the acrylic will dissolve in approximately 5 hours.

Possible pigment experiments are chalk pastels, eye shadow, food coloring.
(I would encourage you to try anything!)

Different enamel-like techniques I have successfully executed in acrylic have been cloisonné and plique-a-jour.
(The advantage of this acrylic is that it is sculptable.)

Tools and Materials used:

Bonding Acrylic Powder – poly(methylmethacrylate) or PMMA

Liquid Monomer (Methacrylate)

Soft brushes

Paper towels

Orange sticks (for pushing cuticles)

Emery sticks or sand paper from 200 to 4000 grit

Buffing Crème for acrylic nail enhancements

Chamois stick

A locket or bezel cup of your choice of metal

SNAG News will pay up to \$125 per page (up to 4 pages) for informative technical articles aimed at any level – from intermediate to advanced, from student to the highly skilled professional. If you teach a workshop, have a clever bench trick or technique of interest to other jewelers and metalsmiths, or have more academically based technical research, please share it with our SNAG community.

Send your submission to James Thurman, 418 Marietta St., Denton, TX 76201

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