

Gluing Costumes

When Miyong Noh, a fashion professional, joined the Burner community, she was horrified that so many people had glued-together costumes. She went on to teach us sewing skills. The moral of the story is that countless Burners have been Playa-fabulous without any sewing skills. You can be, too. Take trim, fabric, rhinestones, sequins, patches, and all sorts of found objects and glue them on to your pedestrian garment.

For this, you should have a hot glue gun and fabric glue.

Hot glue

Hot glue guns come in different sizes and glue sticks come in different temperature grades. Just get general purpose. Hot glue is great for attaching objects to costumes, as the glue sets as soon as it cools. Besides costumes, it is perfect for crafting wood, metal and anything that won't melt. Hot glue loses some strength in the hot Playa sun. It's water proof. Cold hot glue is stiff; for trim and fabric you need flexible fabric glue.

Fabric Glue

Get Magnatec and nothing else. I've had projects fail with other stuff. You can only get Magnatec in the Garment district, where it is universal. If you don't use too much, it will dry faster. For a large surface, I like to spread the glue bead with a cardboard spatula. If you get it on your clothes, it's permanent, laundry proof. It will damage your furniture's finish. Nail polish remover softens fabric glue.

I always take both to the Playa. I take a new, sealed bottle of Magnatec but still worry that it may become a mess in my container trunk. So far, so good.

That's pretty much what you need for costumes. For other projects, you may need different types of glue. For instance, both hot glue and fabric glue melt plastic, and different types of plastic need to be matched with the right glue.

There is a general technique for gluing flat objects together: rough up both surfaces a bit with sandpaper, and fully cover both surfaces with glue, as thin as possible. A card board/business card/junk mail spatula will do the trick. The thinner the glue layer, the stronger the bond will be. Stick the two sides together, and apply pressure. I put bricks on top. Or clamps such as clothespins and binder clips. Leave overnight, if possible.

E6000 is the best plastic glue

If your plastic has a slight ivory shine, it can probably be glued with E6000. If it has a dull look, probably not. (I expect the ivory look to be vinyl, polystyrene, acrylic or Lexan. The dull plastic is probably polyethylene or polypropylene, which is very difficult to paint and glue. There is a special glue with hexane primer for these. It's real hard to find in a store. Better buy it on-line)

E-6000 is an industrial vinyl adhesive that has been adopted by the crafts community.

<http://eclecticproducts.com/e6000/craft.asp> . You can only get it in the Garment District and some craft stores. E-6000 isn't perfect. It dries slowly – it doesn't reach full strength until the next day. But then it really holds. And stays flexible and clear. Also, find a ventilated place to dry your E-6000 project overnight. In a City apartment, this may be your bathroom with the door closed. PERC, the solvent, is not healthy. Incidental exposure is no big deal, though, and you can easily avoid making it an all night affair. E-6000 is a viscous blob; you can apply it with a zip tie spatula or syringe.

Superglue

Superglue pretty much glues the same plastics as E6000. Although it dries quickly, I rarely use it. It is very watery, and the gel version is not much better. The reason I don't use it much is that I've experienced some failures. Note that superglue is not waterproof.

Epoxy

This is the stuff in double syringes. It comes in a plastic and 5 minute variety. I use it, but have better experiences with E6000. The regular store brand, Devcon, doesn't cure well. The special craft brands are much better. Epoxy is waterproof.

Epoxy is made in a tremendous range of varieties, for gluing plastic, metal, ceramic, etc. Epoxy paste may be useful as filler or for sculpting. Store brands like Propoxy are grey. Milliput offers a range of pastes in attractive colors for sculpting and repair. Then there's the different crazy epoxies I use: flexible, thermal conductive, electric conductive.

Barge

Barge is shoe repair glue. It is also the best glue for rubber and foam rubber. Apply with a small piece of foam.

White glues

There is not much use for white glue on costumes. White glues are the cheapest glues, so they should be considered for real large projects. Modge Podge is great to create a textured surface. Jewel glue such as Gem-Tac works well on firm surfaces such as shoes and belts. It has to dry overnight. White glues are not waterproof.

Spray glues

Scotch Super 77 is a general purpose adhesive that is suitable for fabric, cardboard, plastic, etc. Scotch Spray Mount is repositionable adhesive that is good for photos, posters, etc.