

by Brian McMillan

Painting on Glass: Part Three

As a follow up to my previous columns on how to use traditional painter's stains, I thought I would offer some insight on how to use painters stain in your fused work. The obvious advantage of this technique is that it will allow you to attain the finest detail possible while being user friendly. However, there are some technical steps to consider, so you will need to think about the process from start to finish before you start.

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First, it is important to consider where you will be using or displaying your finished piece. Will it be exposed to the elements—such as an outdoor garden feature? Or, will it be installed inside your home or office where it will be sheltered from the elements—such as a window hanging, a decorative bowl or a sculpture? Will your piece be routinely cleaned, like a vessel sink or serving platter?

Next, you will need to decide if you want to cap your painted area with glass or leave it exposed. If the painted detail is on the surface, it can deteriorate from cleaning products, or weather, and ruin all of your hard work.

Encasing the painted detail with a layer of glass on top of the paint will protect the paint. When encasing, it is important to realize that once the paint is fused in between the layers of glass, you will not have the ability to touch up or add any further details to your painted areas. I highly recommend that you fire the painted section separate from the other

pieces of glass. This firing is done at 1175°F. (not fusing temp). If you fire your paints to fusing temperatures without a cap of glass, the paint may fire away completely—along with all of your hard work!

Once you are satisfied with the look of your painted section, you can bring all of your glass together and fuse the entire piece. This process involves a couple of extra firings. However, it is better than having your painted area turn out other than the way that you intended and having to remake the entire piece from scratch.

The down side of encasing is that some of the details of your painted area can distort while fusing. One way this can happen is from trapped air bubbles. Another cause of distortion is if the piece is fused with out damming (using kiln furniture to contain thick pieces of glass). Damming is appropriate when more than two layers of glass are used. Thick items, like sinks, can be made from six to eight layers of glass, which will spread to become ¼" thick and cause your design to get pulled out of shape if it is not contained.

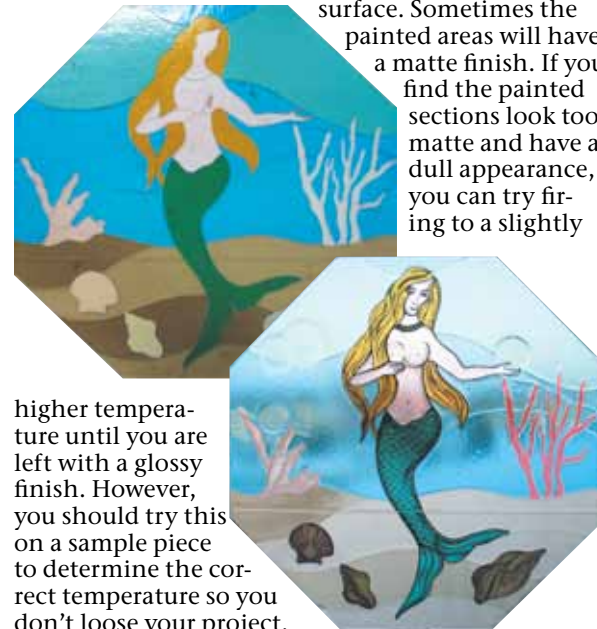
If your piece won't be exposed to cleaning products or weather damage, then you can safely use the painted piece on the surface of your fused project. If this is the case, you can fuse the project as you normally would (at fusing temperature) before adding your painted detail. Firing the painted detail to the lower temperature of 1175°F will not distort the project.

Working in this way allows for much more flexibility in your design. You can achieve very fine detail and not have to worry about any distortion or paint loss. The Mermaid is an example of this

technique. The only down side that I can think of is that you may lose the high gloss look of the fused surface. Sometimes the painted areas will have

a matte finish. If you

find the painted sections look too matte and have a dull appearance, you can try firing to a slightly



higher temperature until you are left with a glossy finish. However, you should try this on a sample piece to determine the correct temperature so you don't lose your project.

Painting can add nice detail to your fused projects. Be sure to practice and experiment to fine tune your skills.



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