Pearl at Home

Art projects designed for family fun, for suggested ages of 5 and up to be completed at home with easily-accessible art materials.

CRAZY QUILT À LA LAURENT

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MATERIALS

- **Black cardstock or construction paper**
- **Paper:** Scraps of plain colors of construction paper, cardstock, scrapbooking paper
  Option: Thin cotton fabric in plain colors (no patterns). Scraps are great!
- **Color media of your choice:**
  Crayons, color pencils, paint, or oil pastels
  Note: Oil pastels and paint work on both fabric and paper
- **Optional:** Small nozzle bottle with thinned white paint
- **Regular pencil** • **White color pencil or white charcoal pencil**
- **White glue** (for fabric) or **glue stick** (for paper) • **Scissors**

ABOUT CRAZY QUILTS AND REGGIE LAURENT

Quilting is an ancient craft that is both practical and beautiful. The term “crazy quilt” refers to quilts with no set pattern, unlike many traditional quilts. This highly individualized quilting style became popular at the very end of the 19th century. It was inspired by the beautiful “crazed” finish on the newly-imported exotic Japanese pottery at that time. In this case, “crazed” means “cracked” and refers to the tiny shapes made from the glaze on these ceramics.

Fabric artists wanted to recreate the beauty of these ceramics in their quilts. They combined uniquely-shaped quilt pieces cut from colorful, luxurious fabrics with fancy embroidery and quilting to make their interpretation of “crazy.”

Reggie Laurent is a contemporary artist from the Atlanta, Georgia area who has been developing his style of bright free-form acrylic paintings since 1986. He creates canvases full of brightly-colored abstract shapes that fit tightly together like a crazy quilt. The overall effect of his paintings is similar to the overall effect of a crazy quilt.

Asked about his painting process, Laurent explains:

> It’s the fine detail in my works that takes the most time, and the detail work is the key to making my works interesting. I can interject all kinds of colors and shapes within shapes. Once I have done all of the detail work, I “sew” my paintings together with my white “thread.”  

https://www.art-is-fun.com/colorful-abstract-art

In this project, we’ll create a collage inspired by both crazy quilts and Reggie Laurent.
**DIRECTIONS**

1. **Cut shapes**
   Cut enough different shapes from the bright colored paper or fabric to cover the black background paper, fitting them together like a puzzle or crazy quilt. Plan your layout on the black paper before gluing them down, because you might want to make changes. Pieces can be trimmed to fit.

   **BE SURE** to leave a little bit of space in between the shapes. See the suggested kinds of shapes below:

   ![Suggested Shapes](image)

   Note: Our shape outlines above are in white, but your shapes will be cut out of solid-colored paper or fabric.

2. **Glue shapes onto your background**
   Glue down each shape to the black paper. Let the glue dry a few minutes for paper, and let glued fabric dry completely.
3 Cut shapes
Decorate each colored shape with patterns in different colors. Use crayons, colored pencil, paint, or whichever medium you prefer. If you are painting your designs, let them dry completely before the next step.

**TIP:** Work from the center of the black paper out toward the edges so you have less chance of smudging your designs.

4 Add white lines
Use the white color pencil or white charcoal pencil to draw squiggly lines on the black space you left between the color shapes.

**Option:** If you have a small bottle with a nozzle tip, fill it with thinned white paint and draw squiggly lines on the exposed black paper. See our notes on the next page for more info on using nozzle-tip bottles.
About nozzle bottles and paint:

Nozzle bottles are easy to find in local craft stores or online. You will probably have to trim off the tip of the nozzle before you use one. If so, stay as close to the tip as you can in order to make the thinnest lines possible with the paint.

You can use craft acrylic paint or tempera paint, thinned with water so that it goes through the nozzle tip. There is no set formula, as each nozzle tip is different, but you can start with the instructions below:

**To thin paint**

Fill 1/4 of the bottle with paint and add 2 teaspoons of water. Close the bottle and shake to mix, then do a test.

If the paint is still too thick and won’t come out, add a bit more water. If it comes out too easily, add more paint to make it slightly thicker. After each adjustment, be sure to shake and test again.

You can store the mixed paint in the bottle as long as you have the cover. When using the bottle, be sure the tip is open and squeeze slightly as you work. The tip can usually be reopened with a pin or needle.

**TIPS:**
- ALWAYS test on scraps when you try a new technique.
- You can also use these bottles for glue.

Pin for reopening the tip
Do NOT leave it in as a stopper, or it will rust.