

cellophane faerie wings

By: RioDancerCO

<http://www.burdastyle.com/projects/cellophane-faerie-wings>

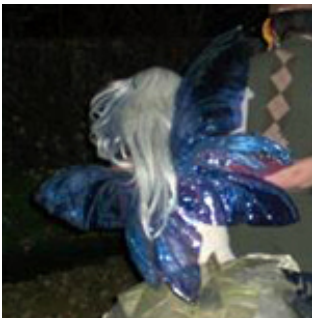


Wire veined, cellophane faerie wings

Materials

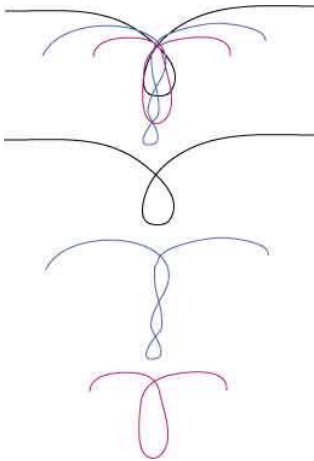
14g wire, floral tape, FabriTac glue, cellophane

Step 1 — Designing Your Wings



Your wings will likely look best if they are symmetrical on both sides. The best way I've found to accomplish this is to draw out one wing on paper, trace the outline with a permanent marker and then trace the pattern on the reverse side of the paper. You can use a single large sheet of paper, part of an art roll or several sheets taped together. I would recommend avoiding paper that has already been printed on only because it may make the style lines difficult to see. You can free hand a shape for the sail and then fill in with 'veins' where the wire will go or you can enlarge a drawing found in a book (encyclopedia) of an actual wing.

Step 2 — Forming the Wire Frame



The toughest part of all of this (in my opinion) is forming the wire. These instructions are for open frame wings which means that the wing frames have wires extending out like spokes to support the sail. There is a second type of frame called a closed frame where wire is formed in an outline. This style of frame is mostly used for nylon mesh wings.

I choose to use 14 gauge stainless steel wire that I find at an ACE hardware store in a bundle of 100 feet. If your wings are smaller and/or you use more ‘spokes’ in your frame, you may be able to use a lighter gauge of wire. For those who don’t regularly work with wire, the smaller the gauge number, the larger the wire diameter. Beware of what type of wire you’re getting. Copper is soft and so is aluminum. I’ve not worked with them but I’d guess they’d support less weight than stainless steel when used in the same gauge.

The strongest sections of your frame should be the upper edge and the center back brace. Build your frame up in layers. Lay out your paper wing pattern with lines marked in for wire shape/placement. You may want to tape this to the floor or table top so it doesn’t slide around while you’re working with the wire over top. Wire lines should extend from one wing tip, swirl through the center making a long narrow loop with some twists and then out to the other wing tip in one solid piece of wire. Think of it like an M shape with a loop in the center instead of a sharp V. You want it to be about 3" at the widest and taper at the bottom portion of the loop. Each main section of ‘vein’ should have a center brace loop.

Step 3 — Wrapping Wire Frame



To hold the multiple wire pieces together, promote better glue adhesion later and limit rusting, it is very helpful to coat the wires with floral tape. I tear off strips that are about 10" long so that they're easier to work with. Keep some tension on the tape as you wrap so that it sticks to itself as strongly as possible. You will cover the wires completely and use some of the floral tape to join the different pieces anywhere the frames touch. This will give you a strong bond between the separate parts of the frame and really reinforce the center back brace. When you reach the end of a wire, wrap the tape until it extends past the end by the width of the tape, then fold it over down the length of the wire and wrap over it. This gives you a double thickness over the potentially sharp end of wire.

Step 4 — Gluing Cellophane Sails



You are now ready to add the sails. For this you need a roll of cellophane found in the gift wrap section of the craft store and some big box stores. I prefer the look of iridescent cellophane used for shrink wrapping gift baskets but it comes in many colors. Lay out your paper pattern. Cut off a section of cellophane sufficient to cover your paper pattern. You will put glue along the frame on the side that will touch the cellophane. I have used E6000 craft glue and FabriTac glue successfully. Experiment with other adhesives at your own risk. Remember the glue used should be clear, tacky and flexible. Lay your frame down on the cellophane, following the lines for veins drawn on your paper pattern.

At this point you can add some internal embellishments to your wings such as a few sequins or a little glitter/embossing powder or small shapes cut out of more cellophane. You may also have some success with coloring the cellophane with markers- again experiment at your own risk. Repeat this step for the other wing. Let the glue dry completely! You should have one layer of cellophane glued to each wing.

When your frame has dried to the wing sail, you will apply glue to the top side of the frame and place the 2nd piece of cellophane down. This sandwiches the frame and embellishments between two layers of shrink wrap cellophane. Again, let the glue dry.

Step 5 — Fusing and Finishing Your Cellophane Sails



Grab some tracing paper or gift wrap tissue (non-metallic/coated/colored!) and sandwich your wing sail between two pieces on a firm, smooth, flat surface. Turn your iron on to a very low setting (like less than synthetic if possible) with no steam. Then press the two layers of cellophane together. Remember, this is shrink wrap cellophane so it will fuse together. You may wish to practice on some scrap cellophane first so that you don't mangle your beautiful new sails. Now that you've got your layers fused together you should have two roughly rectangular pieces of sail glued and fused to your wire frame. Leave at least a half inch of cellophane around the edges and ends of your wires or the cellophane will pull apart. Cut your wing shapes following the spiffy pattern you created at the very beginning.

To finish up you can iron it one more time. You can use a stick of incense (yes, incense. It works perfectly) to melt small lace-like holes in the wings. This style is designed to be worn stuffed in the back of a snug tank top, corset or sports bra but you can also tie ribbons or elastic to the center frame to make arm loops.

When your sails are complete, it is time to give your wings dimension! I use my foot (bare) but some people use a large hardback book. I'll give foot directions and you can elaborate from there :P Step on the frame where one wing joins the center frame piece. This should be about 2-3 inches away from exact center of the wing span. The lift upwards on the center frame to create a bend where your foot is. This will make the wing stick out from your back instead of just lying flat against your shoulders. Repeat for the other side. Woohoo! You're ready to leave the ground flying :D

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