

Mica Flakes

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Let me start out by answering a question that I hear most; what *is* mica? It's actually a group of natural rock forming minerals that is found in all three rock types. Now in days you can usually see the silvery mica minerals in your sidewalks. The minerals flake off in thin transparent sheets that are generally flexible and brittle, but they're also durable. There are about 30 different types of mica; the most common are muscovite and biotite. But when you see mica flakes for sale, it's usually a mix of any given mica that has been processed into small flakes.

Sometimes you will see sellers call it "Vintage Mica Snow". This term dates back to the early 1900s when mica grew to be a popular seller as ornamental snow for Christmas displays. It quickly then grew to be popular to decorate their ornaments with. Since then, only now has mica started to make a comeback through primitive artists. I believe it's a very attractive medium to this artist group because of its history. When making primitive art, the key is to make it look as if it's past down through generations; and mica flakes is the perfect candidate for glitter since it was so popular in the early 1900s; and because of its color. It's not a bright shiny glitter like you would see in most craft stores; it has a silvery sheen to it that already has a feeling of age when you look at it.

So now you know what mica is; but how do you find it, and most importantly, how do you use it? In my experience, and also those whom I talk to online is that you can't find mica flakes in local stores, not yet any way. There are however, a growing number of places online that sell it. *Create a Prim* being one of them. At [Create a Prim's Shopping Center](#) you can buy the mica flakes in ½ or full pound bags. And for those who just want to give mica a try, you can also get sample bags for only \$1.25 which includes shipping.

Once you get and try your mica flakes, it's hard to resist the urge to use it on everything you create! You can add it as glitter to your fabric creations such as ornaments (like they did in the 1900s), valentine hearts, Easter eggs, snowballs, etc. You can use it on paper creations such as tags or scrapbooking items. And because it's a natural nontoxic material, you can also use it in bath and body products to add a bit of shimmer. Even candle makers are now starting to use it on their candles since it can stand up to high temperatures.

General Directions on how to apply it:

Mica can be used on just about any surface; and to apply it, just use it as you would any other glitter. You can use spray glue, spray sealer, white glue, or modge podge.

If you're looking for a mica **dusting effect**; just spray the object with a clear adhesive spray and sprinkle the mica over it. Pat it down a little while the glue is still wet so that it adheres better. Let dry, and then brush off the excess flakes. This method is great for use on florals, wreaths, dolls, and other fabric creations.

But if you're looking for a more **solid look** with the glitter; I would suggest using white glue or modge podge. Water the glue down a bit (just enough water to make the glue easy to paint with). Take an old paint brush; then paint the area you wish to cover and then roll the item in the mica. Use your fingers to push the mica firmly into the glue. As it dries, continue to smooth the flakes flat.

For **finer flakes, mica powder**, or for use in **body products**, just put your mica flakes in a food processor or blender. Remember, mica is natural and non toxic, so you don't have to worry about food safety. When blending it; make sure you keep the lid on tight because it will create a lot of "dust". Let the dust settle before taking the cover off; and it's probably best to use a mask, or even do it outside. When adding to body products, use a very small amount of the mica powder; and sprinkle in slowly while stirring your product. A little goes a long way! Do not attempt to put in whole mica flakes; it will just turn to slush.

Whether you're a fabric or clay sculptor, candle maker, Christmas crafter, painter, or bath and body expert; I'm sure mica flakes will quickly become your favorite glitter, because the possibilities are endless!

~Kristal Norton of Rags-n-Tags

Projects (provided by Cory)



Snowballs:

Stick Christmas hooks or wire into small Styrofoam balls. Coat the balls with gesso and let dry. Paint with white paint and while still wet roll them in mica. Brush off excess flakes when dry.



Icicles:

Cut a piece of aluminum foil approximately 2 1/4" x 7" (taper it a little at the bottom). Using a paper punch, punch 4 holes at the top end, then thread a

Christmas ornament hook through the holes. Crinkle it to make an icicle shape. Paint it white (leaving some of the foil showing through) and let dry. Paint with diluted clear drying glue and roll in the mica, pressing hard. Let dry. Repeat 'glue-mica' step until desired effect is achieved. Experiment using large mica flakes, and mica powder (just put your mica in a blender for finer flakes).



Pinecones:

Using white paint or diluted clear drying glue, paint the pinecone tips and roll in mica. Brush off excess when dry.



Snow Globe (without water):

Pour a mixture of plaster of Paris and cement glue into a jar. Let it dry for a long time (about a week). Using craft silicon bonding adhesive, glue your item(s) inside. Sprinkle a little mica in the jar to stick to the excess wet glue. When dry, add a scoop of mica for the snow and seal with a zinc lid. DO NOT ADD WATER! Water will turn the mica into sludge.



Snowball Candle:

Paint a round candle with diluted white glue, and then roll in mica flakes. You can also roll handmade candles in the mica while they're still soft and warm. CAUTION: Only add mica to fat candles, never skinny ones. Even though the mica will not burn, it will collect as the candle burns down making a 'wall' surrounding the flame. The flame could become dangerously high. Never leave any candle unattended.



Acorns:

Paint the acorn bottoms with diluted clear drying glue and press the mica on using your fingers to make sure the mica lays flat. Repeat. Using your thumbnail clean the edge where the mica touches the cap. If desired, you can drill a hole and glue in a hook, but be careful, because the acorn is hollow. The acorns can be used as hanging ornaments or placed in a pretty bowl for decoration.

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