

Cupcake Panel

Design, Fabrication, Text, and Photography by Nonnie Lyketsos

Cupcakes are so sweet and adorable that customers in Georgetown wait in line for up to an hour to buy them, pet owners name their animals after them, and viewers across the country watch TV shows about them. Naturally a fused glass panel has to follow as well. This cupcake panel features a black line mosaic technique that uses frit to mimic the lead lines of stained glass, frame the colors, and focus the eye. Then we add a layer of glass “icing” to the cupcake and tack-fuse it at a lower temperature for a dimensional effect that has it pop with sprinkles. It’s topped with a shiny red cherry for the perfect finish.

To begin, make two copies of the pattern and cut the cupcake and cherry patterns from one of the copies. Cut the clear base glass to 12" x 10-3/4" and place it on top of the pattern.

1

Cut the Black Iridized glass, or Standard Black if you prefer, into long 1/2"-wide strips.



The strips can be pieced together to line the sides of the panel, but be certain to leave small gaps at the tops of the panel on the right and the left for insertion of the hanging wires. The rest of the black strips should touch and not have any gaps. Adhere the strips with small dots of Super Glue. Remember to check that the iridized glass is irid side up, if you’ve chosen that.

Note that Super Glue works most quickly when used in small amounts. In fact, it can be almost instantaneous in tiny droplets. If mistakes are made, however, the glass *can* be pried off with care. Also, if it leaves a white glaze, don’t worry. The haze burns off completely in the kiln.

2

Cut the glass for the cupcake liner, the cupcake top, and the cherry, then attach them to the clear glass with small drops of Super Glue.



Bullseye Glass Co.

001101 Clear for Base, 12" x 10-3/4"
000100 Iridized Black for Frame, 10" x 16"
004215 Mardi Gras for Background, 10" x 16"
000137 French Vanilla for Cupcake Liner, 8" x 10"
000124 Opaque Red for Cherry Bottom Layer, Scrap
001122 Transparent Red for Cherry Top Layer, Scrap
000125 Orange for Cupcake Icing, 8" x 10"
008916-0107 Opalescent Stringer, Broken Pieces
000100-0001F Fine Black Frit for Design Line Filler, 1/2 cup
Various Colors of Medium and Coarse Opalescent Frit for Icing
18-Gauge Nichrome 60 Wire, two 10" Pieces
Wire Cutters Super Glue® Spoon
Permanent Marker

This time, leave small channels between each piece of glass for the black frit to be sprinkled in later. The channels should be about as thick as a Sharpie marker line or a pattern line in a stained glass pattern book. Don’t add the frit yet, though.

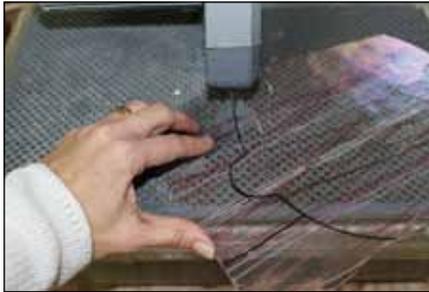
3

Place the Mardi Gras glass over the cupcake glass and trace around the cupcake and the black edges.



4

Trace the rest of the pattern lines and cut the glass.



This step will be a little different for each person depending on the individual piece of mardi gras glass. Trace the pattern lines on the glass in a way that is easy, makes sense for your glass, and looks good with the stringers in your glass. In this panel, they are all vertical, like streamers at a party. Mark the glass with a permanent marker, then cut the glass using a ring saw if necessary.

If you don't own a ring saw, you can draw simpler lines so that you don't need to make difficult cuts. Glue the pieces down around the cupcake, always leaving spaces for the black frit.

Bend the two 10" pieces of Nichrome 60 wire or other strong, high-temp, fusible hanging wire over a tube or a handle (such as a hammer) to give them a nice, attractive curve.

5



Position the wires at the top of the panel so that they stick out exactly the same amount on each side and glue them into place with Super Glue.

6

With the spoon, spread the fine black frit into the crevices between the pieces of glass, starting in the middle and working toward the edges.



7

Use a brush laid almost flat or your flattened fingers to sweep the frit that fell on the glass into the channels.



The frit should be approximately up to the level of the other glass. Have it completely cover the Nichrome 60 wire.

Fire to a full fuse at a schedule that works for your kiln, similar to the following:

Ramp 1, 250°F to 1000°F, hold 1 min.

Ramp 2, 600°F to 1225°F, hold 2 hrs.

Ramp 3, Full (AFAP*) to 1490°F, hold 10 min.

Ramp 4, Full (AFAP*) to 900°F, hold 2 hrs.

Ramp 5, 100°F to 700°F, no hold.

*as fast as possible

8

After the flat cupcake panel has come out of the kiln and cooled completely, add the top layer for an extra bit of artistry and dimension.



