

# NSU ART MUSEUM FORT LAUDERDALE

## Garden Creatures

### At-Home Art Activity

Inspiration for your imagination:  
Alake Shilling - *Ladybug*, 2018

Alake Shilling lives and works in Los Angeles, California where she was born in 1993. Her style is derived from her childhood experiences: watching cartoons, reading comics, visiting amusement parks, and the arts and crafts she made at summer camp. She gravitated towards trendy kitschy school supplies, toys and accessories. When she discovered contemporary artists Jeff Koons and Takashi Murakami who based their art on childhood toys, she realized that her brilliantly colored, large eyed, cartoon characters were valid subjects to explore in her painting. The naive childlike quality of her mixed media work serves as a mature vehicle for the expression of her ever-changing feelings. Starting new projects is both challenging and exhilarating and Shilling says “The struggle and agony of trying to bring something intangible, like a vision or genuine emotion, pales in comparison to the victory I feel from solving an equation that essentially has no answer!”



Alake Shilling, *Ladybug*, 2018. Private Collection, Courtesy of Rubell Family Collection

# Art vocabulary:

**Kitsch** - A nostalgic often garish object or piece of art considered by some to be in poor taste yet ironically appealing.

**Contemporary art** - A period of art from 1960 to the present.

**Mixed media** - Art works that combine a variety of art mediums or art materials.

**Faux** - Imitation.

## Materials:

- Cardboard box lid or recycled product box any size of your choice to make a faux canvas painting surface or a store-bought stretched canvas or canvas board, size of your choice
- Assorted colors of acrylic paints - \*Please note other water-based paints may be used but will possibly bleed when glue is applied on top
- Paintbrushes
- Cotton swabs
- Natural or manufactured sponge
- Container of water for dirty brushes
- Plastic or paper plate for use as paint palette
- Pencil
- White glue such as Elmer's
- Glitter and or glitter glue
- Sand - colored craft sand or plain beach sand
- Miscellaneous craft items such as pom-poms or buttons
- Covering for your work surface

# Instructions:

**Step 1** - Always use a protective cover for your work surface. Several layers of newspaper, brown paper, or a plastic tablecloth work well. Choose a recycled product box with the ends glued shut or box lid to make your own faux canvas or choose a store-bought canvas.



**Step 2** -Skip this step if you have chosen a store-bought canvas. If you have chosen to make a faux canvas from a box, prime or paint the entire surface, including the sides, with white acrylic paint and let dry. Please note that if the surface has an image on it you may need a second coat of paint for proper coverage.



**Step 3** - On your chosen surface, draw a simple outline of a creature and additional simple shapes such as plant life and flowers to suggest that the creature is in a garden setting.





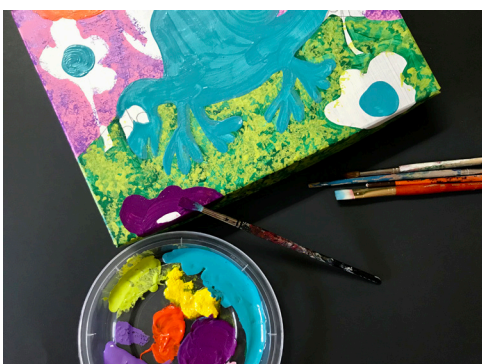
**Step 4** - Dispense small amounts of acrylic paints onto your palette. Paint the background areas first, leaving your subject matter unpainted for now. Paint the sides of the canvas or box as well.



**Step 5** - Using a small sponge dipped in a contrasting color of acrylic paint, carefully dab the additional color onto the background areas to create a textured surface.



**Step 6** - After the background has dried, start painting in the colors of the creature and the other shapes in your composition. Cotton swabs may also be used as brushes or to add some patterns.

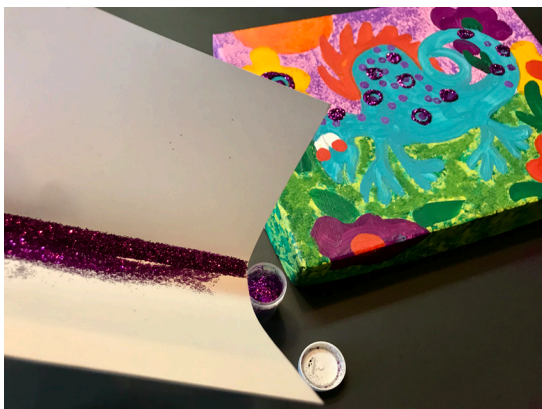




**Step 7** – Apply white glue using a brush to the areas of your dry sponge painted background to be enhanced with sand or glitter. Once glue is applied, generously sprinkle the sand or glitter onto the wet glue. Enhance one area at a time in order to prevent mixing of products. Let dry between applications. Once an area is dry, dump off the excess sand or glitter onto a sheet of paper and return it to the container for later use.



**Step 8** – After the background is done, continue to add sand and glitter details to your composition, drawing with the glue bottle or using a brush, sprinkling sand or glitter using the same process as step 7.



**Step 9** – When you are satisfied with the glitter and or sand additions to your composition, continue to embellish your painting with objects such as pom-poms or buttons.



**Step 10** - When all of the glued areas are dry add some final details to your composition using paint. Don't forget to give your work a fun title!



### **Variations and adaptations:**

A variation of this project is to create your garden creature on paper or cardstock using crayons or markers and glue on additional sand and glitter embellishments.



\*If you have any questions about these art activities  
please e-mail Sue at: [sgirardisw@moafl.org](mailto:sgirardisw@moafl.org)  
Now in her garage making art!

**We'd love to see your artwork!**  
**Take a photo and tag @nsuarmuseum**



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