

SUSAN DAVIS

Making postcards using GEL PLATE PRINTING

317-409-6830 Instagram @Indysuz Indysuz13@gmail.com

A ***gelli plate*** is a clear gelatinous slab that you roll acrylic paint onto and use to pull prints from. You can use a handmade gelli plate or a commercial plate. You can use any brand of acrylic paints, fluid or thick, for different results.

Paint is typically applied to the plate with a ***brayer*** and then texture is applied to the painted surface. Moving quickly before the paint dries, a blank piece of paper is placed covering the gel plate, and the palm of your hand is used to smooth the surface by applying even pressure that will help the paint adhere to the page and lift off the gel plate when the paper is peeled back.

I have a wide variety of found objects that I use to create texture such as combs, bubble wrap, bottle caps, string and cardboard.

Commercial gel plates come in a variety of sizes and shapes. To give you an idea of cost, a 5x7 plate sells for around \$17.00. The most popular brands are **Gel Press** and **Gelli Arts**. Both companies have a library of tutorials on their social media channels where you can spend hours learning new techniques. Their YouTube videos are closed

captioned. There are also plates made by the Speedball company. These do not work well with common acrylic paints. They do work very well with Speedball inks.

You can also make your own gel plate at home using plain powdered gelatin, glycerin and water. There are many recipes online if you search for “**homemade gel plates.**” The advantage to homemade gel plates is that they are inexpensive and can be made in any size and shape you wish, however, they don't last forever and require more care to keep them in good shape.

Each print you make using a gel plate is a unique monoprint. Each time you lift the paper off the plate, it takes most of the paint, so you get a one-of-a-kind piece of art. You can keep adding new layers of paint to your page until you achieve your desired look.

When you start gel plate printing, use inexpensive craft paint and plain copy paper until you get the hang of it. Apply a few SMALL dabs of paint on the plate and then roll it out using a soft rubber brayer until you have a thin layer of paint. Working quickly before the paint dries, use commercial rubber stamps, stencils and found objects to make marks in the paint. If the paint dries too quickly, do not clean it off. Apply a thin layer of white or neutral color paint over the dry paint, then smooth your paper down on the wet paint and lift to find you have picked up both layers of paint!

Once you get the hang of it, you can upgrade your supplies to make art worth framing or sharing. For my postcards, I use 140 lb watercolor paper cut to 6" x 4.25" to comply with postal regulations. I give each card a light spray of fixative to help set the ink I use when I stamp the words on the art side of the card.

FIND MORE ARTIST DEMO DESCRIPTIONS:

Shop Fishers!: **[FishersArtsCouncil.org/Shop2019Info](https://fishersartscouncil.org/Shop2019Info)**

Winter Wonderland: **[FishersArtsCouncil.org/WW2019Info](https://fishersartscouncil.org/WW2019Info)**