

## Method for Replacing Missing Abalone Buttons or Inlay

Many ethnographic objects from the Northwest Coast and South Pacific Islands have inlay or buttons made from carved abalone shells. An easy way of replacing missing pieces is with abalone veneer. A sheet of abalone veneer comes in a standard size and is usually 3 inches x 5 inches x .003" thick. It can be easily cut using sharp scissors or a scalpel. It can be glued to most backings with Acryloid B-72. The backing shown here is acid-free museum mat board. The best method for shaping the replacement piece is to cut the backing to the appropriate size then attach a slightly oversized piece of the veneer. After the adhesive has dried the excess veneer can be trimmed away with scissors. Abalone veneer can easily be found through online sources such as Google and Ebay.

### Materials and Tools needed



Shaped backing with oversized piece of veneer and final product



Analysis of abalone inlay showed that the base (inside material) is a clear polymeric film, which is a styrene butadiene polymer. Adhered to the base are thin sheets of what appears to be Mother of Pearl (abalone). This shows only calcium carbonate on analysis, which is consistent with Mother of Pearl (abalone). This material is adhered to the backing with a styrene butadiene polymer that is very similar to the backing.

*Scott Carrlee*

## Tips for Maintaining Gamblin Conservation Colors

One should maintain the solvent level in the paint close to the original condition. This prevents the paint in the small jars from drying up. Do this by adding a drop or two of mineral spirits (20% or more aromatics) to the color every time the jars are opened.

If the colors have lost so much solvent that they are nearly hard, more aggressive measures can be taken: First add some mineral spirits to the paint in the jar. The amount to add can be easily approximated by using an eyedropper. Place the tip of the eyedropper on a table right next to the jar of color. Hold the eyedropper vertically. Fill the eyedropper with solvent to the level that is equal to the level of the paint in the jar.

Let this solvent sit on the paint in the closed jar at least overnight. This makes mixing easier. Next day mix the solvent and color together using a palette knife. Or by using a Dremel Tool as a high speed disperser. (See below.)

### Cap replacement program

You can order our new black plastic cap if you have purchased Gamblin Conservation Colors that have a white metal cap. The black cap seals the jars better. This replacement is a free service. Send an email to [Robert@Gamblincolors.com](mailto:Robert@Gamblincolors.com) and tell me how many caps you need.

### Dremel Tool Disperser

Dremel tools do not come with a high speed disperser blade, but you can employ a carpenter's nail as one. Choose a smooth surfaced, long, wide headed nail of the proper diameter. This becomes your disperser blade. Wear safety glasses,

latex gloves, and move the "disperser blade" slowly when entering and exiting the surface of the paint. Also, in most cases the slow speed on the Dremel tool is fast enough.

*Bob Gamblin*