Simply cut another piece of orange Bullseye per the cupcake pattern. Wash and place the glass on top of the panel. You can glue, but you don't have to. Cut the transparent red glass for the cherry. Of course, opalescent can be used, but I like how transparent glass helps the cherry to look like a shiny maraschino. Also, it's less likely to devitrify, whereas opalescent red tends to devitrify quite easily.

Add bits of stringer and frit to the top of the cupcake, just as you would add sprinkles to the icing of a real cupcake, and return the panel to the kiln. Tack-fuse at a schedule that works for your kiln, similar to the following:

GPO

Ramp 1, 250°F to 1225°F, hold 45 min.

Ramp 2, 600°F to 1350°F, hold 10 min.

Ramp 3, Full (AFAP*) to 900°F, hold 2 hrs.

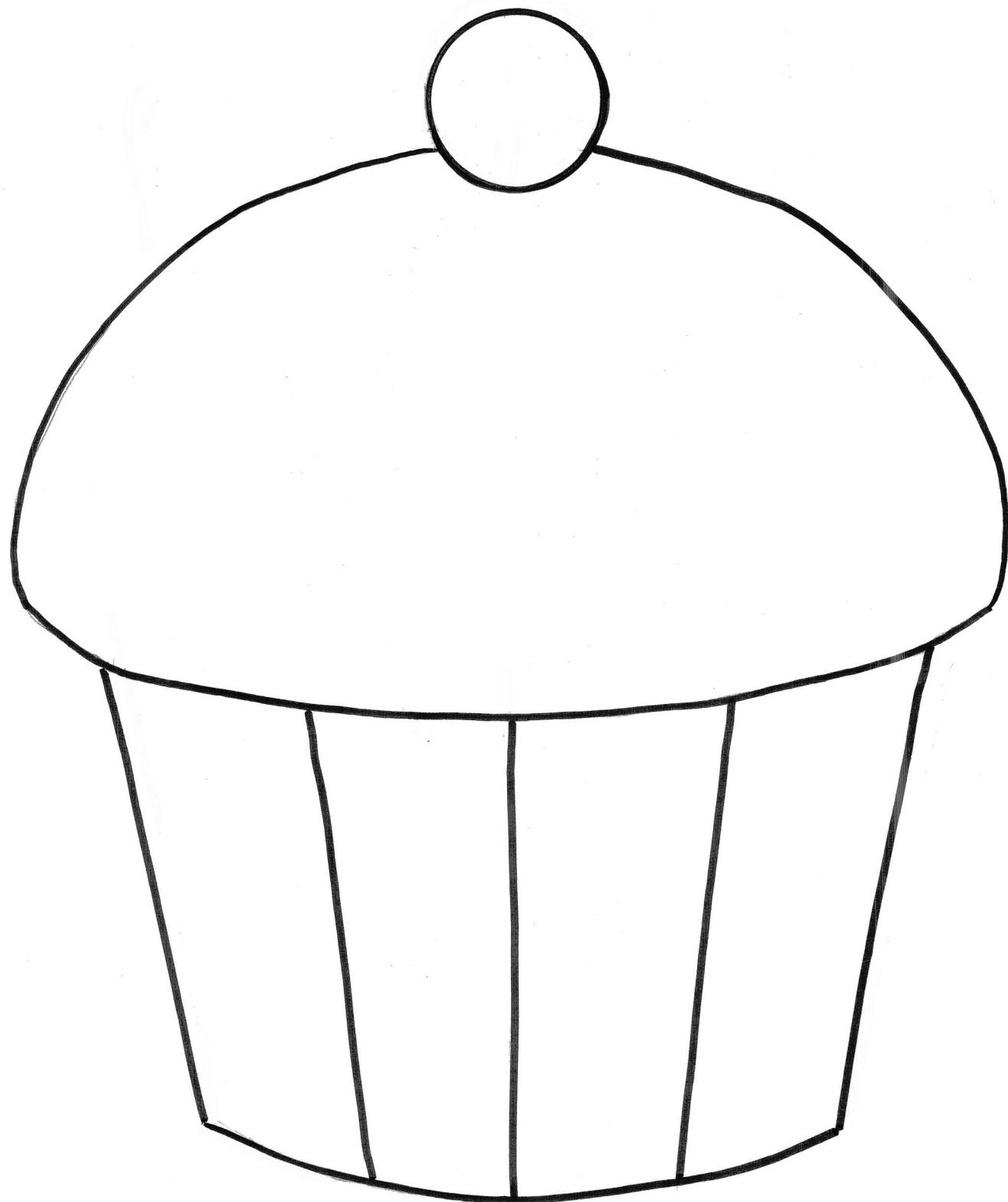
Ramp 4, 100°F to 700°F, no hold.

*as fast as possible

Nonnie Lyketsos is a fused glass artist in Baltimore, Maryland. She specializes in flat panel floral bouquets, awards, and fused glass mosaics. Visit www.nonnielyketsos.com to learn more about Nonnie and view her glass art.



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