

# Monoprinting without a Press (Gelli Plate Printing)

Presented by Andrea Aeschliman

## Gelli Plate Fundamentals 101

1. Gelli plates come in several shapes and sizes – I first bought the 6 x 6 size (\$20.99 on gelliarts.com) and experimented with it – I loved it!
2. They are made of a unique plastic that contains mineral oil & may leave a small amount of residue if left sitting on an absorbent surface. Be sure to use a nonporous, flat, smooth work surface such as a table, baking sheet, Teflon craft sheet, freezer paper, or an acrylic sheet.
3. Acrylic paint is recommended for use on the gelli plate. Baby wipes make cleaning the plate easy but you can also use dish soap to wash the plate – then rinse and pat dry with a paper towel.
4. It is recommended to clean the plate before storing. Store the plate in the plastic case it comes in. If paint dries on the plate, apply gel hand sanitizer, then wipe with a paper towel. You do not have to completely clean the plate off before moving on – sometimes the leftover paint gives you surprising results!
5. A little paint goes a long way! Don't put too much on the gelli plate or you'll get mushy prints. This is something you will have to get the hang of by doing! Also too little paint can dry quickly & give you disappointing prints because it doesn't print off when it's dry! So again, it's just something you learn the more you do.
6. Be prepared for some ugly prints! But don't give up on them – there are so many ways to work with them. Black paint and a couple of masks will save lots of ugly prints. Give it a try!

### Resources:

1. Gelli Plates: [www.GelliArts.com](http://www.GelliArts.com) (they come in lots of shapes, sizes, & prices)
2. Gelli Plate Printing: Mixed Media Monoprinting without a Press by Joan Bess (\$24.99)
3. Cloth, Paper, Scissors Magazine Nov/Dec. 2014 Issue 57 p.66 “Gelli Jumpstart Journals Layered Prints Made Easy” by Patti Tolley Parrish
4. [Gelliarts.blogspot.com](http://Gelliarts.blogspot.com)
5. Facebook page: GelliArts – Gel Printing Plate
6. Facebook page: Gelatin Printing Enthusiasts
7. Online class: Getting Started with the Gelli Plate <http://balzerdesigns.com/Classroom/> taught by Julie Fei-Fan Balzer (\$35)

Missouri Art Education Association: Kansas City 2015 Conference  
Andrea Aeschliman, St. Joseph School District

### Techniques to Try & Tips to Know:

1. Multi-colored Prints – rolling two colors side by side letting them mix & blend as they meet in the middle of the plate (can be a good lesson on color mixing & learning what mixes together well and what does not)
2. Subtractive Method – so many things can be used to remove the paint off the gelli plate. These are just a few: hotel key cards, q-tips, foam stamps (stamps that are less detailed work best), erasers, plastic lids, bubble wrap, stencils, doilies, embossed paper, etc.
3. Additive Method – adding paint to the plate besides using the brayer - model magic stamps, sponge, paintbrush (put a photo under the gelli plate & paint on top – keeping in mind you have to work quickly), palette knife painting, etc.
4. Masks - string/yarn, hand cut paper or lamination stencils, rubber stamp & sticky note, punchinella, netting, plastic stencils, etc.
5. Layering – this technique usually works best if you start with a lighter color first and each layer then becomes a little bit darker hue (but then again why not try it without that in mind). It's all about experimentation after all! For example, start by rolling out a yellow color and remove some paint using a subtractive method. Pull a print. Clean your plate & roll out an orange color and lay a mask down, comb through an area or two. Lay the yellow print you just made on top of the orange gelli plate design & pull another print. You have now created a two layer print. Clean the plate and continue printing as many layers as you want, keeping in mind your composition and the colors of paint.

### What can I do with the Gelli Prints?

1. Collage is a natural choice – cut them up and add them into other work (penguin canvas example)
2. Cardboard Crush – journal covers, altered books, composition notebook cover, inside covers
3. Envelopes – make some “happy mail” & send it to someone to brighten their day
4. Cards – who doesn't love a handmade card
5. Tags – print right on them & tie it onto a gift!
6. Bookmarks
7. Frame the print – as stand alone art!
8. Scrapbook pages
9. Journal backgrounds
10. Jewelry – roll into paper beads, make a pendant backed on cardboard
11. Print on fabric & make a mini quilt
12. Artist Trading Cards
13. Wrapping Paper
14. Create an ART pennant