

Hot Tips from Mr. Art Carfun

For many of you this may well be your first journey into creative expression via an “artcar” or other wondrous conveyance. Every object, material and tool on Earth has potential for use on these drivable sculptures. So, in the name of encouraging the construction of new vehicles, Mr. Carfun has a few suggestions and useful tips to save you time, moolah and energy. Gleaning information from various sources and the experience of numerous cartists, below are some helpful hints.

Plan Ahead: One of the first questions you must ask is -- “Are permanently or temporarily altering a vehicle?” There are many methods to invent a system that can be removed from your vehicle between art car events. Others are anxious to turn their vehicles into artful “daily drivers.” It is important to have a plan so that you make appropriate choices with materials.

Surface Preparation: Whether you are gluing objects or painting the vehicle, it is advised that you prepare the surface. If there is flaking paint or rust, you will want to remove that with wire brushes. Sanding is a good idea as it will allow for a better bond between the surface as paint and/or glue is added.



Paint: Many kinds of paints are available and some are better than others; depending on your needs related to permanence, removability and cost.

Enamels - Both the spray-on and brush-on versions tend to be the most durable options. However, they are the most toxic and require ventilation and the use of respirators and goggles is advised. By far the most popular artcar paint is the lead-based sign painter’s enamel “One Shot”. It is a

great paint that comes in a wide variety of vibrant colors and will last for years with no fading or flaking (if surface is prepared properly) but, it is expensive.

Lacquers - In addition to effectiveness of enamel, there are auto paints that fall into the lacquer category. They are highly toxic but very durable. Some paints even have metal glitter-like flakes that change colors when viewed from different angles.

Acrylics - available in spray cans, tubes and jars. Many sprays are referred to as “acrylic enamel” and are a good option as they dry much faster than pure enamels. Brush-on varieties are user friendly and clean-up is easy but beware the brush varieties do not adhere to all surfaces. It is recommended that the brush-on paint be protected with a clear top coat. It’s also a plus that acrylics and acrylic enamels are relatively inexpensive.

Latex - the most inexpensive option. Some artists use these when vibrant colors and longevity are not important. Many paint stores practically give away returned or mis-matched paint.

Tempera - the only choice for temporary paint jobs. It is essentially a water-based poster paint. When the time comes, you can simply power-wash (bring lot’s of quarters) away your “masterpiece.” Tempera paint is available in both a pre-mixed and powder form. Also it’s quite inexpensive.





Adhesives: Many artcar artists simply can't resist the temptation of "adding objects" to the vehicle and gluing is often the easiest and quickest option. There is an ever-evolving array of adhesives available but one must choose well. Remember, your vehicle will be mobile and need to survive rough roads, wind and weather.



Silicone Caulk - this is probably the best choice for most applications. It's non-toxic but stinky. Available in tubes or for use in caulk guns. It is strong but most importantly, it remains flexible as it will not dry out and become brittle over time. It's also nice because most products offer an hour, or so, of working time. Be careful, this stuff is hard to remove; use prudently.

Epoxy - while fast and strong, it is toxic and offers little working time. It also requires the artist to spend a lot of time mixing the two-part compound. Products like "JB Weld" is a cold welding epoxy that is great for adhering metal objects to other metal objects. Cold weld adhesives are very strong but so much so that they are extremely difficult to remove in the event of breakage of the object or sloppy application.

Other Adhesives - new products appear every day and some may be superior to others. "Liquid Nails", "Dap 2000", "e-6000" and many others come in a caulk form and are effective for use with a wide range of materials. However, they have a tendency to dry out and become inflexible/brittle over time. Some are quite paintable but maintenance can be problematic because in the event of objects becoming loose, it is difficult to completely remove the original adhesive. Some mosaic artists prefer to use "Liquid Nails" as it holds grout well. "Goop" Household, Marine and Plumber's are stronger than silicone but very toxic. A "Goop" bond is often stronger than the object itself. Removal of this product is virtually impossible. "Gorilla Glue" and similar products are good for certain applications but these products require clamping. Excellent for gluing over holes, cracks or uneven areas as they "foam". Must be used sparingly as the "foaming" process causes objects to move; again, clamps required.

Fasteners: Some of your embellishments will require something beyond mere glue. This is where screws, nuts/bolts, rivets, braces, hose clamps, vises etc. come into play. Depending on the weight and balance of the objects or extensions, it will require a bit of engineering; test as you go. There's no need to make your creation earthquake or hurricane proof but you probably don't want to leave a trail of your hard work behind you.



Hex-head self-drilling sheet metal screws are the fastener of choice for many art vehicle creators. Using a hex head driver and power drill makes attaching objects to most metal surfaces quick and easy.

Nuts and bolts are very strong and come in wide range of lengths and diameters. These fasteners and threaded rods are also useful for adding long extensions to the vehicle. Keep in mind though that one must have access to both ends of the hardware for application of the nut.

Pop Rivets are another popular option. They are especially good for attaching metal objects. They require drilling holes but come in both aluminum and steel (the stronger option). Rivet guns are cheap and found in most hardware stores.

NOTE: Water leakage (ie: roofs, hoods or trunks) - put silicone on screws/rivets before fastening.

Braces and Brackets: Large sculptural enhancements will require some additional bracing. Many additions can be bolted on but in many cases, welding is required. Armatures can be added to support sculptural additions such as paper-mache, foam and/or fiberglass layers. This approach takes special skills but can result in extraordinary sculptural creations that can completely disguise the vehicles within.



Temporary Solutions: Not everyone is willing to “sacrifice” their mode of transportation to the arts on a permanent basis. There are ways to create much less permanent vehicular sculpture. In addition to washable paint, there are methods that can add 3D elements to your creation.

Roof Racks - these units offer stable options that will serve as a base from which to begin building up, down and out.

Magnets - very strong magnets are available to assist in adding temporary brackets or objects.

Suction Cups - an easy solution for lightweight additions but be selective with quality & effectiveness.

The “Cozy” Option - some artists create an “article of clothing” for their vehicle. These fabric and/or foam coverings are held in place with everything from sewn-in magnets to bungee cords and ropes. Just don’t rely on any single unit; over-achieve in the name of safety and strength. In essence you are making a “costume” for your vehicle. When not in use, the artful components are stored/saved for the next parade or exhibition.

Zip-Ties and Duct Tape - These also have a wide range of uses. Zip-Ties, in particular, are impressively strong, versatile and easy to remove.



In closing, a significant part of the artcar/vehicle experience is the actual production of the rolling art wonder. It requires creativity, problem solving, artistic vision and a childlike spirit. Collaborations are common as friends, colleagues and groups of all kinds work together to create marvelous mobile conveyances.

BE CREATIVE, PLAN AHEAD & START EARLY!

If you need info or advice, drop Mr. Carfun an email and he will send you more details.

artcarfun@hotmail.com

Check out this great website for more info and tips:

<http://www.artcars.com/making/index.html>